

**ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE
TOWN OF MADISON
December 17, 2024
MINUTES**

Members Present – Sharon Schilling; Joe Dame; Selectboard Rep Joy Gray; Rick Judkins by electronic participation

Members Excused –School Board Rep Sarah DeMartino

Others Present – Town Administrator Linda Shackford; MadTV Videographer Aysia Wellinghurst, members of the public

Where and When Posted – Town Hall upper & lower bulletin boards and Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on May 28, 2024.

Meeting Called to Order – By Schilling at 6:02 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions were made by Schilling.

Pledge of Allegiance – Schilling led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Schilling to allow member Rick Judkins to attend the meeting by electronic means. The motion passed **3-0**.

Judkins stated he is in North Carolina so it is not feasible for him to be present and there is no one in the room with him. Schilling noted that any votes taken tonight will be done by roll call and due to time constraints, the agenda will be taken out of order.

Public Comment: Bill Dempster of 157 Doe Drive brought to the Committee information regarding a House Bill that passed in October that speaks to a cap on annual budget increases. Dempster and the Committee discussed the details.

Nicole Nordlund asked the Committee if there has been any work done on reducing the budget. The Committee cited areas that were considered and some have been reduced that included road improvements, health insurance and asking the Selectmen to level fund the 2025 operating budget.

Linda Haver commented that years ago the school and Town worked closely together on budgets making concessions for each other.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Dame, seconded by Gray to approve the minutes of December 3, 2024 as written. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote with Gray – aye; Schilling – aye; Dame – aye; Judkins – aye.

School Board Budget – Schilling offered an overview of the School Board meeting she attended last night citing that the SAU operating cost is increasing by \$30,000 over last year if passed by a majority vote. There are nine warrant articles this year that include placing \$25,000 in the Madison Corner School Fund and rescinding SB2 voting format.

Health Insurance – The Selectmen voted to increase the contribution percentage that employees pay. It was increase from 5% to 7%.

CIP – Gray was sent the changes that Shackford has received from Department Heads thus far that will be incorporated.

2025 DRAFT Warrant and Budget – The Selectmen made changes at their last meeting to articles on the warrant that included:

- Reducing the road improvement article from \$500,000 to \$400,000;
- Removal of the \$100,000 Master Plan article;
- Reduced the contribution to the Transfer Station ETF from \$15,000 to \$10,000.

Gray noted that the Conservation Commission does not intend to ask for their annual \$5,000 funding of the CRF but will request funds to cover the Crowe property easement review; and they will not be asking for a scholarship donation line in their budget but will ask for it to be a warrant article.

The repairs to the Silver Lake dam were discussed noting a multi-million dollar cost. Ron Force asked if the State of NH has any responsibility with Dame explaining that the Town is the owner of the dam.

Donna Veilleux asked about the Selectmen’s stipend line increasing in anticipation of having 5 selectmen; she feels it should go down, not up because there will be more people to do the same work. Schilling suspects there will be more work to do if they are doing their jobs.

Dame commented on the grader article stating that the actual cost of the grader will ultimately be \$473,000 with interest; Dame would like to see that information incorporated into the warrant article. Schilling reiterated that the Department of Revenue dictates how the articles are written. Force is disappointed in how the grader purchase was handled and will not be supporting it. Gray added that there was a public hearing held and a lot of discussion. Gray would like to see DPW have an alternative plan should the article fail. Judkins fears that some have lost sight of the fact that half of the roads in Town are dirt and that the grader is used to plow too. Force agreed the Town needs a grader but feels the process was not transparent and the Selectmen were being reactionary versus planning. Nordlund agreed with Force adding that the Town just can’t afford it.

Schilling asked Force if he would be willing to fill an open position on the Committee. Force agreed to serve as an alternate for the remainder of this budget season. L. Shackford will bring this to the Selectmen for an Oath of Office appointment.

Road Priorities – The update of the paved road list is still in process. Schilling would still want to see a prioritized list of gravel roads.

L. Shackford will confirm the process for electronic participation procedures regarding the requirements for a quorum.

Motion by Schilling, seconded by Dame to adjourn. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote with Gray – aye; Schilling – aye; Dame – aye; Judkins – aye.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58pm

The next meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2025 at 6:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford,
Town Administrator/Recording Secretary