

Town of Arundel
Joint Meeting of Board of Selectmen and Budget Board
Minutes
15 March 2016
Mildred L. Day School Library
600 Limerick Road

Members in Attendance

Board of Selectmen: Velma Jones Hayes, Tom Danylik, Phil Labbe

Budget Board: Shawn Hayes, Michelle Moore, Paul Raymond, John Bell

Other Attendees: Keith Trefethen, Town Manager, Jenn Welch, Recreation Director, Roger Taschereau, Public Works Director

I. Call to Order: Chair Hayes called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Approval of Agenda: The Town Manager noted the need to talk to the Public Works Director regarding the Paving Budget, which was not on the agenda. Mr. Hayes suggested adding Item (b1) for that purpose. Mr. Raymond moved to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. Moore seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes of 23 February 2016: Mr. Hayes noted that Section III of the minutes included the date “9 February, 2016”, which, he stated, should be either “9 February 2016” (without the comma), or “February 9, 2016”. The Secretary apologized for this epic blunder and assured the Boards that it would be corrected at his earliest opportunity. Mr. Danylik moved to approve the minutes of 23 February 2016. Ms Hayes seconded and the motion passed unanimously, with the exception of Mr. Raymond who abstained since he did not attend that meeting.

IV. Review of Municipal Budget Request:

(a) Account 19-01 Recreation Department: The Recreation Department Director reviewed the proposed FY 16/17 budget, noting that the most significant increase was due to the addition of benefits for an employee who worked two seasonal positions for the department. The Town Manager stated that this would bring the employee into line with other Town employees who worked a similar number of hours. Other topics reviewed included Other Services and Reimbursement Fees. Mr. Hayes noted that 66% of the department’s expenses were covered by user fees. Mr. Trefethen pointed out that the budget increase of 2.7% was primarily due to the increase in employee benefits. Ms. Hayes noted that fees covered all of the department’s expenses and also part of the payroll. In response to a question from Ms. Hayes, the Director reported that she was very pleased with the computer software which had been acquired by the department.

(b) Account 19-03 Recreation Bus Reserve: Ms. Welch reported that the Rec Department had acquired a new (used) bus. She and the Public Works Director reported on the work being performed on the vehicle which centered on replacing brake components, undercoating and repainting. Mr. Trefethen noted that the Bus Reserve Account had been increased by \$1,250. Ms. Welch said that the purchase price and the cost of work done on the bus totaled approximately \$19,000. This compared to about \$80,000 for a brand new vehicle.

(b1) Account 20-01 Road Construction: The Public Works Director addressed the suggestion made at a previous meeting to postpone the Duck Brook Project until next year to provide time to bond the job. He stated that he would prefer to do the job this construction season, citing scheduling difficulties paving Downing Road if the project were delayed, the possibility of obtaining a grant to cover a portion of the cost this year, and that the estimated cost of the project would still allow for some paving this construction season. Mr. Taschereau also briefly reviewed some of the paving projects that were included in his five year plan.

Mr. Danylik enquired if any other upcoming projects would have the fiscal impact of the Duck Brook Project. Mr. Taschereau replied that most of the other culverts in town could be relined. This was not, in his opinion, a feasible solution at Duck Brook, resulting in a much more expensive project. There was also some discussion of the impact of the culvert on a local property owner, whose land occasionally flooded. Mr. Labbe enquired if raising the level of the road would be beneficial to the landowner. Mr. Taschereau said the thought the size of the new installation would alleviate the problem, but noted that there were also problems with another culvert under the Maine Turnpike, downstream from Downing Road, which might still cause the brook to back up. In answer to a question from Ms. Hayes, the Director said the road would need to be closed, but for probably less than a month.

(c) Account 12-03 Town Hall Operations: The Town Manager noted that the budget was projected to decrease by over 7%. He noted that computer software was a major part of the budget which included the Trio accounting software and Vision tax assessing software. He reviewed the Building Maintenance budget which included roofing, exterior repairs and furnace maintenance. There was also discussion of land acquisition for a new Town Hall.

(d) Account 12-04 Planner/CEO/Assessor: Mr. Trefethen reviewed the 12-04 Account noting that the only significant change was a reduction in Dues & Subscriptions.

(e) Account 12-05 Administration: The Town Manager reviewed the 12-05 Account, mentioning that there might be a slight uptick in the Travel account since he was encouraging employees to take advantage of available training programs.

(f) Anticipated Revenue Projections: Mr. Trefethen notified the Boards that the Town was on track to meet revenue projections for the current year. Topics reviewed included Building Permits, Excise Taxes, and BETE Reimbursement. Mr. Hayes enquired about how many properties the Town presently had liens on and was told approximately thirty five to forty. Mr. Trefethen noted that the Town had about a 95% collection rate. Mr. Danylik asked about the difference between Interest & Penalties and Interest/Charges Delinquent. The Town Manager said he would get back to him with a definitive explanation.

(g) Review Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant: The Town Manager notified the Boards that he had attempted to reduce the number of Warrant Articles to put before the Town Meeting by combining previously separate items and providing an explanation of what was included in each Article. Ms. Hayes commented that questions could arise for articles that show a significant increase, and stressed the importance of explaining any increases. Mr. Danylik agreed that reducing the number of articles was a positive step but expressed concern that it might limit efforts to modify specific items in the budget. Mr. Labbe stressed the importance of making the Town Meeting Warrant available to the public well in advance of the Town Meeting.

Mr. Bell notified the Boards that using the budget figures which the Town Manager had provided this evening, an increase of \$1.11, or 7.45% would be required to balance the budget, although this increase could be partially offset by using monies from the Designated Fund. Mr. Trefethen noted that the 2015 audit showed a balance in this account of approximately \$2.4 million. Mr. Bell said that if \$300,000 were transferred from the Designated Fund, as was done the previous year, the increase in the mil rate would be reduced to \$.38, or 2.53%. Further discussion revealed some confusion on Mr. Bell's part over the current and previous year's taxable valuation which would need to be clarified in order to ascertain a more accurate mil rate.

The Town Manager asked the Boards if they wished to have any department head return for further budget review, or if they had any specific questions which needed to be answered before the next meeting. Mr. Labbe asked for suggestions on how to handle expenses related to the possible withdrawal from RSU21. Mr. Trefethen suggested postponing that decision, given that the fund balance was healthy which would provide some flexibility. Mr. Danylik suggested wording the Warrant Article to clearly state that this expense would be funded from the Designated Fund. The Town Manager felt that \$35,000 would be enough to fund the withdrawal effort in the event that it was approved at Town Meeting.

Mr. Bell suggested that the Boards attempt to estimate the long term cost of withdrawing from the RSU to present to the public prior to voting on the establishment of a Withdrawal Committee, but this suggestion was not well received.

V. Establish Date for Further Budget Review: The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 29th March at 7:00 pm.

VI. Other Business and Adjournment: There being no other business, Mr. Bell moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Moore, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

I hereby certify that the above is a true and accurate record of the Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Budget Board of March 15th, 2016.

John Bell
Secretary, Budget Board