

2024 ANNUAL TOWN WARRANT

FEBRUARY 3, 2024

FIRST SESSION

Town Moderator, Rick Dill, opened the meeting at 9:08am. He then called Holden Mangano onto the stage and introduced him. He is a fifth-grade boy who drew a picture of the Wakefield Town Hall. His teacher was so impressed, the art work went viral and the Selectmen have decided to put it on the cover of the Town Report that will come out in March. Mr. Dill then acknowledged the three long term Budget Committee members that are not running for office, but have given so much to the town; Priscilla Colbath, Howie Knight and Dennis Miller. Mr. Dill had Holden lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, Selectman Ken Fifield did the invocation.

Moderator Dill introduced the Town Clerk, Valerie Ward, Town Administrator, Dino Scala, Chair of the Board of Selectmen; Charlie Edwards, Select Board Members Mark Duffy and Ken Fifield. Town Council, Stephen Whitley of Drummond Woodsum, was introduced and then The Budget Committee introduced themselves; Peter Kasprzyk (Water Department Representative), Josh Fuller, Marc Taliaferro, Bob Ouellette (School Board Representative), John Parker, Tom Daniels, Dave Mankus, Jerry O'Connor, Priscilla Colbath, Howie Knight, Denny Miller. Mr. Dill acknowledged Gil and Michelle from Clearview TV 3.

Moderator Dill stated that the polls will be open at 8am and closing at 7pm on March 12th here at the Opera House of the Town Hall. Rules were stated. Mr. Moderator introduced Phil Twombly for the traditional "Bill Twombly motion". This session of the Town Warrant be adjourned by 12 noon, and that no article be taken up for consideration after 11:50 AM. In the event that all articles in the warrant have not been acted upon, the Moderator is authorized to reconvene this session at a date, time and place which meets the approval of the majority of the voters present. Howie Knight seconded the motion. Motion passed

To the inhabitants of the Town of Wakefield in the State of New Hampshire qualified to vote in town affairs:

You are hereby notified of the First and Second Session of the 2024 Annual Town Meeting as follows:

You are notified to meet for the First Session of the Annual Town Meeting, to be held in the Town Hall Opera House, 2 High Street, Sanbornville, New Hampshire, on Saturday, February 3, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. The First Session will consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of each of the following warrant articles, and will afford those voters who are present the opportunity to debate, propose and adopt amendments to each warrant article, except those articles whose wording is prescribed by state law.

You are also notified of the Second Session of the Annual Town Meeting, to elect town offices and to vote by official ballot on the warrant articles that may be amended at the first session to be held at the Town Hall on March 12th at 2 High Street, Sanbornville, NH polls will open at 8am and close at 7pm.

Moderator Dill explained that Article 2 had a public hearing. If anyone has any comments or questions there are people from the Planning Board to answer your questions.

Article 3: 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 purpose set forth herein, totaling \$7,663,490? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$6,931,137 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town 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. This appropriation is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$1.24 per \$1000 of assessed valuation; Default Budget estimated tax impact: \$.92 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Motion to discuss was made by Selectman Edwards and seconded by Selectman Duffy. Selectman Edwards explained the amount of \$7,663,490 is offset by projected revenues approved by DRA in the amount of \$3,999,388 giving a balance of \$3,664,102 as the remainder and actual amount used to set the tax rate upon. Mr. Fogg asked if the offsetting revenues should be within the article. Council explained that the revenues are part of the budget but do not need to go in the warrant article being presented. Robert Hewins came to the microphone and made a motion to change the dollar amount from \$7,663,490 to \$7,666,990 to have \$3,500 reinstated to the Educational Sponsor line of the Conservation Commission's operating budget. Relf seconded the motion. Tom Daniels explained that the Budget Committee voted 8-0-1 to remove the \$3,500. This is taxpayers' money to fund kids to go to camp. The Conservation Commission currently has undesignated fund balance of \$46,289.00 that can be used at their discretion. This Fund 3 grows with interest and fund raising and donations. Last year this account received \$7509 just in interest. Mr. Daniels feels it can fund the camp program. Mr. Hewins stated that the town has supported this program for years and the \$46,289 was donated by one person. He went on to explain the Union Meadows Conservation Park on Harmony Drive has bathrooms and a large parking area and it cost the Commission \$35,000. The Town Forest on Pray Hill needs a forest plan and that money would come out of Fund 3. Barry Conservation Camp statement was read aloud. Peter Kasprzyk discussed the forest on Pray Hill. It will take some money but it will also make revenue. He also mentioned there is County Forester that can be contacted and it may not have a fee. Peter also stated what a great program the camp program is. Selectman Duffy explained that he has gone back and looked at the records. The camp program has been paid out of Fund 3 for the last few years, in error. The Budget Committee sees that the money is not being expended so they decided to cut it out of the budget. Mr. Duffy thinks they should withdraw their motion and come back next year with it in their budget. Relf Fogg explained that was his error, he was not paying attention. They had a short fall in 2020 and the camp was paid out of Fund 3, ever since then it was not corrected and continued to come out of Fund 3. Discussion ensued. A vote was taken and the motion failed 28-17.

Denny Miller explained that this budget needs to pass. If it does not pass, we will lose quite a few employees for sure. They did not get a raise last year. Mr. Kasprzyk stated he feels the spending has been out of hand and that is why we are on a default budget. Mr. Duffy stated that they worked really hard on this budget and we are down from last year's budget. Discussion ensued.

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$85,000) to be added to the Highway Truck Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This article is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.03 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Edwards moved the article; Mr. Fifield seconded the motion. Mr. Edwards explained this is a capital reserve fund set aside for the future purchases of Highway trucks; average price of the Highway trucks cost over \$300,000. Current Balance in this fund is \$98,982.84

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$350,000) to be added to the Highway Construction Project Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This article is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 2-1, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 10-1. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.22 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Edwards moved the article; it was seconded by Mr. Duffy. This article is for the improvements and repairs of damaged roads. This article did not pass last year and has placed the town behind in its schedule for road maintenance. Current Balance in this reserve is \$116,112.40. Mr. Edwards explained that the reason he voted no is because he wanted it to be \$500,000. Mr. Mitchell explained how the costs of materials have risen in the few years. A ton of asphalt cost \$56.50 when he started working in Wakefield in 2018, now it costs \$100, salt used to cost \$50 now costs \$100. Doug Soares asked how did the town deal with the damage from the two bad storms we got. It was explained that \$350,000 came from unassigned fund balance (after appealing to the state), the Highway Block Grant that the state gives each town was used as well. Mr. Soares wanted to know why we have so much money in the unassigned fund balance. It was explained that the state allows 5% - 17% of the bottom-line budget. The money comes from unspent money through the years. It was also stated that some of that money is unpaid taxes and it is not really there. Steve Randall came forward and made a motion to raise Article 5 to \$500,000. Peter Kasprzyk seconded the motion. Denny Miller stated that \$350,000 has a better chance of passing than \$500,000. If it is shot down two years in a row then we would be in trouble. It was discussed to take \$150,000 out of the undesignated fund balance and raise the \$350,000 by taxation. Mr. Randall withdrew his motion, Mr. Kasprzyk withdrew his second and a new motion was made. To raise the \$350,000 through taxes and take \$150,000 out of the undesignated fund balance. Mr. Kasprzyk seconded the motion. Motion passed 38-5.

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) to be added to the Transfer Station Trucks Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This article is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.004 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Edwards moved the article. It was seconded by Mr. Fifield. This reserve is for the Trucks used at the transfer station including the roll off trucks used to transport Dumpsters to Waste Management rather than paying for this process, which has proven to be a large savings to the town. Balance in this reserve is \$5,088.49. There was no further discussion.

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be added to the Wastewater Treatment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This article is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.01 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Edwards moved the article. It was seconded by Mr. Fifield. In the not so far off future, the State of NH will mandate that we build a Waste Water treatment plant. This reserve will help offset the cost of engineering plans and the Cost of a Grant writing team. Current balance in this reserve is \$151,794.52. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that the whole town is sharing a cost but the whole town is not on public sewer. When the state wants us to do an income study it should be done only on the people that use public sewer.

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000) to be added to the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This appropriation is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.03 per \$1000 of assessed valuation.

Mr. Fifield moved the article. It was seconded by Mr. Edwards. This article is the reserve for new Ambulances. Current balance in this reserve is \$120,405.33

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ninety-Five Thousand Dollars (\$95,000) to be added to the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This appropriation is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.04 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Fifield moved the article. It was second by Mr. Duffy. This reserve is for the purchase of new Fire trucks/rescue vehicles. A new Vehicle was just purchased recently leaving a current balance of \$156,248. Mr. Knight questioned the CRF was renamed. Mr. Miller made a motion to change from Fire Truck to Fire Vehicles. Mr. Knight seconded the motion. Teresa Williams stated we should make sure to have the correct name of the CRF. It was determined it was renamed in 2010 on Article 13. Council suggested the motion gets amended. Mr. Knight amended the motion to say Purchase and Equip Fire Vehicles Capital Reserve Fund. Mr. Miller seconded it.

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy-Five Dollars (\$30,775) to be added to the Invasive Species Expendable Trust Fund previously established. This appropriation is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.01 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Duffy moved the article. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion. This reserve is for the yearly mitigation of Invasive species including but not limited to Milfoil and Cyanobacteria. This reserve currently has a balance of \$1,646.41

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) to be added to the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This appropriation is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.02 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Fifield moved the article. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion. This reserve is for the yearly purchase and rotation of a Police Cruiser. Current balance in this reserve is \$5,166.04.

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$55,000) to be added to the Public Safety Building Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This article is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.02 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Fifield moved the article. It was seconded by Mr. Duffy. This article is for the upkeep of the Public Safety building FD/PD and larger capital improvements. Money raised this year will be used for repair of the Fire Station's floor which is cracking in several spots. Balance in this reserve is \$16,337.90. Chief Fenton explained that this is very important. The floor has radiant heat in it. If it does not get fixed it will be very expensive later. This floor is 6200 square feet and really needs to be repaired now.

Article 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the Town Hall Improvement Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This appropriation is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$0.04 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Duffy moved the article. It was seconded by Mr. Edwards. This reserve is for capital improvements for the Town Hall Building. The most pressing need is for a new roof for the Town Hall. Current balance in this reserve is \$82,720.28

Article 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eleven Thousand Dollars (\$11,000) to be added to the Assessing Statistical Update Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This update is legally required by the State of NH. This appropriation is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.005 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Edwards moved the article. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion. This article sets aside a portion of the cost of a town reevaluation which is Mandated by the state of NH. Current balance in this reserve is \$392.23

Article 15: To see if the Town will vote to establish a “Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)” Replacement Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of replacement of the Firefighters SCBA’s used for breathing in hazardous conditions, and to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighty-One Thousand Eight Hundred Dollars (\$81,800) to be placed in this fund; further to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from this fund. \$45,000 to come from the December 31, 2023 unassigned fund balance, and \$36,800 to come from taxation. This article is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$.02 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Fifield moved the article. Mr. Duffy seconded the motion. This Article is for the replacement of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus used by the Wakefield fire fighters. This amount would bring the Fire Department’s number of Breathing Apparatus to a count that each fire fighter responding would have an up-to-date piece of equipment. Of the \$81,000 requested \$45,000 would come from the Unassigned fund and \$36,000 to come from taxation. There is no balance to this account as it is a new Article. Mr. Nason explained that they received these units 20 years ago through a grant. They tried to do a grant last year with no success. After twenty years things start to go wrong with them. There should be a unit on each seat of every vehicle. Each unit cost \$7360. This equipment is very important to someone who is in a burning building.

Article 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Emergency Management Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from December 31, 2023 unassigned fund balance, with no amount to be raised from taxation. This article is recommended by the Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-0, and recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 10-1. (Majority vote required). Estimated tax impact: \$0.00 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Mr. Fifield moved the article. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion. This article would add more to the already established Emergency Management Line in the Budget. The entire amount of \$50,000 would come from the Unassigned fund and no money to be raised from taxation.

Article 17: By Petition: Request that the Wakefield Parks and Recreation Department shall dedicate and name its new Pavilion proposed at the ball field complex the “Gary Miliner Memorial Pavilion” in honor of Gary Miliner, whom for many years coached, mentored and helped many Wakefield’s youth achieve their goals and happiness through team efforts and individual determination. Gary loved everything about his hometown and was proud of Wakefield as he inspired many of us to do our best and never give up on any challenge presented to us. Gary also dedicated many years to the Town in the role of Santa Claus for the happiness of the children during the Holiday Season. Mr. Fogg spoke a bit and introduced Paul Miliner (Gary’s brother). Mr. Miliner explained that there was no little league in Wakefield until Gary Miliner, Ken Beaupre, Alden Hayward Sr. and Ernie O’Neil got together and created a couple teams. Mr. Robinson, Parks and Rec Director, stated that the ballfields are called “The Ballfields” and the pavilion should be called “The Pavilion”. The plan is to have a wall in the Pavilion called “The Hero Wall”. On this wall will be Gary Miliner along with many others that have given their time to the children in Wakefield. Mr. Robinson read a letter from his children Katie and Charlie. Mr. Keating made a motion to amend Article 17 to name the new pavilion at the ballfields “The Pavilion” and create a “Hero’s Wall” at

the Pavilion. We could then place Mr. Miliner's name on that wall along with many other deserving names" Motion was seconded by Peter Kasprzyk. Motion passed.

Article 18: By Petition: To see if the Town will vote to combine the offices of the Town Clerk and the Tax Collector to create a new single office of Town Clerk/Tax Collector with a term of office of 3 years. If approved, the combined position of Town Clerk/Tax Collector would be elected at the next annual meeting in 2025. (Majority vote required). Mr. Kasprzyk explained what other towns do. Tax Collector has to have a Deputy. The Town Clerk may have a Deputy. Sixty-five percent of the towns in New Hampshire have a combination Town Clerk/Tax Collector. The only downside is a new person with no experience there will be a learning curve. Jerry O'Connor made a motion "Shall we express an advisory view that the position of Town Clerk and Tax Collector be combined in the Town of Wakefield." Seconded by Josh Fuller. Mr. Fuller went on to speak about training, cost increases, cost of living increases. Will there be overtime at tax time? Mr. Decolfmacker spoke about the service in the Town Hall and Tax Collectors office has been amazing. He would hate to see it change. Mr. Kasprzyk agreed that the people in the Town Hall are very professional. He stated that it would be nice to have them cross trained in the two offices. Mr. Moderator took a vote on the amendment. Motion passed.

Article 19: To transact any further business that may legally come before this meeting. There was none.

Meeting adjourned at 11:46.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie J. Ward

Town Clerk