

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING – 2019 Budget and Warrant Article Public Hearing  
Kensington Town Hall - 95 Amesbury Road, Kensington, NH 03833  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018 – 7pm  
Minutes - DRAFT

In attendance: Bob Long, Ben Cole, Bob Schwotzer  
Approximately 12 residents in attendance

At 7:06pm Mike called the special meeting to order.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**At 7:07pm, Mike motioned to open the public hearing, Bob seconded. All voted in favor.**

**Proposed 2019 Budget:**

- Mike read the Warrant article for the Operating Budget. Mike explained the calculations for the 2019 Proposed Operating budget. He compared for the public the actual year end expenses of 2018 to the proposed operating budget. It was noted that in 2018 there were 53 weeks of payroll due to the 2017 payroll being included. In 2018, the town overspent by \$94,316, however the town received \$101,499 in grant money.
- Mike explained the “*Analysis of the Proposed Budget to the Default Budget*” and the process through which the proposed budget was created. The Budget Committee went to each department to find out what they need realistically to operate in the year. In 2018, the town spent 99.6% of available funds, including grants.
- Chief Sanders gave an overview for the public of the Police Department budget. In 2018, there was equipment that he had hoped to purchase for the department but did not. In 2019, Chief Sanders hopes to purchase that new equipment so that all his officers can have safe and updates protective equipment. He explained the 2018 year end fuel costs are only through September and the department has spent more in this category than budgeted for. In 2019 he is asking for an increase for the fuel budget. There was an additional FT police officer hired that the town had planned to use 2017 money for, but the DRA disapproved. There was a additionally a pay correction to the support staff. Ben commended Chief Sanders’ efforts in working within his budget and Chief True for his efforts towards grants.
- Chief True gave an overview of the Fire Department and Emergency Management budget. In 2019, he would like to purchase a new thermal imaging camera, as the current one is 17 years old and cannot be repaired. In addition, radios are outdated and no longer seamlessly communicate with the new radios the police have. The department hired 4 people from surrounding towns EMT on temporary basis. The department is trying to build relationships with surrounding towns.
- Resident Glen Greenwood asked if both Police and Fire Departments have considered merging departments with other towns. Chief Sanders explained that during his tenure a prior board has approach other communities about that and engaged those exploratory conversations. No other towns were interested at the time, and the question came down to how would Kensington benefit and at the time, there was no significant benefit. Chief True added that two towns nearby tried to purchase a ladder truck and that failed. He is a part of the Seacoast Fire Chief Association who share resources. He has attempted to share resources as part of Mutual Aid Agreements. Kensington and several surrounding towns have done joint trainings together.
- David Buxton gave an overview of the Highways and Streets budget. He explained the most difficult part of the budget is the storms. David explained that in 2019 he would like to conduct a Traffic Study in town because after reviewing state traffic studies of Route 150 and Route 108, it was determined that there are approximately 900 cars that exit between Route 150 at KES and Route 108.

No additional questions from the public.

## WARRANT ARTICLES:

### Adopt Park Agreement

- Bob read the Article to the public. Ben pointed out that there is a concern about the degree of flexibility if the warrant article was not approved. Resident Glen Greenwood asked if this would be the only year that this agreement would show on the warrant article and Ben confirmed that if passed, it will not be voted on in following years for the length of the agreement. Mr. Greenwood also asked why the word “will” versus the word “shall” has been used. Ben will communicate with town counsel for a response. Resident Donna Carter asked if reason it isn’t an increase that it is already in the budget. Mike explained that it is an agreed upon amount and will go through as the budget, and this is saying it will be budgeted for \$30,000 every year following. **At 8:23pm, Bob made a motion that the BOS support this article. Ben seconded, all voted in favor.**

### Fire Pond Maintenance

- Chief True explained this article is asking the town for \$25,000 to work on the water supplies in town. All hydrants in town but one are functioning and there will be a report soon. The All Hazard Mitigation Plan has room in it for hydrants and water supplies. Because of that they can apply for grants for some of this work. Chief True also explained that work will be done to ISO standards and because of that once completed, residents should start to see their insurance rates go down over time.

### Final Lease Payment for Fire Truck

- Mike explained this article to the public.

### Road Reconstruction

- David Buxton, Road Manager, explained this article to the public. David asked the BOS to change the verbiage as follows: delete “and other projects”. Bob suggested the deletion with the addition of “and maintenance of town roads”. The BOS agreed that the article would be amended to delete “and other projects” and add “and maintenance of town roads”. **At 8:31pm, Ben made a motion to recommend the article as amended. Bob seconded, all voted in favor.**

### Tax Collector Salary Increase

- Ben read the article aloud.

### Town Clerk Salary Increase

- Ben said the Town Clerk will be increasing hours from 9 hours a week to 22 hours per week. He read the article aloud.

### Increase Deputy Town Clerk Hours

- Ben explained that during the BOS meeting Monday night, it was made clear to the BOS that the townspeople would like to see more open hours by the Town Clerk’s office to provide better service to the town. Ben also explained that during his review process of town employees, many town employees are working more than they are logging and being paid for. He suggested making the Deputy Town Clerk a full-time position. Ben presented an amended article to the other Selectmen and read the article aloud. Resident Pamela Schwotzer asked the board what full-time would be and Ben replied 36 hours, up to 40 hours. Mrs. Schwotzer asked if there will be evening hours suggesting the office should be open until 8pm and be the same as the Tax Collector. Ben said that will bring that feedback to the employee. Mike said that the BOS had discussed expanding the hours and after further investigation, a full-time employee in this position is warranted. Bob added that since he has sat on the BOS, he has heard from residents that the Town Clerk’s office hours are a point of frustration.
- Resident Donna Carter asked the BOS if the Town Clerk takes in any transactional income. Mike explained that in the past the Town Clerk was paid a fee per transaction. Several years ago, those fees started going to the town and instead the Town Clerk position became salaried. Resident Glen Greenwood expressed his support of this proposal, and asked if this will cause tension between the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk given that the Deputy Town Clerk has more hours. Ben explained he has discussed this will all parties involved and the Town Clerk understands this this gives them the opportunity for additional training. Bob said that he agrees that the town needs the additional hours but has concerns of the financial impact. It was determined that additional changes could be made at the Deliberative Session. **At 8:49pm Ben made a motion revise the warrant article as read aloud. Bob seconded, all voted in favor. At 8:50pm, Bob made a motion to support the warrant article as revised. Ben seconded, all voted in favor.**

### **Fund Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund**

- Mike explained that this was recommended by Avitar to assist with funding for the new contract as Avitar can no longer offer a flat rate, therefore there is an increase in the 5<sup>th</sup> year. This article helps to budget for the increase in the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

### **Expanded Veterans Exemption**

- Mike explained that this article would allow all veterans to be included in a tax exemption. Currently only veterans who served during active war periods are eligible. Mike explained that the tax impact is not known at this time because there is no way to determine how many veterans will apply.

### **Rockingham Community Action**

- Ben read the article aloud

### **Richie McFarland Program**

- Ben read the article aloud

Mike thanked the public for attending the special meeting.

**At 8:56pm, Ben made a motion to recommend the Warrant Article 6: Elections dealing with the Sawyer Trust Agreement. Bob seconded, all voted in favor.**

Mike announced that the BOS has received a petition for Article 20: Establishing a Heritage Commission. There is a factual issue that the submitted article references 2019, and the authors have been notified but that can be addressed during Town Meeting. **At 8:58pm, Mike made a motion to recommend the article, Ben seconded. Bob asked for clarification on what this entails. Mike and Ben explained what a heritage commission is and what the responsibilities are. Bob recalled discussing this at a past BOS meeting. All voted in favor.**

**At 9pm, Mike made a motion to send the budget and the articles to warrant. Bob seconded, all voted in favor.**

**At 9pm, Mike motioned to close the public hearing on money articles. Ben seconded, all voted in favor.**

The board took a brief recess.

The board reconvened after the brief recess at 9:07pm.

**At 9:07pm, Ben made a motion to go into non-public stating RSA 91-A:3, II(b) for hiring, Bob Long seconded. Ben, Bob, and Mike all voted in favor of entering into non-public session.**

**At 11pm, Mike made a motion to leave non-public session. Bob seconded. Ben, Bob, and Mike all voted in favor of leaving the non-public session.**

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Lalime