

**PRESENT:** M. J. Caruso, Chairman; P. G. Robart, F. J. Ferreira, Jr., Selectmen; E. N. Small, Town Administrator; L. A. Ruest, Administrative Assistant

M. J. Caruso welcomed those in attendance to this year's budget hearing and stated that he will not be seeking re-election. He noted that he has served two terms, that it has been an honor to work with the Town and the Board of Selectmen and that he extends thanks to all.

M. J. Caruso also reported that the school budget hearing will be held immediately following this hearing.

**2005 BUDGET PROPOSAL:** A review of the proposed budget, department by department, took place at this time. Increases and decreases were noted and explanations provided as appropriate. M. J. Caruso reported that results of a salary survey (of local towns as well as smaller towns) conducted found that certain members of the staff were grossly underpaid. The Board has decided to eliminate the longevity pay benefit and has adjusted salaries to better reflect current trends.

E. N. Small provided an explanation of default budgeting and referred the public to the sheet included outlining increases and decreases.

During discussion, it was noted that there is a decreased number of elections in 2005, an increase in the legal case activity, an increase in health and dental premiums, and an increase in dispatch fees. It was also noted that the Fire Department and Ambulance budgets have been adjusted so that actual costs are part of the appropriate budget (some ambulance costs used to be part of the Fire Department budget). Reductions were noted in Emergency Management budget as there are fewer drills in 2005. The Health budget reflects a reduction in the number of anticipated perc inspections.

F. Ferreira, Jr. commended Lyn Stan on her efforts organizing the band concerts on the Common.

The total budget is \$1,882,800 and the default budget is \$1,861,635 representing a difference of \$21,165.

**WARRANT ARTICLES:** The Board reviewed the proposed money warrant articles at this time. The capital reserve fund warrant article for the landfill closure is to be removed and placed on the warrant every other year as recommended by the CIP Committee.

**BOND ISSUE:** M. J. Caruso opened the public hearing to accept comment on a bond issue for funds to complete the road reclamation program. The proposed bond issue will provide enough money to reclaim the remaining roads that are not built to specification. The Board proposes a ten-year bond stretching the payments over time rather than a large impact with a shorter period. The CIP Committee supports this bond as doing the work now will incur costs at today's rates rather than rates that change over time.

M. J. Caruso asked for comments or questions at this time. Suggestion was made to include a warrant article each year for funds for a replacement cruiser. It was also suggested that the Town contact the owner of Big Bill's to inquire about the land for lease. It was explained that the Town is interested in obtaining an easement. Inquiry was made as to why the grant match is part of a warrant article. It was explained that due to the great amount of money, it is presented this way so that the voters can decide whether or not to approve.

Hearing no further comments, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

**MOTION:** To adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

**MOTION:** F. J. Ferreira, Jr.  
**SECOND:** P. G. Robart  
**Unanimous**

011305.doc