

**Town of Northumberland**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**NOTICE**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**2022 BUDGET and WARRANT**  
**And Business Meeting Notice and Proposed Agenda**

**Date: Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Place: Town Meeting Room – 10 Station Square**

**Time: 6:00 P.M.**

**DRAFT COPY**

**\*During the meeting wearing of masks is strongly encouraged for all individuals\***

**Selectmen Present:** Jim Weagle, Chair, Keith Bronson, William Caron

**Others Present:** Becky Craggy, Al Rossetto, Glenn Cassady, Michael Phillips, Sean Durkin, Reginald Charron, Terri Charron, Norman Cotter, Melinda Kennett, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Peter Pelletier, William Daisey, Logan Basta. Tammy Letsen via phone.

- 1. Chairman opens the public hearing and meeting:** Jim opens the public hearing and the Select Board hearing.
- 2. Acceptance of Minutes:** Correction to minutes "Cause Grant" should be "COPS Grant". Jim asks for acceptance to the minutes with a correction. Bill makes a motion to accept the minutes with the correction that "Cause Grant" should be "COPS Grant". Keith seconds the motion, all in favor, 3-0.
- 3. Selectmen Business:**
  - a. Department Head Business: Highway and Water/Sewer

Glenn Cassady for Highway reports: Busy, some people out with Covid, thankfully other departments helped. Lots of snow plowing, 85 loads just to open sidewalks and parking lots.

Bill asks how much of the weekend was worked.

Glenn replies that it was all the weekend to just get sidewalks cleared from the snow the State plows onto them. Two to three loads of salt purchased, lots of sand used, but no major breakdowns.

Norm Cotter asks about the truck body story.

Jim says it has been ordered.

Bill explains it was the lowest bid, the last one in.

Reggie Charron for Water/Sewer reports: it is fortunate that with all of the cold there have been no real issues. There was 1 emergency shutoff that had to be done, this is a repeat shutoff. Problem with houses being bought and then abandoned without water shutoff, windows left open for cold to get in.

Bill: then they come to us for an abatement.

Sean Durkin (??) asks if the owners of these building are being contacted.

Reggie tells Sean he has been told to mind his own business.

Sean??: by who?

Reggie replies, by the owners.

Sean??: Can you explain to them the situation and that the water will be shut off but will be turned back on?

Reggie: homes are being jeopardized by these actions.

Reggie reports pump numbers, seeing consistency finally. Lost Nation was 100 gallons difference from last year. Groveton was up 12,000 gallons but that is due to colder weather, having to run water to keep pipes from freezing. Back flow devices to be installed next Thursday. Winter is stressful for water.

For Sewer, fighting vendors, supply chains. The fish study company Reggie used is now out of business so must find another one further away. There is a Sodium Hypo chloride shortage and PVC is 16 to 18 weeks out.

The lagoons are freezing because of less water being used and for the first time the leach field is freezing.

Hydrants need to be redone as the State has just plowed snow all over them. Lots of hours, want to thank the Highway crew for helping.

Sean??: Reggie has brought up the fact that it is costly to clean the lagoons. How is this being handled?

Reggie: We have a fund for that, have not always been able to contribute to, but we are funding.

Sean??: How is that going?

Reggie: there is a trust fund, but if PFAs are found in the sludge the price to clean will be tripled. Have been monitoring the sludge, it will be approximately 10 years to the next cleaning. Concerned about a couple of businesses coming to Town. One is a brewery; good pretreatment will be required.

b. Discussion/decision of meeting time for annual meeting 3/12/22

9 – School, 10 – Town, 11 – Precinct

Min asks about the order change.

Reggie wants to make sure Town is at 10 as he wants to honor some retirees.

Tammy adds that the Town Lawyer recommends putting the dissolution of the Precinct off until next year.

The dissolution of the Precinct was being discussed but there is a lot more involved with that than previously thought.

c. Review of 2022 Budget

Jim asks if people want to go over line by line.

Min brings up that there are some numbers that need to be changed. Computer expense should be \$2,400, not \$400.

Becky looking for the line, Min says she rounded up from \$2,300+.

Min also brings up that the compensation rate is lower.

Bill asks Tammy why that is.

Tammy says that is a good question from Min as she has \$39,000.

Min clarifies that Town Clerk/Tax Collector computer is \$2,400 not \$400.

Becky brings the numbers for Deputy 2021 was \$37,144, actual spent, \$28,195, requested \$36,516.

Tammy agrees that it should be \$39,000 not \$36,516.

Michael Phillips asks how the OT rates were arrived at.

Tammy replies that some departments made their own, others were determined by a percentage that previous Select Boards had made.

Michael likes the word percentage.

Tammy: Public Safety made its own, the others used the percentage method set by the Select Board.

Michael asks for an overview of the Ambulance wages.

Tammy asks if Jim Gibson is present.

Bill: No.

Tammy: Jim requested a raise for himself to put him more in line with other directors. He also requested an on-call amount and a stipend to be on call and a minimum of 2 hours pay if called out. He hopes to keep more people around instead of him having to take most calls.

Jim mentions that Sam's position is now split between 2 people.

Hiring of a Paramedic. Bill asks if a Paramedic can be salary versus hourly.

Tammy says that salary cannot be done, and maybe overtime won't apply in some circumstances and the possibility of offering benefits versus overtime.

Bill makes that comment that without a Paramedic the Ambulance Department might as well fold up.

Tammy mentions that he has the qualifications to handle all types of calls.

Michael asks Tammy about revenue expense differences.

Tammy replies that she was not able to get those numbers, but this is still definitely on her radar. Needs to get reports from Jim, have the contracts already.

Michael asks Tammy about the effect on the tax rate. Bill must repeat to Tammy as it is hard to hear the audience.

Tammy says the effect is a significant hit on tax rate as written at a \$476,000 increase. A meeting with the Select Board needs to happen soon.

Discussion of the rate increase per 1000. A meeting is set for Tammy with the Select Board for Thursday at 9am.

More discussion on having this settled soon as Town Report is headed to printer soon. Becky says there is a little wiggle room for time. Becky and Min to get together with Liz on the report.

Becky to post the meeting between Tammy and the Select Board.

Terri asks if anything can be done about the school budget. Bill says go to the meeting at the High School. Jim says it is down from \$21,000 to \$19,000.

Tammy says that \$476,000 is a scary number but also includes warrant amounts.

d. Review of 2022 Warrant and record of recommendations from Board

Jim reads the warrant articles.

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 Supervisor of the Checklist

To choose by ballot the following Town Officer for the ensuing six years: one Supervisor of the Checklist.

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 7

Board of Selectmen	3@\$2,400	\$7,200
Treasurer		\$1,500
Supervisors of the Check List	3@\$387.34	\$2,641
Moderator		\$600

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen – Bill makes motion to accept recommendation, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.)

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 7.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector \$50,000

This compensation includes receiving any COLA received by other employees as well as all benefits offered to Town of Northumberland full time employees. If this position is filled by someone other than the current Town Clerk/Tax Collector, compensation will be adjusted upon election / appointment to an amount commensurate with experience and level of certification. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen - Bill makes motion to accept recommendation, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.)

Michael says a 50 cent or so raise is not much.

Min and Bill discuss COLA, Cost of Living Adjustment

Article 05 Operation and maintenance of the water department

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$343,843 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. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen Bill makes motion to recommend, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0)

Article 06 Operation and maintenance of the sewer department

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$342,787 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. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen, Keith makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0)

#### Article 07 Operating Budget-Town

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,994,096 for general municipal operations with \$4,000 to come from unassigned fund balance, representing unspent ambulance repairs. 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. (Recommended by Board of Selectmen, Bill makes motion to recommend, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0)

Michael brings up that Thursdays meeting may change before report printed.

Tammy replies yes and that is why she wants to meet. If amount is lowered there is no need to have another hearing.

#### Article 08 Appropriate to CRF's, ETF

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$191,090 to be placed in the following Capital Reserve Funds at the amounts shown. Water and sewer short-lived assets to come from water and sewer user fees, the balance of \$140,000 to come from taxes.

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

Ambulance Equipment CRF established 2020 \$5,000

Water Short-Lived Assets \$31,674

Sewer Short-Lived Assets \$19,416

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen. Bill makes motion to recommend, Keith seconds, all in favor 3-0)

#### Article 09 Appropriate to CRF / ETF from Fund Balance

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$51,118 to be placed in the following Capital Reserve Funds at the amounts shown. Said funds to come from unassigned fund balance, representing the 2021 sale of scrap metal, a portion of the unspent balance of the 2021 ambulance budget, and the unspent balance of the 2021 health reimbursement budget.

Transfer Station CRF \$7,118

Health reimbursement ETF \$4,000

Ambulance CRF \$40,000

(Tammy to update amount, note taker made update for minutes)

Recommended by Board of Selectmen, Keith makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

#### Article 10 Charitable Organization

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$38,848 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 \$ 5,350

American Red Cross NH & VT Region	\$ 2,200
Center for New Beginnings	\$ 500
Northern Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce	\$ 1,219
Caleb Caregivers	\$3,000
St. Paul's Episcopal Church "Backpack" Program	\$1,220
Project Homebound	\$1,000
Androscoggin Valley Home Care Services	\$8,000
CASA	\$ 500

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen Keith makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0)

#### Article 11 Appropriate to Groveton Volunteer Beautification C

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3208.00 for the purpose of supporting the Groveton Volunteer Beautification Committee.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen, Bill makes motion to recommend, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.)

#### Article 12 Municipal Building Research

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$50,000 for the purpose of studies, inspections, research, design options of preparing possible options of new public safety building options to present to a future town meeting.

Michael leads discussion of this by saying this is almost twice as much as was appropriated last time.

Keith says it is expensive to inspect, study and research a building.

Bill brings up the event that happened the previous Friday. People could have died. Where do you put that price of a new building?

Sean??: That could have happened anywhere.

Bill: there is no detox area, recommends the warrant.

Michael: it was presented before, and it failed. Need a better presentation.

Discussion ensues on spending, study, building.

Keith says that there is a building in mind.

Al: 2 million to fix up.

Bill: How do you know? Must start somewhere.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen, Keith makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0).

#### Article 13 Locality Grant

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$56,000 for the purpose of purchasing safety and emergency equipment needed because of or in response to the health crisis and its negative effects. \$50,000 to come from a State Grant and \$6,000 to come from tax dollars.

Keith asks what Safety and Emergency Equipment is.

Tammy explains that there is a 90/10 grant guaranteed. Description used is one the State used; they are not specific, so wording is being left open ended to not get locked in.

Terri asks if that can be used to cover the previous warrant article.

Tammy replies no buildings, just equipment.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen, Bill makes motion to recommend, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.)

#### Article 14 COPS Grant

To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$142,730 for the purpose of hiring additional Full-Time Police Officers including benefits. Approval would call for a total estimated cost of

\$728,188 for 48 months with a total of \$250,000 to be funded through an already approved 4-year Federal COPS Hiring Grant. Expected revenues of \$106,820 expected to be reimbursed in 2022.

Michael asks how 4 full time officers fits into this.

Peter: if we added additional officers, we would have 6 and be able to service Stratford, cannot be done with only 4 officers.

Sean??: What would the revenue be to Groveton?

Peter: can't tell, would have to negotiate to defray costs. There are about 600 people in Stratford and about 4 people in Stark.

Sean??: What is the operating budget of Stratford and Stark now?

Peter: last I knew there were no numbers.

Al: if you are providing a service to other towns, you should be paid. I can't support this if you are just covering costs, you need to show this is not a drain on our town.

Peter: your comments are well appreciated but need to have more information, have not been down this road before.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen, Bill makes motion to recommend, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.)

#### Article 15 Wellhead land purchase

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$74,900 to acquire land near municipal wells.

\$37,450 (50%) to come from the State's Drinking Water Ground Water Trust Fund and the remaining 50% to come from taxpayer dollars.

(Recommended by Board of Selectmen, Keith makes motion to recommend, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.)

Bill: thought this was already approved.

Jim: no, getting stuff ready, Tammy can you explain?

Tammy: any land acquisitions must be a separate warrant

Al: thought this was already in the budget.

Bill: because it is land it needs to be in a warrant.

Further discussion that this will be a hard sell.

#### Article 16 Reopen Page Hill ATV use

To see if the town will vote to reopen Page Hill for the purpose of ATV use (Inserted by petition of voters)

Tammy: on monetary petitions you must recommend, but not sure about this

one? Will find out and get back to you.

Al: is this a mandate?

Becky: this is advisory only.

Article 17 Selectmen to appoint all other officers as require

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

Article 18 Hear reports

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

Article 19 Transact any other business

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

#### **4. Applications/Permits and Warrants:**

a. Building Permit Application – Town of Northumberland

Map 22, Lot 9-A. This is to demo the tank by the Town employees to get rid of tank on Normandeau’s land. Request fee to be waived.

Motion made by Keith to accept, second by Bill, all in favor, 3-0.

Veteran’s credit for Reginald Gates, he qualifies. Keith makes motion to approve, Bill seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

#### **5. Public Matters to be addressed by the Board:**

a. Supervisors of Checklist session – Sat., 2/26/22

b. Holiday Announcement – Monday, 2/21/22 – Groveton Town Offices closed.

c. Groveton Precinct – Budget Hearing 2/16/22 6 pm

Business Mtg 3/12/22 10:00 am

Min: elections are here on March 8<sup>th</sup> and the ramp and fire escape are snow covered. Jim volunteers to take care of that. A discussion ensues about the condition of the ramp and fire escape and how dangerous they are.

Al requests his comment to be on the record in the minutes. In this time of increasing taxes, as a taxpayer I want this on the record. This town would be in dire straits without the people working for it, the Water Department, Highway Department, Police Department, Ambulance Department and the girls in the office and everybody in this Town. It has not been my experience that Town employees work together, work hard and honestly care. Want this in the minutes. The only reason this Town is still functioning because of these people who care for this Town. Thank you and good night.

Jim announces the Select Board meeting will be on Tuesday because of the holiday on Monday.

Norm: regarding the minutes, the bid decision was not in the minutes. When was that voted?

Bill and Jim told Norm that they had voted at the previous meeting. The lowest bid from NH, since then the last bid came in, \$1500 less, needed to move on it.



Documentation there is an email trail on this.

Norm: not correct.

Discussion with Bill, Jim: we went with lowest bid, except from VT instead of NH.

Norm: what is going on with contract of this building? Have heard nothing.

Keith and Bill: stonewalling, sweeping under the carpet.

Norm: operating without a contract. Crazy.

Select Board: month to month. If someone is killed by snow off building things will change, but not until then.

Jim: if nothing else I need a motion to go into Non-Pub. Min can you stay?

Keith motion to go into non-Pub, second by Bill, all in favor, 3-0. Roll call.

**6. Non-Public Session: (Pursuant to RSA'S 91-A:3, II (C)):**

a. Resident Matter

Bill makes motion to come out of Non-Pub, Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

In Public, Bill makes motion to waive interest for one year tax agreement.

Will revisit in one year. Keith seconds, all in favor, 3-0.

**7. Adjournment:** Bill makes motion to adjourn, Keith seconds, all in favor 3-0. Adjournment at approximately 7:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Kathan  
Northumberland Select Board Minute Taker

Next meeting February 22, 2022

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

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Weagle  
Northumberland Select Board Chairman

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
William Caron  
Northumberland Select Board Member

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Bronson  
Northumberland Select Board Member

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