

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING**  
**Public Hearing**  
**Minutes of 02/09/04**  
7:00 p.m. Budget

**Selectmen:**

**James Hughes, Chairman**  
**Frank S. Michel**  
**Robert C. Flanders**

**Town Manager:**

**Carol M. Granfield**

**Administrative Assistant:**

**Wynette DeGroot**

**Call to Order:**

Jim Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Roll Call:**

Chairman James Hughes, Frank S. Michel, Robert Flanders, Carol Granfield, and Wynette DeGroot.

**TOWN MANAGERS REPORT:**

- Carol thanked the department heads for the time spent working on their budgets and are here tonight to answer any questions that may come up. Thank you to Chief Palm, as Interim Town Manager, for putting together an extremely good budget. Excellent job. Special thanks to Brenda Vittner for working with the Chief on the budget and the preparation for this meeting and the Town Meeting.

**VISITOR'S AND RESIDENTS COMMENTS: (Non-Agenda items)**

**Melissa Sullivan:** Voiced support for the article regarding the Board of Selectmen moving from a three-member board to a five-member board.

**DISCUSSION ON THE PROPOSED 2004 MUNICIPAL BUDGET (Attached)**

**Jim Hughes indicated to the public present that the hand-out of the Budget Summary shows the 2003 budget and the Selectmen's approved budget.**

Questions by the public centered around the increases in certain budgets, increased legal costs, health benefits and other employee benefits. Beginning this year, employees will contribute to their health insurance costs. This will be a gradual increase over the next three years 5% each year, this year 5%, next 10% and then the next 15%. Discussion followed on municipal pay compared to the private sector, and on how town employee salaries compare to teachers. The Town is proposing a 2.25% COLA with the average employee salary being \$26,500 per year.

Other areas of discussion included:

- the increase in General Assistance.
- the additional position in the Assessing Department to include one full-time field person.
- the increase in the Planning & Zoning budget to include monies for the Zoning Ordinance rewrite
- the outstanding job Chief Palm has done with the Fire Department and obtaining grants.
- increased work load in the Buildings and Grounds department.
- the increase in the Highway department due to increased costs of road surface materials.
- Regional Associations; what they are and who they include.
- the decrease transfer of funds to the trust funds.
- discussion on the funds to purchase the Lumbertown land
- discussion on CIP and the 6-year time frame, and the whole idea of stabilizing the tax rate.
- Review of the Pinnacle Park Feasibility study.
- Review of the Water & Sewer Departments budgets and questions relative to whether the rates would increase.

**Chairman Hughes called a recess until 8:37 p.m. Meeting called back to order 8:45 p.m.**

**Public Hearing on Bond Issues over \$100,000**

Bob Flanders moved to open the public hearing on Bond Issues over \$100,000. Frank Michel seconded the motion. Approved 3-0 in favor.

- **First Bond issue \$3,500,000 for the Community Center** - discussion included:
  - Size of the building
  - Programs to be offered
  - Staffing needs
  - Additional operational costs
  - Use of the space in the building
  - The survey utilized for planning
- **Second Bond issue \$500,000 for Conservation Lands**
  - the \$500,000 will be used to raise the rest of the funds needed to purchase a conservation and historic preservation easement on Longridge Farm (125 acres) and to purchase the (188 acre) Eames Trust property. If this project is successful, this would create a permanently preserved approximately 500 acres of recreation trails. The cost of each of these projects, rounded off, is approximately \$550,000. Several grants will expire if not used.

Bob Flanders moved to close the public hearing on Bond Issues over \$100,000. Frank Michel seconded the motion. Approved 3-0 in favor.

**Reading of the Proposed 2004 Warrant:**

**Chairman Hughes read each proposed Warrant Article with the understanding there may be changes prior to the final posting on Monday, February 23, 2004.**

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Steve Merrill:** Requested the Board of Selectmen last year to fund the televising of the Board's meetings. Why has this not happened?

**Carol:** Currently using the cable for notices and looking into the franchise fees for use of funding the televising. The plan is to begin televising the meetings as soon as possible.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Jim Hughes, seconded by Bob Flanders at 10:25 pm. Approved 3 - 0 in favor.

Respectfully submitted:

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Wynette DeGroot, Administrative Assistant

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James F. Hughes, Chairman

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Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

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Frank S. Michel

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Robert C. Flanders