Advisory Public Hearing, 4/10/2023 Approved 5/8/23

Melville Room, Town Hall

Meeting began at 7:05 PM.

Present: Carol Fitzgerald, Sandra Sheehan, Doug Boyd, Kathy Pessolano, Heather Turcotte

Guests: Approximately 25 residents

Agenda: Review of Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Warrant Review

Review of the latest draft of the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Article 1 – Town Report

Town report is being prepared and will be available at Town Meeting

*Article 2 – Budget*

Doug clarified that salaries were considered for 4% COLA, as well as contractual obligations. All budget totals were reviewed.

Discussion item – Park and Rec Director. Park Commissioners indicated that they were proposing to bring back the director position and wanted to find more opportunities for the entire town population and engage with the larger community. They also wanted to use the TWB and park facilities better.

Article 3 – Prior Year Bills

There are no prior year bills.

Article 4 – Revolving Funds

This is a standing article.

Article 5 – Enterprise Fund

BOS indicates no action necessary

Article 6 – Community Preservation Fund

Doug indicated there are two requests. Minnechaug Land Trust is requesting $63,300 for 13.1 acres off the end of Walnut Street that abuts the existing Minnechaug property and the river. The HWRSD is requesting $45,000 for adaptive playground equipment for Green Meadows.

Article 7 – Conservation Fund

Standing article; $1000

Article 8 – State Highway Aid

Article 9 – Library Additional State Aid

Article 10 – Reimbursement for Minnechaug Land Trust

Land Trust is requesting $3,200 for remainder of stump grinding work.

Article 11 – Fire Truck renovation

$10,000 request from Fire Department

Article 12 – Defibrillators

Fire Department is requesting $5,820 for defib maintenance.

Article 13 – Local Match for Grant, Fire Department

FEMA grant requires a town match of $10,952.39

Article 14 – New Dump Truck

Highway Department request for $222,465. This will not require borrowing.

Article 15 – Master Plan

We have a $75,000 grant toward work from the preferred vendor. There would be a $57,500 balance. We may be able to address this in the fall with free cash. We’ll know if the grant is renewed at that point.

Article 16 – Citizen’s Petition

Jim Smith is proposing this article to involve the Fire Department with ambulance services. The Department has an old ambulance that could be used for transports. Jim feels that this could be used to supplement the services from Action Ambulance and would like to create a fund to accept revenue for this purpose. Don Davenport spoke in opposition to this because the town has not been authorized to do billing, contracting, etc. in order to collect this revenue. Furthermore, the ambulance is old and we do not need to supplement the current contractual services. Robin Warner also expressed her opposition to this article.

Article 17 – HWRSD Capital Budget

This is a placeholder in case we need to vote any capital requests outside of the budget article.

Article 18 – Fiber Optic Program Borrowing

This will be information only – no action required.

Article 19 – Senior Center Design Funding

This will be information only – no action required.

Article 20 – Accessory Apartment Zoning

Planning Board article to allow the use of a room in a single-family residence as an accessory apartment.

Article 21- Easement Agreement with National Grid

This requires no funding.

Article 22 – 150th Anniversary Events

BOS is requesting $10,000 to begin funding the 150th celebration efforts. Intention is to fund over a 4-year period.

Article 23 – Assessor’s Funding

This will require no action.

Article 24 – School Resource Officer

Retroactive payment of $11,650 for Hampden’s share of the resource officer at Minnechaug for FY 2023.

Article 25 – Reserve Fund

Advisory will request $25,000 for its reserve fund.

Article 26 – General Stabilization Fund

No action will be required.

Article 27 – Reducing the Tax Rate

No action will be required.

Recorded by Carol Fitzgerald