

**ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE  
TOWN OF MADISON  
January 14, 2025  
MINUTES**

**Members Present** – Sharon Schilling; Joe Dame; Selectboard Rep Joy Gray; School Board Rep Sarah DeMartino; Rick Judkins by electronic participation; Alternate Ron Force

**Others Present** – Town Administrator Linda Shackford; MadTV Videographer Carol Dandeneau, 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 6:00 p.m.

**Welcome and Introductions** were made by Schilling.

**Pledge of Allegiance** – Force led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge.

**Motion** by Dame, seconded by DeMartino to allow member Judkins to attend the meeting by electronic means. The motion passed **4-0**.

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.

**Motion** by Schilling, seconded by Dame to elevate Force to a voting member for this meeting. The motion passed by a roll call vote of **4-1-0** with DeMartino – no; Dame – yes; Schilling – yes; Gray – yes; Judkins – yes.

**Public Comment:**

Nicole Nordlund of E Madison Rd asked questions about the grader purchase with Dame explaining the research and analysis that was performed.

Linda Haver of Pebblebrook Ln hopes there is a plan b should the grader article fail.

Donna Veilleux of Lead Mine Rd received clarification of how the trade of the old grader impacted the cost.

Deb Parsons of Thusis Rd appreciates the efforts of the ABC but is disappointed that they are not as active in the school budget in their finding and as far as asking more specific questions.

**Approval of Minutes: Motion** by Gray, seconded by Dame to approve the minutes of December 17, 2024 as written. The motion passed by a roll call vote of **4-0-2** with Gray – yes; Schilling – yes; Dame – yes; Judkins – yes; DeMartino and Force – abstaining because they were not present at the meeting.

**Calendar** – Upcoming dates of events were reviewed. January 22-31<sup>st</sup> are the sign-up dates for elected positions.

**School Board Warrant Article Votes** - Schilling read aloud each article and after discussion votes were cast:

**ARTICLE 2:** Shall the School District 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 purposes set forth therein, totaling \$7,284,200. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$7,190,421 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the School District 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.

The Committee does not recommend this appropriation by a roll call vote of **2-4-0** with Gray and DeMartino recommending; Force, Schilling, Dame and Judkins not recommending.

**ARTICLE 3:** Shall the voters of the Madison School District adopt a school administrative unit budget of \$1,403,732 for the 2025-2026 school year in which \$442,499 is assigned to the school budget of this district?

This year's adjusted budget of \$1,322,062 with \$414,053 assigned to the School District budget will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the district voters voting in this administrative unit.

The Committee recommends this appropriation by a roll call vote of **4-1-1** with Gray, Dame, Force and DeMartino recommending; Judkins not recommending; and Schilling abstaining because she does not have enough information.

**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Madison School District and the Madison Employees Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimate Increase</u>
2026	\$123,585
2027	\$89,899
2028	\$90,236

And further to raise and appropriate \$123,585 for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

The Committee recommends this appropriation by a roll call vote of **5-0-1** with Gray, Dame, Judkins, Schilling and DeMartino recommending; and Force abstaining because he needs a written analysis of the numbers.

**ARTICLE 5:** To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$10,000 to be added to the Special Education Capital Reserve fund previously established. This sum to come from June 30 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation. (The current Special Education CRF balance excluding interest earned since 6/30/24 is \$219,415.41.)

The Committee recommends this appropriation by a roll call vote of **6-0-0** with Gray, Dame, Schilling, Judkins, Force and DeMartino recommending.

**ARTICLE 6:** To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be placed in the previously established Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund. (The current Building Capital Maintenance CRF balance including obligation and excluding interest earned since 6/30/2024 is \$140,235.07).

The Committee recommends this appropriation by a roll call vote of **6-0-0** with Gray, Dame, Schilling, Judkins, Force and DeMartino recommending.

**ARTICLE 7:** To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$85,000 to be added to the Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from the June 30 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation. (The current Building Capital Maintenance CRF balance including obligations and excluding interest earned since 6/30/24 is \$140,235.07.)

The Committee recommends this appropriation by a roll call vote of **6-0-0** with Gray, Dame, Schilling, Judkins, Force and DeMartino recommending.

**ARTICLE 8:** To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be placed in the previously established Madison Corner Schoolhouse capital reserve fund. (The current Madison Corner School House CRD balance excluding interest earned since 6/30/24 is \$25,000.00.)

The Committee recommends this appropriation by a roll call vote of **3-2-1** with Gray, Dame and DeMartino recommending; Judkins and Force not recommending; and Schilling abstaining because she wants to see more definition of what the funds will be used for.

#### **2025 DRAFT Warrant and Budget –**

Annette Bartlett received clarification of the executive line's increase.

Gray noted the overall operating budget is about \$90,000 over 2024 and she listed the five lines with the highest percentages of an increase.

Discussion of potential changes in the structure for how the Selectmen determine employee pay increases and hiring wage ranges. The use of employee evaluations, job description, the creation of an organizational chart, informing new hires of their potential wage increases over time and pay increases that occur after approval of the budget at Town Meeting were discussed as tools for the Selectmen.

Donna Veilleux asked about the conservation commission budget and if the increase in the Green Mountain Conservation Group's water testing fee increase was considered. Gray offered the history behind the change in the budget.

Comments and discussion regarding:

*Article #5: Road Improvements* – Force drove over the roads mentioned on the road improvement list that were colored red and some appeared in fine shape. Dame explained that Mooney Hill is an example of a road that has had recent work but is still in need of the attention of a top coat.

Force would like to see the Article amount brought down from \$400,000 to \$325,000 for 2025, then increase in 20% increments; the leap is excessive for one year. Judkins agreed with Force adding that an increase from \$250,000 to \$400,000 cannot be afforded and would like to see a plan for the next ten years.

*Article #6: Grader* – Bartlett noted the great deal that the grader was but hopes there is another option listed for in case the article fails.

Dame spoke to his contribution of analyzing the purchase adding he spearheaded the inclusion of a 7-year maintenance plan. Nordlund asked how much Milton Cat's service is once out of warranty costs with Dame responding he did not know but that some towns trade in equipment once it is out of warranty. Healthy debate on this article is expected at Town Meeting.

*Article #7 Police Cruiser* – This would replace the vehicle sold to Effingham that was K-9 equipped. Nordlund expressed her frustration in leasing and paying interest; start voting that we just cannot afford it. Schilling will send an email to Chief Hayford requesting information.

*Article #14 Silver Lake Dam* – The \$66,000 to be placed in the ETF would be in anticipation of the balance being added in 2026 which would allow for the engineering study for repair of the dam. Dame said there has been some discussion by the Selectmen to do a bond in 2026 that would cover the repairs.

*Article #15 Groundwater ETF* – This would cover remediation of PFAS chemicals in five wells by supplying filtration systems, based upon expected DES direction, for local residents' wells that have been impacted. Gray mentioned that Mike Brooks began the process to obtain a \$66,000 grant to assist in covering the costs and that an application for the Town's well to be deemed a public water system will allow the opportunity to apply for more grant funding.

*Article #17* – The \$100,000 original Planning Board request for funds to update the Master Plan was reduced to \$25,000 by the Selectmen. There has been help offered by community members for this project.

10:13pm Judkins excused himself from the meeting.

*Article #21 Watershed* – SLAM has the opportunity to create a watershed plan with a \$100,000 loan from DES. Gray has asked them to consider if the plan could encompass the Silver Lake Dam project too.

SLAM is recruiting members for their steering committee and has asked for a rep from the Advisory Budget Committee.

Gray **motioned**, seconded by Schilling to appoint Dame as the Committee's representative. The motion passed **5-0**.

**Volunteer for Charity Petition Warrant Article Review** – Gray **motioned**, seconded by Force to appoint Dame as the point person for review of charity petition warrant article financials. The motion passed **5-0**.

It was agreed to pass over the remaining discussion items based upon the time.

**Motion** by Schilling, seconded by Gray to adjourn. The motion passed **5-0**. The meeting adjourned at 10:32 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2025 at 6:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford,  
Town Administrator/Recording Secretary