

Town of Washington

Present: Members: Michael Jackson, Craig Schoon, Matt Cain, Barbara Brown,
Ted Bent, Sally Cornell

Alternates: Elizabeth Fenton, Phyllis Allen

Selectmen: James Britton, Jay Hubelbank, Dean Sarjeant

Treasurer: Linda McGarr

Guest: Joan Lodson, Kirsten Feldman, Dan Sherr, Michelle Gorra, Rebecca Rebillard, Donna Alex, Margaret Freeland

Press: Linda Zukauskas, Voices

Interim Chairman Craig Schoon called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m.

Jim Brinton presented the 2022-2023 Budget with the following highlights;

- General fund budget is up 415,345 or 4.9%
- Education budget is up 602,686 5.74%
- The Board of Selectman wanted to keep the capital projects going while minimizing taxpayer impact.
- Some of the increase drivers are material, labor and equipment.
- Resident trooper contract 35,000 increase due to the new resident trooper.
- We have not locked into new fuel prices. Our current contract expires end of September. Waiting for things to calm. Estimated prices were used for the budget
- COLA is 7% but settle on 5% for wages.
- Not renewing Building Department contract that expires 10/1. The current contract pays 74% of fees collected. We will have a fulltime building inspector and assistant.
- The state redistricted splitting the Town of Washington into two districts. We will have two polling centers. We will still have at the Town Hall but upstairs and down. Increase in budget from 28,000 to 48,000.
- Region #12 enrollment went up so increased our percentage of the budget.
- Pension contribution is \$40,000.

- Clerks received the 5 % increase but some may have more hours or decrease hours depending on need.
- The road and reconstruction of \$600,000 will be moved up to the capital instead of the separate appropriation.
- Health Insurance premium increased 11% but also includes additional new employees
- Paramedic service is increased 64% This is only a one-year contract. We hope to possible find new service in the future
- Total budget revenue is \$18,422,154 and total expense is \$19,739,085 with an operating net loss of \$1,316,931 which will come from the fund balance. After the budget the town will have 3.9 months of expenses in the fund balance in reserve. The last couple of years we have budgeted to take out of the fund balance but because of COVID and some unusual income increases, the Town's fund balance has increased.
- There was a discussion of a Dog Park. What is the cost of project, maintenance fee, Insurance? What is the public interest? Should there be fundraising? It is still in the beginning stages. There is still a lot of questions. The initial cost is \$160,000.

Question from Public,

- New Building & Property Manager. – most is done by the Building & Property Commission but it is a lot of work for volunteer especially with new buildings being added.
- Website and newsletter are for the town. The website under Economic Development is for Explore Washington. Sandor Max, who handles Explore Washington, has a very comprehensive contract that is more than just the website.
- Increase on Summer Concerts. To do more in the town.
- Social Worker – our current is 4 hours a week but there is an increase of hours in the current budget. The Selectman are working on more Social Work hours for the town.

A motion to adjourn at 5:50 by Craig Schoon

Next Finance Meeting: April 18, 2022

Town Hearing: May 5, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Kennedy Gomez
Financial Administrator