

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN - SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, March 2, 2022

The conduct of the meeting will include remote access by telephonic, video, and electronic means. The public may attend in person or by viewing the live stream at <http://mtbluetv.org/program-live-stream-farmington-selectmen.html> or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MBTV11/> or by calling 778-5874

Chairman Matthew Smith called the meeting to order at 6:40 P.M. with the following members present: Stephan Bunker, Michael Fogg, Joshua Bell, and Scott Landry. Town Manager Christian Waller, Executive Assistant Nancy Martin, Town Clerk/Treasurer Leanne Dickey, Code Enforcement Officer Steve Kaiser, Code Enforcement Assistant Kate Foster, Planning Assistant Cindy Gelinis, Police Chief Ken Charles, Deputy Chief of Police Shane Cote, Interim Fire Rescue Chief T.D. Hardy, Fire Rescue Captain Terry Bell, Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Foster, Parks and Recreation Assistant Direct Jennifer Savage, Public Works Direct Phil Hutchins, Public Works Foreman Jim Kiernan, Public Works Operator/Laborer Ron Jalbert, Public Works Operator/Laborer Patrick McHugh, Fire Deputy Chief/Town Budget Committee Chair Clyde Ross, Budget Committee Member Mike Guerrette, Budget Committee Member Betty Jespersen, Budget Committee/Planning Board Member Judith Murphy, Budget Committee/Planning Board Member Lloyd Smith, Downtown TIF Advisory Committee/Zoning Board Member Paul Mills, TV camera operator Tom Martin, and members of the press and public were also present. Members of the media and public participated remotely.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Matthew Smith led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To discuss 2022 Public Works road projects supply issue

Public Works Director Phil Hutchins addressed the Board with construction concerns and provided a worksheet detailing 2022 projected inflation rates on HDPE pipe (culverts); 2021 State Index costs for liquid asphalt; and estimated LF cost for in-house construction and contracted construction. Mr. Hutchins stated contractor schedules are 85% booked for the 2022 season when they are typically booked at 55%. This is due to a lack of staff. There is a five to six-month backorder for drainage culverts. Mr. Hutchins reported that the Town does not put projects out to bid until after the Annual Town Meeting and the budget is approved. The Annual Town Meeting was pushed back until May 9th causing a delay in the bid process. There is a thirty-day bidding process for pavement, which will set projects back until mid-June. Mr. Hutchins explained that culverts must be installed before paving and they will not be available until November 2022 which means the project will be delayed. Mr. Hutchins stated it is his understanding that the road budget can be flatlined at \$300,000 and will not require a vote which will allow Public Works to proceed with the scheduled construction process. The five-year road plan calls for Phase II of the High Street Project, and the beginning of Mosher Hill, Savage Road, and Ramsdell Road. Flatlining the budget will allow us to finish High Street and nothing more. Mr. Hutchins said he is not advising the Board to cut the additional \$350,000 nor is he advising to keep it. Keeping the funds will allow us to pre-buy material and get a head start in 2023. Cutting the funds would hopefully help eliminate animosity towards any other budget increases. Mr. Hutchins stated he would regroup and address this infrastructure dilemma. In

ITEM 2: To discuss 2022 Public Works road projects supply issue (continued)

response to Matt Smith’s question, Mr. Hutchins stated he does not foresee a decrease in the cost of construction materials. He believes the overseas conflict will drive up the price of petroleum products depending on how long the war lasts, and it is difficult to predict future costs. Stephan Bunker said it is disappointing how the whole economy and the market shifted. The Board’s initial view based on public input was to substantially increase the road plan budget. But with a lack of vendor availability and the market price on petroleum driving up the cost of asphalt costs astronomically, it is a real kick in the teeth. Mr. Bunker stated the way to go is to raise and appropriate the greater amount of funds and buy ahead for the future in anticipation of the future year. Mr. Bunker said he would like to listen to what the other Board members thought. Michael Fogg responded that normally the Town Meeting is held in March and the next day if the budget passed, the Public Works Director would order materials. This year his biggest concern is culverts, and he can not place an order because we have postponed the Town Meeting. He cannot place the order for culverts, and this is unfortunate, but it is a fact. Mr. Fogg stated he leans towards leaving the money in the budget. And next year or in December when Mr. Hutchins is ready to solidify the 2023 contracts or order products, the money will be available. He does not feel the budget needs to be cut. The money allocated will still go towards the same projects. In response to Joshua Bell’s question, Mr. Hutchins stated the cost of supplies has increased 60%. He then referenced the Construction Inflation worksheet:

HDPE Pipe Cost

<u>Pipe Size</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022 FEB</u>	<u>Projected Cost</u>
12”	\$117	\$185	\$267	\$427
15”	\$160	\$238	\$345	\$552
18”	\$215	\$357	\$517	\$827

Liquid Asphalt Costs 2021 State Index

State	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Maine	\$497.82	\$512.50	\$522.50	\$527.50	\$535.00	\$548.75
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	\$558.75	\$562.50	\$562.50	\$562.50	\$587.50	\$-

Estimated LF

In-house Construction:

<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
\$29 LF	\$34 LF	\$50 LF

Contracted Construction: In town

<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
\$398 LF	\$500 LF	\$714 LF

Mr. Hutchins confirmed that he locked the contract for the High Street Project approximately a month ago. Any project after Phase II High Street will be at a higher cost. Scott Landry said he agreed with Mr. Fogg and would like to see the funds appropriated for roads placed into the Local Roads Reserve account for future use. He said rarely do prices go down, once prices go up, they tend to stay up. Matthew Smith said he could see it both ways but favored placing the funds into the Local Roads Reserve account and then holdover the funds at the end of 2022.

Stephan Bunker moved to reaffirm the recommended amount of \$650,000 into the Local Roads Reserve account 43-90-35-65; Scott Landry seconded.

VOTE

AFFIRMATIVE 5

MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 3: To discuss the approved 2022 Budget, (including employee compensation)

Matthew Smith addressed all those in attendance and said he expects a certain decorum. He asked everyone to be respectful towards one another. We are all entitled to our opinions and the Board based their decisions on what is best for the Town, that is what they were elected to do. The Board had a brief discussion on how they would like to proceed with the Warrant review and vote. Article by Article or would they like to vote on the document as a whole? Joshua Bell stated he thought this meeting would be held as an Executive Session. Mr. Smith reported it was confirmed by our legal counsel that the Board may not discuss personnel budgetary issues in Executive Session. Executive Session regarding personnel and wages is reserved to address individual employees and disciplinary actions – not the overall budget.

Michael Fogg moved to approve the Warrant as written; Scott Landry seconded.

Stephan Bunker asked Joshua Bell if the Board reviewed the Warrant Article by Article it is his opportunity to pose changes and ask questions, is this was what his hope was? Mr. Bell stated he would like to go through by department to figure out what the actual salary breakdown is. But it does not appear the Board wants to do that, so he will not hold the Board back, he is just one voice. Mr. Bunker thanked Mr. Bell. Leanne Dickey said that the date of the Warrant is May 9, 2022, and she is not sure if the meeting will be held at the high school. Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Dickey for the clarification. Mr. Smith acknowledged that some people feel the Board has not reviewed the 2022 Budget enough. He stated he has lived this budget for two months, at this point if someone feels they have not, this is what he does when he goes home at night. He encouraged others to do the same, we need to learn more than what we do when we just show up, and this applies to everyone, not just the Board. Mr. Smith reported that Christian Waller asked Nancy Martin to review the video and listen to the Board's original budget vote. The word "preliminary" did not come up. This year the budget process has been somewhat chaotic, this was our learning year. We all made mistakes and some of us did not communicate enough or give enough guidance, but he does believe this is a strong budget. He believes the Town can maintain, otherwise, he would not vote for it. The budget rewards those who need to be rewarded and gets other things done. We are fortunate that we have a climate right now where we can afford it. Mr. Smith thanked all those who worked for or against the budget. Regardless of your opinion, if you do have an opinion, it means you have a love for this Town and that he appreciates. Mr. Smith stated it is time to put forth the Warrant to the people. If the people want to tear the budget apart at the Town Meeting, that is why we have Town Meetings. Mr. Bunker listed the four areas he identified at the last meeting that are pressing us and made a considerable difference to this budget: highway; replacement of the Community Center roof; the replacement of the fire engine that is two years past its prime and a change to strength personnel; and salary adjustments. Mr. Bunker said he has not heard anything that has changed his mind regarding those four areas. Regarding the salary adjustments, he said, shame on me and anybody else who served on the Board since the Town did the salary survey in 2008 for not bringing up wage adjustments, we've let it go fourteen years without bringing it up for discussion, and wages are terribly out of scale. Some of the adjustments are modest, while others are considerable. For those adjustments that are considerable, it just says to him how far out of line they have been for the years they performed the work without due recognition. Mr. Bunker stated he feels fortunate with these four dilemmas we are at a point where our anticipated increased property taxes come at time so we can address all four of these issues. Mr. Bell each year there is a knee-jerk reaction to any budget that increases. In 2019 the mill rate leapt to \$19.98 due to the explosion and the Town needed to absorb some costs. The Town's operating budget will go up a little every year due to the increase cost of goods and services. In 2020 the budget went up, but the mill rate went

