

2010 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

March 13, 2010

Ned Gordon, Moderator, opened the meeting at 9:00AM, stating that Bristol was incorporated in 1819 and this is the 191st Town Meeting. Paul Fraser, Chairman of the Selectmen, was asked to introduce the Board of Selectmen that were present: Joe Denning, Rick Alpers, and Don Milbrand. Absent, Jeff Shackett. Andrew Hemingway, Chairman of the Budget Committee was asked to introduce the members of the Budget Committee: Dorcas Gordon, David Carr, Dan Arseneau, Ron Preble, Ashley Dolloff, Jon Thouin, Shawn Lagueux, Paul Simard, Dan Bouchard, Wendy Costigan, and Barbara Greenwood. Paul Weston, Town Manager was asked to introduce the Department Heads: John Clark, Chief of Police, Steve Yannuzzi, Chief of the Fire Department, Mark Bucklin, Highway Agent, Michelle Bonsteel, Land Use Officer, Jeff Chartier, Water/Wastewater Superintendent.

Rev. Hedstrom from the United Church of Christ offered a prayer, and Ned asked Sylvia Bailey to start the Pledge of Allegiance. Ned explained that this meeting is to be run fair and efficient, and he will try to be sure that anyone that wants to speak gets the chance. Ned spoke about Richard Walenda- for 16 years Richard had always been to the left of Ned at Town Meetings, and that Richard would be missed this year, as he had a debilitating stroke. It is hoped that he will be back next year.

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one million, seven hundred forty thousand, eight hundred ninety-seven dollars (\$1,740,897) to build an addition to the Library and renovate the existing Library building, and to authorize the issuance of not more than the amount of one million, seven forty thousand, eight hundred ninety seven dollars (\$1,740,897.) of bond or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon. The first bond payment will be included in the 2011 budget. (2/3 ballot vote required to pass)

A motion was made by Paul Fraser to accept Article 9, 2nd by Rick Alpers. Paul gave a brief history of the Library building. He added that the Library staff, trustees and the friends of the Library had been very busy doing fundraisers. He also noted that bond rates are low right now, and contractors are looking for work, so that this may be a good time to proceed with the project. George Corrette spoke next stating that he has worked on this project for the past 10 years. Over the years, people have wanted to enlarge the library, and in 1956 there were very similar plans for expansion that we are discussing today.

The Trustees have applied for stimulus money, but we are not sure if the library would get it yet. This project would completely renovate the existing building and enlarge the building by adding an addition. It would bring the old building up to code. It would double the library in size. The Trustees know the economy is inadequate at present and this project would be good for numerous other reasons. If the downtown project was approved, this library project would help the whole downtown area.

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The tax rate impact over the ten-year bonding period would start out at 44 cents per thousand and go down 31 cents at the end of the ten years. If the \$250,000.00 stimulus grant money comes through it would be less than the amounts listed above. George Corrette thanked the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee for supporting this.

There was much discussion as to why some felt it should be approved for the betterment of the Town. People that don't have computers could access them at the library. Some thought it was too much money, and others wanted to know if it infringed on the wetlands. It was noted that the Library is above the flood plain.

At 10:10 AM Ned called for a vote. Approval requires a 2/3 margin, so a written ballot vote was done. The polls were open for an hour.

The number of ballots cast: 268; Yes: 148 No: 120. Needed 179 to pass.

The article failed.

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-eight million dollars (\$28,000,000-gross budget for the purpose of constructing sanitary sewer lines to the southerly end of Newfound Lake, and to authorize the issuance of not more than seven million (\$7,000,000) of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA33) and to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; with twenty-one million dollars (\$21,000,000) to come from federal or state or other aid, if any which may be available and to do all things necessary to carry out the purpose of this appropriation. This appropriation and bond authorization are to be effective only if the Town has received a binding commitment for the receipt of the offsetting grant funds. (2/3 ballot vote required)

A motion was made by Rick Alpers, seconded by Don Milbrand. Burt Williams requested to speak on this article. He stated that 28 million dollars needs to be raised for this project and that we are not ready to vote on this yet. We are close to getting 21 million, and then another 1 million after that, from Federal stimulus money. There would be 984 new users on the system, and the Town is not proposing to put this onto property taxation. This project would be paid for by grant money and the new users. The town will know within 30-45 days if they have received the Federal money. The town would have to have a special Town Meeting, after we know if we have the money. Burt stated that there is \$8 billion waiting to be used in stimulus money, and this needs to be decided before September. Rick Alpers made a motion to table Article 10; Don Milbrand seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed.

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Article 11: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate four hundred ninety seven thousand dollars (\$497,000) for the Bristol Central Square Enhancement Project, with three hundred ninety-seven thousand, six hundred dollars (\$397,600(80%)) coming from the NH Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancement Grant Program and ninety nine thousand, four dollars (\$99,400 (20%)) to be raised by property taxes as required by the NH Department of Transportation for the Town's matching share of the project. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the Enhancement Project is completed or by December 31, 2014, whichever is sooner. The project will provide the following items to be constructed:

- *Provide pedestrians with safe, new and reconstructed crosswalks, as well as take out the curve as you come down Summer St. (Route 104) into the Bristol Central Square.
- *Provide ramps, curbs and wide-paved shoulders for pedestrians, bicycles and non-motorized vehicles.
- *Improve the landscaping with scenic beautification of Bristol Square.
- *Create bio-retention, new parking and landscaped areas to support pedestrians, bicycles, and non-motorized vehicles.
- *Install more efficient and effective lighting associated with the new crosswalks and bicycle lanes, which lead to businesses, schools, and parks.
- *Conduct educational safety activities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized vehicles proved by the Bristol Police Department and the Newfound Area School District.
- *Review the present sign inventory and remove all non-compliant outdoor advertising.

(Requires a simple majority to pass)

A motion was made by Joe Denning, seconded by Don Milbrand. Joe spoke on the article. There would be major changes in the Central Square area, such as repair of sidewalks, removing the bank parking lot, reclaiming the common so that events could take place on the common, smoothing out the curve coming down Summer Street, installing storm drains, establishing a bike lane from South Main Street to North Main Street. North Main St. may become one-way going north to Union Street. The school is receiving a grant this summer for work on a parking lot, an 80-20 grant.

Steve Favorite spoke on the project, stating that it has been an on going project for 40 years. We are very close to the top of the list for grant money at NH Department of Transportation.

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There was much discussion on the one way street going north on North Main Street. Joe explained that none of this is set in stone, and that there will be more meetings on this before the project is started. There was concern about lights and traffic, and the need for sewer lines to be installed if approved. Susan Duncan had an amendment to read: To amend Warrant Article 11 to state that North Main Street shall not be made a one-way, 2nd by Janet Cote. This amendment is to protect the neighborhoods that are off of North Main Street. It was suggested that the big picture should be looked at. It was also suggested that we should retain a good working relationship with the businesses and discuss this one way on North Main Street proposal at one of the later meetings. A vote was taken on the amendment only.

The amendment was defeated by voice vote.

Susan Duncan made a second amendment: If in conjunction with this Article, North Main Street is made a one-way street, then North Main Street shall be one-way from the intersection with Pleasant Street in the Square up to Union Street with appropriate traffic controls installed. 2nd by Rick Alpers. She felt that traffic could come down from the Lake and go down Union Street, or come up from the Square and go down Union Street. There was some discussion on this concerning parades and such. It was suggested that some of this could be discussed at the meetings that will be taking place before the Square is done. A vote was taken on the amendment only.

The amendment was defeated by voice vote.

There was more discussion on Central Square. It was felt that the Square has a lot of potential, and that traffic lights should be installed. It was noted that this has been a project that has been talked about for over 40 years and that you can not cross the square safely or any street coming into the square safely. At this time an Amendment by Walter Waring, 2nd by Mike Bannan was read: I would like to make an amendment that a light go up first. It was stated that there will be meetings before the Square is finally designed and that an amendment like this would only hurt the project from going forward. A vote was taken on the amendment only.

The amendment was defeated by voice vote.

At this time a voice vote was taken on the original article. *The article passed.*

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five million, one hundred four thousand and twenty dollars (\$5,104,020) for general municipal operations.

A motion was made by Andrew Hemingway, 2nd by Ashley Dolloff, to approve the article as read. Andrew explained how and why the Budget Committee came up with these figures—they tried to keep the budgeted amounts as low as possible, but still considered what the needs are, and that there were a lot of cuts.

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Rick Alpers made a motion seconded by Don Milbrand to increase the operating budget in the amount of \$121,991.00, to bring the total proposed budget to \$5,226,011.

This amount of money would give back to the employees the life and disability benefits, as well as fund the lines for the Patrol Officer and the Sergeant to be full time again. Also the call fire fighters pay needs to be put back in and the Administrative Assistant to the Chief as well. The overtime for the Highway Department and call in for emergency needs to be placed back in. The line item for the dump attendant needs to be back in so that is covered when the dump is open. Rick feels that the Selectmen and the Town should take care of their employees.

Andrew Hemingway answered this by stating that he felt that this should have been brought up before Town meeting and that the Budget Committee did not eliminate positions, they cut the bottom line. The Department Head and the Selectmen need to figure out how to live within that amount. It was mentioned that there were lines that were cut and that the Budget Committee made the recommendations on which lines to cut. Also a question was asked about the Town Manager line, now that, the position has been eliminated. Rick responded that the Select Board has not had a chance to discuss that yet, but that an Administrator would probably be hired.

There was much discussion on the lines that were cut and how the Budget Committee gave recommendations on what lines to cut. It was stated that the Fire Department and Police Department should not have money cut from their budgets, as they are essential services for the Town. It was stated that the Department Heads have already cut the budget as much as possible, and then the Budget Committee cuts more. There was much more discussion on how the Budget Committee comes up with the figures, and what their suggestions are. A statement was made that the Town should be supporting the employees - most of them have worked for the Town for many years. At this point a call for a vote was made, and 5 people asked for a ballot vote.

Number of Ballots cast: 202: Yes 8, No 117. The amendment failed.

Susan Duncan made an amendment, seconded by Brian Firth, to Article 12: that the total expenditures for public access and communications (line item 01-4194-815 and any other related items) shall not exceed the total revenues received from the cable franchise fees.

She would like to see that services stay in line with the total revenues. It was questioned whether this would be legal. Susan felt it would be, because of the legislative body taking a vote. Bernie Waugh, Town Attorney stated that it would mean that it would not be binding to that line, but it would be the intent.

It was noted that this is already the fact and that the line does not expend anymore than the revenues.

A vote was taken and the Amendment was defeated

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Betty Seeler made an amendment, seconded by Bob Gilbert, Sr. to increase NANA's line item and the budget by \$7,400. to \$32,400.. Betty would like to see that line level funded. The employees at NANA received no raises in 2010. The Town of Bristol gets very good services from NANA and most of the calls are in Bristol.

A voice vote was taken the amendment passed

Mike Bannan made a motion, seconded by Jeanne Sokoloski to reduce the appropriation for account #4130-331 consulting service from \$15,000. to \$ "0" (zero). Mike feels that the Department Heads, the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen can do this and that this \$15,000. is not needed. Rick Alpers responded by stating that the day to day financing with all of the departments and policies are in step with the GASB Act. The auditors can not do any of the figures like they used to, because of the GASB Act. Also every grant that is applied for needs to be audited in itself. Mike feels that anyone that has questions about the budget, etc should talk to the office people, as they know what is being done.

A voice vote was taken, the amendment passed.

Robert S. Glassett made a motion, seconded by Tim Woodward, to increase the budget by \$51,574. to cover the cost of lines 01-4210-119, 01-4210-115 and 01-4210-190. This amount of money would pay for the two police officers that the Budget Committee cut to part time. This motion would also pay for the call firefighters. It was mentioned that this money could be placed anywhere, and would not have to go for these lines. Selectman Rick Alpers guaranteed that the \$51,574. would go for these lines if it is voted in. Barry Wingate, former Chief of Police, stated that in 1997 a study was done and recommendations were made at that time which still have not been implemented. This money would at least help get to where we need to be.

A voice vote was taken, the amendment passed.

Joe Denning made a motion, seconded by David Powden, to increase the budget by \$700.00 for patriotic purposes for flags at the cemetery for the veterans. Boake Morrison offered to give the Town the \$700.00 in place of this amendment. Everyone thanked Boake for this generous offer and the Town accepted the offer.

Mike Bannan made a motion, seconded by Mark Chevalier, to reduce the appropriation for account #4153-320, legal fees for purposes, from \$50,000. to \$10,000. Mike feels that people need to be trained so that lawsuits don't happen. Joe Denning stated that this needs to be voted down because the Town gets sued for all different things. We have lots of volunteers and when this happens we need to be able to defend them.

Voice vote taken, the amendment was defeated.

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Bob Patten made motion, seconded by Burt Williams, to change line #01-4194 from \$1.00 to \$500.00 for the care and winding of the Town Clock, which is located in the steeple of the United Church of Christ. The amount in the budget has been \$500.00 for the past 5 years. Bob goes up about 60 times a year to wind and care for the clock.

A voice vote was taken, the amendment passed

Chris Dolloff made a motion, seconded by Ben Laroche to add \$6,000.00 to Article 12 this is for the purpose of line 4220-661 ladder truck, 669 boat and 680 medical supplies.

The ladder truck needs to be maintained, and the boat was gift from Mark Chevalier. It needs to be maintained and registered and the raft also will needs maintenance Medical supplies used to be picked up at the hospital, but this can no longer happen, as the patient was being billed twice. Now all supplies need to be purchased.

It was stated that we need to maintain all the vehicles, because we don't get new ones. A question was asked about servicing other towns, which we do, but we also get revenue from these towns. A question was asked about why we don't bill back. Steve Yannuzzi, Fire Chief, stated that we do bill back, but it is only at 80% so we don't get the total amount back, and some people don't pay at all.

Paul Simard stated that he doesn't know why the Budget Committee does the budget when amendments are taken from the Town Meeting floor.

There was more discussion on the amendment about the upkeep of vehicles.

A voice vote was taken, the motion was defeated.

At this time Ned asked if there were any other amendments. Seeing none, he asked for a vote on the revised new amount of \$5,148,493. for Article 12. This is the amount with the passed amendments in the budget.

A voice vote was taken, the article passed as amended.

Article 13: (by petition) To see if the Town will vote to approve the following resolution to be forwarded to our State Representative(s), our State Senator, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate President.

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Resolved: The citizens of New Hampshire should be allowed to vote on an amendment to the New Hampshire Constitution that defines “marriage”.

Donald Milbrand made a motion to table Article 13, seconded by Joe Denning.

A voice vote was taken, motion passed.

Article 14: To transact any other business which may legally come before this meeting.

Burt Williams announced that he would not be seeking re-election to the House of Representatives this year, as he has been in the position for 10 years. He really enjoyed it, but it is time to step down.

Ned Gordon remarked on what a good meeting this was, with some great debates.

Sue Martin made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dorcas Gordon.

Voice vote the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymah W. Simpson
Town Clerk