

Town of Freedom
Public Hearing – 2022 Municipal Budget
Monday, February 7, 2022

Present were Selectmen Leslie Babb, Ernest Day, Jr., and Alan Fall, and Ellen White, Town Administrator, who recorded the minutes. This meeting was held at the Town Hall. Also, in attendance was Rob Cunio, Justin Brooks, Jamie Mullen, and Don Johnson.

Chairman Babb called the Public Hearing to order at 7:00 PM and asked if everyone received a packet.

Les asked if there were any questions? Rob questioned if the lease payment for the new Rescue will be a Warrant Article each year? Les responded that it is only a Warrant Article in the first year when the lease agreement is voted on for approval.

Les provided an overview on the budget. The overall budget reflects a \$349,320 increase in the amount to be raised by taxation. The Board discussed holding off on the salt shed at the Highway Garage in an effort to keep the budget level but they learned that the school budget is being proposed at \$533,925 less this year so they decided to take advantage of wrapping up this project this year with the increase in taxation being offset by the school's decrease in taxation. The rate should still go down as a result while a lot of items are being taken care of.

Melissa stated that communications have been reopened with the School Board and we are looking forward to working together as a team to help keep the tax rate stable. Joint meetings between the boards are going to resume this year.

Don questioned how to read the packet of information? Les explained that the operating budget is in the front, followed by the warrant article summary, and lastly estimated revenues. Don asked if the individual warrant article language is available? Ellen responded that it is still being drafted and reviewed by legal but will be ready this week.

Les stated that due to delays due to Covid absences, the Board was not able to vote to re-encumber or encumber funds for projects in progress. As a result, there is a warrant article for \$273,740 that will be funded from unreserved fund balance. This amount is reflective of the monies set aside for paving and completing the reclamation that will be returned to the General Fund since it was not expended or further encumbered.

The Board agreed to set up a meeting tentatively Thursday to review and recommend the warrant articles.

Don requested a meeting with the Selectmen on 2/21//2022 to continue preparations for Town Elections and Town Meeting. The Board agreed to not meet on 2/14/2022.

Being no further comment, Babb made a motion to adjourn the public hearing at 7:12 PM. Day seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen White
Town Administrator

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on _____:

Leslie R. Babb

Ernest F. Day, Jr.

Melissa M. Florio