

**TOWN OF EATON, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03832**  
**EVANS MEMORIAL BUILDING**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BUDGET**  
**February 9, 2023**

The Public Hearing on the budget took place on Thursday, February 9, 2023 at the Eaton Town Hall. Present were Selectmen Joyce Blue, Richard Fortin and Edward Reilly. The Public Hearing was called to order at 6 pm.

Copies of the budget, the proposed Warrant, proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments, the 2022 detailed payments and the Sources of Revenues were distributed.

Ed Reilly reviewed the revenues from last year and proposed for this year. Ed Reilly noted that the collected interest and penalties has decreased due to the aggressive collection by Heather McKendry and possibly as a result of the reduction in the applicable interest rate.

Joyce Blue reviewed the operating budget expenditures from last year versus the proposed operating budget for 2023. John Hedden questioned what happens to the taxes raised but not spent last year. Dick Fortin explained that the unused tax revenues are in the Fund Balance and used to offset Warrant Articles the next year. Joyce Blue noted that the Planning and Zoning budget has been increased in hopes of hiring a part-time person for this position. Paul Hennigan questioned if the merger between the Center Conway and Redstone Fire Departments will impact Eaton. It was noted that Center Conway Fire Chief Glenn Merrill has indicated that a merger will not impact Eaton's contract. Jonathan Simonds questioned the cost for the transfer station. Dick Fortin explained the formula for calculating the costs to be split between Conway, Albany and Eaton and noted that revenues from recyclables has decreased while expenses have increased.

Joyce Blue noted that the remaining funds raised last year for cybersecurity has been encumbered to complete the project during this year. Jonathan Simonds noted that the operating budget has increased approximately 23% from last year. Joyce Blue stated that the estimated tax rate will be \$5.11 compared to \$4.42 for last year. Dennis Sullivan questioned whether the assessed valuation will change. Joyce Blue noted that it varies every year and that there has been new construction which will factor into the tax rate.

Dick Fortin reviewed the Warrant Articles. Dick Fortin gave an overview of why the Select Board voted not to recommend Article 2 for a Town Manager. Dick Fortin explained that the State Statute requires this Article appear on the ballot rather than allowing for discussion at Town Meeting. Joyce Blue noted that the position has not been factored into the current budget and that it makes more sense to hire additional staff to assist rather than a higher paid Town Manager. Paul Hennigan stated that there are too many issues not being addressed and that is why the proposal for a Town Manager was brought forward. Ed Reilly stated that the Board has accomplished much and that care is taken to keep costs down, while at the same time asking for the Town's input in prioritizing the

large projects ahead. Jane Gray noted that the public is not kept informed and suggested finding a way to keep voters informed about issues. Dick Fortin noted that some of these issues occurred during covid and that changed how the Town operated. Dick Fortin explained that the Town may be at a point of borrowing for projects for the first time and that the Selectmen have been preparing for that possibility by securing a professional annual audit. It was noted that if Article 2 passes, the operating budget will have to be amended to cover the costs of that position.

Dick Fortin explained that the funds raised in Article 13 to be placed in the Highway Equipment Fund will be added to the Fund and then used, along with \$25,000 from the ARPA funds, to purchase a new truck this year. Dick Fortin stated that Article 14 places additional funds in the Equipment Maintenance Fund and noted that the intent is to keep this fund at \$50,000. Road Agent Richard Heath explained that the intent is to keep the trucks for 10 years and that there would always be a spare in the event that a truck breaks down. Paul Hennigan noted that the amount raised for gravel should be higher as the cost of gravel has increased.

Dick Fortin explained that due to an amendment in the State Statutes, the Town must re-adopt the credits for the Veteran Exemptions and explained the two different credits.

Dick Fortin gave an overview of the Capital Improvements Committee and explained that there are large projects to be considered, such as reconstructing Bull Pasture Road. Paul Hennigan stated that dates should be included in the Warrant Article.

Dick Fortin noted that the Board has voted not to recommend the funding of the Sheriff's Department patrols for this year to determine whether the digital speed signs are adequate to reduce speeds through Eaton Center.

There being no further questions, the Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lianne M. Boelzner*

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