

SELECT BOARD MEETING
January 12, 2023 5:30PM
Town Hall/Hybrid

Quorum noted

5:30 PM: Meeting called to order by Chairperson Donhauser.

A. Roll Call: Mr. Donhauser, Mr. Widi, Mr. McPherson, Ms. Dow, and Mr. Shapleigh.

B. Pledge of Allegiance recited

C. Public Comment:

5:31 PM Mr. (Gene) Wypyski, Creek Crossing, said that I'm a voter, also a member of the Budget Committee. However, I do not speak on behalf of the Budget Committee on what I'm about to say. I'm here to discuss the level of library services the William Fogg Library provides to the citizens of Eliot. In the last 60 days, or so, the Fogg Library has lost 3/4 of its staff. Presently, the Fogg Library is operating 17 hours a week, mostly during the day. The Library's website has been removed so all online access to the library's resources and services doesn't exist. There are no plans for any library programs in 2023 and, if you go to their Facebook site, everything on there is obsolete or is a broken link back to the website that doesn't exist. So, my concern as a voter and Budget Committee member is we, as citizens, simply aren't getting our money's worth in services from the Fogg Library Trust. We've spent about \$240,000 in fiscal year 2023 to support the operations of the library, expecting that they would continue to provide traditional library services to the community. What I mean by services are things like access to books and materials, borrowing the books, internet access, personal computer access for some people, meeting space, professional staff, after-school programs, kids story time, all that good stuff. My dad was a librarian. My daughter-in-law is a librarian, my sister used to sell books to libraries so I kind of have a sense of what a functioning library should look like for the Town, especially a public library. So, as I research it, the Town is not a benefactor of the Fogg Library Trust. We're a customer of the library. I understand we're still pulling away from Covid restrictions but there's no economic reason the Fogg Library is unable to provide the level of services the community has come to expect. So, I'm asking the SB to write a formal letter to the Fogg Library Trustees, namely Ms. Schisler, Ms. Cabot, and Ms. Kent, to request, formally, what is the level of service we can expect from the library for the duration of fiscal 2023. If you look at what was offered, even 30 – 45 days ago with being open 30 hours a week, programs scheduled into this month, and all of that has just kind of evaporated on us. So, what level of service will the library provide in fiscal year 2023, i.e. their staffing plans, library hours, availability of online resources, program plans. Basically, things we had 60 days ago, you know. Let's continue, hopefully. And the second thing is really when the services they are going to provide in fiscal 2024. I'm on the Budget Committee and we formally invited the Trustees to the next budget

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meeting. Their response is pending. So, I guess I go back to the very economic concern of are we getting our money's worth, now, and can we expect to get our money's worth, with their request of approximately \$260,000, in the next fiscal year. Thank you for your time.

5:39 PM Mr. Widi said, just to simplify it, your request is for us to draft a letter asking the trustees what their plans are for the remainder of fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024.

Mr. Wypyski said, simply, yes. And candidly, I understand behind the scenes, there's a lot of history and upset and corporate governance issues with the trust. That's all well and good but all I care about is the citizenry having access to good library services. We paid for them. We should have access to them. And what we get right now is not acceptable. It's not up to what we contracted for 8 months ago.

Mr. Shapleigh asked if Mr. Wypyski knew why 3/4 of the staff have retired or left.

Mr. Wypyski said that I don't know directly. I'm a citizen and I hear talk. I think, speaking as a former HR professional, it was a combination of voluntary and involuntary term. But beyond that, I don't know.

5:40 PM Mr. Donhauser said that I don't find your request unreasonable, at all. I think it makes a lot of sense. However, I want to state just for the record that we actually, as a Board, have no control over the library, other than withholding money. I guess that would be a form of control. Even to the extent of clawing back money. For example, money that was allocated for this year that is not being used. That would be very difficult for us to do, I believe.

Mr. Wypyski said that I am not suggesting that, in the least. I respect that they are a separate entity from us. However, I made this point at the last Budget Committee meeting. We have to have some kind of relationship with them. They want to be hands off, fine. They are the vendor. We are the customer. We don't have any control over our vendors. You know it's all arm's length. So fine. You don't want us to be involved in your governance, so be it. We should be able to expect, though, the services we pay for.

Mr. Donhauser said that I agree with your proposal.

Mr. McPherson asked if we know if those positions have been posted.

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5:42 PM Mr. Wypyski said that I believe the Library Director's position is posted. It's a Maine.gov site – library association site. That's the only one I saw.

Mr. Donhauser said that I would like to make a motion.

Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Ms. Dow, that the Eliot Select Board initiate a letter through the Town Manager asking what the level of service we should expect in this coming year and for fiscal year 2024 and perhaps the Trustees may visit us at a future meeting.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Widi said that I would just say “for fiscal year 2024” in there because we're going through that budget season now. We may have a lot of questions and, then, we're voting on making a recommendation based on a total unknown.

Mr. Donhauser agreed to that change and enter that into the motion.

DISCUSSION ENDED

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes

Mr. McPherson - Yes

Mr. Widi – Yes

Ms. Dow – Yes

Mr. Shapleigh - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

5:43 PM Mr. Donhauser asked if there was any other public comment that people would like to make at this time.

Mr. (Larry) Sottero, Brixham Road, said that the one thing that concerns me a lot is that the Director was let go I believe 3 or 4 weeks ago, now, and the job posting was just put on a few days ago. So, they are kind of taking their time. It doesn't seem to be important and the hours have been cut ever since Christmas.

Mr. Donhauser said that I understand your concern. Again, we as a Board have no control over that.

Mr. Sottero said that, as taxpayers, I think we would have definite concern.

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Mr. Donhauser said certainly. Without question.

Mr. (Skip) Devito, State Road, said that I remember discussions when the schools were being built that, technically, our public library is in the schools. Can anybody comment.

5:44PM Mr. Donhauser said that, to my knowledge, that isn't true. That's not the case. It's a private trust. The school libraries are funded by the school, as far as I know. For security reasons, it would probably be unlikely we would be able to go into a school library freely.

D. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

There were no minutes reviewed tonight.

E. Department Head/Committee Reports

5:45 PM 1. Town Manager's Report

Mr. Sullivan said that I did file a report and it is on the website. I did take Orland McPherson's picture and put it on my report. Two things I'd like to add is that we did go live with Timeclock+. It is a system that will help us streamline our payroll as well as keep closer records of time – vacation time, sick time, when they do and don't come in to work. This is something we've been working on for a long time. I'd like to thank, particularly Ms. Albert, for the hard work on this. It has been accepted by the employees at a rate I haven't seen before. They've absolutely been wonderful. I'd also like to congratulate Eliot on getting the Climate Resiliency grant, a competitive grant. Thank you to Mr. Brubaker for all his hard work on it. It dovetails well with the Comp Plan.

Mr. Donhauser said that the grant also has future possibilities, correct.

Mr. Brubaker said that now that we are officially enrolled in Community Resilience Partnership, we'll have access to those grants.

Mr. Donhauser asked if there was an amount awarded to us yet.

Mr. Brubaker said not yet but my understanding is that they are were pretty favorable to other grant applications for action items that fit with the list of action items.

Mr. Donhauser said well done.

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Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. Shapleigh, that the Eliot Select Board accept the Town Manager's Report, dated January 4th, and ask that it be posted on the Town website.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow – Yes
Mr. Shapleigh - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

F. Board and Committee Appointment/Resignations:

5:50 PM 1. David Marshall, Conservation Commission

Mr. Marshall said that I am looking forward to serving the Town. I've done this in New Hampshire prior to the pandemic.

Mr. Donhauser said that I have read your application. It is quite impressive.

Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. McPherson, that the Eliot Select Board appoint David Marshall to the Conservation Commission to a term ending June 2025.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow – Yes
Mr. Shapleigh - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

5:51 PM 2. Jay Muzeroll, Eliot Fire Chief and Forest Fire Warden

Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Ms. Dow, that the Eliot Select Board appoint Jay Muzeroll as the Eliot Fire Chief and Forest Fire Warden for a term ending December 31, 2023.

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Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow – Yes
Mr. Shapleigh - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

5:52 PM 3. Suzanne O'Connor, Planning Board

Ms. O'Connor said that I'm really interested in participating. I've been to a couple of meetings. I think the work is interesting and I'm happy that I have time in my life, now, to join.

Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. Shapleigh, that the Eliot Select Board appoint Suzanne O'Connor to the Planning Board to a term ending June 2024.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow – Yes
Mr. Shapleigh - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

G. New Business:

5:53 PM 1. Comp Plan Update (Planning Director Jeff Brubaker)

Mr. Brubaker said that we are now up and running with our Comprehensive Plan update. We had the kick-off meeting for the full committee that you all appointed in November. It was a great meeting of around 20 committee members and I felt it went really well. I want to thank the committee for their work, so far. They appointed co-chairs, a vice chair, and a secretary. We also have subcommittees that have each had their inaugural meeting, most happening in December. Those subcommittees, as you know, are focused on particular topics in the community like economic development, land use, and so forth. The good news recently is that

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we have released our Community Survey. It is now open and I hope you all can take it. Everyone should have gotten a postcard in the mail with a link. We have a great online survey where you can not only answer questions but you can also put points on a map, draw lines on a map, to help determine where you want to see community amenities, improvements, and things like that. For those who don't want to do the online survey, we have paper copies here in Town Hall. There's a new drop box in the lobby that our Land Use Assistant set up, and we also have some copies available at the library. Furthermore, if anyone calls our office who might have trouble leaving their house and wants a paper copy mailed to them, we can do that, as well. We are thankful, also, to have EliotConnects. They are volunteering, too. If someone connects them, they can actually drive a survey to their house and drop it off and then bring it back. We're hoping to give folks a lot of different options to take the survey.

5:55 PM Mr. Donhauser asked if there is a deadline.

Mr. Brubaker said that we are keeping it open through January. There are extra copies of the post card in the lobby, showing them an example. On the back there is a link and QR code if you want to do the online version. I did check the responses on the online survey the other day and we are either at, or over, 500 responses. So, I'm really excited about that And that doesn't include the last few days or paper copies. We have our inventory underway. This is the first pillar that is commonly done in the early sages of a Comprehensive Plan, where we're collecting existing conditions information, getting a sense of all of the data that we can that goes into the state of the community. That, along with the community survey and other public input, will inform the goals, policies, and strategies in the Comprehensive Plan. That's the true road map for where the community wants to go the next 10 to 15 years. So, right now we're in the information-gathering stage and we have SMPDC as our consultant; that they are helping us with that inventory. We are planning to do the first public session sometime later this winter, which would be like a community visioning meeting. We are also planning to do some stakeholder interviews with businesses and organizations in Town.

Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. Shapleigh, that the Eliot Select Board accept the update, as presented, and thank the Town Planner for all his excellent, hard work on this project.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes

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Ms. Dow – Yes

Mr. Shapleigh - Yes

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

H. Old Business:

5:58 PM 1. FY 24 Budget Brief

Mr. Sullivan gave a briefing using a powerpoint presentation. We are getting closer to having some finality on our FY24 budget. He said that Town Manager recommendations as represented in this presentation are his professional opinion of what fiscal resources are necessary to fund the basic services to facilitate Town business or the activities for the residents of Eliot in the most responsible manner in FY24. As Manager, I continue to advocate that Eliot invest in itself. This includes increased funding for infrastructure, innovation, and staff retention. Regarding the **Town Hall** renovation and expansion, I think it's one of the items that is ready to go before the voters in a warrant article. It will be in a separate article. I would consider this project ready to go because it has been discussed, ad nauseum. The price tag is about \$3.5 million. I'm going to suggest we do a 30-year note, which would allow us to do some of the necessary repairs at the Police Station, as well. I think that this, to some degree, will double the size of the present Town Hall. A major portion would accommodate a larger meeting space, additional meeting spaces, and increased Town Clerk staff, which is where we have a need, as well. The large meeting space would accommodate voting activities and larger public meetings. I've had people ask me why move voting from the schools. The future of having voting in schools is being considered in every community because of safety concerns. Here, for some of the larger elections, they do close the school, but the set-up is getting more complicated, the moving of equipment from place to place is adding additional strain on that equipment, etc. So, if we can have a facility, which the Clerk feels we can, large enough to both store the equipment and have the voting here, I think you will be ahead of the curve. The added bonuses for the Clerk's Office, which would mean more space, but also additional space and a lot more programming for the ECSD, Aging-in-Place, and others. We often have people ask us, public groups, to use space. There has been substantial deferred maintenance in Town Hall for years. There is an immediate need for a new door. The front door was open this morning when we came in and the alarm wasn't set from last night. We've had that door repaired a couple of times and looking at having it repaired again. The roof needs to be replaced. It's beyond its guaranteed, useful life. There are ADA issues, security issues. The carpets are beyond steam-cleaning. Our insurance underwriters have cited floor tiles as a hazard. Painting of offices or meeting spaces has not been addressed in years or, in some cases I'm told, ever. The

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backup generator is inefficient and a likely candidate for failure. The project will not get any cheaper in subsequent years. By using a 30-year bond, now, the cost will be borne by real-time residents who will get the most utilization. 30-year level debt would add about \$243,000 to the annual budget. It would not impact the budget fully until the bond is floated, at the earliest if it was approved next year, FY25, or later depending on the issuance, if approved at the June 2023 meeting. It's also time to make a decision, in my estimation, one way or another.

6:03 PM

The **Boat Basin**, an incredible community asset, is tired and in need of significant investment. In cooperation, and with the approval of the owner (State of Maine), I believe we can harness revenue, much of which is being left on the table, so to speak. I'm proposing the Town of Eliot approve a \$1.5 million enterprise borrowing supported by fees assessed to the users. My proposal, if accepted, would establish a parking fee for all cars. Eliot-registered passenger vehicles may be excluded. Increased launch fees to \$100 for companies or non-residents and \$25 for Eliot residents for launching their boat. Presently, it's \$50, \$30, and \$10. The revenue of these and other sources – sponsorships, fee-based agreements – would be used to satisfy the bond. The Police Department (PD) would have greater oversight, including hiring and supervising seasonal staff to enforce and monitor the Boat basin. This model has been very successful in other communities. Everyone knows that when they travel to some of our neighbors, they have a community service staff during the summer that looks similar to police but are in a lot better shape and much younger. Those are the models we continue to look at. Chief Moya and I have had a number of discussions. The plan would address re-paving, including expanded parking on the Green Acre side of the property, installing security cameras, improving the docks, re-building the stair railing, adding an irrigation system to a portion of the fields, improving the restrooms, and refurbishing the pavilion. A security surveillance system would be installed and some accessibility issues would be addressed, as well. The goal would be to lessen the impact to the taxpayers, improve the asset, and have the cost allocated to users. The PD would become the central oversight. Monitoring equipment and software for the parking and launch fees enforcement would be included in the bond and be about \$17,000. If we wanted to go to a kiosk, it goes up to about \$26,000. All the parking would be an 'app' on people's phones. Other communities have used it and, for people who have a lot of 'apps' it's fairly common. If somebody comes in and they don't have the app or couldn't download it, you could always make adjustments to the fine or forgive the fine. There are ways to address it and it has been successful in other communities.

6:06 PM

Regarding **Murray Rowe Park**, it is in tough shape. Once the FY22 audit is complete, I hope to make a recommendation for a portion of the unassigned fund balance allocated to invest in Murray Rowe Park and attempt to bring it back to a usable state. Presently, there are structures which are falling over and pose a danger. People are using it as a disposal site and there is a general lack of care or investment. I've been told that a family that constructed it and took care of it for a

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number of years. I would suggest that some of that effort has been squandered. It's in terrible shape. With reasonable annual investment, Murray Rowe and other parks and Town properties would become something we could be proud of. Part of the plan would be improved parking at pickleball, make the playing fields safe for play and, at the very least, straighten the foul pole in left field. I don't know if you've seen it, but the foul pole dips quite a bit to the center field. There are other infrastructure needs, including but not limited, to Hammond and Frost Tufts Parks, expansion of trails and sidewalks for pedestrians and cycling. Town Hall parking lots, tennis courts at Frost Tufts, new lighting around the pond at Hammond are all been things that have been requested and are valid. The sewer and water expansion is finally starting to move, which is a major infrastructure project. Closing on that bond will be January 25th. I am sure it will test everyone's patience all summer long on Beech and State but it is needed and a great investment for the Town. In this budget, I continue to advocate for more investment in roads and sidewalks. I believe it's important to give Public Works the resources to increase repair of roads. In this year's recommendation, I'm asking to nearly double the size of the investment. We have two or three streets that we haven't been able to put the finish coat on. We've been trying to stretch the budget. The finish coat asphalt is about \$78/ton. The ground coat is about \$16/ton. If we use recaptured material from other roads that we're re-doing, we can lower that to about \$7/ton. We can also capture a larger contract if we are able to move forward in a more aggressive way. So, I think investing an extra \$500,000 in roads and hard surfaces in Eliot is absolutely a great investment.

Regarding **technology**, I mentioned Timeclock+. With TRIO, we have recently moved to the cloud version. We're running into a few bugs. We're feeling the pain that the FAA felt yesterday but this will increase our functionality and security and improve our reporting options. It won't all happen at once but we're already on the web version and we have a number of things that we'll be able to improve. Maptionnaire is something that the Planning Department has been using to increase citizen accessibility for community engagement. It helps all voices to be heard and we hope that people enjoy using that. I also think, from a budget perspective, we need to really over the next year get serious about some regionalization. Talk about why there are two transfer stations just a few miles apart. The Transfer Station has been really difficult lately. It's not anything to do with the staff. We've had issues with the cost of recycling material fluctuating. One example is that, in November, we were getting about \$80/ton for cardboard. We had to send one 10-ton trucks up to ECOMaine, so we actually benefitted about \$200 on that transaction. With the next one, we had to send two trucks up and the price fell to zero. They didn't charge us for taking the cardboard but the market price is zero a ton. So, it cost us \$800 for two trips, so \$1,600, so we lost the \$200 we made in November. We think that's an area that, long-term, we have to find some other solutions. Mr. Brubaker and I have talked about some of our partners in other communities, especially Kittery about regional transit. The

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question is where should we invest regionally. Thanks to the SB, we're going to more fully exploit the communications we get from the cable network. That is probably a June or July unveiling. Should we be using contracts for seasonal instead of hiring seasonal, buying equipment, or is it better for us to try and contract for some of that. And is there private sector opportunities for us that we are missing, and partnerships. I just want to let folks know that we continue to look at those areas.

6:12 PM

Regarding **training and retaining staff**, the market for attracting and training and retaining the best staff available has certainly been quickly evolving. I believe Eliot has made solid progress in challenging times. Each component may be regarded as expensive; however, the cost of addressing the issue to the greatest extent possible is immeasurable. We have partnered with York County Community College (YCCC) for some important training. As the SB knows, we've had customer service training, de-escalation training and, through the Harold Alfond Grant, we have more training lined up. We have individuals taking other skills training, like Excel, writing skills. We also have a lot of training through people's professional organizations – subjects from ADA requirements to human resources, cyber security, (inaudible) health (creating a healthy workplace). It's not going to change the world in a minute but these trainings are incredibly important. I thank the staff for being so engaged and I thank you for allowing me to do that. In compensation, we made some changes last year and made some adjustments. We still do want to compete. Anyone who has work in the municipal setting will attest that salary studies don't really capture the responsibilities. What the Town Manager does in Eliot is quite different than what the Town Manager does in Kittery. There's levels and levels of assistance. I looked at one compensation comparison – the police service in South Berwick. It's \$38 per capita more expensive for police service for the same number of policemen. There is an additional civilian person. The Town is only 800 people larger. It's a good comparison. I know people will say it's not but, actually, statistically it is a good comparison. So, that's just one example of the value that we have in Eliot. When I'm making decisions about positions, I review responsibilities, organizational significance, capacity, for the individual and for the organization. Opportunity, regulatory requirements, and a person's want to take on additional responsibilities. Compensations and expenditures are now part of the SB warrant process so anyone who wants to look at what people make. At each one of your meetings, you are now voting on the payroll warrant, and you can't get more transparent than that. Regarding **Administration**, we have eleven full-time, one part-time. We're consolidating benefits into one grouping in the administration budget. We are consolidating IT, or technology, for most of the departments. There is some specialized IT that we see in other departments. Increase in community relations in all departments and, by that, it means we're asking every department to 1- have the resources but then 2 - use those resources to do more outreach to the public and communicate with the public. We have a

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renewed effort to fully exploit technology we presently possess, as well. There is some technology we have that doesn't get fully used, and we're aware of that. Some of it is training and some of it is that we haven't found the application. One of the things I missed in the budget and I think is worthwhile, and I apologize, is becoming a member of the Eastern Trails Management District (ETMD) for \$3,500. The ETMD is creating a network of trails from Scarborough down to the New Hampshire border. We certainly want to be part of it. We would be on the North Berwick/South Berwick leg. This membership will open other funding for us in that regard. Regarding **outside agencies**, the newest request is for Mainspring, which is an organization to provide wrap-around services for people in need. I think it's a really good approach. It's a smart approach. Long-term, it's going to lessen the incidence of what that community faces – homelessness, food insecurity, mental health, job training and placement, and those things don't stop on a dime. Ms. Albert wasn't here, today, so I had the opportunity to be the General Assistance person. When she's not here, I fill in. I had two people coming in for heat and it's a longer process than you would imagine, if they qualify, if they filled out the right applications, etc. So, the need is real. This year we're getting more requests than we have in the past and we thank York County Community Action, Fair Tide, Footprints, for all their work. Mainspring asked for \$100,000 for seed money for their 22 Shapleigh Road project. After discussions with a number of parties, I chose to recommend \$50,000, which I think is a good starting point for Eliot. Some of the other people – Footprints is asking for \$12,000, Caring Unlimited, ProShare, MHC@Home, LifeFlight, SMAA, Crossroads, Maine Public Radio asked for \$100 and I didn't recommend that, YCCA, and York County Shelter. Please go to our website, where all this is in the FY24 budget. I ask you to consider my recommendations. As best I could, I determined the value of the services provided by these different organizations and how it applied to Eliot. Hopefully, my recommendations reflect that. I found nothing exceptional in the Town Budget Committee's to previous years. There were reasonable increases requested from Budget Committee and Planning Board, which I supported. The new Eliot Agriculture and Food Security Commission was requesting a \$1,000 to promote the work they are doing and creating material for the public. They are really an active group. I'm really excited and I can't thank Leslie Stevens enough for her leadership on that committee. Regarding **debt**, presently, the only debt we have is sewer and Town Hall LED lights. Prior, they were lump sum. On advice of our auditors, I'm separating it out into interest and penalties. We have also moved the lease line into debt at the advice of our auditors, as it has similarities to borrowing or to debt. In that, we only have a backhoe, a fire truck, and copiers and printers. One of the things we're trying to concentrate on, now, is to coordinate and get a better price for all our copiers and printers. The one here and the one at the Police Station are on different schedules. If we can get them all together, we can save money. The proposed projects at the Town Hall spaces, they would be in borrowing but they would be in separate.

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warrant articles. If they get approved, in future years they would be in the debt line. The Eliot Police Department has 8 full-time officers, one Sargent. When I wrote this, I was very excited because we were almost right up-to-snuff and then we've run into a couple of things with academy challenges, so we're still a little bit short. Right now we're only one officer down but, due to some issues with the academy, there are two officers that we can't count as fully trained. We are looking at a revised configuration for the department, including a non-union command position, which I think is needed. That would be done within the budget. Then, we're looking for some stipend specialized duties, like Harbor Master, ACO, and detective. The Town Manager recommendation also includes to York County Community Action \$54,000 to double our access to social work. That has become a godsend and it's really making a difference, both for the officers and for some of the issues that they have to deal with. As we quickly found out, the problems that face some people in each community don't happen 9 to 5. They usually happen n Friday at 5:30 PM. Having access to good, social and psychological work and other wrap-around services I think is worth the \$54,000. Regarding the Fire Department budget, the largest increase is Fire Department wages from last year. It's still incredibly low. Probably in a lot of fast food restaurants make more than being a volunteer fire department in Eliot. It's great work that they do and this community is very lucky to have them. As I said in my report, you're never too old to volunteer. They are always looking for people to add to the volunteer Fire Department here. Public Works has 5 full-time and presently one vacancy. Five part-time and one seasonal worker and Public Works Director. The largest increases are under paving for an additional \$473,000 to go to all hard surfaces, reiterating that I think that some of that can come from the unassigned fund balance. Public Works maintains a list of roads and surfaces, some of which have been waiting for binder coat. Also included in this line will be crushed, retained material, which has been sitting at the DPW for a while. Costs for road repair has been increasing. With more funding, we hope to get a better contract. Fuel costs have risen. When we wrote the FY23 budget, diesel fuel was \$2.64. When we are in the FY23 budget, it's over \$5, so that tells you how difficult it is, sometimes, to budget for these items and how we need to have some flexibility. We did put in the seasonal summer employee consolidated to wages in the budget and added \$20,000. I think you were paying \$57,000 a year for that service. We put in \$20,000 to hire an extra person for the season but we also put \$20,000 in to explore contract services. We hope that the Town will support that. As previously mentioned, the snow budget had fuel added to better allocate those costs. Fuel is always taken from your regular budget but we're trying to determine how much snow removal actually costs us. With Transfer Station costs, I talked a lot about that. With Community Service (ECSD), the main focus on that was to make sure we're getting fees for the user. As I mentioned before in other areas, the communications budget you'll see has an increase of about \$10,000 to \$14,000. That's to buy an 'app' that will allow us to

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more quickly disseminate information - if there's a cancellation, people will be able to download it. The first year, I'm asking for the cost to come out of the budget. From then on, the support money will come out of fees raised by the ECSD. It's sort of a compromise but it's a great, handy tool. In FY24, we'll be fully engaged in re-building some of the programs that we lost during the pandemic; that that will free up some time with not as much oversight at the Boat Basin.

6:29 PM

General Assistance. I would encourage you to go to Mainspringcollective.org to see the plan for Kittery, York, hopefully Eliot, and other partners to merge together for GA services so they can provide a comprehensive wrap-around services at that site. I think it's great way to move. **Fixed assessments:** County, MSAD are both just beginning their budget process. I needed to put a number for money into the budget so I used what I could discern from the State and in conversations with Superintendent Caverly. I added 4.5%. I'm not saying that's right. There are mil rate calculations, number of students, all kinds of formulas that play a part in determining what the cost will be to the Eliot taxpayer. The Governor's proposed budget looked fairly positive but needs more scrutiny, I'm sure. In consultation with our auditors, we removed TIF assessments, except those directly related to the sewer project in fixed assessments. We also added the William Fogg Library to fixed assessments. With **capital reserves**, we're trying to reconstruct capital reserves. I think we've talked about this a couple of times. Because of our late FY21 audit, and now we're in the FY22 audit, we'd like to get as close as we can to having hard numbers before we try to reconstruct what departments feel were in their reserve accounts. We also have been advised by our auditors and our lawyers that the necessary votes weren't taken to establish these reserve accounts. So, we hope to bring those as a warrant article to the Town Meeting to establish them properly, with the proper language, and the proper policies in place as to how they get used. It's a lot more work than it sounds. Our intent is to reserve, reminding everyone that the audit showed that you had \$4.2 million in unassigned reserves. That's a lot of funds but that's all those reserve accounts put in there and other money that wasn't spent in previous years. We are going to take financial advise from various sources. Last, **revenue.** Our auditors were amazed to hear that there is actually a warrant article about revenues because, with revenues, you can't predict. We do our best. One of the things for years is BETTY, which is a business excise tax program, was put in as a revenue and the auditors and the State say that we shouldn't do that. It's already captured in your tax values and, then, putting it in as a revenue actually puts it in there twice. So, that is one of the issues that we've been addressing. **The Sewer Enterprise.** For years, it wasn't articulated as a budget but we have decided to articulate it as a budget. We have had a little challenge disentangling sewer expenses with the sewer expansion project, the water projects, and other Town costs, to make sure that it's accurate. Thank you. I would encourage the public to call or submit in writing to me any questions they have.

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6:32 PM Mr. Donhauser said that I want to go back to the very beginning of your presentation about debt service and about the different types of bond issues that you were contemplating in the future. You and I, today, had an interesting conversation that I thought would be interesting to the public. That is the difference between funding reserves versus going out and getting a bond issue. What you told me about that, and it made a lot of sense to me, is that if we want to spend money on Murray Rowe Park, as an example, one way of doing it is putting \$50,000 or some amount into a reserve fund every year and hoping that, in ten years, we'll have \$200,000, or something, as opposed to going out and getting a bond issued today. Your comment, which made a lot of sense to me, is that say I'm in my later years in Eliot. By putting money into reserves, I don't really benefit from that reserve and the use of the park. But, if you go out and bond the money today, and renovate the park. I actually benefit from that as an older member of the community. So that bodes well for bonding something. Plus, instead of putting the money into a reserve, you are actually paying principal and interest over the period of time. As a result of paying that principal and interest, currently, I benefit currently. By enticing people to put money into reserves, they're really delaying the use of that money but they're paying taxes today.

Mr. Sullivan said exactly. That's the key, paying taxes. The other part of that is when you took a quick look at borrowing \$4.5 million for repairs to the Police Station and expansion here, over a 30-year period you will pay \$7.3 million back. Now, most people look at that and think \$3.3 million we're paying in interest over the 30-year period. Yes. But if you didn't do it and you apply the present consumer price index (CPI - inflation), that same \$4 million project is going to be \$32 million in 30 years. So they never look at it from that perspective and that speaks to what you're saying in that the real-time use and the real-time cost of money is not always digested well. It's always how can we do this in the cheapest way and, sometimes, people look at borrowing as it's not. But don't forget, we're not borrowing at 15% or 16%. If you went out and looked at some borrowings from the past week, they were at 3.75%. I had a conversation this afternoon with a colleague working in Massachusetts and they borrowed at 2% to build their new town hall 18 months ago. So, we're missing out on those opportunities. Costs are going to at 9%, in what is 7.3% today in the CPI. We can wait but it's going to cost you way more.

6:36 PM Mr. Donhauser said that as the dollar becomes less valuable in the future, the costs are going up. So, you are losing it on both ends. Again, the argument for bonding currently as opposed to putting that money away into reserve accounts.

Mr. Sullivan said that we've had conversations where you're traditionally only bonding with Maine Municipal Bond Bank (MMBB) and, as I've said before, indications in speaking to bond advisors are there is probably a good chance we

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could borrow at a price lower than a MMBB. Don't forget, if you brought Moody's, etc. in here to rate your bond, it's probably going to be lower than the MMBB because you are so financially healthy. I think it's one tool. You can't get crazy with it. You shouldn't borrow for everything. But, if you pace yourself and, like the Boat Basin, if you have a revenue source that you can apply to it and that is not hitting the taxpayer, that makes even more sense.

6:37 PM Mr. Donhauser said that I think everyone should acknowledge the complexity of how we have to budget as a municipality. All change, no matter how it comes, encounters some type of headwind. You would expect people would say they don't want to borrow a whole bunch of money today but, if you really look at the big picture, it makes a bit of sense. The other question I had, and I don't expect an answer about what the Budget Committee does. What was the total, looking at it from 30,000 feet, what was the budget last year, in total, and what is the budget this year, in total. Forget about all the detail, just the two big numbers. That not only is the municipal budget but includes the school and county budgets.

Mr. Sullivan said that it's close to a \$2 million difference. But again, we don't have the school number or county number. One of the questions that has been posed to me is about excise tax. Right now, in the middle of December we collected \$575,000 in excise tax. We budgeted for \$1.5 million last year and \$1.5 million again for this year. The concern is are we going to get there. In the early spring, there are a number of fleets that get registered so we know there's going to be a big uptick in that area. Additionally, let's say it was 21 vehicles that were over \$100,000 and we are seeing 40 to 50 cars, now, over \$100,000. We've had three this week. To me, a car over \$100,000 is not one car, it's five cars. So, it's not inconceivable, with the way the economy is evolving, that the excise tax would do more than \$1.5 million next year.

6:41 PM Mr. Donhauser said that, today, you and I were speaking that you and the Assessor looked at 2000 accounts and I thought the information you gave me was important to let the public know. 2000 municipal taxpayers were reviewed by account and, in 1,200 of those accounts, the actual real estate tax being collected went down.

Mr. Sullivan clarified that their bill went down.

Mr. Donhauser said that, in 800, it went up because of increased assessed value. As important is that the mil rate went down. So, in my mind, Eliot is in a very good position to borrow money and, if not borrow money, use some of our undesignated fund balance. To have that \$4 million just sit there, we're not getting anything from that \$4 million.

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- 6:43 PM** Mr. Sullivan said that you are actually losing money. Prior to changing the investment group, your investment was costing you more because of investment fees than you were taking in.
- Mr. Donhauser said that I think that the Budget Committee and the Select Board should look at the utilization of undesignated fund balance to do something. Not in its entirety but in some segment of it.
- Mr. Shapleigh asked when the number would be certain in the undesignated fund, the real number.
- Mr. Sullivan said that it would be when the FY22 audit is completed. We're probably going to have to make some decisions before then. We'll present a plan for those decisions based on being conservative. You aren't going to want to spend it all. That just doesn't make any sense. You are going to have to hold some of that back. You are still going to have money in your reserve accounts, as those won't be spent all at one time. We'll be coming forward as we research it more with a plan that can keep Eliot comfortable, whether we have that audit, or not.
- Mr. Shapleigh asked if he anticipated that that budget audit is going to tag on until next November.
- Mr. Sullivan said no. We're actually hoping it will be done in February. Presently, it's the auditor's capacity holding us up as opposed to us. We have everything in to the auditor. I think you're in incredibly good shape.
- 6:45 PM** Mr. Shapleigh said that I like the idea of not sending so many problems out to external legal counsel and handle more stuff in-house.
- Mr. Sullivan said that you were spending between \$55,000 to \$68,000 a year on legal counsel and there are a number of things that we can do in-house that can save us money in that regard. It's \$350/hour for attorneys.
- Mr. Widi said, regarding the Town Hall question, you calculated that would be \$243,000/year to the annual budget. So, for thirty years, on average that's about \$100 per household. That is a set amount now and, in 30 years, I think we already established that that is going to be considerably less in real value. I just wanted people to understand that, on that one, they would be voting on an extra \$100 in taxes over the next thirty years. To the training and retention item, since we had a Special Town Meeting, we made the adjustment.
- 6:47 PM** Mr. Sullivan said that I should just make sure that we don't go down the wrong road on that. It might not be \$100 extra in taxes. Don't forget, in your general

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fund operation, 60% of your funds come from fees and permits. So, it might be \$40/year in for your taxes as opposed to \$100.

Mr. Widi asked if there was any way, moving forward, communicating this to the general public that we could have some more concrete explanation on that one. I know we're in the very early stages but I'm just thinking like a normal person.

Mr. Sullivan said yes, absolutely. I think these kinds of conversations are essential to having people start to understand. Let's not forget that, even in that \$40, there's going to be other maintenance if you don't expand. If we don't do the project, you're still going to have to replace the roof. So, maybe you have \$500,000 worth of expenses that you are going to have to pay in the more immediate and maybe that's where the undesignated fund balance comes in. You could also take a portion of that undesignated fund balance, if you wanted to, and have the debt be lower, not that I'm suggesting that. But, I think that's just kicking the can down the road..

Mr. Widi said, to Mr. Donhauser's point, if you did it, the older person gets the benefit of an improved Town Hall, even though they may not live the full thirty years. Back to training and retention. With the Special Town Meeting, we made adjustments to compensation and training. By my calculation, although we lost one person immediately, we haven't lost anyone since then. Is that correct.

6:49 PM

Mr. Sullivan said that we have actually brought those positions back. I'm glad you mentioned that. Interestingly enough, the two people we gained just in Town Hall, one came from another town that used to steal people from us and the other one was offered a job in that same town and chose to work in Eliot. Not only because of what I feel we are offering for compensation but we've worked really hard to change the environment in Town Hall and tried to lower the stress on employees and work with them in a lot of areas. With the training and retention, part of it is compensation but also caring about your employees.

Mr. Widi discussed the Eastern Trails and the \$3,500 and doing a project from Scarborough to the New Hampshire border. Just very briefly, is it going to be a new trail or just expanding.

Mr. Brubaker said it is partially an existing trail all the way from South Portland to Kittery and partially a vision for a future trail. There are existing portions in South Portland and Scarborough. They're working on a portion from Kennebunk to North Berwick. And where there's not an actual trail, like in Kittery, Eliot, and South Berwick, there's a recommended on-road route but there's a vision to have a future off-road trail going through all those communities.

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Mr. Widi said that that road vision would be paid for by federal and State money, in theory.

Mr. Brubaker said yes. They are very much focused on finding grant funding, including, as a quick example, a design for extending the trail where it ends in Kennebunk into North Berwick near Pratt & Whitney was fully funded by a federal grant.

6:51 PM Mr. Widi said that our \$3,500 is showing support for that project and remembering us as they continue this way.

Mr. Brubaker said yes.

Mr. Donhauser said, regarding capital reserves, that you mentioned that they weren't properly authorized and we talked about that today, too. Correct me if I'm wrong but the reason they are not properly authorized, first of all, a capital reserve, when we move money from the general fund into capital reserves, it was voted by the taxpayers so that was an appropriate vote. Then at the end of the year and that money wasn't used, the inappropriate part was that we didn't carry it forward. So, we're going back to make those adjustments.

Mr. Sullivan said that there are two ways you could look at that. If you want to have a true reserve account, there's acceptance legislation we have to accept that was never accepted (State law) that allows you to leave that money in the reserve accounts without the carry-over vote, It will just permanently stay until it's used for that assign. The other thing is that it wasn't clear whether anything voted that was taken from the reserve account would have to come back to the SB to be voted before anything could be expended. So, if you were buying a new dump truck and you had it in the reserve account, the department went through the process, got the dump truck they wanted to buy, before they could purchase it they'd have to come back to the SB and have a vote. According to the records, that happened sometimes. Sometimes it didn't happen. So, our auditors have said that we have to. If you want to use the carry-over method, you would just have to remember to carry it over into the reserve every year. You could do it that way but our auditors have suggested that we do the acceptance language and establish real reserve accounts.

6:55 PM Mr. Donhauser said that my final comment about your presentation, which I think was excellent, is that your budget, in my mind, is predicated on investing in Eliot's future, and I think we should view it as that. Do we want to make expenditures, or raise taxes, for Eliot's future and I think this budget that you're presenting actually looks forward. It's a forward-looking budget and predicated on investing in Eliot's future. I think that's important to know.

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Ms. (Megan) Weeks-Sottero, Brixham Road, said unfortunately I'm not one of those 800 people. My taxes have gone up every year in the 25 years I've lived here. Can you explain, or give a little more detail, as to why the William Fogg Library is being put into the budget this year as a fixed asset versus its on article on the referendum.

6:56 PM

Mr. Sullivan said that our auditors felt that it lends itself to a fixed assessment as opposed to a stand-alone. It will still appear on the ballot the same way because that's the law. It is the similar to the schools; that they are on a separate ballot question, as well, but the Town votes on whether the money will be appropriated.

Ms. Weeks-Sottero said that I think some of the confusion was that some people thought it wouldn't be a separate article anymore.

Mr. Sullivan said that it has to be by your ordinances.

Mr. (Skip) Devito, State Road, said that I agree with your comments about reserves versus bonds. But, I've been involved in a lot of capital projects and we're always hoping that we can have someone in our pocket. We're in a period of serious inflation and I don't know any contractors who aren't having trouble getting the help that they need. On the capital projects I've been on, I've always hated to have to compete with other people and the economy during an inflationary period. Conversely, if there's a recession, or worse a depression, it's great to have a project that you can put out there and get done. You get it done for less money and you provide work for people that need it. The best example is the Empire State Building. It was like a miracle that it was done, designed and built, in about two years, and under budget. But it was in a depression, and we could have a depression. It's possible. So, it's good to have a few projects in our pocket, in a reserve. To compete, now, in this economy is not a pretty picture.

6:58 PM

Mr. Donhauser said that that was a fair comment. Thank you.

Mr. (Gene) Wypyski, Creek Crossing, said that you (Mr. Sullivan) said something about the budget format that I wanted to raise a concern. During our Budget Committee meeting yesterday, we spent an awful lot of time with form. The four incumbent members all had last year's binders, two-years-ago binders, and they were showing all the great detail, and all. I found it very frustrating because we spent more time talking about form than we talked about notes. But, to the point you just made, Mr. Sullivan, the major heartburn some of us were having was that the budget is presented in your spreadsheets wasn't in the format consistent with the referendum, which requires the headings to be a certain way. The way you had things presented in that wasn't the same way and, so, that kind of brought all our discussion about it to a halt because some of us didn't want to

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talk about the budget unless it was in the exact same format as the referendums will be presented to the public. But, it sounds to me like you've already incorporated that awareness in how you're thinking about the budget. My frustration is that the numbers were all here but some wanted it already in a certain way before they would even look at it.

7:00 PM Mr. Sullivan said that I can't speak to the Budget Committee but we are very well aware of what we have to do to put the budgets into the proper warrant articles. If you look at the Fire Department, it says 'C' next to it. So, that means it would go into, once a number is assigned, the 'C' warrant, which is usually 5 or 6 in most warrants so the Fire Department is going to be the 'C' warrant and the 'A' warrant. That follows closely the warrant process. It clearly says in the Charter, and for good reason, that the form the budget is presented to the public, the Budget Committee, and to the SB is the responsibility of the Town Manager. We tried to put this form in something that is more common to other progressive communities. This isn't something that I thought up on my own. It's clear. It's concise. If you remember the old way, it went on for hours and you had to go from tab to tab. This sheet rolls down and you see everything that's required in the ordinances and Charter; that all that is in this budget. It was mentioned that we don't have the information from previous years. All the information is there. We don't know what people are getting paid. Well, every other week we give you a report on that to the Budget Committee. I appreciate what you're saying that all the information is there. There is nothing in the ordinances or the Charter that says that the budget form has to be in the warrant form. It's two different issues.

7:02 PM Mr. Wypyski said that I understand that and I agree 100%. The problem is within that committee, some people are saying they aren't even going to consider anything until it's in that format of the referendum. I personally find that frustrating because I'd like to talk about the issues. So, the first question that the Budget Committee has posed to you is that the Budget Committee is requesting that the Town Manager provide a budget that complies with the Town of Eliot Referendum Town Meeting Ordinance.

Mr. Sullivan said that it does.

Mr. Wypyski said okay. I hope you can convince some of us on the committee that that is the way that it is. I'm a believer.

7:03 PM Mr. Sullivan said that, if you are telling me that the Budget Committee is not going to do anything with the budget until Town meeting, it's up to them.

Mr. Wypyski said that, no, what I'm suggesting is that, sometimes, we get more involved with form than we do substance. That's all.

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Mr. Sullivan said that I appreciate that.

Mr. Donhauser asked how is it different. How is it not in that form.

Mr. Wypyski said that, as I look at it, I think one or two of the headings; for example, public safety would include public health, fire hydrants, ambulance services, dispatch, and Harbor Master. That was called out well. The Harbor Master is now over in the Police Department. By ordinance, it should be right 'here'.

Mr. Sullivan said that the Harbor Master has always been overseen in the Police budget.

Mr. Wypyski said that what I'm saying is, if you look at the way the format is in the ordinance.

Mr. Sullivan said for the warrant articles, it's something different.

Mr. Wypyski said yes. But it's picayune in my humble opinion given what we really need to be spending our time on.

Mr. Donhauser said yes. Thank you.

7:04 PM Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Ms. Dow, that the Eliot Select Board accept the report that the Town Manager has rendered to us and endorse the presentation format for the FY24 budget.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes

Mr. McPherson – Yes

Mr. Widi – Yes

Ms. Dow – Yes

Mr. Shapleigh

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

7:35 PM 2. TA Evaluation

Mr. Donhauser said that we just finished, today, an evaluation of our Town Manager. He has been here for over a year. Each individual SB member filled out a form, presented it to me, and I combined it all together as one document. Then, I presented it to Mr. Sullivan this afternoon. So, knowing that, I make this motion:

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Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. Shapleigh, that the Eliot Select Board accept the Town Manager's evaluation and have a copy placed in his personnel file and make it available to the public upon request.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson – Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow – Yes
Mr. Shapleigh

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

Mr. Sullivan said thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Mr. Donhauser said you are welcome. It was a very good evaluation, I might add.

I. Selectmen's Report:

7:36 PM Mr. Widi said that I went to the Maine Agriculture & Trade Show on Tuesday as part of my continuing re-education. I'm a licensed pesticide applicator, for those of you who don't know. You have to be a licensed pesticide applicator, even if you only spray organic compounds on your food, if you're selling the food. I'm sharing two tidbits of information that I think would be helpful. Some of you may remember that we did the chemical and herbicide like 6 months ago. That was for schools and public parks. The legislature did LD519 that banned glyphosate and Dicamba from schools and within 75 feet of schools. We went a step further for public parks. The other one we should consider is that I spoke to Mr. Brubaker and he let me know that we were going to update the marijuana ordinance in June, probably. Currently, with medical marijuana, if you spray pesticides on it you are required to have a basic applicator's license by State law. But, because of bureaucracy and the slowness of bureaucracy, recreational marijuana, which is also consumed, you are not required to have any license whatsoever to spray pesticides on it. If I sell you a tomato, I have to have a license. So, just to clarify, if you smoke medical marijuana, that has to be applied by a licensed pesticide applicator. If you eat a tomato from a farm stand, and there's pesticides on it, either organic or conventional, that person has to have a license. But, if you use recreational marijuana, there is no license required for pesticide application whatsoever. It's not out of our realm to recommend to the PB that they add that to the next marijuana adjustment. We're not overstepping our bounds because the licensure is all done by the State, and that's their prerogative, but just requiring a

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license for all recreational marijuana that has pesticides applied to it, sold in Eliot would be appropriate; that it's a consumed substance.

J. Approval of Warrant(s):

7:10 PM Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Ms. Dow, that the Select Board approve Payroll Warrant #56 in the amount of \$50,432.39, dated December 12, 2022; A/P Warrant #57 in the amount of \$103,968.33, dated December 15, 2022; ; Payroll Warrant #58 in the amount of \$51,962.10, dated December 22, 2022; ; A/P Warrant #59 in the amount of \$31,963.82, dated December 22, 2022; ; A/P Warrant #60 in the amount of \$4,611.78, dated December 27, 2022; ; Payroll Warrant #61 in the amount of \$50,497.21, dated December 27, 2022; ; A/P Warrant #62 in the amount of \$121,034.90, dated December 28, 2022

Roll Call Vote:

**Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow – Yes
Mr. Shapleigh - Yes**

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

Mr. Donhauser said that it should be noted that we have been advised by our auditors that payroll warrants should be included in our public payroll process.

K. Adjourn

Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. Shapleigh, that the Select Board adjourn.

Roll Call Vote:

**Mr. Donhauser – Yes
Mr. McPherson - Yes
Mr. Widi – Yes
Ms. Dow – Yes
Mr. Shapleigh - Yes**

Unanimous vote to approve motion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

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Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Lemire, Recording Secretary

S/ Lauren Dow, Secretary

Date approved: 07/13/2023