

**Hill Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2020**

DRAFT COPY

Present: Charlie Estes (Chairperson), Bill Wilson (Vice-Chairperson), Paula McDonough, Denise Robie Charlie Henry, Shelly Henry (School Board), Tom Seymour (Selectperson) Paul Meyerhoefer

Absent: Kristen Cunningham, Gerry Desrochers

Public: approximately 57 people

Meeting Minutes:

Town Public Hearing Notes:

Charley opened the Town Public Hearing at 7:15 He then talked on the way he would be discussing the 2020 proposed budget with a line by line account review as the MS-737 draft copy handout stated.

Question and discussion on current tax rates and valuations.

Tom spoke to answer the concerns to his best knowledge. Currently the state had lowered the value of utilities running through the community, which has left the town with an estimated 5 Million-dollar loss of valuation revenue. This with an increase in housing valuations of close to 2 million dollars has lead to large concern to many of homeowners in town. A number of the public were looking to see if this current budget could be held flat or where cuts could be made to help address the current tax status. Tom also noted the town has a large number of acres in current use and this land is not appraised at full value. This being said some of the public stated current use land doesn't add to town services, which was felt to be a plus for all. It was asked what the number was for lost revenues from utilities. Tom did not have this number. A suggestion on if this loss were substantial enough the town should hire a specialist to fight current appraisal.

Question on difference between actual budgets versus recommended. Charlie responded by stating the budget we are discussing is for the new year and unexpected consequences can arise at any given time which could have a large impact on the budget. Mike Stanley commented that the actual expenditures were less than approved from last year and the selectmen try to do their best with monies appropriated by the town with the possibility of giving back a portion to offset taxes.

Question on Fire Budget

A member of the public commented that the Danbury Fire Dept. have a larger staff yet budget costs are less. Dee Ford (Fire Chief) responded saying current equipment is in need of updates such as radios, Scuba packs. Dee also stated that she has 6 certified people in Dept. and everyone is able to run a pump to answer a question of who is able to use equipment.

Question on Police Budget

It was asked how many hours of service was budget based on. Andrew Williamson (Police Chief) stated the budget is based on 52 hours per week of service. Andrew also answered yes to the question on coverage from state police if no one on duty at town.

Question on Highway Budget

It was asked to where increases of budget are coming from. Paul mentioned several increases in line items 2,000.00 on diesel fuel, 6,000.00 equipment expense, 3,918.75 health insurance, 4,000.00 road salt, 7,533.00 in wages all added to the increase.

Mike Stanley said the town has

44 miles of road to maintain. Mike spoke on cutting cost and mentioned you could plow snow on all pave roads one day then plow snow on dirt roads the next this option he felt wasn't in the best interests of the community. Question on Bunker Hill Bridge as to progress? Mike said monies for project have already been appropriated in 2019. Tom stated the bids have gone will be opening them Friday February 7, 2020 @ 4:00 in Selectmen's Office. The approximate start will be June 1, 2020 with an estimated completion date of August 1, 2020.

Comments from the public mentioned that changes in budget could be made before being approved for Town Meeting looking to produce a level budget to give taxpayers a little breather after this years current property valuations. Mike talked how the selectman's office returned \$40,000.00 dollars in last years budget to help offset the tax rate.

Bill Wilson reviewed estimate revenues.

Charlie reviewed warrant articles.

Proposed Town of Hill operating budget for 2020	\$ 1,158,256.00
Proposed Capitol Reserve Funds for 2020	\$ 123,500.00

Charlie closed Public Hearing @ 9:04 p.m.

Budget Committee Minutes

Voted to table vote on estimated revenues to verify numbers.

Tom made motion to table until numbers were confirmed. Bill 2nd motion, Vote was unanimous

Paul made motion to cut a total of \$ 17,803.00 out of 3 Dept. budgets making 2020 town budget \$ 1,140,453.00 Paula 2nd motion vote was (3 yes 5 no)

Charlie made motion to recommend currant proposed 2020 town budget of \$ 1,158,256.00

Shelley 2nd motion vote was (5 yes 3 no)

Tom made motion to accept minutes as read for the January 22, 2020 meeting, Charlie 2nd motion vote was unanimous

Paul made motion to adjourn, Tom 2nd motion vote was unanimous

Meeting adjourned @ 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Paul Meyerhoefer

