

**DELIBERATIVE SESSION
TOWN OF AUBURN
FEBRUARY 5, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Thomas Lacroix at 9:35 AM. There were 38 voters in attendance. The Town meeting had been preceded by the School District meeting at which the pledge of allegiance had been recited and the rules of the meeting explained. The Moderator introduced himself, the Board of Selectmen: Chairman Keith Leclair, Michael Rolfe and Thomas Carroll; Budget Committee: Chairman Peter Miles, Vice-Chairman David Wesche, Daniel Carpenter, Kevin Downing, Paula Marzloff, Joanne Linxweiler, Janice Baker (School Board Representative), Keith Leclair (Selectmens' Representative); Town Counsel Michael Tierney; Town Clerk Kathleen Sylvia; Assistant Town Moderator Colleen McCormack; Town Administrator William Herman.

Second: To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items related to the first year of a five-year collective bargaining agreement which resulted from negotiations between the Auburn Board of Selectmen, the Auburn Police Commission and the Auburn Police Union, Local 216 and which represents an estimated increase of \$53,022 over FY 2021 salaries, fringe benefits and other cost items at the current staffing level for the ensuing year; and further to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty-three thousand, twenty-two dollars (**\$53,022**), to fund those cost items for FY 2022. Cost items for FY 2023, FY 2024, FY 2025 and FY 2026 will be presented to the voters for their approval in March 2023, March 2024, March 2025 and March 2026 in accordance with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. **(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Recommended by the Budget Committee)**

Keith Leclair spoke to the article and explained the increase is over all officers, not per officer. He also expressed that the Board was pleased that the contract was extended to five years.

Article Two will appear as written

Third: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-five-thousand dollars (**\$25,000**) to be placed into the Fleet Maintenance and Replacement Expendable Trust Fund previously established. The sum of \$25,000 to come from the unreserved fund balance (surplus) as of December 31, 2021 with no additional amount to come from taxation in 2022. (Majority vote) **(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Recommended by the Budget Committee)**

Keith Leclair spoke to the article, explaining it is primarily used for fire trucks which can need unexpected, expensive repairs.

Article Three will appear as written

Fourth: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-five-thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be placed into the Accrued Benefits Liability Expendable Trust Fund previously established. The sum of \$25,000 to come from the unreserved fund balance (surplus) as of December 31, 2021 with no additional amount to come from taxation in 2022. (Majority vote) **(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Recommended by the Budget Committee)**

There was no discussion.

Article Four will appear as written

Fifth: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five-thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be placed into the Cemetery Maintenance Fund previously established. The sum of \$5,000 represents the proceeds from the sale of cemetery plots in 2019 and 2020 and shall come from the unreserved fund balance (surplus) as of December 31, 2021 with no additional amount to come from taxation in 2022. (Majority vote)

(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Recommended by the Budget Committee)

There was no discussion.

Article Five will appear as written

Sixth: To see if the town will vote to discontinue electing the Road Agent and give the Selectmen the authority to appoint an Expert Highway Agent in accordance with the provisions of RSA 231:64. (Majority vote)

Keith Leclair spoke to the article, explaining it would allow the Selectmen to interview and hire based on qualifications and that it is not an indictment on the current road agent but is a forward looking measure.

Rick Eaton of Eaton Hill Rd opposed the article due to the costs associated. Jess Edwards of Rattlesnake Hill Rd spoke against article citing voters' right to elect and concentration of power not being a good thing.

Alan Villeneuve of Spofford Rd spoke in favor of the article saying he thought it was good planning and forward-thinking.

Rick Eaton proposed the following amendment, seconded by Jess Edwards:
"To see if the Town will vote to continue electing the Road Agent and give the Selectmen no authority to appoint an Expert Highway Agent in accordance with the provisions of RSA 231:64."

After some discussion on the amended article, and clarification by Attorney Tierney on the legality of the amendment, a vote was taken.

The amendment failed.

Article Six will appear as written

Seventh: To see if the town will vote to affirm its establishment of a Cemetery Maintenance Fund in 2016 pursuant to RSA 31:19-a and RSA 289:2-a, and further to allow all future proceeds received from the sale of cemetery lots in Auburn cemeteries to be deposited into this fund. The proceeds and any interest gained thereon, may be used for the maintenance of cemeteries; and, further, to name the Board of Selectmen as the agents to expend from this fund. (Majority vote) **(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Recommended by the Budget Committee)**

There was no discussion.

Article Three will appear as written

Eighth: To see if the town is in favor of increasing the board of selectmen to five (5) members. (Majority vote required) **(By petition submitted and signed by at least twenty-five (25) certified petitioners)**

The petitioner Ed Gannon of Windsor Dr spoke to the article. He listed five reasons for the petition warrant article as being lack of transparency, outdated software at town hall, Fire Department budget, Board of Selectmen not following purchasing policy and the Roads budget.

The Moderator and Attorney Tierney explained that the wording in this article is statutory and cannot be amended at the deliberative session per RSA 40:13 IV and 41:8-b

Alan Villeneuve of Spofford Rd, Jess Edwards, Todd Bedard of Hills Rd, Dale Phillips of Rattlesnake Hill Rd, and Jim Headd of Rattlesnake Hill Rd all spoke against a five member board citing inefficiency, lack of people running for office and they feel the three member board has worked well for Auburn.

Article Eight will appear as written

Ninth: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$6,035,729**? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$5,795,712**, which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Auburn or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. NOTE: This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in any other warrant article. **(Recommended by the Board of Selectmen) (Recommended by the Budget Committee)**

Keith Leclair spoke to the article. He used the opportunity to address the accusations made by the petitioner of Article Eight.

All right to know requests were run by Town Counsel and satisfied to the extent legally possible.

The Town has no policy on invoices being handwritten or otherwise.

The tax rate has decreased the past two years and is expected to decrease again in 2022.

The Town's purchasing policy does not require going out to bid but gives the Selectmen flexibility in choosing.

The Roads budget may include reconstruction costs and comparing to other towns is difficult because the funding may be come from different accounts, such as trusts.

The Board has a good amount of lively debate and whether a three or five member Board that will not change.

The Budget Process involves every Town department bringing their budget to the Board of Selectmen, then the Budget Committee and gets final approval by the voters. The process is completely transparent, accessible and available every step of the way.

Article Nine will appear as written

Tenth: To transact any other business that may legally come before the Town Meeting.
No discussion

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Sylvia
Town Clerk