

**Public Hearing  
Water/Sewer Project  
Public Safety Building Project  
2021 Budget/Warrant  
February 10, 2021**

**Select Board Members Present:** Jim Weagle, Bill Caron, Michael Phillips, Chair

**Others Present:** James Gibson, Sam Oakes, Bruce Pelletier, Glenn Cassady, Becky Craggy, Al Rossetto, Robin Irving

Michael opens the public hearing at 6pm and announces there are 2 Bond warrants that need to be done in a public hearing. Then we will get onto the budget and warrant articles.

**First Public Hearing - Water/Sewer/Drainage Infrastructure (Article 5 on warrant)**  
**Opened 6:00 pm - Adjourned 6:10 pm**

**Article 05 Water/Sewer/Drainage Infrastructure Improvement**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,000,000 for the purpose of improvements to the water, sewer and drainage infrastructure, as well as appurtenances on the Eastern Slope of the residential-high section of "The Hill" area of Groveton Village and to install flood mitigation and protection equipment on the Perras Road and Old Village Road pump stations and to install a new meter pit in Guildhall, Vermont, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$7,000,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and to authorize the Selectmen to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; and to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; further, without impairing the status of this bond as a general obligation of the Town, it is the intention and expectation of the Selectmen that debt service on this bond will be shared proportionally between water user fees and sewer user fees; and to authorize the Selectmen to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto

Open to comments.

Robin Irving: Wants to ask what the Boards thoughts are on the \$7 million amount. It was a number I entered after talking to Horizon Engineering. Horizon gave a \$6.6 million and recommended adding the standard contingency percentage which is 15%. The concern Horizon had was with the ledge and felt the estimate should be raised. The Select Board has to make the recommendation.

Michael comments that he thinks that is a good number for an estimate, lets Robin know she did a good job with this and that they would deal with things as they come.

Al Rossetto: Do we have authorization to install a backflow meter and pit in Vermont?

Robin: Not right now. The estimate for that project is \$78,000, the plan and estimate have been sent to Guildhall Selectmen and Water Commission. If Bond goes thru we will ask for meeting with Selectmen in Guildhall, but this is the last piece of the project.

The State of NH requires us to have a backflow meter pit, Vermont does not.

Al: I've listened to the conversation before and as I recall Guildhall does not want to pay for it.

Robin: Correct.

Al: So why don't we just turn off the water?

Robin: That has been suggested before, but feel that it is better to be cooperative than not.

Al: Or make the rates so that they pay for it over an amount of time. I don't have a problem with spending our money for our infrastructure.

Robin: Well by making this the last part it may not happen.

Michael: as Robin said we will be meeting with Guildhall. We have them paying the full rate and that is a move in the right direction, and how they can cover the cost.

Al: While not a large amount in a \$7 million project, it galls me to provide them water and they won't cover their end. As a Select Board you are doing good, but as one guy I think they should pay for it either upfront or over time by increasing their water bills.

Michael: any other comments?

Bruce Pelletier???? Is there a projected rate increase in the water and sewer fees?

Michael: At this point we are years at not being where we should be and this bond will be a general obligation of the town so that future Select Boards can vote to turn part of this debt into water and sewer fee increases, done year to year, a real balancing act. Anything else? Ok so we close the first public hearing.

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen ) (3/5 ballot vote required)

**Second Public Hearing - Public Safety Building (Article 6 on warrant)**

**Opened 6:10 pm - Adjourned 6:15 pm**

**Article 06 Construction of Public Safety Building**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,306,667 for the purpose of the construction of a new Public Safety Building and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,306,667 of bonds or notes in accordance with provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Selectmen to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the Selectmen to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen) (3/5 ballot vote required) Any public comment?

Al: can I practice my speech?

Michael: if you wish.

Al explains why he and his wife will vote for this warrant article.

3 main reasons: Economical development, town growing, have businesses here and coming. People expect services from the Town and the Town to invest in itself. 2<sup>nd</sup>: The Town workers are our friends and neighbors, they provide services to us and they need a safe place to decontaminate from the ever increasing pathogens they experience each day. We need to support our friends.

Third, now is the time, interest rate projection is Robin am I correct 1.6?

Robin 1.67%

Al: 1.67% for 20 years. We did not get any grant money last year. Powers in state are on our side and want to push this forward. We may get up to a ½ million dollar grant from the government.

For those reasons Gail and I are voting for this.

Michael: any other comments. Public hearing closed.

**Third Public Hearing - 2021 Budget/Warrant**

**Opened 6:15 pm - Adjourned at 6:42 pm**

Michael opens with: A big picture of the budget last year to this year. Looks to be tax rate will decrease by 40 cents. Last year was 4 cents off, hope in the same ball park. Depends on several things. Any questions or comments? Will go thru warrant.

**Article 01 Election of Officers**

To choose by ballot the following Town Officers for the ensuing three years: one Selectman, one Library Trustee, one Trustee of Trust Funds and one Cemetery Trustee.

**Article 02 Election of Selectman**

To choose by ballot the following Town Officer for the ensuing two years:  
one Selectman

**Article 03 To set the compensation of Town Elected Officials**

To see if the Town will vote to set the annual compensation for the following Town elected officials. These amounts are included in the Town operating budget in Article 9

Board of Selectmen	3@\$2,400	\$7,200
Treasurer		\$1,500
Supervisors of the Check List	3@\$387.34	\$1,162
Moderator		\$ 300

Any comments or questions. Jim makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 04 To set the compensation of Town elected official**

To see if the Town will vote to set the annual compensation of the elected Town Clerk/Tax Collector. This amount is included in the operating budget under Article 9.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector	\$50,000
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This compensation includes all benefits offered to Town of Northumberland full time employees. If this position is filled by a newly elected official, compensation will be adjusted for the ensuing tax year immediately following Town Meeting to an entry level amount commensurate with experience and level of certification.

Any discussion? Jim makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 05 Water/Sewer/Drainage Infrastructure Improvement**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,000,000 for the purpose of improvements to the water, sewer and drainage infrastructure, as well as appurtenances on the Eastern Slope of the residential-high section of "The Hill" area of Groveton Village and to install flood mitigation and protection equipment on the Perras Road and Old Village Road pump stations and to install a new meter pit in Guildhall, Vermont, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$7,000,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33); and to authorize the Selectmen to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; and to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; further, without impairing the status of this bond as a general obligation of the Town, it is the intention and expectation of the Selectmen that debt service on

this bond will be shared proportionally between water user fees and sewer user fees; and to authorize the Selectmen to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. Any comments? Jim makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen ) (3/5 ballot vote required)

**Article 06 Construction of Public Safety Building**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,306,667 for the purpose of the construction of a new Public Safety Building and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$2,306,667 of bonds or notes in accordance with provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Selectmen to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the Selectmen to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto. No public comment. Jim makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, Michael against, passes 2-1. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen) (3/5 ballot vote required)

**Article 07 Operation and maintenance of the water department**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$444,315 for the purpose of operating and maintaining the water department. Said funds to be raised from the water user fees. Any shortfall in the water user fees will be made up from the accumulated surplus in the "regular water account". No amount to be raised from taxation.

Al Rossetto asks if anything is left in surplus.

Michael responds about \$16,000, nothing substantial.

Al notes that the water fee does not cover

Michael: not currently but it is being worked on.

Al: Is that the final statement – no amount raised from taxation?

Michael: Final statement.

Any other comments? Jim makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 08 Operation and maintenance of the sewer department**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$341,532 for the purpose of operating and maintaining the sewer department. Said funds to be raised from sewer user fees. Any shortfalls in the sewer user fees will be made up from the accumulated surplus in the "regular sewer account". No amount to be raised from taxation. No public comments. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 09 Operating Budget-Town**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,607,920 for general municipal operations. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately, except for Articles 03 and 04 regarding compensation of town officials. No public comment. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 10 Appropriate to CRF's, ETF**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$135,000 to be placed in the following:

Capital Reserve Funds at the amounts shown:

Police Cruiser CRF, established 2001 \$10,000

Road Maintenance CRF, established 2009 \$100,000

Municipal Buildings CRF, established 2010 \$10,000

Sludge Removal ETF, established 2011 \$15,000

No public comment. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 11 Appropriate to Transfer Station Equipment CRF**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,279 to be placed in the Transfer Station Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, with said funds to come from unassigned fund balance (this represents the 2020 scrap metal sales). No public comment. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 12 Charitable Organization**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$38,997 to fund the following charitable organizations at the amounts shown:

North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency	\$12,759
Northern Human Services	\$3,100
Tri-County Community Action Programs	\$5,725
American Red Cross NH & VT Region	\$2,200
Center for New Beginnings	\$500
Northern Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce	\$1,072
Caleb Caregivers	\$3,000
St. Paul's Episcopal Church "Backpack" Program	\$1,141
Project Homebound	\$1,000
Androscoggin Valley Home Care Services	\$8,000
NH North Country Veterans, Inc.	\$500

No public comment. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 13 Construction of Salt Shed**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 for the purpose of finishing construction of the salt shed. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Michael makes comment that early on resulted in no contractors that were within budget. Now there is a contractor selected.

No public comment. Motion by Jim recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 14 Appropriation to Public Works Equipment CRF**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$11,250 to be added to the Public Works Equipment Fund CRF established in 2017. This sum is to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

No public comment. Michael says this is monies received when selling the old plow truck. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 15 Appropriate to Ambulance Equipment CRF**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to be placed in the Ambulance Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Established in 2020. This sum is to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation. No public comment. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0.

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen)

**Article 16 Appropriate to Ambulance CRF**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 dollars to be placed in the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund, established in 1990. This sum is to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation. Michael: will have more information in the future, penciling in an amount for now.

No public comment. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 17 Establish Health Trust Fund**

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Health Trust Fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a for the purpose of maintaining health insurance funds for the benefit of Town employees. This fund is exempt from the provisions of 35:8 or 34:4. The Trustees of Trust Funds shall have custody of the fund. And to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 to be placed in this fund, amount to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to come from taxation. Further, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. No public comment. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 18 Radio Communication System**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$79,200 for the purpose of the purchase of a radio communication system for First Responders. \$30,000 to be raised from an anticipated USDA grant and \$49,200 to come from unassigned fund balance. This appropriation is contingent on receipt of said grant. No amount to come from taxation.

Michael comments that this is the same amount from warrant of last year. Last year the grant did not come in so need vote to bring money back for this year if we get the grant. No public comment. Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

**Article 19 New Construction Property Tax Exemption for Industry**

To see if the Town will vote to adopt a new construction property tax exemption for industrial/commercial uses pursuant to RSA 72:76. If adopted by the Town, the percentage rate and duration of the exemption shall be granted uniformly within the Town to all projects for which a proper application is filed. The exemption shall be 50% on an annual basis of the increase in assessed value of industrial/commercial use properties attributable to construction of new structures, and additions, renovations, or improvements to existing structures. The exemption shall run for 3 years following the new construction. The exemption shall apply only for municipal and local school property taxes assessed by the municipality. The exemption shall not apply to the state education property tax nor to the county property tax. The exemption shall take effect in the tax year beginning April 1 following its adoption and shall remain

available for 5 tax years. Per RSA 72:77, II, any exemption granted within the 5 tax years will apply for the following 3 tax years notwithstanding the expiration of the 5-year term for applications.

Michael comments that Precinct taxes will be included in this. Had this in place for 5 years and many companies (NSA, Mom's, Rotobec, etc., took advantage of this to come here and build. Any public comment?

Robin asks if this is the provision only in Coos County?

Jim replies partly, it's been opened up a little more but mostly Coos County.

Becky says originally it was only open to Coos County.

Michael: Carroll?

Jim: Yes Coos and Carroll.

Motion by Jim to recommend, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

#### **Article 20** Pay off of Town Office Loan

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$98,647 for the purpose of paying off the USDA loan for the Town Office. This sum is to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation. No public comment. Michael says there are 2 goals, one getting out of debt and two, getting out from under USDA process which is a condition of the loan.

Motion by Jim to accept, seconded by Bill, all in favor, 3-0.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen)

#### **Article 21** Selectmen to appoint all other officers

To see if the Town will vote to instruct the Selectmen to appoint all other officers as required by law.

#### **Article 22** Hear reports

To hear reports of agents, auditors, committees or other officers heretofore chosen and pass any vote relating thereto.

#### **Article 23** Transact any other business

To transact any other business that may be legally brought before said meeting.

Michael: That's the 2021 budget and warrants and we are done, unless there is any further discussion?

Robin: know it's late but, the generator was not finished. Anything in the budget to do that?

Michael: Town office building?

Robin: If passed, if not passed, then 2 buildings.

Michael: Don't think this would be too expensive but have Municipal CRF if we want to move ahead.

Robin: Didn't know if that would apply to that, the Municipal CRF.

Becky: Will check and see if that applies, how it was established.

Further discussion between Robin, Becky, Michael and Bill on application and costs involved.

Michael: anything else?

Robin: this Friday is deadline for Fire Fighters Grant. Been working madly on it. Requesting a vote to approve for me to submit the application. It is for a replacement ambulance.



Jim makes a motion to approve Robin to submit the application for the Fire Fighters Grant, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Robin: there is a match component, and this is thru FEMA. There is a 5% match, but they want to know what we have to invest. If we have \$54,000, that will change the amount of the grant given.

Michael: why would it go to \$54,000 if it was 5%?

Robin: because it is looking at our ability to pay.

Discussion between Selectmen and Robin. \$54,000 for a new ambulance not a big price to pay. There would still be \$30,000 in fund, but that does not have to be counted into the \$54,000. Will know by the end of April.

Michael asks if there is anything else? Jim makes motion to adjourn at 6:42pm, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

Next meeting, February 16, 2021

Respectfully submitted,  
Pam Kathan  
Select Board Minute Taker

Minutes approved by Select Board Members on \_\_\_\_\_

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Weagle  
Northumberland Select Board Member

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Phillips  
Northumberland Select Board Chairman

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
William Caron  
Northumberland Select Board Chairman