

# Chesterfield NH Budget Committee

## Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2017

Present: Bayard Tracy, Dan Cotter, Doug Foster, Rick Cooper, John Koopmann, Carol Wheeler, Steve Laskowski, Gary Winn, Brad Roscoe, David Smith and Chris Babcock.

Absent: George Goulet, Cathy Harvey

Guests: Ege Cordell and Nick Belsky

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bayard Tracy at 07:06pm. It was suggested that there be some kind of documentation to explain the Budget committee's thoughts on not recommending the following articles for the budget.

Motion was made by Carol Wheeler and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rick Cooper to review the reasoning on article 4 for the school purchasing the property.

After much discussion a motion was made by Dan Cotter and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brad Roscoe to accept the final wording. All were in favor.  
(The draft and the final copy are attached to the minutes)

Motion was made by Rick Cooper and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Carol Wheeler to review the wording on the explanation as to why articles #1, #13 #14 were not recommended.

After much discussion and corrections Dan Cotter made a motion to accept all the changes in the wording, this was seconded by Rick Cooper with the vote in the affirmative.

(The draft papers and the final wording will be attached to these minutes.)

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Penny Cooper

## **2017 Town Warrant**

### **Town of Chesterfield**

#### **State of NH**

##### **ARTICLES 'NOT RECOMMENDED' BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**ARTICLE 8:** To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to purchase a new Tractor with Mower and Blower for the Highway Department and authorize the withdrawal of the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) from the Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

The budget committee voted 10 to 1, with 1 abstention, to Not Recommend Article 8, in part, for the following reasons:

- The Town should contract the roadside mowing to a specialty contractor who will assume the financial and liability responsibilities of the job and free up the Town highway crew to perform work that is of greater value to the taxpayer.
- The proposed cost is high for a specialty machine that does not have a daily function, even if that function is marginally expanded (by a blower).
- The amount of the requested funding will likely not purchase a substantial base machine, especially given the additional cost of the requested add-on mower and blower. If a used unit is purchased the maintenance liability rises.
- The current unit sits idle for most of the year. When the Town contracted the roadside mowing the job was done within two weeks by one person.
- The cost of adding funds to a Capital Reserve Fund for future replacement is a minimum of \$3,000 per year for a 20 year possible life in 2017 dollars just to keep close to even in addition to current deposits.
- Roadside mowers are maintenance intensive because of the harsh environment in which they work and the complicated mechanics. Work on specialty units and hydraulics is expensive.
- When an operator is assigned to mow the roadside the utility of that operator to be performing more important tasks directly related to road maintenance and road construction projects is lost. Each year the Road Agent states that there are projects that he would like to have done that are not completed due to time or budget restraints.

For the above reasons and in a time of rising taxation the Committee decided to 'Not Recommend' Article 8.

**ARTICLE 13:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 to Develop Town Hall Annex Construction Documents and authorize the withdrawal of the sum of \$30,000 from the Town Hall Annex Renovations Capital Reserve Fund for that purpose, or act in any way related thereto.

The budget committee voted 11 to 1 to not recommend this article. This article pays for construction plans and designs for a projected approximately \$464,000 kitchen improvement project to the Town Hall Annex. The cost of this project has not been approved by the Town.

If Article 13 is approved but the Town fails, at some future date, to approve the full construction of this project, these construction plans, in part or in total, cannot be used.

The Budget Committee feels that the project's full cost should first be approved prior to spending \$30,000 for an undefined and unapproved project.

**ARTICLE 14:** To see if the town will vote to establish a Broadband Infrastructure Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the establishment, expansion, maintenance, and/or upkeep of the Broadband Infrastructure in the town and to raise and appropriate \$50,000 to put in the fund; and further to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from the fund.

The budget committee voted 10 to 1, with 1 abstention, to not recommend Article 14. The requested \$50,000 represents approximately half of the estimated cost required to complete this project. The remaining estimated \$50,000 must be approved at a future Town Meeting

The Budget Committee feels that this project is not a prudent use of tax dollars for two reasons: (1) The project does not benefit a sufficient portion of town residents and (2) that the Town should not be investing in the broadband infrastructure business particularly for the exclusive benefit of any single corporation.

# **2017 School District Warrant**

## **Town of Chesterfield**

### **State of NH**

#### **ARTICLE 'NOT RECOMMENDED' BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$89,500 for the purpose of purchasing the 21.7 acre Chickering Lot which is adjacent to the School.

The Budget Committee voted 12 to 1 to 'Not Recommend' Article 5. The reasons for this recommendation are as follows:

- School taxes will increase this year by 6.32% if all Warrant Article pass. Now is not the time for the School District to purchase and hold undeveloped land.
  - Article 2 of the School Warrant requests \$8,566,546 to operate the Chesterfield School District to educate 453.5 students from Pre-School through High School 'Out of District'. This is an increase of 24 students from last year's budget.
    - To fund this operating budget increase, the District is asking for a \$304,711 increase in taxes.
  - With this and other operating budget changes, School Property Taxes will increase 4.48% or \$61.51 per \$100,000 of valuation.
  - Approval of Warrant Articles 4, 5, & 6 will require \$164,500 and will cause total taxes to increase by 6.32% or \$62.46 per \$100,000 of valuation
    - The \$89,500 requested by Article 4 alone represents approximately \$.51 of the \$62.46 per \$100,000 valuation increase.
- The District should focus taxpayer resources directly on education expenses, not inventorying land.
- Other town organizations are better structured and equipped to own excess land than is the School District.
- Alternative town or open land nearby is available for the uses noted by the School District Board.