

**ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE  
TOWN OF MADISON  
January 28, 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 Kasia Scentsas, 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 6:01 p.m.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Schilling made introductions noting Gray is on her way and Judkins will be asking to participate electronically.

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

**Public Comment:** There were no public comments.

**Approval Of January 14, 2025 Minutes:**

Ron Force noted a correction to the January 14 minutes regarding Article 4 and the CBA vote. He had abstained, while Sharon Schilling had voted in favor, which was the opposite of what was recorded.

There was a brief discussion about whether the elevation of Force was required for the minutes approval. Force clarified that it was not required by the Budgeting Ordinance.

Schilling requested that the most recent version of the Budgeting Ordinance be distributed to members, as it had been amended at the previous year's town meeting.

**Motion** by Force, seconded by Dame to approve the minutes of January 14, 2025 as amended. The motion passed **4-0**.

**2025 SAU 13 Draft Budget:**

Ron Force provided a summary of the Madison School Board meeting he attended on January 27th:

- Staffing levels for grades 5 and 6 will remain the same due to increased enrollment.
- No changes were made to para-educator positions or other staff for the coming year.
- The school board officially voted on their warrant articles, with Articles 5 and 7 amended to clarify "no additional taxation" would be required.
- The school board decided not to take a position on the SB2 warrant article, leaving it to voters to decide.
- A special SB2 hearing was scheduled for February 11 at 6 PM, before the town's public hearing at 7 PM.

The committee discussed the insurance premium split, noting some confusion about whether it should be 88/12 or 89/11. They agreed to seek clarification on this point.

*6:20pm Gray joined the meeting.*

The Committee decided to attend the deliberative session on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and if it is felt necessary, they will revoke their recommendations on the school's warrant articles.

## 2024 Final Drawdown, 2025 Draft Budget and Warrant Articles:

Shackford presented the final drawdown report for 2024. Key points discussed:

- The town spent 95.1% of the budget, with \$165,031.14 remaining.
- \$83,000 of the remaining funds were encumbered for specific purposes, including fire truck repairs, a defibrillator, and flooring repairs.
- The amount going back to the unreserved fund balance was estimated to be around \$82,000.
- The current unreserved fund balance was \$418,849, which would increase that approximately \$80,000 from 2024.

The committee discussed several specific line items:

- DPW overspent its parts budget by \$40,900. This included \$12,000 for unanticipated parts for a new truck, \$4,800 for a mulcher, \$9,000 for truck plows, and \$10,000 for an excavator head.
- There was discussion about the need for better planning and fiscal conservancy in some departments to avoid overspending.
- The committee requested more detailed information on equipment purchases and maintenance costs from the DPW.
- Emergency Management Director expenses were over budget due to reimbursable FEMA-related costs.
- The Fire Department's purchase of a \$44,000 defibrillator was discussed, with part of the cost covered by ARPA funds.
- Replacement of the DPW wood chipper was discussed with Dame volunteering to produce an analysis related to purchasing versus rental.

The committee expressed a desire for more detailed tracking of equipment costs and usage to inform future budgeting and purchasing decisions.

*7:15pm – **Motion** by Schilling, seconded by Force to allow Judkins to participate in the meeting by phone from the Carolinas. The motion passed 5-0.*

Judkins joined the meeting stating he was alone and could not attend the meeting because he is not in New Hampshire. Schilling noted all votes will be done by roll call from here forward tonight.

## Updated Road Priorities:

The committee reviewed an updated road priorities list provided by the DPW. Key points of discussion:

- The list categorized roads as red, yellow, or green priority.
- Some roads, like Maple Grove Road and Bickford Road, were not included on the list. The committee agreed to ask DPW to add these.
- There was debate about the appropriate level of funding for road maintenance. The current proposal was for \$400,000, up from \$250,000 in previous years.
- Force and Judkins expressed concern about the large increase and its impact on taxpayers, suggesting a more gradual increase to \$325,000.
- The committee discussed the need for a long-term road maintenance plan, similar to the state's 10-year cycle.
- Questions were raised about the accuracy of the cost estimates on the priority list, as some appeared outdated.
- The committee requested more information from DPW, including:
- Prioritization within the "red" priority roads

- Additional DPW work required before repaving
- Updated cost estimates based on recent quotes
- Validation of the information on the priority sheet

The committee agreed to revisit this topic at their next meeting on February 11th, Gray will reach out for updated information from DPW regarding the further prioritization of red roads.

**Updated CIP:**

Dame reported that the DPW had added a new item to the Capital Improvement Plan: a wood chipper with an estimated cost of \$90,000. The committee discussed the need for a thorough analysis of this request, including:

- Comparison of purchase vs. rental costs
- Frequency of use
- Alternatives such as contracting out the service
- OSHA regulation compliance

Dame also noted that the DPW had provided an updated vehicle fleet document, which the committee found very informative and helpful. The grader should be added to the vehicle list.

**Charitable Warrant Articles:**

Dame offered a spreadsheet listing the charitable requests received this far. It will be completed once the deadline for submission has passed.

**2024 Revenue Worksheet:**

Gray reported that the Recreation Department had generated approximately \$32,000 in revenue through fees, fundraising, and donations.

Schilling noted that the total estimated revenue for 2024 was \$1.3 million.

**Adjournment and Meeting Schedule:**

The committee discussed the schedule for February 11<sup>th</sup> meetings to be held at the school:

- 5:00 PM: Advisory Budget Committee meeting – Shackford will request the use of the school gym, inform the Committee, inform MadTV and post as required.
- 6:00 PM: School Board SB2 hearing
- 7:00 PM: Town budget hearing

**Motion** by Force, seconded by Gray to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by roll call vote **6-0**.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM.

**The next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2025 at 5:00pm at the Elementary School Gymnasium.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford,  
Town Administrator/Recording Secretary