

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

July 13, 2022 5:30PM

Eliot Elementary School

5:30 PM: Due to technical issues, the meeting was called to order at 5:46 PM by Ms. (Wendy) Rawski, Town Clerk. There were 174 registered voters in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance recited

5:47 PM ARTICLE #1: To elect a moderator.

Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. Widi, to nominate J. Peter Dennett as moderator.

No other nominations were offered.

Mr. Donhauser moved, second by Mr. Shapleigh, that nominations be closed.

Ms. Rawski called for at least three residents to vote by secret ballot.

Three residents voted. A resident counted the ballots. All three ballots were for J. Peter Dennett.

J. Peter Dennett was officially elected as Moderator for tonight's meeting.

At this time, Ms. Rawski administered the Moderator's Oath to J. Peter Dennett and he officiated the rest of the meeting.

5:49 PM Mr. Dennett explained the procedure for the evening, first reading the article, then a motion and second, followed by discussion of the background of the article, then open discussion from the floor. He also discussed amendments that would, and would not, be allowed.

Mr. Dennett said that several non-voters wished to speak and, if there is no objection, I will allow it.

There were several who objected.

Mr. Dennett said that he has had a request that non-residents be allowed to speak on articles, as necessary, required by a 2/3rds vote. They would not vote. They would be allowed to answer questions on the articles. At this time, he asked all residents who were in favor of allowing non-residents to speak to raise their card. Because the visual count was too close, he asked for the vote to be physically counted.

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School**

A member of the audience said that all this vote was requesting is that Town employees be able to speak even if they don't happen to live in Town.

5:54 PM Mr. Dennett said that that was correct.

Mr. Hennessey said that I would like to expand on the Town employees because we could have an architect or engineer here that would be speaking on an article or another type of expert that is speaking on a specific item that is in their field. They should be able to provide that background information to the voters. That's what we're asking for. I don't want some resident from Kittery coming in and complaining about something but I think we need to be able to stay open for somebody here who is an expert on a topic to speak.

A member of the audience said that, if they don't pay taxes in this Town, they don't have a say in this Town. It's that simple.

After discussion closed, Mr. Dennett called for a hand count of votes for and against allowing non-residents to speak, as necessary.

Votes in the affirmative: 138

Votes in the negative: 36

Mr. Dennett declared that a 2/3rds majority voted to affirm that non-residents would be allowed to speak, as necessary.

6:04 PM Mr. Dennett said that, if you wish to speak, please stand up, wait to be recognized by the Moderator, and state your name and address. Please direct all questions to the Moderator. If there are no objections, please let the record indicate that the meeting is being conducted under the rules of the Maine Moderator's Manual (2021).

There were no objections.

6:09 PM **ARTICLE #2 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$139,175 to the FY 2023 Administrative budget, bringing the total amount including the Annual Town Meeting held on June 14, 2022 appropriation to \$1,545,639 for FY 2023.**

Mr. Dennett recognized Mr. Widi.

Mr. Widi moved, second by Ms. Dow, that Article #2 be approved.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

Mr. Dennett said that the article has been moved and seconded. I recognize Mr. Widi for comments on the article.

6:11 PM

Mr. Widi thanked everyone for coming, saying that he is the Vice Chair of the Select Board (SB). I'll be making the SB presentation tonight. I'm either the bravest person here, tonight, or the most foolish. I ask you to hear me out, keep an open mind, and let's have a good discussion. We are here based on a highly unusual series of events. We are here tonight because of the failure of your elected officials. Let me say that again. You are here tonight because of the failure of your elected officials. That includes the SB. That includes the Budget Committee. We have failed you. This tribalism should have ended decades ago but it didn't, and we are here, today, at the breaking point. So, specifically what happened. The Town Manager presented a budget with all the workman's compensation for the Town in one article – Administration. The SB did not see this as an issue. The Budget Committee did not like this approach and re-allocated workman's comp to each different department. This led to a many months-long, foolish stand-off. Two different entities, using two different formulas, created a lot of confusion and it was the failure of the government and it wasn't fair to you. There are now some departments that have no workman's comp funding. I don't know a single person who knowingly voted to take away workman's compensation but that's ultimately what happened and that requires a community discussion, which is why we called you here tonight. If you vote no, so be it. That is the will of the voter and that is absolute. However, another part of the rule of order was electing us to represent you and be responsible to bring these kinds of things to your attention. The circumstances and situation in June are completely different than they are today. Your library had workman's comp funded but your police do not. We support our library but don't you think the people dealing with the most dangerous elements of our society should have their workman's comp fund. The Public Works Department, the people who operate heavy machinery and big trucks all day in the worst conditions do not have funding for their workman's comp. Thank God the Fire Department does have funding for their workman's comp but I bet many of you didn't even know that. It would be reckless and downright criminal to not bring this to your attention. The first question here also does have some funding for cybersecurity protection. Right now, we have a vulnerable server, the same kind of server that is the target of theft, or ransomware, that is so common it barely makes the news anymore. If we let the Towns' information exposed and vulnerable without bringing in extra protection, that _____. There is one final piece to this. Because other proposed items got voted down, we are still way below the already voter-approved revenue number. That means these two essential things can be funded while staying under the already approved revenues and have almost no effect on the mil rate. So, very clearly, what this suggests is what a 'yes' vote will do and what a 'no' vote will do. A 'yes' vote fixes the bloop that happened with the workman's comp and

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

secures the Townspeople's debt. A 'no' vote forces the SB to choose one of these options. Option #1: we could self-insure for workman's comp and hope that a police officer or public works employee is not seriously injured or killed. We could be potentially be paying for decades. Option #2: We would have to cut what the SB and Budget Committee already agreed are essential and need to be funded. In the case of the Police, we don't even know where to start. You can't cut protective equipment, training, benefits, vehicles, etc. If you vote no, we'll try to figure something out but, as you can see, there are no good options other than to call you here tonight and we do appreciate it. The Town Manager will be able to answer your questions. If you're going to stand up and besmirch the SB, the Budget Committee, or Town Manager, I ask you to please reconsider for the sake of a productive discussion. I hope I set a different tone than most of you expected and thank you for listening.

6:16 PM Mr. (Steve) Kumin, Jennie Lane, said that, as I understand it, the \$139,175 includes portions of workman's comp that were already voted into the Snow Removal, Community Service (CSD), and Fire Department so we're double-funded if we vote this article in. It is my observation that we are double-funding these three departments' workman's comp.

Mr. (Mike) Sullivan, Town Manager, said that I would say it's a matter of perspective. I disagree. There was other money that was cut from CSD. Ultimately at the end of the day, there were two accounts that had workman's comp put in it. That was the snow account and the fire department account. The other accounts, from my reading, it has been cut. Now there is some ability for us to move things around in those budgets but we will have to essentially cut other things if the workman's comp is not funded. That's my opinion.

Mr. Kumin said that the only other issue I have is this \$73,590. The Town _____ voted not to use the non-TIF income to fund Administration costs for the TIF and this budget adds that money that we voted no. We also voted no on providing it to the administrative budget so we totally left it out. But this doesn't give the Townspeople the opportunity to choose to do what's been historically done – the TIF Fund paid for the TIF administration costs and instead puts the onus on the taxpayers. So, the way I feel unfortunately, the way this article is written, I can't support it.

Mr. Sullivan said, Mr. Moderator, Question #2 on the ballot for June 15th, the SB recommendation of \$4,865, 614 was accepted by 529 voters. The Budget Committee's recommendation, which included TIF funding of \$4,939, 204, a larger number, at a vote of 446 people.

Mr. Dennett asked if there was any further discussion.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

6:20 PM Ms. (Donna) Murphy, Hanscom Road, said that I'm speaking as the Chair of the Budget Committee. We reviewed the numbers. The voters, in fact, approved workman's compensation under the Fire Department (\$6,700), Snow Removal (\$6,515), and CSD (\$6,575). At the meeting tonight, the Budget Committee voted 5-2 to support Article #2 for the \$42,120 to support the SB's workman's compensation. Under Article #3, we voted to fund it at zero and that vote was 5-2. I have given you these numbers because, under the Charter, it's required that the Budget Committee's numbers be posted on the ballot for the Townspeople.

Mr. Dennett asked if there was any further discussion. Maybe we could have somebody who is going to speak for the article rather than opposed.

Mr. (Cabot) Trott, Main Street, said I've been 57 years in this Town. My question to the Budget Committee is why we've gone and taken to playing with the insurance that is in the administrative budget, taken it apart so nobody else knows where it is. I have been a voter here for years and I have yet to see so much confusion on a ballot, and I read all of them. I still have people ask me what that was all about. Please tell me why you feel it's necessary to play with this because that's what I think you did so that you guys could have your say. Prove to me that that's an appropriate thing to do and I'll back you. I want to see the Town employees taken care of in this Town. They work hard. They do everything we need them to do. What I'm hearing now, what I see, doesn't change the dollar. The bottom line, our tax number isn't going to be affected by this.

6:24 PM **Mr. Chair, I (Cabot Trott) move the question. Seconded by a resident.**

Mr. Dennett said that this motion is not subject to debate. It must be voted on immediately and requires a 2/3rds vote.

Mr. (John) Reed moved that this vote be taken by written ballot.

Mr. Trott said that no other debate or motion is allowed after a motion to move the question.

Mr. Dennett concurred. We vote on the motion to move the question and then we can vote on the motion and use a written ballot.

A resident asked that the Moderator make clear to the voters that we are voting on whether or not to move the question forward and not, in fact, voting on the content of the article.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

Mr. Dennett said correct. We are voting to move the vote forward on the article. We're not voting on the content.

Mr. Dennett said all those in favor to move forward the article please raise your cards. All those opposed. I would declare a 2/3rds that we move on the question. Now I would entertain Mr. Reed's motion to vote on the main motion by written ballot. Has that been seconded.

A resident seconded Mr. Reed's motion.

Mr. Dennett said that it has been moved and seconded that we vote on Article #2 by written ballot. **All those in favor please raise your card. Those opposed. The majority have voted in the negative. We will vote on Article #2 by the raising of cards.**

Ms. (Jean) Hardy asked if we can have a discussion.

Mr. Dennett said no. The discussion is done. Now we are voting on the motion to accept Article #2. Does everybody understand that. The question has been moved. You voted on it by a 2/3rds majority and now we're voting on the main motion to adopt Article #2, as written. **All those in favor please raise your cards. Those opposed. The majority having supported in the affirmative, Article #2 is accepted as written.**

6:27 PM **ARTICLE #3 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$110,00 to the FY 2023 Reserve Account budget, bringing the total amount including the Annual Town Meeting held on June 14, 2022 appropriation to \$190,944 adding \$110,000 to the "Wage and Training" line.**

Mr. Widi moved, second by Mr. Donhauser, that we approve Question #3.

Mr. Dennett said that the motion has been made and seconded to approve Question #3. I recognize Mr. Widi.

6:28 PM Mr. Widi said that, before I discuss this, I want to say thank you for your trust in us and I pledge to work with the Budget Committee to heal this relationship for the betterment of Eliot. This next question is a supplemental request. Since we still below the voter-approved revenues, it won't affect the mil rate and it is essential. We need to have an open discussion concerning the training and wages of the people that make it all happen. I've been on the SB for two years. In that time, we've had a new assessor, new planner, new code enforcement officer, new land use assistant, two new treasurers, and two clerks leave. For those of you keeping track, that's an 80% turnover in two years. This turnover is costing you

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

more money than making the supplemental adjustment, both financially and in productivity. We heard you loud and clear that you want to reduce spending. Message received. But spending on problems that are avoidable are unnecessary spending. As an example, did you know our audit for 2020 is going to cost us nearly \$60,000 for something that should cost us \$20,000. This could have been cheaper if the original treasurer didn't leave if he had the appropriate resources at the time he was here and, quite frankly, **or the prior _____**. When one of the Town treasurers left, the duties of making payroll then fell on the current Town Manager. The budget for cross-training employees has been non-existent. So, the person who was supposed to be managing the Town was stuck putting checks in envelopes for over a month. When the prior code enforcement officer (CEO) departed, nothing was addressed for weeks because we had no one trained as a back-up to do the job. The current CEO walked into a stack a foot high on her desk, Day 1. If we lose our assessor, we'll be forced to contract that responsibility out of company, who would charge us almost double per year what your current assessor's salary is for the same job. This preventable turnover and lack of training is costing you money. You made it clear you want us to cut and control expenses. Training and work retention are how you do that. Some of those positions are union, that is true. Their contracted cost-of-living is 2%. Inflation is rising at 8.5% and that doesn't take into account food, fuel, or housing, which adds way more than that. This is not a solid company that underbid a job that can make up profits elsewhere. These are human beings that have families to support. Almost none of our Town employees can afford to live in Eliot. The labor market circumstances are changing so fast that teenage lifeguards are making nearly what some of your Town employees are. If you want to vote 'no' and kick the can down the road, so be it. We will respect it. But the problem is not going away and it's going to cost us. It's either going to cost us a little tonight or a lot more down the road. Voting tonight is consistent with the voter because it's going to save you money. That's the end of the official presentation. This next part is just something personal. Again, I've been on the SB for two years. I can tell you that I walked into a complete and total mismanaged mess. We are working as fast as we can to fix this stuff but a lot of this couldn't start until we had a quality Town Manager. We finally have good management and a great staff. I hope you give them the tools.

6:33 PM Mr. Dennett asked if there was any further discussion.

Ms. (Jaimie) Letellier, Sargent's Lane, said that I have not been to an official Town Meeting before. I have five kids and there are just some things I can't do with my schedule. I'd like to make a point that I feel like a little bamboozled and I wanted to know if I could make another motion before we voted on the article, but what's done is done I would like to make a couple of points. First of all, I think this is ethically wrong that we are holding votes here tonight. We have 17% of our

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

entire population of our Town show up for voting and in Mr. Sullivan's town (Holyoke?) I believe they had 6% of their voters show up. We shouldn't have a vote on something that has already been decided. That is ethically wrong. If you guys want a re-vote on this, you need to provide the opportunity, with formal notification of this meeting, and not through Facebook pages, not through message boards outside the Town Hall that most in Town will drive by. That is unethical. This is not unprecedented. There are so many options allowed on the ballot. We should not have to re-vote without the entire registered voters in the Town having the opportunity to do so. I move that we withhold the vote. I move that we go ahead and allow absentee ballots to do so. I move that we go ahead and cease this back _____ and hold people accountable and allow the Townspeople to go ahead and seek that 17% of the entire population. That includes non-registered voters. That's huge. This is absolutely ridiculous. I move we postpone the vote and vote with absentee ballots.

6:36 PM Mr. Dennett asked if that was a motion.

Ms. Letellier said that that was a motion, to postpone the vote. Second by a member of the audience.

A member of the audience asked, through the Moderator, if Ms. Letellier would consider amending her motion to put this article on the November ballot so that we don't have to run a special election and we can vote when we are coming in here to vote.

DISCUSSION:

Concern that many didn't understand what the statement was, that additional motions were confusing. People potentially making poor decisions because it was hard to hear speakers.

Can't be heard because the equipment is terrible because we can't get it in the budget.

Ms. Letellier was asked if she would amend her motion and Ms. Letellier agreed.

Ms. Letellier moved to amend her motion to postpone the vote on Article #3 and place it and postpone it until the November ballot so all people can vote. Seconded by a member of the audience.

Mr. Dennett said that the motion on the floor is to postpone Article #3 and have it appear on the ballot at the November election.

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School**

A point of order was made regarding the need to have the motion in written form.

Another point was made that this is an amendment to the original motion.

6:38 PM Mr. Dennett clarified that this motion is an amendment to postpone the vote and move it to the November ballot.

At this point, many people were speaking at the same time regarding process. Individual speakers were not audible.

A member of the audience moved the original question. Another member of the audience seconded the motion.

Mr. Dennett said that the motion is in question until I get this in writing and it is resolved. He received the written motion and said that the motion on the floor is to postpone the vote today to the November 2022 ballot to allow all registered voters the opportunity to vote. He called the vote:

All those in favor of postponing and deferring to the November election, please raise your card. Those opposed. The vote is too close to decide. I ask those in favor to raise their cards and hold until they are counted.

Mr. Dennett recognized that he did not open the floor for debate, postponed the vote, and opened the floor to debate regarding the question to move the vote to the November ballot.

6:40 PM Ms. (Rita) Pomerleau, Spinney Creek Road, had a question for the Town Manager. What will happen if we wait until November for that funding in that space in time.

Mr. Sullivan said that this article was put forward because you have a number of salary studies that you've not responded to, as a Town. You are in jeopardy of losing more staff. I came here in November. I'm still learning about Eliot. I find it to be a wonderful Town. Thank you for being here tonight. I'm working with my third finance director since November and this is only one component part. We talked about why we need this funding. We need this funding to make salary adjustments, professional salary adjustments. But also, to put performance-based evaluations, with goals set and in place. And more important than anything training. We continually compile violations that we make innocently because we don't have the proper training. We need to get a training regimen in. We need time for that. In some cases, we need to bring in mentors and consultants because we don't have the wherewithal within our system. It's a small system. So, I put this forward. It was originally \$196,000. We asked to have it reduced

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

substantially on this article to \$110,000. I hope the voters of Eliot see their way in voting for it tonight. Thank you.

6:41 PM

Mr. (Lewis) Corapi, River Road, said that I'm a relatively new resident to Eliot. This community has been fantastic to me and my family so a general thank you to everyone for welcoming us. I would like to reiterate the question I was just asked. My understanding was that this increase was for fiscal year 2023 so I am also curious what this will do if we kick this can down the road to November. Would it affect any of the money going towards staff wage increases during 2022. Thank you.

Mr. Sullivan said that it doesn't affect FY2022. FY2022 ended July 1. FY2023 began July 1. So it won't effect anything going back. I would also like to say, regarding the risk asked about by Mrs. Pomerleau, we do risk losing more staff in between now and November. It's a real threat.

Mr. (Ed) Henningsen, Prides Crossing, said that I don't know the formality involved but, could we make this like an emergency vote for just this year and then put a requirement in place that all future monetary items of this issue should be on a regular election on a ballot. So at least we get this thing off the ground and then, in the future, have it on the ballot so everyone can understand it.

Mr. Sullivan said that I think it's certainly feasible. I don't think you can do it on the floor if there's not an article to state that.

6:43 PM

Ms. Murphy said that this original amount of \$190,421 was the request. This was put before the Budget Committee and we asked for further details of what this entailed. We did not receive an answer to that question. Therefore, the Budget Committee could not blindly support \$190,421 of taxpayer money being raised without that information. Had that information been provided, the outcome could have been very different. I would fully support moving this to the November ballot, providing that information to the Townspeople, and the Town Manager, Select Board, and Budget Committee have a conversation about this. The Budget Committee, despite what's been said, is in support of the Town employees but we cannot blindly support that amount of money without further detail. We would be remiss in our duty. That can be put on the ballot in November and addressed at that point, giving more people the opportunity to vote on it.

Ms. Letellier said that you have already recognized _____ to the Budget Committee and SB. I would argue that, if you look at actual studies of retention of people, it has nothing to do with a dollar raise. What exit interviews have you done with the staff that have left that said that a dollar raise would help them stay.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

6:45 PM Mr. Sullivan said that, in a number of anecdotal cases, we've seen where people have not left for a dollar an hour, they've left for four dollars and hour to other communities to do a similar task. We also think it extends farther than just giving them a raise. It's giving them training, letting them know that we appreciate them. When I first came in here in November, I came here with no intent. I appreciate you bringing up the voting ratio in my hometown. I think that was a little personal but that's okay. I came here with no agenda. I was going to retire and I was talked into by my wife, who didn't want me at home, to get a job and I came here to Eliot. I try to be honest and forthright. I hope that people consider that I came here in November. All I'm asking for are the tools to support the hard-working people that I come to work with every single day. It's an incredible group and not only from the \$1/hour or \$2/hour but the training to make sure that they can have interaction with their profession.

Ms. Letellier said that he isn't answering the question. He's just making a speech.

At this point, the discussion became argumentative and the Moderator call on someone else to speak.

Ms. (Nancy) Lee, Leech Road, asked why the Town Manager did not provide the details to the Budget Committee that they asked for. I don't understand that. This could have been avoided had that been provided. We wouldn't have been sitting here tonight. The same goes for the workman's compensation. How was workman's comp accounted for before. Why is there a change. That is all internal business within you elected officials and then you have it on the ballot. We don't need to know where 'this' is maintained and where 'this' is maintained. We just get the number. Why did you not provide the information that they have asked for; that they have had such a working relationship with past boards with past town managers to get the information so the Town voters can make an informed decision.

6:47 PM Mr. Sullivan said that I agree that it's the management's prerogative as to how you present the budget. I agree with you. I also have responded to the question from the budget committee. I respect the fact that they didn't like the detail that I gave them but the reasoning behind it is, when we don't have the resources, I'm not going to promise my staff and reveal in an extended plan, what training so-and-so is going to get and who's going to get 'this' raise and who's going to get 'that' raise for taking on additional responsibilities or what's going to be in someone's performance-based evaluation. All of that is a private, personnel matter that has to come up in the course but I have to have the resources to give those raises.

The Moderator had to bring the meeting back to order.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

Ms. (Liz) Hariton, Sawgrass Lane, said that I am generally supportive of passing this at any time. However, I was reticent in the voting booth because of the lack of detail. I appreciate that you don't want to reveal person-by-person who's getting what training but, as somebody who has done contract training before, you can use a vague amount of terminology that the voters can then use to make an informed decision. So, I think we should vote on the amendment to postpone.

6:49 PM

Mr. (Jim) Roy, Surrey Lane, said that what I'm getting is that the Budget Committee went against the SB because they weren't given the answers. Is that right.

Ms. Murphy said that the Budget Committee is an independently-elected committee. Our role is to take the budget, when it's presented to us, to vet that budget, to ask questions of the items in there. Our job is to review them and to make recommendations to the legislative body in this Town. That's the voters. We do not report to the Town Manager. We do not report to the SB. It's a checks-and-balance system for the voters' protection. The reason that the monies we voted and elected to maintain is that in each budget, each department, is to keep an accurate cost of those departments. Historically, the workman's comp has been in each department. It was moved this year. That's what we voted. That's what we explained in the letter that was sent out to the voters. I would also like to point out, as far as training, the money that's being requested here is for a wage reserve. There is money that was approved by the voters within departments for training. And I also want to reiterate that the Budget Committee supports the workers in this Town. If they have the information they need to support any position that is being under-funded, the Budget Committee would support funding that at a level it should be at. We felt that we did not get enough information in order to then recommend \$190,421 of your taxes to be raised.

6:51 PM

Ms. (Nancy) Shapleigh, River Road, said that, when I moved her in 1965, the Budget Committee was fussing and whining then and they're still fussing and whining. The Budget Committee comes up once a year. Your Select Board is here every day of the year. I think it's time we trusted the SB. They are trying to do this correctly and I would suggest we vote with the SB.

Ms. (Rosanne) Adams, Goodwin Road, said I want to invite you. If you want to know what's happening in your Town and what your boards are doing, all that information is on the Town website, and you can sign up for email alerts. I think that's the best way for you to understand what's going on. You can read the SB minutes, the minutes of the Budget Committee, etc. I want to bring up the point that the SB does have the authority under the Charter to bring an emergency meeting, which is what the Town Manager asked our lawyer and the lawyer said

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

yes. However, this particular article I don't see as an emergency and I believe it can wait. I don't think, in three months, there is going to be a training program developed for staff. And I agree with the Budget Committee that they should have been provided more information so the Townspeople would have that information. In fact, in either the ordinance or the Charter, the Town Manager is required to turn over any documentation asked by the Budget Committee. To close, I think we should go back to what Mr. Widi brought up at the beginning of this meeting: that we stay off personalities, we stop accusing each other. We know there was a failure. There's a big failure, here, in communications and collaboration and I'm sure that they are now going to work this out. But we need to stop. It's not black and white. Every situation has shades of grey and we aren't "you against me", "me against you". That's not the way we want to be. We want to do what's best for the Town, our staff, our elected officials, our appointed officials. All are working, I really believe, for the best for this Town. We all can be misguided. We all can use language, which isn't the best for bringing us together, but I think we should remember that we're all in this together. This is our Town and we, by the way, are the legislative body. The Town Meeting is the legislative body and that is who our Budget Committee reports to. They can give a recommendation. They consult with, hopefully, the SB and Town Manager, but they report and are a sub-committee, as in the Charter, of the legislative body. In this Town, we do not have a mayor. We don't have a council so the legislative body is you and me at this Town Meeting.

7:00 PM

Mr. (Jim) Latter, State Road, said that I was fortunate enough to be involved in the PB. I was on the Town Manager Search Team. Mr. Sullivan doesn't know this but he was not my first choice. I was wrong. Finding people like Mr. Sullivan is not easy. Finding employees like those sitting over there is not easy. If you want to show these employees you support them, you will support the funding for them now.

Ms. (Ellen) Ceppetelli, Main Street, said that I'm from away. I started to pay taxes here in 2010. I've had the good fortune of being the Chair of the Aging-in-Place Committee. I share my experience doing this for six years. I love this Town. The staff here are phenomenal. I knew nothing about Eliot. Nothing about Aging-in-Place. They have been outstanding and I have had to watch these qualified people leave. And it's been difficult to do the work we do on our small committee to have that happen. So, I ask you to think about that. I don't know if you worked or where you worked but, when people keep saying 'keep waiting, keep working, it's coming', it's dishonest to me. The SB thinks we need to do this now and I would ask citizens to support them.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

7:02 PM Ms. (resident but could not hear her name) Jennie Lane, said that I have lived here for 35 years. Are we asking for new money or is this money already allocated somewhere. Is this in addition to what people voted for in June.

Mr. Sullivan said that this is an addition to what was approved on June 14th.

The lady confirmed that this is money over-and-above June 14th approved money.

Mr. Sullivan said that, if we're talking about expenses, yes. If we're talking about revenues and the projected tax rate, no. We'll still be under LD1. We'll still be within that revenue structure. So, it isn't (is an) additional money. If you didn't appropriate this money, this money would go to your General Fund or be unappropriated funding.

Mr. Dennett asked if there were any more questions.

Ms. (Jenny) Isler, Adlington Road, ask regarding a point of clarification. Fiscal year 2023 is when.

Mr. Sullivan said this past July 1.

Ms. Isler confirmed that we are in Fiscal Year 2023 now.

Mr. Sullivan said yes, we are.

Ms. Isler said that we are talking about approving money for the next 90 days. Is that correct.

Mr. Sullivan said that it would be through June 30, 2023.

Ms. Isler said that, if we moved to put it on the November ballot, the urgency of voting now versus the November ballot, I believe that's what sent _____. What is lost. The gentleman asked before what the urgency is. I understand that there are some employees who are at risk of leaving at this moment.

Mr. Sullivan said yes.

Ms. Isler asked if I understand that there are two employees at risk of leaving at this moment.

Mr. Sullivan said that I don't know the official count. They don't confide in me.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

Ms. Isler said that this would help that. It would also help with training from now until November, if we vote now versus putting it on the November ballot. Is that correct for verification.

7:04 PM

Mr. Sullivan said that we would start to put the training in place immediately. We would put performance-based evaluations for this fiscal year in place. We would also make some salary adjustments. The salary studies that you have done, I think you paid \$17,000 for the last salary study, we would implement some of those and make some adjustments, as well, to be competitive for different positions.

Ms. Isler said thank you. One more point of clarification: When the Budget Committee requested, asked a question, information regarding this amount of money, what was the answer given to them.

Mr. Sullivan said that it was pretty much similar to what I just said. We would invest in training. We would invest in performance-based evaluations. There was also a series of questions.

Ms. Isler said general rather than specific.

Mr. Sullivan said yes. As I said, it's very difficult to get into specifics, and I appreciate the comment that was made before. You're in a very small setting. We have 11 employees in the Town Hall, 43 employees altogether, so it's kind of hard to loose what you're going to do with somebody for a certain training or an evaluation. I certainly don't want that to affect t their career.

Ms. Isler asked if he would be able to provide that level of specificity between now and November.

Mr. Sullivan said no. I wouldn't provide any more specificity.

Ms. Isler said so, we take it on trust that the SB would manage it.

7:07 PM

Mr. Sullivan agreed that the SB would have to oversee it because it's going to a reserve account. Also, the fact that, not for nothing do I appreciate what Mr. Latter said, but you hired me to manage and all I'm asking for are the tools to manage.

Ms. Isler said thank you.

Ms. (Mona) Davis, Guys Way, said that I would just like to know how the Town Manager came up with the amount. How did you come to that amount.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School

Mr. Sullivan said that that's a very good question. I looked at some of the shortfalls in different jobs, looked at what some of the training might cost, and then, also calculated performance-based evaluations. When I went back and re-looked at it, recalculated it, the SB said we have to make it lower. I went back and looked at it and, instead of the \$190,000, I came back with \$110,000. I appreciate anything you can give us today. I certainly do. But I think there needs to be a movement to have it done today.

Ms. Davis said but we already voted in June and I believe that these people in the Town voted with their wallets because all of our wallets are hurting right now. And that is the reason why people voted and cut your department budgets a little bit, because we're all having to cut our own little budgets. To call a meeting where half the people I know work until 6PM, 6:30PM. There are people in my family that could not make it and they aren't having the right to vote.

Mr. Sullivan said that that's fair and let me address that. The projections that the Assessor has done, our tax rate would show that we are actually going to be raising less taxes than we did last year. We're also going to be going, with a projected mil rate, from 13.5 to 13.2, so we will be going down in the mil rate. A great deal of that is due to his hard work making sure that valuations along Route 236 and a lot of businesses that, because we weren't investing in assessing before, weren't there and we now have greater values on those. Those businesses, those places, are going to bear a brunt of the taxes. But certainly, if you want the Assessor to speak to that, he's here today. By the way, the increase would be \$5/month on an average house of \$300,000.

7:09 PM Ms. Murphy said that I would like to reiterate that this is about transparency in your government. You have the right to know where your money is spent. I will be the first to support, with documentation, any employee in this Town that is not being paid fairly. That is what the Budget Committee was asking for, some information around that, not personal information. I think the taxpayers in this Town deserve that information and I don't see the harm waiting until November on the ballot. And the Budget Committee, the SB, and the Town Manager sitting down and having conversations and seeing the documentation, coming to a consensus to recommend to the voters of this Town to fairly pay our employees. If the Town Manager feels that there is any employee in this Town that is underpaid and not compensated, it was his responsibility to provide that information to the Budget Committee, as requested, so we could make an informed decision while we were making our recommendations to the voters.

7:11 PM **Mr. Trott moved the question to end this debate. Second by a resident in the audience.**

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School**

Residents asked the Moderator to re-read the question.

Mr. Dennett said that we are moving the question on the amendment to postpone the vote until November 2022 ballot to allow all registered residents to vote. The original motion on the floor was to approve, as written. The motion to amend that was to postpone the vote until November 2022. We are now voting on the motion to close debate on that amendment to amend the article to move it to the 2022 November election.

7:14 PM Mr. Trott clarified that we are voting to move the question. That's the first vote. Then we do the motion to postpone. We first have to vote on moving the question (to cease discussion).

Mr. Dennett concurred. He called the vote. **All those in favor of closing debate on the motion please raise their cards. All those opposed. The motion to end debate carries.** We are now voting on the motion to amend to move this article (#3) to the November 2022 Meeting. **All those in favor of moving this to the November election please raise your card. All those opposed. It is too close for me to tell and we will have to count. He called for the vote. All those in favor to postpone please raise your cards. The count was made. All those opposed to the amendment to move the question to November 2022 election please raise their cards. The count was made.**

**69 having voted in the affirmative
99 having voted in the negative
The motion fails.**

Mr. Widi moved, second by Mr. Trott, that we move the original question.

7:16 PM Mr. Dennett said that the it has been moved and seconded that the original motion to approve article (#3) be moved. He called the vote. **All those in favor please raise your card. All those opposed. It is an affirmative vote to move the question.** We are now voting on the motion to accept Article #3, as written. **All those in favor please raise your cards. All those opposed. I say that it's an affirmative vote in favor of the question and Article #3 is approved.**

Article #3 is approved, as written.

Mr. Widi moved to adjourn, second by a member of the audience.

Mr. (John) Reed made a motion to reconsider Article #2. It was found that he did not vote in the affirmative and could not make that motion as he was not on the prevailing side.

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
July 13, 2022 5:30PM (continued)
Eliot Elementary School**

Mr. Dennett said that the motion on the floor is to adjourn and was seconded. All those in favor please raise your cards. All those opposed. It is confirmed that the vote is in the affirmative and this meeting is adjourned.

L. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Lemire, Recording Secretary

Entered into the record on February 15, 2023 as the Official Minutes of the Special Town Meeting held on July 13, 2022.

S/ Wendy Rawski, Town Clerk