

## 2006 WARRANT ARTICLE EXPLANATIONS

**Article 9.** The legislature has given each community the option of whether to enact a veteran's exemption and if so at what level up to a maximum of \$500. The petitioners desire that the maximum be allowed. The Selectmen encouraged an increase in the benefit from \$100 to \$200 in 2004 and voters approved that change. Unlike the other exemptions allowed by law, the veteran exemption does not have a means test (an income consideration) to determine qualification but a range of credit instead. The town would not be affected by any change. It would simply allow a greater credit to one subset of taxpayers and all others would share that tax burden.

**Article 10.** The operating budget includes routine recurring expenses related to staffing and salaries, benefits, supplies, utilities, maintenance, repairs, and the like required for the day-to-day operation of the town departments. This year's budget is up 8.6% or \$250,000. The increase in the cost of oil has affected a wide range of products we buy, benefits like health insurance are up, several items that were warrant articles last year are in the operating budget this year (fire fighters accident insurance and the police vehicle lease). The general effects of population growth and inflation play a part as well.

**Article 11.** The Town Hall is beginning to show its age. Structurally it is very sound. We just gave it a new roof this year and installed a sprinkler system several years ago. Now there is a need to focus on the inside. This CRF begins the process of funding a rehab of the first floor to better utilize space and to modernize while being sensitive to the architecture of such an old building. The estimated total cost of \$300,000 has been prepared with the assistance of a local architect. Upgrading the Town Hall was determined to be more cost effective than building a new structure.

**Article 12.** The Expendable Trust fund was established as a way to pay for accrued benefits (typically sick days or some vacation time) owed when a person leaves town employment. Being able to pay them out of the trust reduces the need to fund them from a department operating budget that was probably not designed at budget time with these expenses in mind. The trust fund works well but needs a little more money in it (this would give us a total of \$4,000) to be capable of covering all contingencies.

**Article 13.** The library roof has been in the capital plan for the past 5 years. All sections are in need of replacement though one is already leaking. Two well qualified roofing companies have looked at the job and prepared quotes for the cost of this article to be based on.

**Article 14.** The Master Plan will be completed by mid 2006. It will identify certain sections of our regulations for review. This warrant article will fund the work necessary to take the action items from a general concept to a written regulation.

**Article 15.** The Fire Department was awarded a federal grant in 2005 to purchase a combination forestry/pumper truck. A bid process to determine the key providers was

concluded in January. To comply with the 95% federal 5% local funding mechanism plus purchase some supplies for the truck, \$20,000 in taxpayer funds is being requested.

**Article 16.** The major pieces of fire apparatus have a lifespan of about 30 years. Experience has proven that reliability over the latter years is improved if a thorough inspection of key components is undertaken near the half-way mark of the vehicles expected service. Repairs will be made after discussion with vendors. The warrant amount is an estimate of the maximum amount the department feels would be needed given what they know now about the condition of the truck.

**Article 17.** As the Recreation Department baseball/softball and soccer programs become ever more popular, more space is needed. The site across from the current fields on Old Coach Road has been identified as a preferred location. All the interested parties have reviewed a design and approved it. Recreation will provide approximately one-half the funding and the town is being asked to approve \$20,000 towards the project.

**Article 18.** Recreation programming generally is growing and expanding. The 2004 Community Profile identified providing improved facilities for various community purposes including those of the Recreation Department as a high priority. A basic building design to accommodate the space needs and provide general cost guidance has been developed. Funding would come from a variety of sources, not just public funds. This article asks that a Capital Reserve Fund be established to begin the public funding, now that some of the key needs have been identified, recognizing it will be five years or more before construction would start. Additional details will be provided as the project moves forward.

**Article 19.** The Highway Department has 3 dump trucks and one 1-ton that are bought new. This capital reserve fund is designed to provide the funds to replace these vehicles as their rotation schedule requires.

**Article 20.** Funding for the replacement of the 1-ton we now have (a 2001) was not built into the CRF of previous years for the Highway Department vehicles. Thus funding is being requested in this separate warrant article. Funds appropriated this year will be held over and included with those raised next year, thus the non-lapsing language, allowing for a 2007 purchase.

**Article 21.** The Highway Department used the previous Road Agent's Gradall for many years as the department's defacto backhoe. Upon his retirement, a Capital Reserve Fund was established and funding begun for a replacement. This year those saved funds would be combined with newly approved funds so the backhoe can be purchased.

**Article 22.** This article continues the town portion of the funding that will be needed when the bridge is replaced in 2009.

**Article 23.** The last major bridge on the replacement schedule is the Gregg Mill Road bridge. Like the others, its replacement will be accomplished using the State bridge aid

program. Even though replacement is planned for 2012, the bridge aid program is so popular that to have the state 80% share in place for 2012, application must be made in 2006. Applications are only accepted when the town has begun the funding of its share.

**Article 24.** Every year the Road Committee and the Selectmen discuss with the Road Agent sections of road that need improvement but the cost is beyond what can be absorbed in the operating budget. The project for 2006 is as described in the warrant article. This section of road is heavily traveled but the road base and drainage was never designed to handle it. Portions of this section are fine but others need major work. Once the road preparation work is completed, it will be repaved with a 2 inch base coat and an 1 1/2 inch overlay or wear coat.

**Article 25.** When not on a scheduled shift, our Police Department officers are available to be hired by outside contractors for traffic control situations. Costs for this service are paid for totally by the contractor. Until now, these costs had to be included in the Police Department budget but the expense was offset on the revenue side when the bill was paid. The legislature has just approved using a Revolving Fund to account for these activities because they really do not relate directly to work being done on behalf of the town. This is non-town related work. The Revolving Fund would eliminate the need to fund these “Details” out of the town operating budget and would make them self-funding.

**Article 26.** The Footbridge article was amended at the Deliberative Session to make it “non-lapsing”. As it turns out, it is not legal to amend an article in this fashion if it was not originally posted as such. Given that the Department of Revenue Administration will disallow the article even if it is passed, voters are encouraged to skip over this article rather than vote either “yes” or “no”.

**Article 27.** The Town Hall Roof project is now complete with close to \$850 left in the fund. The Municipal Budget law requires a vote of the town to discontinue and close-out a CRF. Funds lapse back into the general fund as a revenue and thus reduce taxes.