

Grafton Budget Committee Minutes January 12, 2024

Members present: Ed Grinley (Chair), Catherine Mulholland, Bonnie Haubrich, Sandy Griffin, Steve Darrow (Select Board Ex-officio)

Others present: Maureen O'Reilly, Cindy Kudlik, Sara Hogue, Wanda Ellis, Karen Johnson, and Jake Abuhay

The meeting was called to order by Ed at 6:07pm. Minutes from the December 14, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Catherine made a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by Bonnie. All in favor.

This Budget Committee meeting was scheduled to review monetary 2024 Warrant Articles (see attached Warrant Articles). RSA 40:13, V-a "allows any town operating under the official ballot referendum (SB 2) town meeting to require that the numeric tally of all votes of an advisory or official budget committee and all votes of the governing body be printed on the ballot next to the affected article."

The following monetary warrant articles were discussed and voted on:

- #3 Historical Records Restoration Capital Reserve Fund
Ed made a motion to recommend; seconded by Steve. All in favor.
- #4 Fire Department Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund
Sandy made a motion to recommend; seconded by Ed. All in favor.
- #5 Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund
This capital reserve fund is designated exclusively for equipment.
Bonnie made a motion to recommend; seconded by Steve. All in favor.
- #6 Bridge Capital Reserve Fund
Objections to this warrant article was primarily based on the sum (\$50,000) to come from the unreserved fund balance.
Steve made a motion to recommend; seconded by Catherine. Ed, Steve and Catherine in favor. Sandy and Bonnie opposed.
- #7 Paving town roads (\$75,000)
Steve made a motion to recommend; seconded by Catherine. Steve, Ed, and Catherine in favor. Sandy and Bonnie opposed.
- #8 Recycling Capital Reserve Fund
Steve made a motion to recommend; seconded by Bonnie. All in favor.
- #9 Town Hall Repairs Capital Reserve Fund
Sandy made a motion to recommend; seconded by Ed. All in favor.

#10 Property Tax Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund

Ed made a motion to recommend; seconded by Steve. All in favor.

#11 Veterans Park Capital Reserve Fund

Bonnie made a motion to recommend; seconded by Ed. All in favor.

#20 C and D Container

Sandy made a motion to recommend; seconded by Ed. Ed, Catherine, and Sandy in favor.
Bonnie and Steve opposed.

#21 Library Grant/Construction

The full content of this warrant article as originally written was not included for the Budget Committee's review. Steve will insure that the additional sentences are included on the ballot.

Bonnie made a motion to recommend; seconded by Sandy. Catherine, Bonnie and Sandy in favor. Steve and Ed opposed.

Ed made a motion to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting at 6:45pm with no further monetary articles or increases to be submitted; seconded by Sandy. All in favor.

Ed opened the Public Hearing at 7:06pm.

A budget summary and spreadsheets for each town department's budget were distributed to the Budget Committee members and meeting attendees. The Budget Committee did not receive any additional requests from department managers for budget increases or changes.

The audience engaged in asking specific questions regarding budget line items.
Questions/discussion included:

Cemetery - Custodian Stipend - Sexton Stipends (\$225) – The 2023 Appropriation was \$500, however, \$225 (perpetual care check from VNA) was inserted in this line item. A sexton stipend of \$500 (11/24/23) was provided, however, it was categorized in Wages rather than the stipend line item.

Emergency Management – Budget \$570 – The question was why allocate more funds to a budget that spent \$0 for 2023. A grant is being applied for which has fees associated with it. The bulk of the budget is for grant support.

Highway – Uniforms (\$7,998.44) - The Highway Department is locked into a contract that ends in 2025. According to a previous comment made by the Highway Department manager, it is cost effective to let the contract expire rather than trying to get out of it.

The issue of paving vs patching was discussed. A mutually agreed upon definition of what each road service encompasses needs to be further examined by the Select Board and Highway Manager.

Select Board – Subscriptions (\$900); Computer Support (\$0); Reappraise Props (\$19,240)
Subscriptions expenditures were \$1,135.26 (\$235.26 over budget). This line item is the cost for the town's LexisNexis updates which provides legal, regulatory and business information and analytics to customers. Since the annual bill from LexisNexis came in on 11/24/23, the budgeted line item could have been adjusted if so requested.

Computer Support – several computer line items which had appropriations for 2023 and at \$0 for 2024 were consolidated to Supplies/Licensed Software (\$7,000) within the Executive total.

Reappraise Props - over budget by \$8,751. Billing for the last 3 months of the year amounted to \$11,728.50 which far exceeded any other quarter pay out during the year. Steve was going to discuss this issue with the other Select Board members to increase the dollar amount to cover over budget expenses.

Welfare – although little was spent from this budget, it is critical to have funds on hand in cases of severe need.

Provided department managers do not go over budget, they can interchange funds between line items. Several attendees expressed concern over utilizing line item funds for other purposes not adequately labelled.

Warrant articles should be on the ballot verbatim as originally presented.

In the interest of disclosure, Sandy made a proposal to have the handout from the meeting posted online along with the minutes to afford the opportunity to those townspeople who were not present at the public hearing to have detailed budget information.

Ed made a motion to conclude the Public Hearing at 8:05pm; seconded by Catherine. All in favor.

At 8:06pm Ed re-opened the meeting for any additional discussion. No additional comments.
Ed made a motion to adjourn at 8:09pm; seconded by Sandy. All in favor.

**Notable Dates: Saturday, February 3, 2024 – Mascoma Valley Regional School District
Deliberative Session
Saturday, February 10, 2024 – Town Deliberative Session
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 – Election**

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Griffin

1. To see if the town will vote to donate the Vacant lot at 2 Library Road (Map 16d lot 274) also known as the Grey Lot to The Friends of Grafton Library (FOGL) for a Library/Community center whereas the town shall not be responsible for any financial support as in Support/upkeep/maintenance or operating costs of said property/Building. The selectmen recommend this article.
2. To see if the town will vote that if the previous article fails, then the property at 2 Library Rd will go back to the Chester Gray Trust. The selectmen recommend this article.
3. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in the previously established Historical Records Restoration Capital Reserve Fund. The selectmen recommend this article.
4. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the previously established Fire Department Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund. The selectmen recommend this article.
5. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be placed in the previously established Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund. The selectmen recommend this article.
6. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in the previously established Bridge Capital Reserve Fund. this sum to come from the unreserved fund balance. No amount is to be raised from additional taxation. The selectmen recommend this article.
7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) for the purpose of paving town roads. The selectmen recommend this article.
8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the previously established Recycling Capital Reserve Fund. The selectmen recommend this article.
9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be placed in the previously established Town Hall Repairs Capital Reserve Fund. The selectmen recommend this article.
10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be placed in the previously established Property Tax Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund. The selectmen recommend this article.
11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in the previously established Veterans Park Capital Reserve Fund. The selectmen recommend this article.
12. To see if the Town will vote pursuant to RSA 35:15 to name the Board of Selectmen as agent to expend funds from the Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund. The selectmen recommend this article.

13. To see if the Town will vote to name the Selectmen as agents to expend the Bridge Fund Capital Reserve Fund in order to Repair and replace bridges. The selectmen recommend this article.
14. To see if the Town will vote to name the Selectmen as agents to expend the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund in order to Purchase Ambulances. The selectmen recommend this article.
15. To see if the Town will vote to name the Selectmen as agents to expend the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund in order to purchase police cruisers. The selectmen recommend this article.
16. To see if the Town will vote to name the Selectmen as agents to expend the Fire Department Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund in order to purchase fire apparatus. The selectmen recommend this article.
17. To see if the Town will vote to name the Selectmen as agents to expend the Roll-Off Truck Capital Reserve Fund in order to replace truck for recycle center. The selectmen recommend this article.
18. To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to appoint a Capital Improvement Program Committee, pursuant to RSA 674:5, to prepare and amend a recommended program of municipal capital improvement projects over a period of at least six years. The sole purpose and effect of the capital improvements program shall be, along with the budget advisory committee, to aid the Selectmen in their consideration of the annual budget. The selectmen recommend this article.
19. To see if the town will vote to establish a Police Department Revolving Fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h (c) Providing public safety services by municipal employees or volunteers outside of the ordinary detail of such persons, including but not limited to public safety services in connection with special events, highway construction, and other construction projects, or for any other public safety purpose deemed appropriate by the municipality. The Town Treasurer shall have custody of all monies in the fund and shall pay out the same only upon order to the Police Chief and no further approval is required by the Selectboard to expend. Such funds may only be expended only for the purpose for which the fund was created. The selectmen recommend this article.
20. To raise and appropriate the sum of thirteen thousand dollars (\$13,000) for the purpose of having the Cand D container also known as the demolition container be brought back to the recycling center for use by the town residents. (by Petition) The Selectmen do not recommend.
21. Will the Town vote to raise and appropriate a sum of \$996,239 to construct a new library at 2 Library Road, also known as the "Gray Lot" donated to the Town for this purpose. Funding to come from: \$845,844 NH Community Development Finance Authority's Community Center Investment Program, \$88,390 Secured grants, Friends of Grafton Library funds, and pledges, \$27,005 Secured volunteer labor and services. \$35,000 Existing library improvement capital reserve fund. (by petition) The Selectmen do not recommend.
22. To see if the voters will subdivide the property known as the East Grafton Union Church and parsonage (tax map 12, lot 1153) and sell the vacant parsonage to abutter Andrew Cushing (tax map 12, lot 123). The buyer agrees to increase both church and parsonage lots to the minimum two acres and pay all related legal and surveying expenses. The purchase price shall be informed by a mutually-agreeable third-party appraisal. Minus the value of the church's increased lot size. The buyer agrees

to restore the house and return it to the tax rolls. (by petition) The Selectmen do not recommend.