

BOARD OF SELECTMEN – FEBRUARY 13, 2023
MEETING MINUTES
TOWN HALL

Meeting called to order at 7:10 PM. Present were First Selectman Don Stein and Selectmen Ray Pech and Nick Lukiwsky

DELEGATIONS: No delegations were present.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were made.

MOTION: Ray Pech made a motion, seconded by Nick Lukiwsky, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2023 meeting

MOTION: A motion was made by Nick Lukiwsky, seconded by, Ray Pech and passed unanimously to approve the following Tax Refunds:

Rebecca Hogan	\$ 357.47	Credit
Paul & Maryann Beauchene	\$ 105.29	Refund
Corelogic (for Edmund Wild)	\$ 3,164.24	Refund

MOTION: A motion was made by Nick Lukiwsky, seconded by, Ray Pech and passed unanimously to appoint Jeanine Reinier to a position on the Conservation Commission for the current term, ending December 31, 2023.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen reviewed the current year's budgets for the General Government and Capital budgets and the tax and grant/fee collections, also for the current year.

Tax collections are 0.67% behind last year (96.47% vs. 97.14%). However, the tax collection period for this fiscal year extended into early February, so we will have a better idea of where we stand once we get the February collection report. As far as town fee collections, we are on-track with the Town Clerk fees, ahead on Conveyance Tax and building permits, and the state grants are on track. We are also doing well on return on the town funds invested in the STIF account due to the increase in interest rates resulting from the interest rate increases.

The Town budgets are on track – expenditures are at 71.6% and we are 58.3% through the year. Several accounts are paid 100% early in the year and the Resident Trooper is not paid until the end of the fiscal year. Salaries are generally at the point they should be, although the Receivables Clerk (ARPA responsibilities) and the Assessor's Assistant (Revaluation and Grand List preparation) are a bit over budget for this time of year. The cost of heating oil and diesel fuel are higher than budgeted due to the increased

petroleum prices. Liability insurance came in higher than budgeted when we got the final costs and the road improvement budgets are high since we have not yet transferred Town Aid Road funds into that line item.

We are also on track with capital expenditures, with the exception of the increased cost for the F550 replacement vehicle. We are still working on the best solution to this increase, which may be a combination of ARPA funds or an additional appropriation this year. We will also be getting a revised estimate for the Town Hall and School Parking lots due to increased paving costs and will be going out to bid for painting and/or siding on the Town Hall.

DISCUSSION: The Selectmen discussed preliminary capital and General Government budgets for FY2023/2024. As presented, and what will be discussed at the Board of Finance meeting on February 21, is a General Government increase of 6.55%. Included in this figure are salary increases of 3.2% for employees plus step increases for the two newer union employees, an increase in pensions due to their eligibility for pension contributions after 1 year of service, and increased hours for the Receivables Clerk/Assistant Town Treasurer and the Building Official. Both of these are based on additional work load requirements. Also included is a line item for the part-time Economic Development Director shared with Winsted (\$13,200). This position will be further discussed along with more detail on the achievements and benefits for the position, which has been funded by ARPA for the past 9 months. The proposed budget reflects the increase in cost for heating oil and diesel, which were not increased in last year's budget due to the uncertainty of prices. New Hartford Volunteer Ambulance asked for a significant increase in their allocation due to their need to hire paid staff vs. volunteers, and the ever-increasing cost for these essential workers. School budgets are not yet known, but the cost of the loans for the Town Garage and the school roof/solar has gone down slightly as the principle has decreased.

The Capital Committee met on February 6 and are recommending the following allocations for 2023/2024:

- An additional \$39,000 for Revaluation (total for two years of \$74,000)
- An additional \$10,000 for painting the town hall, with the recommendation that the town evaluate whether to use the full amount of \$20,000 for installation of vinyl siding rather than painting
- \$12,000 to replace the rug in the Senior Center
- \$165,000 for a new roadside mower to replace the 2005 model. Any trade-in would be deposited back in to the capital fund to lower the net cost of the equipment

This total cost is \$226,000 and the school had no requests for projects this year due to the use of ARPA funds or prior capital funding.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald S. Stein
First Selectman