

TOWN OF SALISBURY

Budget Committee Business Meeting Summary

February 8, 2018

Marcia Murphy, Chair	Present	Sandy Miller	Present
Ralph Downes, Vice Chair	Absent	Salvatore Morgani	Present
Dave Merwin	Present	Nancy Hayden	Present
Jason Hood	Present	Ken Ross-Raymond, Selectman Ex-Officio	Present
Sara (Sally) Jones	Present	Margaret Warren, Town Administrator	Present
Bill MacDuffie, Sr.	Present	April Rollins, Municipal Secretary	Present

Other Selectmen Present: Pete Ballou

General Public Present: Kathie Downes, Albin Zuech, Louise Andrus, Steve Wheeler, Mike Toepel, Joan Toepel, Matt Tilley, Beverly Tilley, Alison Thomas, Rick Chandler, Kathleen Doyle, Douglas Greiner, David Kelly, Phil Tucker, Sharon MacDuffie, Dave MacDuffie and Bill MacDuffie Jr.

Handouts for Meeting:

- 2018 Proposed Budget & Revenue figures through 12/31/17
- 2018 Warrant Articles

Chair Murphy opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Review & Approve Minutes of January 8, 2018 – Bill MacDuffie Sr. made a **motion** to approve the meeting minutes of January 8, 2018 without correction. Sally Jones **seconded** the motion. The **motion passed unanimously**.

Review / Work Session of remaining Proposed 2018 Budget Figures - Chair Murphy stated there has been a change in the warrant articles (Article #7) for recreation in the amount of \$42,500 dollars, which is a 50% matching grant through the Department of Resources and Economic Development. Bill MacDuffie Sr. asked what would happen if the grant was not awarded? TA Warren replied then nothing would be spent. Chair Murphy stated the budget has increased by 7% but without this article it would increase by 4%. TA Warren explained that the grant would not have an impact because the funds are coming out of the capital reserve for recreation and some of the funds are an “in-kind” match. Chair Murphy asked if the tax rate would be calculated by DRA based on the total figure and TA Warren replied yes. Bill MacDuffie Sr. added the revenue would offset the tax rate. Selectman Ross-Raymond stated the town’s tax commitment increased by 19% last year and he is unsure what will happen this year. TA Warren reported that the town’s revenue is over \$600K at this point. Selectman Ross-Raymond noted that exemptions also need to be taken into consideration. Chair Murphy stated she wants to be sure what the total impact is and that our fellow taxpayers understand. The Budget Committee reviewed the Town’s revenue sheet. Selectman Ross-Raymond asked if the Town could apply for the LWCF grant again. April Rollins replied yes. Bill MacDuffie Sr. stated he feels we should let the voters decide because it looks like the grant will increase taxes but it really doesn’t. Selectman Ross-Raymond stated the school tax commitment increased by 12.5% and it is estimated to increase this year by 3.5%. Sal Morgani stated he thought that enrollment was down and Selectman Ross-Raymond replied he is not sure about enrollment. Sal Morgani replied that the committee knit picks to the penny here but we need to know how the school gets their numbers. Chair Murphy stated the Department of Education uses 2015 figures and if anyone wants to know the school’s process, they just need to go to the Superintendent's Office and they will tell you.

Selectman Ballou explained that the bleachers and swing set are unsafe and the idea is to attract residents to the park, the only funds to be raised by taxation is the annual appropriation for the capital reserve fund. Bill MacDuffie Sr. made a **motion** to move Article #7 forward. Sal Morgani **seconded** the motion. The **motion passed unanimously**. Selectman Ross-Raymond made a **motion** to add the \$400 dollars from Article #8 - Cemetery Maintenance & Operations Trust Fund. Bill MacDuffie Sr. **seconded** the motion. The **motion passed unanimously**. Sal Morgani added that the town's operating budget is lower than 2016. TA Warren stated there was \$372K in the surplus for 2016 and she wouldn't have the 2017 surplus figure until after the audit was completed.

Budget Committee Members - Chair Murphy stated she has spoken with Vice Chair Downes, who apologizes for not being able to make the meetings. Chair Murphy thanked Bill MacDuffie Sr. for twelve years of service and Sally Jones for ten years of service, as members on the Budget Committee. Selectman Ross-Raymond stated he has enjoyed working with Bill & Sally. They both will be greatly missed!

Proposed 2018 Budget Public Hearing at 7 p.m. - Chair Murphy opened the Public Hearing at 7 p.m. Kathleen Doyle stated there is no playground for kids at the Maplewood Recreation Field and understands that there is a playground at the elementary school but it doesn't have public access during school hours. Kathleen Doyle explained that the current swing set needs to be torn down and if the new swing set plus the small playground equipment is installed then smaller children would have some form of entertainment while baseball games are played. Kathleen Doyle stated there are no towns without a playground that she can think of and if we do not take advantage of the grant, it will take many years to save those funds. Kathleen Doyle provided the committee with an update on the success of the ice rink. Chair Murphy started review of the budget and asked for questions and comments by department. Selectman Ballou stated the increase for line **4195-30, Cemetery Sexton** which has increased from \$1,060 dollars to \$3,000 dollars, in order to compensate that person for their current job responsibilities and not just the setting of corner stones. **Recycling, 4323** - Transfer Station Manager, Steve Wheeler explained the increases in recycling for plastics and that the town was not paying for the container rental but now will be. Manager Wheeler stated recycling is voluntary and if the town were to consider single stream then msw would need to be separated by staff or there could be a "pay as you throw" system. Manager Wheeler noted that the town's tipping fee is still under negotiation by the NRRA. TA Warren noted the total revenue from last year was \$26,300 dollars. **4910, Highways & Streets Projects** - The committee asked about the \$70K increase for the North Road #2 project. Bill MacDuffie Jr. explained that they did half of the road this year and will do half again. Selectman Ross-Raymond stated if the project is done this year instead of doing it over two years, the town will save \$35K. Bill MacDuffie Jr. added that this line will drop down to \$100K next year. John Herbert stated he feels the increase is too much and impacts the tax rate a lot, so it should be put off for another year. Selectman Ross-Raymond replied this is just like the recreation department's grant, so it should be left up to the voters. Chair Murphy announced that the capital budget has increased by \$69,039 dollars and the operating budget has increased by 31,287 dollars. The Budget Committee reviewed the 2018 proposed warrant articles. Bill MacDuffie Jr. stated the amount in article #12 for the air packs will need to be increased over the next few years because the replacement costs and date are known figures. Bill MacDuffie Jr. stated he will also be looking to replace the current ambulance with a used one from Hopkinton, which will be a huge savings for the town. There was a brief discussion regarding spending funds out of the unreserved fund balance. Chair Murphy closed the public hearing at 8:28 p.m.

Vote to Approve the Proposed 2018 Budget & Warrant Articles - Bill MacDuffie Sr. made a **motion** to approve the budget and warrant at a total of \$1,310,088 dollars. Sally Jones **seconded** the motion and the **motion passed unanimously**.

Signing of the MS-737 - Budget Committee Members were asked to come in next week to sign the MS-737.

Other Business - Chair Murphy thanked all of those who were in attendance because this is the biggest crowd they have had. Louise Andrus thanked the Budget Committee for all that they do in preparing the Town's one million dollar budget and urged residents to attend the School District's budget hearing of \$40+ million dollars. School District Meeting will be held on **Thursday, March 8, 2018 at MVHS from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.** Town Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 13, 2018 @ the Town Hall from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.**

Next Meeting – Will be held on Monday, *April 9, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.* at the Academy Hall.

Sally Jones made a motion to adjourn at 8:31 p.m. Jason Hood seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
April Rollins, Municipal Secretary