

**Auburn Budget Committee Meeting
January 13, 2022
Auburn Town Hall
Meeting Room
Approved Minutes
6:00 PM**

Members Present: Peter Miles, Chairman, David Wesche, Vice-Chairman, Dan Carpenter, Paula Marzloff, Joanne Linxweiler, Kevin Downing, School Board Representative Janice Baker and Selectman Representative Michael Rolfe

Others Present: Alan Villeneuve, Jeffrey Porter, Town Administrator William Herman, and Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary

Chairman Miles called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Meeting of December 2, 2021

Mrs. Marzloff motioned to approve the December 2, 2021 meeting minutes. Mrs. Linxweiler seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Budget Committee Meeting:

- Consideration of the Conservation Fund Article

Mr. Herman provided the Committee with a Summary of Current Use Taxation Revenue \$1,841,366.46; Interest Income \$10,547.08; and Expenses toward Conservation Easements \$1,131,159.39 for the period 2009-2020.

Mr. Leclair detailed the history of the Land Use Change Tax which had changes to its original intent to 50% of current use on the floor of Town Meeting with approximately 50 people in the room from 50% to 100% what it is now. Conservation has approximately \$1 Million on account now and this Article is not seeking to touch any of those existing funds. There have been \$1 Million spent in acquiring easements over the past 11 years and there is \$1 Million on hand now which is equal to what has been spent over the past 11 year period.

Mrs. Marzloff asked the acreage. Mr. Porter noted he didn't know but stated the Sanborn easement was the most significant and the cost was nothing compared to what it could have been without other contributors. The Audubon easement had other contributors leaving the Town as the smallest contributor. Mr. Carpenter added that the Town as the greatest beneficiary. Mr. Villeneuve noted there were about 600 acres protected.

Alan Villeneuve stated that he had served on the Conservation Commission in the past. The fund was used for the Prime Wetland Study in 2008. He referenced the Dufresne easement as one example of a landowner needing money and development that could have happened. Big chunks coming out of current use are rare. 50% is not all that noticeable.

Mrs. Linxweiler asked how easements were found and Mr. Porter noted some owners were approached. Mr. Villeneuve noted the importance of having a connected greenway to animal habitat. Water Works owns 25% of the property with no easement of protection on it.

Mrs. Linxweiler asked if there were any parcels coming up in the near future and Mr. Porter noted the Commission was not actively pursuing any.

Mr. Villeneuve noted there are not a lot of large parcels, but it is best to have enough money if something comes up and is against changing the percentage.

Mr. Wesche asked when the percentage was changed from 50% to 100% and Mr. Herman noted in 2003-4 when it was changed on the floor. Up until then the revenue went into the General Fund.

Mrs. Marzloff stated that she did not see reducing it without a dedicated purpose. Mr. Downing agreed he would like more detailed thought what to do with the money. Mr. Leclair stated the State does not allow this revenue to be set aside for a dedicated purpose; it can go only to either of the General Fund or the Conservation Fund. Mr. Leclair stated the Town is in desperate need for a revenue source with the rising cost of salaries and no business or developments happening on a large scale.

Mrs. Baker asked if there were a spillover provision after a certain amount and Mr. Herman indicated there was not.

Mrs. Linxweiler asked how much revenue was predicated and doubted it would affect taxes that much.

Mr. Leclair noted Conservation did a good job. There is \$1 Million there now and \$1 Million has been spent.

Mrs. Linxweiler noted she is in favor of keeping the percentage as is to save land from being developed as development is more of a strain on the Town. Mr. Carpenter agreed every new home costs the Town money and would like to see Auburn be a green community in southern NH evidenced by so many visitors to Tower Hill. He would like to connect the rail trail to the Water Works trails around the lake.

Mrs. Baker reviewed the existing capital expense funds and asked if there was a need not being covered by any of those funds and Mr. Leclair noted the Library Project was one example, but maintenance overall is in good shape this year.

Mr. Wesche asked the ending balance for FY 2021 and Mr. Herman noted he did not have those numbers yet but \$50,000 would be added.

Chair Miles called for a vote on whether the Budget Committee would recommend Article Sixth. Mrs. Marzloff voted no, Mr. Wesche voted no, Mr. Carpenter voted no, Mr. Downing voted no, Mrs. Linxweiler voted no, and Mrs. Baker voted no. Chair Miles noted the Article would not be recommended by the Budget Committee.

Mr. Villeneuve added right now. He stated that the Town does not need the revenue. Mr. Porter agreed there will come a point when it won't be workable.

Mrs. Linxweiler asked what would happen if someone made changes on the floor or voted it down and Mr. Herman noted there was no question whether or not to have the fund; there would be no change. Mr. Villeneuve encouraged residents to go to the next Select Board meeting and request that the Board pull the Article.

- Reconsideration of Debt Service Accounts (Bill Herman)

Mr. Herman noted DRA would not allow the two \$1 placeholders for the Long Term Bond Principle and Interest.

Mr. Wesche motioned to zero out the proposed FY 2022 Debt Service budget. Mr. Carpenter seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

- Other Business

Mrs. Baker noted the last sentence of Article Seventh of the Warrant Articles should read Recommended by the Budget Committee.

Mr. Wesche asked about the difference in numbering of the proposed articles between what was in the December minutes and the most recent draft and Mr. Herman noted there had been no zoning amendments.

- Adjourn

Mrs. Marzloff motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 PM seconded by Mr. Carpenter. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

7:00 PM

Public Hearing on Proposed Budgets:

Chair Miles called the hearing to order at 7:00 PM and opened the hearing to the public for comments and questions and being none closed the hearing to the public at 7:01 PM.

- Auburn School District Proposed Budget – FY 2022-2023
- Town of Auburn Proposed Operating Budget – FY 2022
- Town of Auburn Warrant Articles

Next Meeting: Deliberative Sessions: Saturday, February 5, 2020 at 9:00 AM at Auburn Village School. Auburn School District Meeting first immediately followed by Auburn Town Meeting.

Adjourn

Mrs. Marzloff moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 PM, seconded by Mr. Carpenter. A vote was taken; all were in agreement, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer,
Recording Secretary

Note: Any person with a disability who wishes to attend this public meeting and needs to be provided a reasonable accommodation in order to participate, please call the Town Hall (603) 483-5052, or contact the Committee Secretary so that arrangements can be made.