

JOHNSON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2023

**Present:** Selectboard members: Duncan Hastings, Eric Osgood, Eben Patch, Mark Woodward

Others: Brian Story, Rosemary Audibert, Shayne Spence, Lois Frey (remote)

**Absent:** Beth Foy

**Note:** All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

**1. Call to Order**

Eben called the meeting to order at 6:30.

**2. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda**

Two additions were made to the agenda: a possible executive session to discuss possible hiring of a town employee and a discussion on whether to hold town meeting in person or by Australian ballot.

**3. Review and Approve FY24 Town of Johnson Budget**

Brian said he got a tax update from the county minutes before this meeting. As a result of that, line 184 decreases from \$25,723 to \$23,985. The total budget is now \$3,341,120.22 and the amount to be raised by taxes is \$2,084,868.79.

Eben asked if Susan found any errors. Brian said she found a few things, mostly related to the current year. Duncan asked if they had any significant impact on the year end number. Brian said they impacted it but he would not characterize the impact as significant. We are still running a surplus but now it is a few hundred dollars lower. Eben said it is \$700 lower.

Brian said he made some updates to interest and principal payment expenses for capital equipment for this year. In the equipment fund we have updated numbers for the Internationals and the pickup. Those were some pretty big changes. They are now considerably more expensive than in the past. The increases informed the scheduled payments for equipment going out into the future and it is not good news. But hopefully it is not quite as bad as it looks. He didn't increase the trade-in values to the same extent as he increased the expenses. He made only minor increases to trade-in values.

Duncan said we need to take a good hard look at this when we redo the capital budget plan. Eben agreed.

Eben said he believes the foreman's pickup is supposed to be on a 5-year rotation and should be replaced in 2030, not 2031.

Brian said he ran rough numbers and if we started borrowing for truck purchases rather than buying outright the capital equipment reserve would still not be healthy in the future but it would not go negative.

Duncan asked, Brian's figures don't have this year's \$10K increase to the capital equipment fund contribution continuing forward? Brian said no. But he talked about it with Beth and they assumed our contribution would not go down from this year, so he used a higher contribution amount for next year than we had previously called for.

Duncan said the negative number in 2029-30 has increased from a previous version of the capital budget. Brian said he made a few changes, which he tried to discuss in the emails he sent out. He needed to correct the year one or two loans were expiring and the loan amounts for the trucks went up.

Brian said our next pickup truck replacement is being made in the 6<sup>th</sup> year, not 5<sup>th</sup>. That is why the replacement after that is after only 4 years – because it is 5 years from when it was originally supposed to be replaced.

Eric said we could tweak some things in the capital budget plan now, but he would suggest instead just going forward with it as it is and telling the voters that we have to look at the whole replacement plan and the reserve fund. We know it is healthy for a couple of years.

**Duncan moved to approve the FY24 Town of Johnson budget as presented with the noted change making the total \$3,341,120.22, Eric seconded and the motion was passed.**

**4. *Discussion on In-Person vs. Australian Ballot Town Meeting***

Brian said the governor signed a temporary measure allowing towns to hold town meetings by Australian ballot this year. Rosemary said he signed it reluctantly. Mark asked, why reluctantly? Rosemary said she thinks there were some aspects school boards didn't like.

Eric, Duncan and Eben all said they are in favor of meeting in person. Eben said based on that we will have an in-person town meeting.

**5. *Review and Approve Town Meeting Warning***

The board reviewed the draft warning. Brian said he added the word “estimated” in a second place, as requested by the board. Rosemary also had made a change.

Rosemary asked if Brian has spoken to David Manning about using the school for town meeting. Brian said no. Rosemary said the school may still have additional requirements for meetings. Brian said he knows they are having sports with no restrictions.

**Eric moved to accept the town meeting warning as presented, Mark seconded and the motion was passed.**

**6. *Executive Session to Discuss Possible Hiring of Town Employee***

**Eric moved to enter executive session to discuss employee review under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3), Mark seconded and the motion was passed at 6:54.**

The board came out of executive session at 7:17

**7. *Adjourn***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18.