

2011 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

March 8, 2011

Moderator, Edward "Ned" Gordon opened the meeting at 9:02 AM. Ned asked Burt Williams to lead the Pledge of Alliance, and Pastor Wayne Toutaint to do the invocation.

Rick Alpers introduced the Board of Selectmen: himself as Chairman, Joe Denning, Don Milbrand and Phil Dion. Selectman Shackett was out of State and sent his regrets. Town Administrator, Michael Capone introduced Highway Superintendent Mark Bucklin, Police Chief Michael Lewis, Fire Chief Steve Yanuzzi, and Librarian Sharon Warga.

Shaun Lagueux, Chairman of the Budget Committee, introduced Committee members Mark Chevalier, Tom Keegan, Paul Simard, Dan Arseneau, Ron Preble, Ashley Dolloff, Barbara Greenwood, Wendy Costigan, Jon Thouin, Dorcas Gordon and David Carr.

Ned introduced Raymah Simpson, Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Ned stated that the meeting will follow parliamentary procedure. He would like anyone that wants to speak to come to the microphone. Only registered voters can vote. Only residents and Town Employees can speak. Non-residents may speak if the legislative body allows it. Any amendments need to be in writing and given to the Moderator.

At this point Joe Denning introduced George & Shirley Corrette, to whom the 2010 Town Report had been dedicated.

Ned mentioned that 478 people voted in Tuesday election, with 30 of those being Absentee votes. All of the Zoning Articles passed.

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one million three hundred thousand dollars (\$1,300,000) to build an addition to the Minot-Sleeper Library and renovate the existing Library, and to authorize the issuance of not more than the amount of one million three hundred thousand dollars (\$1,300,000) of bonds and notes in accordance with the Municipal Finance Act (RSA33) and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; furthermore to authorize the acceptance of any other grant or aid, which might be available for this project. The first bond payment will be included in the 2012 budget. **2/3 Ballot Vote Required to Pass.**

The Budget Committee recommends this article 10-1

The Board of Selectmen recommends this article 5-0

Rick Alpers moved the article, Shaun Lagueux seconded it. George Corrette spoke on the Article. Since last year when the library was defeated, the Library Trustees have met with several people to refine the design. The use of the adjacent lot allows the library to be built out of the floodplain. The new design incorporates 1200 feet of existing library space by using the first floor for meeting space and the basement for housing the heating plant and utilities. The new addition would add 3800 square feet to the library and be all on one floor. This project would cost \$400,000 less than last year. Also there is no elevator in this building. George presented a power point to show what the library would look like. He stated that there are more people with library cards now than ever. There has been a large growth in library usage in Bristol in the past ten years.

The addition would be handicap accessible and include a children's section and a young adult section. It would also allow space for new books and include an expanded area for computers, which are used constantly.

The new 3800 square foot addition would accommodate most of the library functions. The building would help upgrade the downtown area. The Library Trustees have collected some funds over the years and used them to partner with the Town to buy the property next to the library to allow for the addition.

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Rick Alpers stated that there are at least three options for financing this project. One would be the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank (NHMBB), where we would get a bond, but would not have the option of paying the debt off early if additional funds were contributed to the project. A second would be Rural Development, where we could get low interest rates, but would give up some control over how the project is done. A third option would be a local bank. A construction loan through a bank would have a small amount of interest in 2012. Interest and principal payments would not begin until 2013. There would be no penalty for paying the loan off early if additional funds became available. The Board would like an aggressive payment plan, but not one that would hurt the taxpayer. The Library Trustees and the Board of Selectmen would work together to try to use local contractors.

There were many pros and cons from the audience. Some didn't like the project and hoped it would be rejected. Others expressed concern that there were no figures presented with respect to ongoing operating costs. There was a question about whether or not the 1.3 million included furnishings. The Trustees said that the 1.3 million would be for construction. Donated funds would pay for the furnishings. It was noted that the goal was to build an energy efficient building with a very tiny energy footprint. It may be possible that the new building would use less energy. It was stated also that this is a great project and that Bristol needs this for the children as the library is open and children learn to interact with people of all ages at the library.

At this time, Fire Chief Steve Yannuzzi stated that he and the State Fire Marshall had recently inspected the existing library. Although there was no need to close the Library, there are issues that need to be addressed. New exit signs are needed. The boiler room needs a one hour fire wall. The building is on the historic register so he can exempt the stairs into the basement from having to be replaced.

There was a question about how much of the 1.3 million would be spent to update the old building. It was noted that \$150,000.00 would be spent to rewire the building and install a sprinkler system.

Les Dion, Director of Recreation, spoke about how closely the Library and Tapply Thompson Community Center work together. She sees kids reading books all of the time. "Reading is a gift we give our kids".

Deb Thouin, Assistant Librarian, read a letter from a service man, thanking the library for all of the programs that they have for children, and how it has helped his children.

It was mentioned that this is the time for this project to go through. The library is very cramped. The Library Trustees are looking toward the future with this building. If this isn't done, it will cripple the community. Some felt that this should be done to invest in the children of Bristol. It was also mentioned that the library might bring more people in to the downtown area and be an attraction for Bristol. The library was a gift to the Town in 1884 and it is hoped that we honor the men that gave this gift to Bristol. It was mentioned that having a free public Library means that there is democracy. The library is a learning center and there is comfort in going to a library. It was also mentioned that this would be an anchor for kids in Bristol and that it is a good project.

Some people felt that this should just be a children's library. Others felt that this is a want not a need for Bristol and that the financing will impact the tax rate. Also the issue is not the books, but the cost over the years. Some support the library, but not the cost.

At this time Walter Waring asked to move the vote, Andrew Connolly 2nd. All in favor.

A ballot vote will be taken after discussion on Article 9.

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Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate up to two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to cover engineering expenses for the Water and Sewer Improvements, known as the Central Square Water and Sewer Replacement Project, and to authorize the issuance of not more than the amount of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) of bonds and note 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; furthermore to authorize the acceptance of grant monies from all Rural Development, State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) RSA 486:14 established for this purpose, and/or any other grant or aid, which might be available for this project. Without impairing the nature of these bonds as general obligations of the Town, it is expected and intended that the debt service on the bonds will be paid from user fees. **2/3 Ballot Vote Required to Pass**

The Budget Committee recommends this article 10-1

The Board of Selectmen recommends this article 5-0

Joe Denning moved the Article, 2nd by Rick Alpers. Joe asked Burt Williams to speak on the Article. Burt stated that Bristol has a great Water/Sewer system, but the lines in the downtown area date back to the 1800's. The newest pipes down there were installed in 1951. We would like to do the work to replace the pipes at the same time we do the Transportation Enhancement project. The \$250,000 is just for engineering. This would be done before the downtown project starts in 2012. If grant money is available for the Town, we will apply for it.

It was mentioned that we have a lobbyist trying to get money for the Sewer to the Lake Project so why don't we use him for this project. Burt answered that the lobbyist is working on obtaining funds for both projects. It was also mentioned that the people need to be reassured that the water is fine, since there had been a problem earlier in the year. It was mentioned that payment of the debt should come from all taxpayers, not just user fees.

Burt made a motion, to close the discussion, Ron Preble seconded the motion. Ned explained that there are four people at the microphone and after those four people speak the discussion would be closed and we would vote.

It was felt that the taxpayers should pay for this because it benefits everyone. Some felt that the \$250,000 was only the beginning, and that water/sewer fees are not low now. Also, that this is a debt for the Town now, and that no one knows what will happen in the future.

The polls opened at 11:17 AM for voting on Article 8 & 9. Ned explained that the orange ballot was for Article 8 and the green ballot was for Article 9. He asked everyone to circle either yes or no and to place the ballot in the ballot box. The polls would be open for one (1) hour.

Article 10: Shall the Town vote to establish a revolving fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h, for the purpose of Police special detail wages, benefits, supplies and equipment to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be deposited into the fund. Further, all revenues received for police special details will be deposited into the fund, and the money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year, and shall not be considered part of the town's general fund unreserved fund balance. The Town Treasurer shall have custody of all monies in the fund, and shall pay out the same only upon order of the Board of Selectmen and no further approval is required by the legislative body to expend. The balance in the fund shall be included in the Town Report each year.

The Budget Committee recommends this article 8-3

The Board of Selectmen recommends this article 5-0

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Don Milbrand moved the article, Joe Denning seconded. Don explained that it is impossible to predict special detail costs. In the past \$10,000 has been budgeted and up to \$28,000 spent. The extra money to cover the expense has to come from somewhere else in the budget which impacts Department operations. If the revolving fund were set up it would take the guess work out of budgeting for that line. The extra money in the fund would be spent on Police expenses lowering the amount of money spent by the Department. The treasurer would have the money and it couldn't be spent without the Board of Selectmen approval.

It was felt that we should know what the revenue is, and that another fund is not needed. What was the advantage of the revolving fund? Rick explained that the excess money in the fund would pay Police expenses and take some of the burden off of the taxpayer.

It was mentioned that the Board of Selectmen would have control over this fund. Phil Dion stated that nothing is hidden from anyone. Everyone would know what is in it. This balance would be available to everyone.

It was mentioned that if funds like this did not work, the legislature would not have allowed for them in the law. Joe Denning stated that this is a way to get someone else to pay your bills. It would not affect the tax rate at all.

Don Milbrand made a motion to close the discussion, Phil Dion seconded. A voice vote was taken on this article that was too close to call. A show of hands showed more against. The article was defeated.

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five million one hundred sixty two thousand seven hundred and eighty dollars, (\$5,162,780) for general municipal operations.

The Budget Committee recommends 13-0

The Board of Selectmen recommends this article 5-0

Shaun Lagueux moved the article, seconded by Rick Alpers.

Shaun explained that in July he had met with the Town Administrator Michael Capone to begin discussion of the Budget process. He explained that the Department Heads had met with the Budget Committee to present their initial requests. The Board of Selectmen also reviewed the Department requests and submitted a budget that would lower the Town portion of the tax rate. Then the Budget Committee lowered the Selectmen's Budget slightly. The proposed budget is an 8.5% reduction from last year. This represents a potential four (4) cent reduction in the Town portion of the tax rate. Shaun also mentioned that Police Chief Lewis found other means for dispatch and lowered the amount by \$38,000. The Board of Selectmen had asked for the employees to receive a 1½ % increase in wages, and the Budget Committee voted for a 1% increase. The Town is paying 10% more for retirement than two (2) years ago.

Eric Rottenecker made an amendment to rescind the 1% pay increase for Town employees, seconded by Dan Arseneau. This would decrease the budget by about \$20,000. It was stated that this amendment should be defeated. The budget has already been decreased by 8.5%. A voice vote was taken on the amendment, the amendment was defeated.

Mike Bannan made an amendment to decrease the budget by \$200,000, seconded by Paul Simard. Mike feels that there is no reduction in the budget, and that the revenue has not come in. A voice vote was taken, that was too close to call. A show of hands was Yes-75 to No-84 and the amendment was defeated.

The Moderator read the results from the two (2) ballot votes. He noted that there were 274 votes cast for each question. A two thirds majority of 183 yes votes would be needed for an article to pass.

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The vote total for Article 8 was Yes-167, No-107. The Article failed.

The vote total for Article 9 was Yes-176, No-97, one (1) blank ballot. The Article failed.

The Moderator then asked those present if they wished to move to restrict reconsideration of Article 8 and 9. The meeting voted in favor of restricting reconsideration by a voice vote.

Rick Alpers made an amendment to place \$30,000 in the Police Detail operating budget. Phil Dion seconded. A voice vote was taken, the amendment passed.

A voice vote was taken on the Amended Article 11 to increase the budget by \$30,000 to \$5,192,780. The amended Article passed.

Article 12: Pursuant to RSA 41:11-a to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a lease for an initial term of five years with the right to nine five year renewal terms with Maxton Technology Inc., a Massachusetts business corporation. The leased premises consisting of an area approximately 100 feet contained in lot 115-26 on Chestnut Street Extension. The leased area will contain a wireless communications facility, including tower structures, equipment shelters, meter boards and related improvements and structures and uses incidental thereto.

Rick Alpers moved the article, Don Milbrand seconded. Rick stated that work on this project has been going on for at least a year. This tower would help public safety as well as communications. The tower on Hemphill isn't large enough and can't carry what is needed for public safety needs.

There is Town owned property on Chestnut Street, on which the tower can be constructed. Maxton would pay \$10,200/year in rent on the property. We also would receive the rent for each cell tower carrier, plus taxes on the facility. First and foremost it takes care of public safety.

Some people felt that the Board of Selectmen didn't let people know about this soon enough and are against this. It was stated that the town will not get any better cell service from this tower. It was stated that Zoning had already given exceptions to where cell towers could be placed. Some people are for the tower, but not in their back yard.

A question was asked about the existing agreement. Rick Alpers answered that there are options for either party to nullify the contract.

Some wondered about the health effects this could have on people living nearby. It seems that no one has been able to answer that question.

Dan Paradis, Chairman of the Zoning Board wanted to inform everyone that the tower has not yet been approved by the Planning Board.

Fred Eichman made a motion to close the discussion, seconded by Archie Auger.

The article was defeated after a voice vote.

Article 13: By Petition: To see if the Town will vote to have all funding for the waste water to Newfound Lake Project be paid for by the user fees and not taxation.

Not addressed

2011 TOWN MEETING MINUTES—(CONTINUED)

Article 14: By Petition: To see if the Town will vote to limit the size of the police department to 2 full-time officers, per 1000 full time residents.

Charles Carpenter moved the article, seconded by Paul Simard. Charles stated that a smaller Police Department would save taxpayer money. He would like to reduce the Police Department because of the way the economy is. He feels that this is a retirement community and we need to become proactive to save money. He would like six (6) full time officers instead of nine (9).

Phil Dion mentioned that the Board of Selectmen determine how many officers the Town employs, and that this Article, if passed, would not be legally binding.

Police Chief Mike Lewis stated that he would support whatever the legislative body says. In a report back in 1997 it was stated that Bristol should have 16 officers. If this Article goes through, the Police Department would not be able to give the service that they give now.

The Chief was asked about the number of calls that were answered that were not in Bristol. He noted that of the 15,830 calls received, they responded to about 50 that were not in Bristol.

The legal opinion would be that this article would not be binding.

A voice vote was taken that was too close to call. Ten (10) people stood and asked for a ballot vote. The result of the ballot vote was Yes-46, No-82. The article was defeated.

Article 15: By Petition: To see if the Town will vote to return to an on-call volunteer fire department.

Ian Schaffer made a motion to table Article 15. The motion was seconded by Mark Chevalier. The Moderator explained that this motion is not debatable.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed.

Article 16: To transact any other business which may legally come before this meeting.

Rick Alpers moved the article, seconded by Joe Denning, the article passed with a voice vote.

At 2:50 pm a motion to adjourn was made by Boake Morrison, seconded by Rick Alpers.

The motion was approved by a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymah W. Simpson
Town Clerk