

TOWN OF SOUTH BERWICK
TOWN MEETING
MAY 11, 2022

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant, the inhabitants of the Town of South Berwick, qualified to vote in Town affairs, assembled at the Town Hall on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 and transacted the following business. The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by the Town Clerk.

Council members present included Chair Mallory Cook, John C. Kareckas, John James, Jessica Cyr, and Jeffrey Minihan. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance. There were approximately 60 voters present.

ARTICLE 1: Thomas Harmon was nominated as moderator, received three votes of three votes cast, was elected and duly sworn by the Clerk.

Mr. Harmon stated we would be using the Maine Moderators Manual and explained the process for voting.

ARTICLE 2: John Kareckas made a motion to authorize the Town Council to dispose of tax-acquired property in any manner in which the Town Council deems to be in the best interest of the Town. Jessica Cyr seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 2 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 3: Jessica Cyr made a motion to authorize the Tax Collector to charge and collect interest at a rate of four (4) percent per annum on all unpaid taxes not paid by the due dates, with one-half of the taxes due on September 30, 2022 and one-half due on March 31, 2023. Mallory Cook seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 3 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 4: Mallory Cook made a motion to authorize the Tax Collector to accept prepayment of taxes not yet due or assessed. Any excess paid in over the amount finally assessed shall be repaid at zero (0) percent interest. John James seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 4 passed.

ARTICLE 5: John James made a motion to authorize the Tax Collector to continue an eight (8) month payment plan known as the "Tax Club", with interest waived for all members of the Club making regular payments in accordance with the rules and regulations governing said Club. Jeff Minihan seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 5 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 6: John James made a motion to set the rate of interest paid on overpayment of taxes due to abatement at two (2) percent per annum as allowed per MRSA 36 §506A. John Kareckas seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 6 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 7: John Kareckas made a motion to appropriate up to \$25,000 from the Undesignated Fund for the payment of property tax abatements (and Applicable interest) granted during this fiscal year. Jessica Cyr seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 7 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 8: Jessica Cyr made a motion to authorize the deposit of all proceeds from the Parking Lease Agreement between the Town and Avesta Young Street LP, dated December 12, 2014 and December 22, 2015 into a non-lapsing designated reserve account and to appropriate and expend those funds to pay the costs associated with the repair and maintenance of said parking lot. Mallory Cook seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 8 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 9: Mallory Cook made a motion to allow the Town Council to utilize funds from the TIF Account (Tax Increment Financing) for the purposes denoted in the Final TIF Agreement approved in 2020. John James seconded the motion.

Bob Johnson, Berwick Rd, asked what TIF was. It means Tax Increment Financing. It is a means of segregating certain tax revenues for specific purposes with the designated TIF zone.

Lisa "Hershey" Hirschkop, Sterling Ln, asked how much was in the TIF account. Response: \$700,000.

Article 9 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 10: John James made a motion to raise and appropriate \$1,502,436 from general taxation and other revenue sources for Police Services. Jeff Minihan seconded the motion.

Audrey Fortier, Rodier Rd, asked where our dispatch was. Response: Sanford.

Jeff Deck, Academy St, asked for a more detailed breakdown of the Police Dept. line for \$1,229,701. Manager Pellerin explained that it covers all aspects of running the Police Department from payroll (including the Chief and ten (10) officers, to office supplies, uniforms, and special equipment used by the department.

Cliff Cleary, Spillane's Hill, asked how many part-time officers we have. Response: five (5).

Malcolm Kenney, Agamenticus Rd, asked for how many overtime hours were used last year. Chief Ruger did not have the info with him; but he did state that the overtime line for last year did go over budget.

Manager Pellerin stated that we did hire one new officer this year using ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act - COVID) funds.

Article 10 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 11: Jeff Minihan made a motion to raise and appropriate \$667,789 from general taxation and other revenue sources for Emergency Services. John Kareckas seconded the motion.

Article 11 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 12: John Kareckas made a motion to raise and appropriate \$1,711,148 from general taxation and other revenue Sources for Public Works. Jessica Cyr seconded the motion.

Malcolm Kenney, Agamenticus Rd, asked what the Transfer Station budget included. Manager Pellerin responded that the budget covers everything from uniforms, protective equipment, transportation of waste, and wages. Staff wages were increased this year to bring them in line with the area wages. Unfortunately, and beyond our control, tipping fees have increased by 46%.

Mr. Kenney also asked about the bucket loader. Response: It is shared with Highway. Mr. Kenney also commented that it may be time to look into consolidating with other communities.

David McDermott, Bennett Lot Rd, asked what is covered under the Highway appropriation. Response: This covers all aspects of operating the Highway Department, wages, equipment, road salt and winter road maintenance, and office supplies.

Cliff Cleary, Spillane's Hill, questioned the \$84,000 for the Town Hall. Response: This covers the costs of operating and maintaining the building. It includes heat, utilities, and maintenance. Note was made that the boilers are almost at a point of failure and may not be able to be repaired if they do. We spent over \$8,000 on repairs this past winter.

Article 12 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 13: Jessica Cyr made a motion to appropriate \$62,500 from DOT Highway Block Grant (URIP/LRAP) and raise and appropriate \$637,500 from general taxation and other revenue sources Capital Improvements - Roads and Road Bond Debt. Mallory Cook seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 13 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 14: Mallory Cook made a motion to appropriate \$700,000 from the Undesignated General Fund and to raise and appropriate \$1,578,143 from general taxation and other revenue sources for General Government. John James seconded the motion.

George Deyman, Great Works Dr, asked about the \$124,000 increase in the Town Manager's budget. Manager Pellerin stated that he made several changes in regard to the administration and promoted the Finance Director to Assistant Town Manager. With added duties, he increased her salary. Also, the part-time finance assistant has been promoted to full-time. There is a reduction in the Finance budget to help offset the increase in the Manager's budget.

Tamre Steinhauer, Hill Dr, asked what was included in the Administration budget. Assistant Manager Janelle stated that the biggest part of the Administration budget is contracted services, vehicle and building insurances, phones, internet, and postage.

Audrey Fortier, Rodier Rd, asked if the proposed budget is under the LD1 cap. Response: Yes, we are well under the cap. Mrs. Fortier also asked when the Town gets the amount of the cap from the state. Response: January.

Malcolm Kenney, Agamenticus Rd, asked what will happen, budget wise, if we are using ARPA money now. Response: The ARPA funds were used just for the new officer's salary, none was used for operating costs.

Paul Steinhauer, Hill Dr, asked for the balance in the undesignated fund. Response: \$6,000,000. He also asked if the Council has thought about what will be used for overlay. Response: It is too early in the process to determine; we don't have the numbers for the school or state.

Article 14 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 15: John James made a motion to raise and appropriate \$535,647 from taxation and general revenue sources for Debt Service. Jeff Minihan seconded the motion.

Michelle Kareckas, Parent St, asked when will the next bond expire. Response: Don't have that readily available, but can get it for her.

Article 15 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 16: Jeff Minihan made a motion to raise and appropriate \$149,515 from general taxation and other revenue sources for Code Enforcement and Health Department. John Kareckas seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 16 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 17: John Kareckas made a motion to raise and appropriate \$380,136 from general taxation and other revenue sources for Public Welfare. Jessica Cyr seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 17 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 18: Jessica Cyr made a motion to raise and appropriate \$370,700 from general taxation and other revenue sources for Capital Improvements - Reserves. Mallory Cook seconded the motion.

Audrey Fortier, Rodier Rd, asked what the \$1200 for Town Clerk Records Preservation was for. The Clerk explained that each year we have had at least one of the old record books preserved and rebound. As of now, all birth, death, marriage, and Town Meeting records have been re-done through 1971.

Article 18 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 19: Mallory Cook made a motion to apply \$1,425,000 from Excise Taxes, \$1,215,350 from Non-Tax General Fund Revenues, \$1,125,000 from State Revenue Sharing, \$500,000 from Homestead Exemption Reimbursement, and \$13,000 from BETE Reimbursement (for a total of \$4,278,350) to use toward the 2022/2023 Budget Appropriations, thereby decreasing the amount to be raised by taxation. John James seconded the motion.

No discussion. Article 19 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 20: John James made a motion to increase the property tax levy limit of \$5,108,578 established for the Town by State law in the event that the municipal budget approved under the preceding articles will result in a tax commitment that is greater than that tax levy limit. Jeff Minihan seconded the motion.

The Moderator explained that based on the prior votes, Article 20 is not necessary. Motions must be made in the affirmative, so we have a motion and a second, but in this particular case we want to vote the article down.

Audrey Fortier, Rodier Rd, asked how much under the cap we were. Assistant Manager Janelle responded we are under by about \$600,000. Mrs. Fortier asked for a breakdown of the taxes. Mrs. Janelle stated that about 30% of your tax bill is for the town. The breakdown is printed on the tax bills.

Hilda Howell, Quarry Dr, asked for clarification of Article 20. Mr. Kareckas stated that we, must by law, include this article in the warrant in the event that changes are made to any of the prior articles, especially article 19. If article 19 was reduced we would have to make up the funds by exceeding the limit based on the other articles that get approved.

Article 20 was voted on and failed unanimously.

ARTICLE 21: On a motion by Jeff Minihan, seconded by John Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:38pm.

Barbara Bennett, CCM
Town Clerk