



562 Winterbrook Road Campton, NH 03223
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WEVD 2024 Budget Hearing and Meeting APPROVED Minutes
February 13, 2024 – 6:00 PM

Approved as amended on February 29, 2024.

Attendees: Commissioners Maureen Patti, Gerry Panuczak (arrived at 6:04 PM) and David Spinney. General Manager Ron Beard and Water Department Administrator Allison Smith.

Members of the public: Mark Canfield.

Members excused: none.

Attendees via Zoom: Robert Diefenbach, Scott Salaway, William Mitchell, Beth Ellinwood, Jim Cahill, Denise Bujalski, Tom H., Dave Ketcham

Call to order: Commissioner Patti called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance: The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of Commissioners: Ms. Patti and Mr. Spinney were present in person at the Summit Lounge. Mr. Panuczak (arrived at 6:04 PM).

Public Hearing

BUDGET HEARING

Ms. Patti noted that the public hearing policy was included in the packet and opened the public hearing at 6:02 PM.

Ms. Patti asked Mr. Spinney to start with a brief overview of the budget.

Mr. Spinney began by thanking everyone involved in the budget process and commended everyone for their hard work. He said that the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) did achieve consensus on the proposed budget, although they did have some concerns about the actual spending and proposed amounts for some items. Mr. Spinney then went over each department's budget numbers and actuals:

1. **General Government:** The budget for general government is up by \$25,000 but it is over \$39,000 compared to '23 actual spending. This increase is primarily attributed to higher payroll costs and adjustments in certain expense lines, notably legal services and consulting.



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2. **Public Safety:** Public safety expenses have increased by \$5,000 compared to the previous year.
 3. **Highway and Streets:** While the budget for highway and streets is down by \$27,000 from the previous year's budget, it is actually up by \$12,000 compared to actual expenditures from the prior year.
 4. **Building and Grounds:** The budget for building and grounds has increased by \$53,000 compared to the previous year.
 5. **Parks and Recreation:** Although the budget for parks and recreation is down by \$27,000, it is up by \$4,000 compared to the actual expenditures of the previous year. This adjustment reflects a more accurate assessment of expenses after reviewing the numbers.
 6. **Front Desk:** The front desk budget has increased by \$12,000, totaling \$25,000 more than the actual expenses from the previous year. The BAC has acknowledged that this area needs further examination.
 7. **Ski Area:** The budget for the ski area is down by \$7,500 based on actual expenditures.
 8. **Pools:** The budget for pools has increased by \$3,000, mainly due to higher spending on chemicals.
 9. **Food and Beverage:** The budget for Food and Beverage has increased by \$23,000, attributed to actual salary and insurance expenditures that were not accurately budgeted in the previous year.

Mr. Spinney concluded that the bottom-line budget for the current year is \$2,000,137.83. This represents a decrease from the previous year's budget of \$2,440,150.00. There was discussion about the budget in reality being up this year because the proposed budget in 2023 was \$1,970,970.31 and this year, the proposed budget is \$2,000,137.83.

After Mr. Panuczak asked a question about the budgeted amount of \$96,000 for the consulting line item and offsetting that by removing the salary of the Assistant General Manager, there was a lengthy discussion about the need to budget this much as this line covers the services of Ms. Donaldson from MRI who is wrapping up her work after the '23 audit and there are plans to hire a part time municipal finance/accounting employee which would be funded from the wages line and should be a lot cheaper. Mr. Diefenbach, via Zoom, offered an explanation on behalf of BAC, that this was budgeted this way due to uncertainty of when the new employee would be hired.

Mr. Panuczak also asked questions about the low highway budget, which was clarified to exclude paving expenses. He then asked about the significant reduction in the heat budget from which was attributed to the replacement of a furnace, resulting in improved efficiency and lower fuel costs. It was confirmed that this reduction was a one-time occurrence due to the furnace replacement. He also asked



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about vehicle maintenance budget, which was set at \$13,000 despite higher actual spending. This discrepancy was explained as a one-time deal, and the higher '23 spending was attributed to unforeseen maintenance needs and repairs. Then Mr. Panuczak questioned the property and liability insurance budget increase under parks and rec. The reason for this increase was explained as a result of restructuring the budget to accurately reflect insurance expenses across different departments, as opposed to using one line as before, which was deemed a more transparent approach.

Commissioners commended MRI Consultant Rita Donaldson for her invaluable contributions to the budgeting process, particularly in restructuring the budget to accurately reflect true costs across different departments. Her diligent efforts were lauded for enhancing transparency and providing a clearer understanding of where expenses were allocated. Overall, her dedication and meticulous attention to detail were recognized as essential elements in ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of the budgeting process.

Lastly, Mr. Panuczak asked a clarifying question about the Food and Beverage employee wages line amount and was told that this would be sufficient to cover new staffing needs.

Then discussion went back to whether there is a need to budget higher for the consulting line, knowing that Mr. Donaldson is going to finish her work with the District soon and the new employee, when they are hired, are going to cost a lot less. The conversation then turned to the considerations surrounding the hiring of a part-time accounting employee, with recognition of the potential cost savings and decreased reliance on consultants. However, uncertainties remained regarding the timing of the hire and the subsequent impact on consulting expenses. Despite these uncertainties, there was a consensus that hiring the accounting part-time employee would likely lead to reduced consultancy requirements in the future. After a lengthy back and forth, the Commissioners agreed to lower the consulting line by \$30,000.

Mr. Panuczak made a motion change line item 014130002390, consulting, from \$96,000 to \$66,000.

Ms. Patti duly seconded.

There was discussion that the line for administrative assistant wages (line item 014130001113) that covers the wages of the potential new hire that is currently proposed at \$77,310 and was deemed sufficient, thus making the above motioned reduction in consulting costs justified.

Motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0 Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

Mr. Spinney opened the floor for public comment.

- Mark Canfield, 17 Amesbury Circle, who is also a member of BAC, addressed the budget allocation for administrative assistant wages, noting that the budget reflected expected expenses based on the actual employee structure at the time, which had since undergone changes. He acknowledged that there might be some remaining funds in the budget that could



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be allocated for a new hire, whether full or part-time, although in case of the former, the additional expenses related to benefits may not be reflected in the proposed amount under that line.

There was discussion about the plan to fill the position with part-time employees to minimize costs. The challenge of finding qualified candidates willing to work part-time without benefits was recognized, but the efficiency gained from the municipal software implementation was highlighted as having reduced the workload associated with the position.

- Mr. Canfield also noted that the consultant expense in the proposed budget was attributed to Ms. Donaldson's contribution in ensuring employee training for the transition to a new accounting system. He noted that her presence was contingent on the employees' ability to take over the processes with the training provided. However, he highlighted her ongoing necessity due to lingering issues with clarity in numbers resulting from the accounting system switch. Mr. Canfield also made the distinction between the operational budget, which covers day-to-day activities, and the long-term expectations, which will be addressed by the Warrant Articles that will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Scott Salaway, via Zoom, asked about the budget impacting the taxes this year.

Mr. Spinney said that the budget alone, without the Warrant Articles, will result in the reduction in taxes by \$1.61 per thousand. This is mainly due to increased revenues coming from Waterville Estates Association (WEA).

- Scott Salaway also asked a question about whether the money collected for water bills was sufficient to cover the department's expenses or if it affected taxes.

It was clarified that the water budget operates separately from the municipal budget and is intended to cover its own expenses. Specific budget figures were mentioned, indicating a decrease in the current year's water budget compared to the previous year's budget. Further details were provided regarding the separation of water-related expenses from the municipal budget and compliance with relevant NH Statutes (Chapter 38).

Ms. Patti brought up the topic of investigating the use of a third-party HR administrator, as there were no plans to fill the Assistant General Manager position, historically responsible for HR management. The cost estimate for this HR admin service was around \$10,000, likely to be allocated from the consulting budget. Concerns were raised about the necessity of hiring a full-time employee versus



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using a more cost-effective admin service, especially given the technical nature of HR and past costly errors. While the contract has not been signed yet, it was suggested to budget for this expense as it would likely be needed. It was also acknowledged that the current budget might accommodate the expense due to other savings, but future budgets should reflect this line item.

- William Mitchell, via Zoom, attempted to ask a question but was inaudible.

Ms. Patti suggested to Mr. Mitchell to contact the Commission by email. Mr. Mitchell did send the email and Ms. Smith said that she is addressing it with him as it was not a public comment.

Then Mr. Spinney went over the Water Department Budget, emphasizing a meticulous examination of individual line items and proposed expenditures. Notable points included the segregation of wages to enhance transparency, an uptick in the allocation for leak repairs, and adjustments in building-related expenses, notably a reduction due to revised project priorities, and bond payments for the Pegwood Road project.

Mr. Spinney opened the floor to the public.

- Mr. Canfield highlighted the significant shift in payroll allocation from another department to the Water Department, including the relocation part of Ms. Smith's salary.

Mr. Spinney agreed with Mr. Canfield and emphasized the accomplishments of both the Water and Building departments, noting the tangible benefits visible around the Community Center and praising the efficiency of the small staff in accomplishing tasks. He commended Mr. Baert for improvements in system maintenance, leak detection, and SCADA system monitoring.

- Mr. Canfield also discussed the importance of allocating funds for the long-term needs of the water system, acknowledging that while water rate increases do not directly reduce taxes, they are essential for infrastructure upgrades.
- Beth Ellinwood expressed gratitude towards the Budget Committee for their hard work and raised a question regarding tax reduction related to water expenses. She mentioned receiving a letter indicating a tax reduction after going to direct billing since the Water Department would no longer be funded through taxes. She also recalled a recent offset of \$188,000, possibly for recreation, but was unsure about the process and reference to historical data and the Master Plan survey, seeking clarification on how it worked.



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It was explained that the \$188,000 allocation was not related to the Master Plan survey. Instead, it was used to rectify past shortfalls in the financial records. The Commission voted to utilize this amount to address discrepancies in previous years' budgets, ensuring that all transactions between the Recreation fund and the General Fund were appropriately accounted for. This was a one-time procedure aimed at cleaning up past financial records and starting the 2024 budget with a clean slate.

There was nobody else willing to address the Commission in person, via remote platform, by phone, or by email. Mr. Spinney closed the budget hearing at 7:04 PM.

Adoption of Agenda.

There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

a. January 31, 2024

Ms. Patti made a motion to amend the draft minutes of 1/31/2024 consistent with the 14 amendments prepared by Ms. Patti. Mr. Spinney duly seconded and motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0 Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

Ms. Patti made a motion to make the amended minutes of 1/31/2024 as official meeting minutes. Mr. Spinney duly seconded and Motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0 Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

Ms. Patti made a motion to make the two documents submitted by Mr. Beard, which are the print outs reflecting the Bank of NH account balances for the following: Water Department sweep of current balance of \$740,728.46 and the General Fund sweep of current balance of \$700,333.43, as attachments to the minutes of the meeting tonight. Mr. Spinney duly seconded and Motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0 Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

There was a brief discussion about the increased amount of interest accrued on the District accounts since the move to the new banking institution. It was also noted that the bond money for the Pegwood project was also in the Water Department account.

GM's Report

Mr. Beard spoke about the following.



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1. Shawn Pelchat and his team have removed the duct work, repaired areas of the ceiling and are in the process of painting the summit lounge.
2. Shawn Pelchat made snow three days in a row and has reported that the well is holding up very well.
3. Jennifer Franz has hit the ground running as our new Food and Beverage manager. Jennifer has hired two new part time bartenders and has interviewed two potential candidates for the cook position at the mountain.
4. Jennifer Franz with help from her bar staff has reorganized the seating plan at the mountain in hopes of making more space around the bar area.
5. Steve Baert has been busy with water sampling and testing along with the required PH test throughout the water system.
6. Lauren Bennett has been busy monitoring the roads and trimming back some brush back at some of our intersections.
7. Steve Baert and Lauren Bennet have also been busy putting a new chain and pillow block bearings in one of their sanders.

Mr. Beard answered questions about the snowmaking well water testing, snowmaking schedule and plans for the snowmaking for the upcoming vacation week.

The next discussion centered around the snowmaking efforts and the current state of the recreation fund. Despite challenges, such as warm weather affecting snow conditions, there were successful tests of the snowmaking system, with over 100,000 gallons pumped. Concerns were raised about the lack of natural snow and the potential impact on the ski season. However, there was optimism about the reliability of the snowmaking system once fully operational. The discussion also touched on the financial aspect, with a positive trend in the recreation fund. There was acknowledgment of the lodge's potential as a viable business, with discussions on future considerations like parking and expansion.

Ms. Patti noted that she has gotten a lot of inquiries lately about the lead finding notice sent out to residents, which was part of an EPA requirement for water testing. The notice aimed to educate residents about potential lead issues in aging infrastructure and homes, with the actual finding being related to plumbing in private residences rather than the municipal buildings and water system. Mr. Beard provided details on the testing process. The conversation concluded with plans to provide informational packets to residents on how to conduct their own water testing if desired.



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GENERAL CALENDAR ITEMS WEVD

Conflict of Interest Ordinance

Ms. Patti noted that the Conflict of Interest Ordinance was part of the packet. The discussion revolved around the presentation of a Conflict of Interest Ordinance for approval. The purpose of the ordinance was to establish clear guidelines for employees, officials, commissioners, committee members, and representatives to avoid conflicts of interest. The Ordinance outlined definitions, rules for participation, recusal procedures, and administration of complaints, many of which Ms. Patti read into the record. She noted that the intent was to ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making processes within the community.

Ms. Patti made a motion that the Commission adopts the six page Conflict of Interest Policy as it is presented in the meeting handout. Mr. Spinney duly seconded and Motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0 Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

Opposition to HB1640

Ms. Patti noted that the HB 1640 along with a fiscal note and NHMA guidance are part of the meeting packet. The discussion centered around House Bill 1640, which proposes establishes standards and procedures for claims against the State for alleged violations and effectively would strip government employees or volunteers of any immunity that is currently granted to them. The fiscal note highlighted potential increases in litigation costs, hindrances to early resolution of claims, and concerns about municipalities facing higher costs related to claims against them. The Commissioners expressed opposition to the bill due to its potential negative impact, and a motion was made to allow the registration of opposition on behalf of the community. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Each Commissioner expressed deep reservations about the proposed bill, highlighting the potential for significant negative impacts on local communities. They articulated concerns about the erosion of immunity protections for volunteers and employees acting in good faith, which could open the floodgates to a barrage of lawsuits, overwhelming both state agencies and municipalities alike. Discussion ensued about rallying support from stakeholders, facilitating online testimony submission, conducting public outreach to raise awareness, collaborating with like-minded entities, and engaging with local media to amplify their message. This strategy would aim to highlight concerns about the bill's potential impact on volunteers, municipalities, and other entities, emphasizing the need for alternative solutions or amendments. There was general consensus to proceed with this strategy.



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Ms. Patti acknowledged she neglected to add to the agenda a report from the WEVD lawyer. He determined there has been no change in the statute which allows members of public bodies to attend meetings remotely. Ms. Patti wanted to remind her colleagues, management, and the public that WEVD Commissioners and volunteers that remote participation in Commissioner, advisory committee, and Planning Board meetings has two requirements. First, there must be a quorum of the public body present at the meeting's physical location (i.e., not counting the member attending remotely). Second, the member seeking to attend the meeting remotely must identify and state at the outset of the meeting the reasons why he/she cannot attend in person AND the meeting minutes must include that information. The legal standard for remote attendance is that attendance at the physical location is "not reasonably practical due to travel, illness or another reason." Convenience is not a legitimate reason for attending remotely.

Next Meeting

Meeting and Warrant Article Hearing: Thursday, February 15, 2024 @ 6 p.m.

Public Comment Period

- Nancy Seward, via Zoom asked for clarification about virtual participation in meetings. Ms. Patti explained that NH law allows remote participation for any public body member only if their physical participation is not reasonably practical due to travel, illness, or other reasons that have nothing to do with issues of convenience. The reason has to be identified for the meeting and reflected in the minutes and as has been required since at least COVID, there has to be a quorum present at the physical location.

- Mr. Salaway asked a question about levels of lead if any were found in the municipal well water or the private test results.

Ms. Smith answered that all sampling findings are available on NHDES One Stop platform. Additionally, she directed Mr. Salaway to an educational pamphlet that provides a link to the DES One Stop search tool.

- Jim Cahill, via Zoom expressed appreciation for the Budget Advisory Committee's work and thanked Mr. Beard for finding a new Food and Beverage manager. He also mentioned upcoming events and praised the staff's performance.
- Mr. Diefenbach, via Zoom commended the improvement in the budgeting procedure compared to previous years and thanked everyone involved, including members of WEA and Mr. Canfield.

There was nobody else willing to address the Commission in person, via remote platform, by phone.



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Non-Public Session

Ms. Patti motioned to enter non-public session at 7:45 PM for the purposes described in RSA 91-A:3, II (1). Mr. Panuczak duly seconded. Motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0. Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

Non-public session was entered at 7:45 PM, Commissioners Patti, Panuczak and Spinney were present in person as well as the General Manager Ron Beard.

Resumption of Public Session

Mr. Spinney motioned to exit non-public session at 8:11 PM. Mr. Panuczak duly seconded. Motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0. Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

Public session was entered at 8:11 PM. Commissioners Patti, Panuczak, and Spinney were present in person.

The nonpublic session minutes were sealed by a motion from Mr. Panuczak, a second by Mr. Spinney, as divulgence of the minutes would adversely affect the reputation of someone other than a Commissioner. Motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0. Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

Adjourn Meeting

Mr. Spinney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Panuczak duly seconded. Motion carried with a roll call vote 3:0. Mr. Spinney – aye, Ms. Patti – aye, Mr. Panuczak – aye.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.

Prepared by Alvina Snegach



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2/13/24, 5:21 PM

Bank of New Hampshire: Account Details



Good Evening, RONALD BEARD

General Fund Sweep

Last Updated: February 13, 2024 5:20 PM

\$700,333.43

Current Balance


Transactions Details & Settings

DETAILS

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Current Balance | \$700,333.43 | Interest Rate | 0.00% |
| Last Deposit Amount | \$2,635.61 | Last Deposit Date | Feb 2, 2024 |
| Last Statement Balance | \$0.00 | Previous year-to-date interest amount | \$9,874.52 |
| Year-to-date interest amount | \$1,591.54 | Accrued Interest | \$974.07 |
| Account Number | | | |

SETTINGS

Online Display Name

General Fund Sweep 

Visibility on Home 



Text Banking

You are not enrolled in Text Banking, enroll in Settings

<https://secure.banknh.com/banknh/uux.aspx#/account/249294?currentTab=details&returnTo=Home>

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2/13/24, 5:21 PM

Bank of New Hampshire: Account Details



Good Evening, RONALD BEARD

Water Sweep

Last Updated: February 13, 2024 5:20 PM

\$740,728.46

Current Balance

Transactions Details & Settings

DETAILS

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Current Balance | \$740,728.46 | Interest Rate | 0.00% |
| Last Deposit Amount | \$91.74 | Last Deposit Date | Feb 9, 2024 |
| Last Statement Balance | \$0.00 | Previous year-to-date interest amount | \$7,151.75 |
| Year-to-date interest amount | \$2,529.96 | Accrued Interest | \$961.51 |
| Account Number | | | |

SETTINGS

Online Display Name

Water Sweep 

Visibility on Home 



Text Banking

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<https://secure.banknh.com/banknh/uux.aspx#/account/249286?currentTab=details&returnTo=Home>

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