

The Waterville Estates Village District Annual Meeting convened at the Summit Lounge on Saturday, March 23, 2024 at 9:00 am to act on the articles of this warrant.

Saturday, March 23, 2024

The Annual meeting was opened at 9:28 am by Moderator Jaime Oldmixon. Moderator Oldmixon led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Oldmixon noted the Moderator Rules as posted and included inside the Waterville Estates Village District (WEVD) Annual Report. Moderator Oldmixon indicated the purpose to address the business of WEVD, the Warrant Articles presented, and nothing further. Public comment is limited to three minutes, addressing the Warrant Article under consideration. If the speaker exceeds the allotted time, they can return to the back of the line for another opportunity to speak.

Moderator Oldmixon introduces Commission Chairperson, Maureen Patti. Commissioner Patti reflected on the passing of WEVD Treasurer, Rob Diefenbach, noting his devotion to the community.

Moderator Oldmixon moved Article #1.

Article #1: To Choose One Commissioner, Clerk, and Treasurer To choose one Waterville Estates Village District (WEVD) Commissioner for a three-year term, a WEVD Clerk for the ensuing year, and a WEVD Treasurer for a three-year term.

Discussion:

Maureen Patti declared for Commissioner for a three-year term. No other declarations.

Motion carried by majority vote (16-0).

Ryan Timms declared for Clerk for the ensuing year. No other declarations.

Motion carried by majority vote (16-0).

There were no declarations for Treasurer.

Article #2: Purchase of Excavator & Accessories

To see if the Waterville Estates Village District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ninety-Two Thousand, One Hundred Forty-Two Dollars and No Cents (\$92,142.00) for the purpose of purchasing an excavator and accessories, including a trailer, bucket, teeth, and coupler, at a cost of no more than Ninety-Two Thousand, One Hundred Forty-Two Dollars and No Cents (\$92,142.00) and to authorize the issuance of no more than Ninety-Two Thousand, One Hundred Forty-Two Dollars and No Cents (\$92,142.00) of

bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize Waterville Estates Village District officials to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon. Furthermore, to raise and appropriate the first year's payment of Twenty-Two Thousand, One Hundred Ten Dollars and No Cents (\$22,110.00). This special article is a special warrant article per RSA 32:3 VI (d) and RSA 32:7 V.

Three-fifths (3/5) ballot vote required.

The estimated tax rate impact for the Waterville Estates Village District, if it were a single taxing district, would total \$0.21 per \$1,000 of valuation if a payment were to be due in 2024. This amount will be apportioned between Campton and Thornton by NH Department of Revenue. Recommended by all Commissioners (3:0).

Moderator Oldmixon indicated that this warrant requires a paper ballot, and the ballot box would be open for one hour. Moderator Oldmixon distributed ballots.

Moved: Denise Bujalski

Seconded: Mark Canfield

Discussion: Commissioner Spinney detailed the budget development process, stating Roads and Water Superintendent, Steve Baert, requested a mini excavator. Commissioner Spinney indicated the mini excavator would allow for more efficient roadwork and assist with the water system. Commissioner Spinney stated WEVD currently relies on a 3rd Party for some water system issues and repairs can be delayed based on their scheduling. Commissioner Spinney stated in 2023 WEVD spent over \$50,000 in leak repairs and this machine will allow the district to handle many leak repairs in-house. Comparison between currently owned backhoe and the mini excavator, including the personnel required when operating, was mentioned. Commissioner Spinney stated the flexibility to use for other projects and that the cost was via a New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) government quote. Commissioner Spinney stated both WEVD General Manager, Ron Beard, and Mr. Baert recommended this purchase.

Chris Fagas asked if the district had a trailer and proper vehicle to tow the mini excavator. Commissioner Spinney indicated the Warrant Article quote included the purchase of a trailer.

Mark Canfield requested clarity on the tax impact. Commissioner Spinney stated the tax impact would be \$0.21 per \$1,000 on a \$22,000 payment due in 2024, not for the entire purchase of the mini excavator.

Dave Paradis asked when taxes would go down. Moderator Oldmixon stated the bond was for 5 years. Mr. Paradis asked the expected cost of use of the mini excavator over that 5-year period compared to renting. Commissioner Spinney stated approximately \$700 per day. Mr. Paradis asked how many days the mini excavator will be used. Commissioner Spinney indicated many projects are outsourced to Lakes Region Water Company instead. Mr. Paradis stated outsourcing means WEVD doesn't have to maintain equipment and further states he does not agree with this purchase.

Denise Bujalski moved the question. Stan Bujalski seconded.

Moderator Oldmixon stated the ballot box would be open until 10:46 AM.

Article #3: WEVD Operating Budget

To see if the Waterville Estates Village District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Million, One Hundred Seven Thousand, One Hundred Eighty-Three Dollars and No Cents (\$2,107,183.00) for the general municipal operations of the Waterville Estates Village District. This article does not include appropriation(s) contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Majority vote required.

The estimated tax rate impact for the Waterville Estates Village District, if it were a single taxing district, would total \$12.88 per \$1,000 of valuation. This amount will be apportioned between Campton and Thornton by NH Department of Revenue.

Recommended by all Commissioners (3:0).

Recommended by all Budget Advisory Committee members (5:0).

Commissioner Spinney detailed the budget development process, commending Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) members Mark Canfield, Denise Bujalski, William Mitchell, and Rob Diefenbach Committee for their hard work and diligence in helping develop the proposed budget which consisted of combing line-byline over more than two-months. Commissioner Spinney stated the budget estimates were generated from the input of WEVD GM Ron Beard, various department leaders, and consulting firm Municipal Resources Inc., reviewing actual expenditures, and then reviewed by the BAC. Commissioner Spinney stated the BAC has expressed concerns that WEVD is only spending for today and not saving for the future, along with increasing expenses related to payroll and benefits. Ultimately, however, Commissioner Spinney stated the proposed budget is recommended by the BAC and Commission.

Commissioner Spinney detailed some budget line items. Commissioner Spinney detailed some changes to the Recreation Management Agreement (RMA) with Waterville Estates Association. Commissioner Spinney stated in 2023, via the RMA, WEA paid WEVD \$400,000. In 2024, that payment will be \$600,000, paid in quarterly installments of \$150,000. Commissioner Spinney further stated approximately \$110,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) will be paid by WEA to aid in projects. Commissioner Spinney stated these totals approximately \$710,000 paid by WEA to WEVD that will reduce taxation.

Moved: Mark Canfield

Seconded: Maureen Patti

Discussion: Stan Bujalski stated he is a 14-year WEVD homeowner, experiencing various tax

increases. Mr. Bujalski stated the tax increase in 2023 was 24% and he is a retiree on a fixed income and the tax increases are unaffordable for retirees on fixed incomes. Mr. Bujalski expressed concern for the financial sustainability of the ski area. Mr. Bujalski is not opposed to this budget, but again is concerned about the future tax implications brought upon by the ski area.

Mr. Fagas stated the WEVD amenities do not make money, but instead increase property value.

Mr. Paradis stated he is in favor of the ski area, but it should be focused as a ski hill and the food and entertainment should be at the Recreation Center. Mr. Paradis further stated the ski area well water should be used for drinking rather than snowmaking.

Moderator Oldmixon stated the well water is not adequate for drinking, with further testing already under way.

Mr. Bujalski stated he is not opposed with the ski area, rather the inability for it to be self-sustainable. Mr. Bujalski reiterated the difficulties of increasing taxes on retirees.

Commissioner Spinney detailed quarterly meetings with WEA to analyze operations and find additional revenue opportunities. Commissioner Spinney stated the BAC recommended taking \$450,000 of \$1.3 million unreserved fund balance and putting into trust funds, but there is no mechanism in place for the commission to do so.

Commissioner Panuczak stated the ski area is costly, but in order to make it work, a plan is needed, and that plan is well on its way. Commissioner Panuczak stated progress with the Profit Improvement Committee, Tom Lithgow (ski consultant) is finalizing preparation of a ski plan, and through EVP Marketing, we have recaptured marketing opportunities on the web and social media.

Mr. Canfield commented that asset utilization is important and certain assets are not being used optimally. BAC agreed there is a need to reinvent the use of the ski area to increase its utilization rate. Mr. Canfield believes in the long-term potential but recognizes considerations may need to be discussed if it doesn't work out.

Mr. Bujalski stated he is appreciative of the efforts involved, but feels it is a shame if the increases in costs continue, forcing out retirees. Mr. Bujalski stated he understood the tax increase was due to the Department of Revenue Services and asked if WEVD could comment on that.

Commissioner Patti stated a reduction in 2022 impacted 2023 for Thornton residents. Commissioner Patti stated there is a report available detailing this, that will be disseminated by WEA.

Mr. Paradis asked about the status of the ski lift.

Commissioner Spinney stated the ski lift is in good working order, passing annual inspection.

Commissioner Patti moved the question. Mr. Bujalski seconded.

Motion carried by majority vote (17-1).

Article #4 Water Department Operating Budget

To see if the Waterville Estates Village District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six Hundred Twenty-Two Thousand, Five Hundred Fifty-Four Dollars and No Cents (\$622,554.00) for the purpose of intradepartmental water department operations, said funds to come from Water Fees, Rates, and other charges in the WEVD Water Fund. This article does not include appropriation(s) contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

Majority vote required.

This article will have an estimated tax rate impact of \$0.00 per \$1,000 of valuation as it will be funded by income to the Water Fund.

Recommended by all Commissioners (3:0).

Recommended by all Budget Advisory Committee members (5:0)

Moved: Mark Canfield

Seconded: Stan Bujalski

Discussion: Commissioner Panuczak explained the water budget revolving fund and expenses (leak repair and pipe replacement).

Mr. Paradis stated he preferred the previous method of water billing through taxes.

Commissioner Panuczak recommended getting involved with the Roads and Water Committee to affect change to the current practice.

Commissioner Spinney stated the collection of water fees has gone well. Commissioner Spinney asked Water Department Administrator Allison Smith for input. Ms. Smith stated although the current audit has not returned yet, she believes any outstanding debt to approximate 3% of the billing, which is consistent with the past.

Mr. Fagas stated he also preferred the water fee in taxes. Mr. Fagas believes that was more equitable.

Mr. Bujalski stated this topic of water fees versus taxation has been beaten to death. Mr. Bujalski stated metering is the only equitable way to bill, however that was defeated at the 2023 WEVD annual meeting. Mr. Bujalski believes the current method is better than the previous, but ultimately would like to see the move to metering in the future.

Mr. Paradis states metering only works in communities with 100% full-time residents. Mr. Paradis asks GM Ron Beard to speak about the metering in the town of Lincoln. Mr. Paradis believes the water ordinance has divided the community.

Moderator Oldmixon reminds the body that this Warrant Article does not address language of the ordinance. Moderator Oldmixon further stated any desired alteration of the water ordinance would need to be addressed with the Water and Roads Committee, separately.

GM Ron Beard commented on his recollection of metering experienced in Lincoln, stating currently the water fees remain in the tax rate.

Mr. Canfield moved the question. Mrs. Bujalski seconded.

Motion carried by majority vote (17-0).

Article #5 Road Infrastructure – Paving

To see if the Waterville Estates Village District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$150,000.00) for the purpose of paving Waterville Estates Village District roads. This appropriation is not included in the main operating budget.

Majority vote required.

The estimated tax rate impact for the Waterville Estates Village District, if it were a single taxing district, would total \$1.40 per \$1,000 of valuation. This amount will be apportioned between Campton and Thornton by NH Department of Revenue.

Recommended by all Commissioners (3:0).

Moved: Denise Bujalski

Seconded: Maureen Patti

Discussion: Commissioner Panuczak stated this Warrant Article is specific to paving the stretch of dirt road from Bell Valley to Richardson Trail and Weetamoo. Commissioner Panuczak further stated WEVD has requested a 20 year paving plan to address all necessary paving in the district.

Mr. Bujalski commented regarding the potential to turn roads over to the towns of Campton and Thornton and would like to ensure any paving be done at the same standard of the respective towns, so as to ensure that potential may remain.

Mr. Canfield commented in opposition of this Warrant Article. Mr. Canfield stated he has yet to see a long-term plan that would tackle the paving and maintenance of the district roads. Mr. Canfield stated the tax impact is a lot without having a plan first.

Commissioner Patti commented regarding town acceptance of WEVD roads, stating many roads won't meet the grade requirement of the towns. Commissioner Patti further stated that another requirement for the towns to take responsibility of the road is that it be a thoroughfare, which most WEVD roads are not.

Commissioner Spinney commented advocating for the Warrant Article. Commissioner Spinney stated this is the same spend ask as in 2023, and if we make this a recurring expenditure the tax rate will level off in kind.

Andrea Canfield asked for clarification on the roads being addressed by this article.

GM Beard stated this Warrant Article was based on Mr. Baert's recommendation.

Mr. Paradis commented his belief that roads should be paved without raising taxes. Mr. Paradis is not in favor of this expenditure without a plan.

Mr. Canfield further reiterated the need for a long-term plan but does not oppose this Warrant Article after discussion and agreeing it does not impact taxes.

Mr. Bujalski agreed with Commissioner Patti's statement regarding road grading and the inability to turn over to the towns. Mr. Bujalski speculated whether a long-term plan may allow for the towns to consider accepting the roads.

Mr. Fagas asked where the \$150,000 in 2023 was spent.

Commissioner Spinney indicated the Pegwood project.

Commissioner Panuczak agreed a long-term road plan is needed and the Roads and Water Committee have a meeting in early April, expecting a quote from consultants HEB for such a plan.

Mr. Paradis stated paving can be more costly to maintain than gravel.

Mrs. Bujalski moved the question. Mr. Canfield seconded.

Motion carried by majority vote (14-3).

Moderator Oldmixon indicated time had expired for Article #2. Dave Ketchum motioned for a brief recess, seconded by Tom Hagerty.

Commissioner Patti motioned to resume the meeting, seconded by Mr. Bujalski. Meeting resumed at 11:10 AM.

Moderator Oldmixon read the results of Article #2.

Article #2 carried by majority vote (16-2).

Article #6 ADA Project Funding

To see if the Waterville Estates Village District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$30,000.00) for the purpose of improvements to the Community Center and Campton Mountain public facilities to make them more accessible as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This article is non-lapsing until December 31, 2028. This article is a special warrant article per RSA 32:3 VI (d) and RSA 32:7 VI.

Majority vote required.

The estimated tax rate impact for the Waterville Estates Village District, if it were a single taxing district, would total \$0.28 per \$1,000 of valuation. This amount will be apportioned between Campton and Thornton by NH Department of Revenue.

Recommended by all Commissioners (3:0).

Moved: Maureen Patti

Seconded: Stan Bujalski

Discussion: Commissioner Patti stated there was an approved Warrant Article providing \$25,000 for ADA projects and this \$30,000 would complete the necessary projects. Commissioner Patti indicated those projects included improving doorways, installing communication systems and cameras and entry points that may require assistance, lifts for the hot tubs, and bathroom sinks in the Recreation Center.

Mr. Paradis questioned if WEVD is required to make these improvements and stated he opposed the tax increase for this Warrant Article.

Commissioner Patti stated that any time we make improvements to the facilities, best effort should be made to comply with ADA requirements.

Mr. Bujalski stated he was completely in favor of this expenditure, believing it to be long overdue. Mr. Bujalski further stated he was happy to see this is being addressed.

Commissioner Patti stated the Commission has adopted a policy that any time a project is started, there is a review of ADA compliance.

Mr. Canfield agreed that ADA compliance is very important. Mr. Canfield questioned if there had been discussions with WEA about the potential of using CIF. Mr. Canfield would rather this project is completed with CIF rather than a tax increase.

Commissioner Patti stated that she had previously intended to have such a discussion with WEA but neglected to do so and apologized. Commissioner Patti further promised that if any additional ADA compliance funds are necessary, she will seek input about CIF with WEA before presenting the request as a Warrant Article.

Mr. Paradis stated he agreed with ADA compliance but believes there should be \$30,000 available somewhere in the budget.

Commissioner Panuczak moved the question. Mr. Bujalski seconded.

Motion carried by majority vote (17-0).

Article #7 Well Cleaning

To see if the Waterville Estates Village District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighteen Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$18,000.00) for the purpose of cleaning municipal water system Well Number Two (2) with said amount to come from the unassigned fund balance from the water department.

Majority vote required.

The estimated tax rate impact of \$0.00 per \$1,000 of valuation as it will be funded by unassigned fund balance in the Water Fund.

Recommended by all Commissioners (3:0).

Moved: Maureen Patti

Seconded: Gerry Panuczak

Discussion: Commissioner Panuczak stated that the pumps were replaced a couple years ago and through that, Well #1 had to be completely rebuilt due to lack of maintenance. Commissioner Panuczak indicated that due to that rebuild, Well #1 has two-thirds more capacity than Well #2 and this project would allow the two wells to operate in concert.

Mr. Bujalski moved the question. Commissioner Patti seconded.

Motion carried by majority vote (17-0).

Article #8 Conflict-of-Interest Ordinance

To see if the Waterville Estates Village District will vote, pursuant to RSA 31:39-a, to adopt the Conflict-of-Interest Ordinance approved by the District Commissioners on February 13, 2024, copies of which are available at the Community Center, Ski Area, and on the District's website.

Moved: Maureen Patti

Seconded: Denise Bujalski

Discussion: Commissioner Patti stated where the language of the Conflict-of-Interest Ordinance can be found. Commissioner Patti stated this Ordinance came about through various requests of CPA's and auditor's. Commissioner Patti stated the Commission approved the policy, but now needs adoption from the legislative body. Commissioner Patti stated that RSA 31:39-a allows for such policies to be adopted. Commissioner Patti further stated the auditor's continually ask for other type's of policies that WEVD has not adopted, but this Warrant Article is solely asking for adoption of a Conflict-of-Interest Ordinance.

Commissioner Patti moved the question. Commissioner Panuczak seconded.

Motion carried by majority vote (18-0).

Moderator Oldmixon indicated that concluded the business before the public body.

Mrs. Canfield motioned to adjourn. Mrs. Bujalski seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35.

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan Timms

Clerk

Waterville Estates Village District