

**ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE  
TOWN OF MADISON  
January 19, 2021  
MINUTES**

**Members Present** – Chairman Ron Force; Selectman John Arruda; School Board Representative Michael Brooks; Ned Rogerson; Doug McAllister; Steve Bartlett; Justino Fernandes

**Members Excused** – Nicole Nordlund

**Others Present** – Selectman William Lord; DPW Director Jon Cyr; Librarian Sloane Jarell; Officer Michael Mosher; Town Administrator Linda Shackford; Madison TV Videographer Moselle Spiller

**Where and When Posted** – Town Hall upper & lower bulletin boards and Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on December 28, 2020.

**Meeting Called to Order** – By Chairman Force at 6:02 p.m.

**Approval of December 8, 2020 minutes – Motion** by McAllister, seconded by Rogerson to accept the minutes of December 8, 2020 as written. The motion passed with Fernandes abstaining because he did not attend that meeting.

**Approval of January 5, 2021 minutes – Motion** by McAllister, seconded by Bartlett to accept the minutes of January 5, 2021 as written. The motion passed **unanimously**.

**Drawdown Review:** Arruda noted that the 2020 drawdown, with encumbrances of \$125,353.88, leaves an expected return to the general fund of approximately \$117,000.00.

**Proposed Town 2021 Budget and Warrant Articles Review:** Arruda led a review of each department’s budget for 2021.

	2020 Approved	2020 Expended	2021 Proposed
Ambulance	\$ 21,869.00	\$	\$ 106,350.00
Animal/Pest Control	\$ 1,975.00	\$	\$ 2,300.00
Assessing	\$ 39,980.00	\$	\$ 37,600.00
Building Inspection	\$ 38,141.00	\$	\$ 39,262.00
Conservation Commission	\$ 4,850.00	\$	\$ 4,850.00
Direct Assistance	\$ 13,025.00	\$	\$ 9,525.00
Department of Public Works	\$ 893,746.00	\$	\$ 932,563.00
Election, Registration, Vital Statistics	\$ 10,860.00	\$	\$ 7,150.00
Emergency Management Dept.	\$ 6,001.00	\$	\$ 6,001.00
Executive	\$ 128,151.00	\$	\$ 128,153.00
Financial Administration	\$ 146,258.00	\$	\$ 153,450.00
Fire Rescue	\$ 170,950.00	\$	\$ 173,100.00
General Government Buildings	\$ 130,675.00	\$	\$ 130,675.00
General Government Equipment	\$ 12,600.00	\$	\$ 12,600.00

Insurance	\$ 99,177.00	\$	\$ 99,177.00
Interest - Tax Anticipation Notes	\$ 1.00	\$	\$ 1.00
Legal	\$ 17,300.00	\$	\$ 12,000.00
Library	\$ 82,670.00	\$	\$ 84,542.00
Madison PEG TV	\$ 28,467.00	\$	\$ 28,500.00
Notes Due	\$ 98,260.00	\$	\$ 98,260.00
Patriotic Purposes	\$ 1,525.00	\$	\$ 1,525.00
Personnel Administration	\$ 517,554.00	\$	\$ 555,946.00
Planning Board	\$ 18,950.00	\$	\$ 13,950.00
Police	\$ 313,132.00	\$	\$ 329,314.00
Street Lighting	\$ 3,925.00	\$	\$ 3,925.00
Zoning Board	\$ 19,760.00	\$	\$ 19,760.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,819,802.00</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ 2,990,479.00</b>

Rogerson noted that the overall increase in the budget at is 6.1% with half of that increase caused by the increase in the ambulance line. The operating budget for 2021 is at \$2,990.479.00.

**Warrant Article Review:** Arruda led a review of the proposed warrant articles, pertinent discussion noted below each article.

**Article 3.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a 10-year lease/purchase agreement for One Hundred and Eighty-two thousand Eight Hundred and twenty-six dollars (\$182,826.00) for the purpose of leasing a new excavator using trade to reduce the lease payment and to raise and appropriate Twenty Thousand Seven Hundred and fourteen dollars (\$20,714.00) which will apply to the first year's payment for that purpose and to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a 10-year lease/purchase agreement for One Hundred and Fifty-two thousand two hundred and forty dollars (\$152,240.00) for the purpose of leasing a new loader using trade to reduce the lease payment and to raise and appropriate Seventeen Thousand Two Hundred and ninety-nine dollars (\$17,299.00) which will apply to the first year's payment for that purpose. These lease agreements contain an escape clause and the Town will own at the end of the 10 years.

*Arruda explained this article as presented has recently been considered to have changes made. Arruda stated that the 15-year-old loader is in terrible shape, with Cyr in agreement to the poor condition. This article's original purpose was to trade in the loader and excavator. The idea being presented now is to only trade in the loader using the trade amount for the first year's payment. Bartlett confirmed that it would be a \$161,000 purchase and with the trade the Town would make lease payments on 131,500 beginning next year. Arruda, noting that this is also a Selectmen's meeting, asked Lord his feelings on financing the loader. Lord would rather take a shorter term and pay it off faster with Arruda agreeing.*

**Motion** by Arruda, seconded by Lord to sign a purchase and sale agreement, pending Town Meeting approval, for a CAT loader with a 6-year lease agreement. *The motion passed 2-0.*

**Article 5.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000.00) for paving and road improvements of Town roads including but not limited to King Pine Road, Fox Road and High Street. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the funds have been exhausted with the completion of the project or by December 31, 2025, whichever is sooner.

**Article 6.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a 7-year lease/purchase agreement for one hundred and twenty-one thousand (\$121,000.00) for the purpose of leasing a new Highway Truck with dump body, plow, frame and sander and to raise and appropriate the sum of Nineteen Thousand and fifty-one dollars (\$19,051.00) of which will apply to the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease/purchase agreement contains an escape clause and the Town will own at the end of the 7 years.

**Article 7.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a 5-year lease/purchase agreement for Fifty-Two Thousand Seven Hundred and ninety-five dollars (\$52,795.00) for the purpose of leasing an outfitted Police Cruiser and to raise and appropriate Eleven Thousand Three Hundred and twelve dollars (\$11,312.00) of which will apply to the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause and the Town will own at the end of the 5 years.

*Arruda stated that originally the Police had requested two vehicles this year, one has been eliminated.*

**Article 8.** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a 7-year lease/purchase agreement for One Hundred and Twenty-Nine Thousand dollars (\$129,000.00) for the purpose of leasing Rescue Truck Chassis and to raise and appropriate Twenty thousand Three Hundred and twelve dollars (\$20,312.00) which will apply to the first year's payment for that purpose and to use \$55,000 of funds encumbered from the 2020 budget. This lease agreement contains an escape clause and the Town will own at the end of the 7 years.

*Arruda explained that this project will refurbish the current vehicle using monies encumbered from the 2020 budget to offset the lease amount.*

**Article 9.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Highway Heavy Equipment Expendable Trust Fund.

**Article 10.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Assessing Expendable Trust Fund.

**Article 11.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate Fifteen Thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Transfer Station Capital Projects Expendable Trust Fund.

**Article 12.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000) for the fireworks show during Old Home Week.

**Article 13.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of XXXX dollars (\$xxxxx) to be placed in PEG TV Expendable Trust Fund this sum to come from the unassigned fund balance which represents unused franchise fees.

*Shackford explained that this number will be finalized and it represents the funds that were not expended from the 2020 TV budget that came from cable franchise fees. McAllister recommended that this same process happen annually as there will come a time that a major failure of equipment could cost thousands of dollars to upgrade.*

**Article 14.** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) to be added to the previously established Capital Reserve Fund for land acquisition and conservation purposes.

*Lord noted that this will be placed into their capital reserve fund which will be added to the over \$300,000 amongst the conservations three accounts.*

**Article 15.** To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund created in 1996. Said funds with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the Town's general fund.

**Article 16.** To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Code Enforcement Vehicle Expendable Trust Fund created in 2020. Said funds with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the Town's general fund.

*It has been decided that a cruiser from the Police Department will be passed on to the Code department.*

**Article 17.** To see if the Town of Madison will vote to authorize the Selectmen to appoint two (2) volunteer representatives from the Town to serve on the "Communications District Planning Committee" for the purpose of drafting a "Communications District Agreement" under RSA Chapter 53-G – Communications Districts?

**Review Petition Warrant Articles:** Shackford explained that we have received letters from the listed petitioners however not all have submitted their paperwork. The deadline for submission is 4:00pm on February 2, 2021. Arruda confirmed with Shackford that the amounts that will be requested by petitioners have been worked into the bottom-line total of \$3,322,115.00.

**Housekeeping:** Force would like to address the January 5<sup>th</sup> minutes again because abstaining votes need to have a reason included. The minutes will be adjusted to reflect the following on Article 6: Brooks recommended this Article, McAllister and Bartlett voted NO and abstentions were by Rogerson for lack of available documentation, by Fernandes for reason of documentation lacking as related to the School CIP, and by Force for lack of transparency because not adequate time to study the School's CIP.

**Update on MES Budget, Warrant Articles and Deliberative Session(s):** Brooks offered clarification on HB1129 stating that it requires that a drive-thru option for school voting be made and this offers some challenges because the Town is not adopting the alternate procedure under that bill and therefore cannot offer drive-thru voting on Town matters.

**Approval of ABC Report to be published in Madison School District Report:** Force reviewed the draft report with the Board. The following changes were agreed to be made:

- Page 1: second to last line ~~bottom line of~~ to read "difference between";
- Page 2: last paragraph shall have CIP called out as Capital Improvement Plan;
- Page 3: Conclusions section shall be change from:

**Conclusions:**

Kudos to the Madison School District staff for their incredible efforts in providing quality education to our Madison students during a worldwide pandemic. It is apparent to us that this strategy will continue until the pandemic is over.

The Committee also suggests some recommendations and highlights some items that need more scrutiny:

- The MES student population has steadily decreased over the decade, but the budget has steadily increased over that same period. However, it should also be noted that this year's school budget increases are significantly more modest than in most prior years.
- Special Education costs have literally skyrocketed over the past decade. Far more than any other major category in the school budget, despite a declining student enrollment.
- Consideration of a cooperative school district arrangement should definitely be pursued as well as preparation for contract renewal with the Conway School district with better terms for Madison residents.

To:

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The Committee also suggests some recommendations and highlights some items that need more scrutiny:

- The MES student population has steadily decreased over the decade, as the budget has steadily increased over that same period.
- Special Education costs have increased over the past decade, significantly more than any other major category in the school budget.
- Consideration of a cooperative school district arrangement should definitely be pursued as well as preparation for contract renewal with the Conway School District with better terms for Madison residents.

The committee was in agreement with the changes. Shackford will adjust and forward to Force for submission.

**Review Upcoming Meeting Dates:**

- The Town Budget Hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2, 2021 here at the school commencing at 7:00pm.
- The School's deliberative session is scheduled for ZOOM at 7:00pm on February 1, 2021. Brooks will get the committee emails from Shackford and ask the superintendent to send the invite link.
- February 9, 2021 will be the Public Hearing for changes to the Budgeting Ordinance.

**Public Comments** – There were none.

**7:48 PM** – McAllister made a **motion** to adjourn, seconded by Rogerson. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford,  
Town Administrator  
Recording Secretary