

North Conway Water Precinct
Annual Meeting
Wednesday, March 29, 2022

Voting from 4:00PM – 7:00PM
Business Portion of the Meeting 7:00PM – 8:51PM

North Conway Water Precinct
Wastewater Treatment Facility
104 Sawmill Lane
North Conway, NH

Commissioners

John Santuccio (Board Chair)
Suzanne Nelson
Robert F. Porter

Superintendent

Jason Gagnon

Fire Chief

Chad McCarthy

Treasurer

Robert T. Anderson

Clerk

Gary Chandler

Appointed Moderator

Chris Meier, filling in for Donald Ekberg

Moderator Chris Meier opened the Official Ballot Voting session at 4:00 PM.

Motion of Suzanne Nelson and seconded by Robert F. Porter to put Article 1 on the floor.

Article 01 Election of Officers

To choose all necessary officers.

Commissioner	3 year term	James Umberger (18)
Treasurer	1 year term	Robert T. Anderson (29)
Moderator	1 year term	Donald Ekberg (28)
Clerk	1 year term	Gary Chandler (31)

Commissioner Nelson: Before we get started, Moderator Ekberg is not available this evening so I would like to make a motion to approve Chris Meier as temporary Moderator.

Chris Meier: I, Chris Meier, do solemnly and sincerely swear and affirm that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all duties incumbent upon me as Moderator of the North Conway Water Precinct, according to the best of my abilities, agreeably to the rules and regulations of this constitution and the laws of the state of New Hampshire. So help me God.

Suzanne Nelson: ...and again thank you for doing this.

Robert T. Anderson: Is that going to be permanent now?

Suzanne Nelson: No, he's temporary.

Chris Meier: Can everybody join me in the pledge of allegiance?

Crowd: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God indivisible by liberty and justice for all.

Chris Meier: So, I don't have too many housekeeping rules. Uh, generally it's just, be nice to each other. We're here to debate issues and not debate s or make personal attacks. Uh, so if I warn you about making a personal attack, you get one warning the second you're gone. Uh, so let's keep to the issues. Uh, let's, uh, keep it cordial. Uh, we may have disagreements over issues, but we don't have disagreements of overall us being neighbors, so let's act that way. Uh, any rule that I make, um, including that one, I suppose, uh, you can overrule as a legislative body. Uh, it needs a motion a second, and then a vote to overrule me. Uh, it's a majority vote. So, uh, if you'd like to do that, certainly go ahead. Uh, I remind everybody, uh, when you are speaking, I need your name for the record. I need your address for the record, and then you can go on and speak. Uh, I will try to let everybody speak once. Uh, if you want to speak again to an issue, uh, I use my discretion to allow you to speak again after somebody else has spoken, and that is about it. Uh, if you want a secret ballot on a question, I need a, uh, I need a petition of five, uh, registered voters. I have secret ballot petitions on 4 and 5 already, so if you're interested in the secret ballot on any of the other questions, uh, take care of that in advance and bring the petition up to me. With that, we'll get started.

The first order of business is I need a motion to allow the Precinct Supervisor Jason Gagnon and the Precinct Attorney, uh, Steve Bennett, uh, and Precinct Business Administrator, Hannah Andersen to speak.

Suzanne Nelson: And the, uh, Fire Chief, Chad McCarthy.

Chris Meier: Oh and the Fire Chief, Chad McCarthy...

Suzanne Nelson: Okay. I will make that motion.

Robert F. Porter: And I'll second it.

Chris Meier: Thank you. Any discussion? Seeing no discussion, I'll take a vote. All in favor, say aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: Any opposed? Motion passes.

Chris Meier: Okay. And at this point, I'd like to call Jason up to the Chairman for some other business.

Jason Gagnon: So, as you all know, we have somebody with us tonight for their last official meeting, uh, serving the Precinct. Um, Believe it or not, it's been 50 years that John Santuccio in some form has been serving the Precinct since 1973. He first joined the Fire Department, and here we are 50 years later in 2023, and he, he's wrapping up one of his many terms as Commissioner. So a lot of you out here have been with John a lot longer than I have, and I know we all have very fond memories, not just of what John's done for the Precinct, but also of him as a person. So, to keep it simple;

In honor of 50 years of public service, to present the, uh, antique water pump. We've come a long way since we were bringing water out of the ground in one of these things. And that's in big part thanks to the efforts of John. So, here you go, John. Thank you.

The room stood for a round of applause for John.

Chris Meier: Thank you, Jason. Uh, one thing I don't think I did is let's, why don't we do introductions? I know most people know everybody at the head table and, and the table over here, but, uh, Jason, can you start and let's go that way and introduce yourself to everybody just in case we have new folks.

Jason Gagnon: Sure. I'm Jason Gagnon. I'm superintendent.

Robert F. Porter: I'm Bob Porter.

John Santuccio: John Santuccio.

Suzanne Nelson: Suzanne Nelson; Commissioner.

Chad McCarthy: Chad McCarthy; Fire Chief.

Hannah Andersen: Hannah Andersen; Business Administrator.

Steve Bennett: Steve Bennett; Precinct Attorney.

Chris Meier: Thank you. Uh, so next item of business. So we've already taken care of Article 1. That was the voting, uh, which, uh, everybody took care of from 4 to 7. Um, on the other Articles, um, I generally entertain, will entertain a motion to waive reading of the Article. So you don't have to listen to me, uh, read all the Articles. You have all the, everybody should have a warrant in front of them. If you don't, there's one, there's warrants up at the front table there. Uh, you can, you can read the warrant rather than having me read it.

Chris Meier: So I will entertain a motion to waive me reading all the Articles.

Karen Umberger: So moved.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Chris Meier: Any discussion? Seeing none. Any... All in favor?

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed? Awesome.

Chris Meier: Uh, so we will start with Article 2, Long Term Debt Service payments. Any discussion on this Article? Uh, let's actually, we need, uh, to have it placed on the floor. Yeah,

Suzanne Nelson: I will, um, make a motion to place Article 2 on the warrant.

Robert Porter: Second.

Article 02 Long Term Debt Service Payments

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$ 1,704,748 for the retirement of outstanding bonds, notes, interest, and temporary loan interest for the ensuing year. This Article will be offset by grant revenues estimated to be \$354,508 and Sewer Funds in the amount of \$539,434 and the remainder to be raised by general taxation.

[Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0]

Chris Meier: Okay. Any discussion on placing it on the warrant? Uh, okay. So it, it's on the floor. It's on the floor. It's on the floor. So, uh, that opens it up for comments. Um, Jason, do you want to take a couple minutes to explain this, uh, Article?

Jason Gagnon: Sure. This is our standard warrant article that includes all of our long-term debt payments. Uh, we are obligated to make these payments. This really is just a formality that acknowledges that we're obligated to do so and we'll actually make those payments.

Chris Meier: Any other thoughts, comments, motions, amendments, uh, on Article 2. Okay, so this is on the passage of Article 2. I need a, uh, all in favor of passing Article 2.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed?

Chris Meier: Aye's have it. Article 2 passes.

Chris Meier: So let's move on to Article 3. This is the operating budget, uh, General Fund. Uh, I need a motion to place this on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I will make a motion to place Article 3 on the warrant on the floor.

Robert F Porter: Second.

Article 03 Operating Budget - General Fund

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$112,230 for the General Fund (Commissioners) operating budget, not including other appropriations voted separately for the ensuing year. This is a tax funded article.

[Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0]

Chris Meier: Okay. Uh, that opens it up for discussion on the floor. Jason, do you want to address this operating budget?

Jason Gagnon: Sure. As with all the operating budgets tonight, uh, we've gone into great detail on them during budget hearings, so I won't go through all those things again. Um, if you, you're welcome, if anybody has any specific questions, we're happy to an I'm happy to answer them.

Chris Meier: Questions, comments, amendments? Seeing none, uh, we'll take a vote on Article 3. All in favor of Article 3 as written?

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed? The ayes have it. Article 3 passes.

Okay. Article 4 again, I have a, uh, petition with 5 signatures. Uh, make this a secret ballot. Uh, this is operating budget for the Water Department. Uh, let's have a,

Suzanne Nelson: I'll make a motion to place Article 4 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Article 04 Operating Budget - Water Department

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,332,036 for the operating budget of the water department for the ensuing year to be funded by water usage fees and revenues with no amount to be raised through general taxation.

[Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0]

Chris Meier: Okay. Uh, Jason, do you want to address this Article?

Jason Gagnon: Yep. Like, like with the Commissioners, we've, uh, discussed it in full at the budget hearing. There is one new piece of information that we have since budget hearing. We have received a \$40,000 grant from New Hampshire DES related to lead service line inventory and planning. And that \$40,000 will be used to actually pay the payroll salaries of our staff who would be doing the lead service line work anyway. Uh, so that's not in the budget. The grant paperwork is still going through, but that money is coming in. So where we had originally intended to include \$40,000 of revenue from the rate stabilization capital reserve offset, I'm not recommending that we take that out. I want to keep it there just in case, but we shouldn't have to use it because now we have that \$40,000 coming from DES that will offset payroll,

Chris Meier: Yes, sir?

Robert T. Anderson: Tim Anderson, 235 Sunset. Where do we have lead pipes left?

Jason Gagnon: That's what the work we have to do is, is to identify it, at first. So regardless of, uh, what you have in the ground, EPA, the new Lead and Copper Rules say that you have to create an inventory. So you have to have certain information on every single service that we have in the entire Precinct. Both the stuff that the Precinct owns in the right of way, and the services that are on private property that go into the buildings. So, as you can imagine, it's a pretty significant undertaking to go through and collect and aggregate all that data in the format that DES and EPA need.

Chris Meier: Yes, sir?

Robert T. Anderson: Who's going to do the work?

Jason Gagnon: So we're going to have our staff, uh, on the water side, do it...

Robert T. Anderson: Out back?

Jason Gagnon: Out back. Those are the guys, uh, well, it's, it's really going to be a little bit of everybody. It's going to be a team effort. So we've got guys out back who will be working through the existing tie cards and as-builts and record drawings and things like that, that we have. Um, we may have some administrative time with actually putting the stuff together in the, in the format that EPA wants or that DES wants. They don't even know have a format yet for that stuff. So it's kind of a little bit of a moving target. Uh, but basically it'll all be water related, so it'll offset water salaries for whomever is doing that work, whether it be in the field, in the maps or in the office.

Chris Meier: Okay. Anyone, anyone else? Any further discussion?

Karen Umberger: Karen Umberger; 136 Birch Bend, Kearsarge. Uh, so the 40,000 that you're taking from the Rate Stabilization, reserve offset here, that will not be spent, is what you're telling us with this grant?

Jason Gagnon: What? Yeah. So it shouldn't be spent, right? You can take it out of the budget if you want, but if you leave it in it's, it's there. So the intent of having that 40,000 in there all the time was to cover us in case we needed it. So as we go through the year, if we can figure out how to save some money, or maybe we don't have things break like we budget for and we have some of that extra money, then we would not tap into that rate stabilization fund unless we needed it to sort of break even in the operating budget at the end of the year,

Karen Umberger: If I may?

Chris Meier: Yes.

Karen Umberger: So you're not, you're not planning to use this 40,000 for the lead pipe stock?

Jason Gagnon: The rate stabilization? No.

Karen Umberger: Thank you.

Chris Meier: Yes?

Kristine Cluff: I'm Kristine Cluff, 136 Seavey Street. Jason, if the \$40,000 is in Rate Stabilization, there's no Special Article, uh, no Special Warrant Article for it, you just put it in the budget as an offset?

Jason Gagnon: Yes. So Commissioners are agents to expend, right?

Kristine Cluff: Of course.

Jason Gagnon: So by putting it in there, if we ended up having to spend our full budget, full operating budget, you know, worst case scenario happens everywhere, and we spend that full amount, then we would technically have overspent our revenue by, you know, \$36,000 or whatever it is. So that's where that \$40,000 then would be used to repay the fund to make it so that it breaks even at the end of the year.

Kristine Cluff: The other part of that is the \$40,000 is being used as a payroll offset. That's what you just said, right? It's a payroll offset. So how are you going, because it's not a line item budget, you're going to use those funds in other categories or other line items if necessary.

Jason Gagnon: So it's two separate 40,000's, the 40,000 from the rate stabilization fund was what was in there originally, right?

Kristine Cluff: Right.

Jason Gagnon: That's our, that's our quote unquote revenue to offset expenses. The 40,000 from DES is a separate grant.

Kristine Cluff: Right.

Jason Gagnon: And so that 40,000 can be used to fund our workers' activities toward lead service line inventory and planning.

Kristine Cluff: Okay. So, the 40,000 out of rate stabilization is not necessarily payroll?

Jason Gagnon: No, it's, it's gross budgets net I guess net budget.

Kristine Cluff: Net Budget. Yep. Okay. Thank you.

Robert T. Anderson: 235... So if, in fact on your, uh, line item of administration, if you didn't have that 23% in there, you probably wouldn't need 40,000. I had it figured out that you're going to give \$22,000 to hire this person under water and 22,000 on the sewer, roughly \$42,000.

Jason Gagnon: Yeah. So what Tim's referring to is we have a, a proposed additional position both in the water and the sewer budget. And what this additional position is, is it's a, it's another part-time administrative staff, office staff. So the total amount that I have budgeted is, is based on 30 hours a week, which at that point would qualify for health insurance benefits. So I budgeted 30 hours a week for about 3 quarters of the year, and then 3 quarters of the year of the worst case scenario for health insurance, which would be a family plan. And that comes out to \$27,123 that I have budgeted in water for this year, for that part-time administrative position. Again, that's, that's a worst case estimate. If they take the full family healthcare plan and work 30 hours a week, I do think that's going to result in about \$4,500 in reduced overtime costs. So the net comes out somewhere around 22,600. Um, I forgot the second half of your question. I'm sorry,

Tim Anderson: I didn't have a second...

Jason Gagnon: Okay. So I, I had to answer. Okay. Oh, I remember what it was. Would we need the \$40,000 if we didn't have that in there? And the short answer is there's still a little bit of, um, overage even without that in there. I'm just scrolling down and my stuff here to see what that would be. That's, it's about a wash with that. Yep.

Tim Anderson: If you didn't have...excuse me. If you didn't have that position in there, it would be a wash?

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, we're expected to be, uh, about \$10,000 in the red right at the projected budget. So that's where that \$40,000 of safety net for the, for the, um, Rate Stabilization funds come from.

Robert T. Anderson: Well, this is my 46th year coming here and talking, and this is the first time I've ever heard of this place ever being in the red. You just said that. I'll make note.

Jason Gagnon: Yeah. So, I said the projected budget is in the red.

Robert T. Anderson: Right...

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Robert T. Anderson: Mr. Moderator, I'd like to make an amendment to Article 4.

Chris Meier: Okay.

Robert T. Anderson: I'd like to change that number from 1,332,036 to 1,310,036.

Chris Meier: Can you state the number, the number again please?

Robert T. Anderson: 1,310,036

Chris Meier: Okay. So the motion on the floor is to amend Article 4 to reduce it, uh, by

Robert T. Anderson: 22,0000

Chris Meier: ... \$22,000 to \$1,310,036. Do I have a second for that motion?

Jeff Currier: Second.

Chris Meier: Okay, if you're seconding, can you state your name for the record too?

Jeff Currier: Jeff Currier.

Chris Meier: Ok, um, discussion on the amendment. Yes, Kris?

Kristine Cluff: Kris Cluff 136 Seavey Street. At the deliberative portion of the meeting, we discussed the possibility of, of making that 40 hours in the additional, the small amount of money. Did you give any more consideration to that or not? Or did you consider maybe reducing it to 20 hours?

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, so at the budget hearing we talked about where we came up with that 30 hour and healthcare position. So as everybody knows, the labor market is fairly tight right now, and, uh, the reason why we came out with that, that part-time figure, right? We, we were looking at 20 to 30 hours because we thought that that would fit, uh, maybe an underserved demographic in the community for say, working parents, parents who wanted to work during the hours when their kids were in school, uh, because maybe they didn't have childcare outside of those hours or couldn't afford childcare outside of those hours, but would be able to give those hours to the Precinct within that timeframe. Um, that's really where that 20 to 30 hour or the 30 hour cap came from. The 30 hour cap came from, it's hard to attract quality employees, right? We advertise for a position out in the water department and we got 1 application. So we thought that if we could bump it up to that 30 hours and offer that health insurance, that might be the thing that actually allows us to attract a quality candidate and bring them in. So we could certainly, I know for a fact we could fill 40 hours, but...

Kristine Cluff: Yeah, just didn't seem like for \$210 extra, you wouldn't go for the extra 10 hours.

Jason Gagnon: And if we found somebody who wanted to work full-time and was an excellent candidate, I think that's something we'd have to consider.

Kristine Cluff: The ad is out. Um, we've seen it publicly. Have we had any response to the ad?

Jason Gagnon: We've had 4, 4 responses so far. Yep. Each of them are differently qualified, but I think all of them have the potential to be a good candidate.

Chris Meier: Further discussion on the amendment. Anyone? Yes, sir.

William Hounsell: William Hounsell 112 Thompson Road. I personally would, will vote against this amendment because I think if our Superintendent, um, put this before the Commissioners and the Commissioners said that they agreed that it was needed, uh, that I know the burden that's put on the Superintendent to accomplish what we've asked him to accomplish, it's going to get greater and greater. There will be more inter municipal agreements that we'll have to work

with. And, uh, so I'm going to back the Commissioners on this and give them the staff and create the team that he needs.

Chris Meier: Thank you. Further discussion on the amendment?

Karen Umberger: Yes, could you read the dollar figure again? I'm sorry...

Chris Meier: The, the, the dollar figure of the amendment is reducing the budget by \$22,000 to \$1,310,036. Further discussion? Yes, Mr...

Jim Umberger: Jim Umberger, 136 Birch Bend. And over the years that I've been involved in the Precinct, I've never, we've never tried to micromanage. When somebody says they need something, we give 'em the opportunity to get it. The Fire Department says they need extra amount hours, we give it to 'em, to me, this is up to the Commissioners. Put it in the budget, let them make the decision on whether they need it or not. It's not up to us to micromanage that opinion.

Chris Meier: Thank you. Mr. Anderson?

Robert T. Anderson: Go ahead, Bill.

Chris Meier: Go ahead.

William Hounsell: William Hounsell. Uh, I just wanted to, to mention too that we started this thing off. Uh, the challenge was could we build a plant? And, um, Gary and I stood before you and we said we won't do it until we get all pieces in place. And one of the pieces we waited two years for was an economic development administration grant. And that was based on the capacity of this plant's ability to go out to the industrial zone on East Conway Road. That grant came through and we built the plant. We've talked many times about everybody being in this together. It's a Valley wide capacity plan. And I congratulate the voters and the Commissioners who all these years who have built it for that regional capacity. There's only 400 people with 60 to 100 voting every year, built \$75 million worth of regional capacity. And that I, I congratulate everybody.

But we also said, as we bring in more revenue on the sewer side, the water's always gonna be a challenge. We may have to raise the water rates, but maybe we'll look at lowering the wastewater rates at the same time so the household rate will hold even. And then finally, Gary and I stood before you at the beginning of all this and said, raising ourselves up to 3 times the state average on our rates, because you get an extra 10% grant from the State of New Hampshire, the State Aid Grant Program, 10% of principal interest payments, and all these bonds that you're looking at has reduced our costs a lot. So I just say we've been a team, we have wonderful Commissioners, superintendents presented to them that we need staff and we ought to give it to them.

Robert T. Anderson: My only caveat to Bill, like I said, when I stood here first, I've been coming since 77, this is the first year the Commission or the Superintendent, whether it was Fudd, Gary, Dave, and now Jason, I commend them on their work. 75 million is a lot of money. Okay. But now we're in the red. Okay. He just told me we're in the red. So there's only one way to get out of the red, that's reduce cost, correct?

Jason Gagnon: Correct.

William Hounsell: Or raise rates?

Robert T. Anderson: That's coming next! Believe me; you'll be here this summer when they do that. Uh, so I'm just trying to save a little bit of money right now so that maybe before we get done this year, he won't be coming back in the fall and looking for a hundred thousand dollars out of the Rate Stabilization so we stay in the black.

Chris Meier: Yep. Jason

Jason Gagnon: Sir. Yeah, so I, um, the budget is in the red because I build it really conservatively. I, I could have, I projected our revenues to be lower than they were last year. And I do that on purpose because I don't want to be caught, uh, caught behind the eight ball with conditions like Covid that are out of our control that impact our revenues, right? And we saw that happen in, in '19, or sorry, in '20 and '21, where revenues dropped and we, we had to really tighten our belts to make sure that we stayed within those revenues. So that's one of the reasons why the budget is 'in the red'. Um, I also budget conservatively because we always need to have that cushion, um, in case unexpected stuff happens. Um, for example, and you guys, if you look at the, at the books in the water treatment chemicals, we've got 78,000 budgeted in that line. I, I expect to spend about 48,000 of that, but I've got a second delivery of chemicals

budgeted in there because we may need it. I don't think we're going to need it, but there have been some years where we didn't think we were going to need it and we did. For example, when the shortage happened because it got cold in Texas for 2 weeks and everything froze and all the production plants went down. So you can, that's why I kind of build some of that buffer in there. So, so yes, the, the budget is in the red on paper. I know that we're going to come in, I don't know, I'm pretty confident that we're going to come in in the black, but I have that caveat in there with that rate, stabilization cushion, so that if we need it, if Texas freezes up again and we can't get caustic and it triples in price like it did in 2020 or 2019 or whenever that was then that we have that cushion in there. So I just wanted to provide that caveat on what in the red means.

Chris Meier: Are we ready to take a vote?

William Hounsell: Just one question. Sure. Do you intend to do a rate study?

Jason Gagnon: So we are currently doing a rate study. It is a hundred percent grant funded by DES. And we have a national company who that's what they specialize in. They do rate studies for utilities, and we should have some results from that, some preliminary results and recommendations in, in the next couple weeks to months.

William Hounsell: And in that rate study, would, would we be looking at the, the, the rate for the sewer and the wastewater? So would we both looking at an integrated approach?

Jason Gagnon: No, we would be, looking, well, we'll be looking at each of them individually, and then as the voters and the Commissioners look at those recommendations, you and they will make decisions on where we go with that stuff.

William Hounsell: and so that's the tool we need to use to adjust our budgets for...

Jason Gagnon: Right.

William Hounsell: Okay... thank you. Thank you!

Chris Meier: Okay. You ready for a vote on the amendment? So this is the amendment to reduce Article 4 from 1,332,036 by \$22,000 to 1,310,036. Now, I don't have a petition for a secret ballot on this question, so we're going to do it live.

Chris Meier: Uh, all in favor of the amendment to Article 4, say aye.

Crowd: Aye

Chris Meier: All opposed?

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: Can we do a hands, I I think the nays have it, but All all in favor, please raise your hand. Aye. All opposed, please hear, raise your hand. Nay. The nays have it. So the, the amendment to Article 4 fails.

Do we have further discussion amendment, uh, questions on Article 4 as written? Seeing none, we'll proceed to boating. So this is a secret ballot. We're going to use 'A' for this question. So tear off your 'A'. So the ballot box is in the back. There's one there and one here. You can use the either ballot box. This is the, the vote is Article 4 as written.

Chris Meier: Okay. Article 5. Uh, I need a motion to place Article 5.

Suzanne Nelson: I will, uh, move to place Article 5 on the floor.

Chris Meier: Thank you.

Robert F Porter: Second!

Article 05 Operating Budget - Sewer Department

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,975,721 for the operating budget of the sewer department for the ensuing year to be funded by sewer usage fees and revenues with no amount to be raised through general taxation. [Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0]

Chris Meier: Thank you. Article 5 is on the floor. Jason, would you like to take a minute to explain Article 5?

Jason Gagnon: Sure. So this, uh, Article 5 is the Sewer Operating Budget. And as with the others, we went through everything pretty much in detail Budget Hearing. With this one nothing has changed since then. So if you have any specific questions, I'm happy to answer them.

Chris Meier: All right. Questions, amendments or comments on Article 5? Tim? Yep, come on.

Robert T. Anderson: The, the only comment I'm going to make on Article 5, which has to do with the sewer as going through the book on page 11, um, we closed out a Sewer Capital Improvement account in the amount of 1,425,166.20. And talked Jason about this yesterday. We went and took that money and put it in the general checkbook. I would like the body to put that money in our Sewer Infrastructure Capital Improvement account so that when we go to do sewer projects, um, we could use that money instead of it sitting in the checkbook. Thank you.

Karen Umberger: Would you go through, go through that again, Tim?

Robert T. Anderson: What's that, Karen?

Karen Umberger: Would you go through that again?

Robert T. Anderson: Okay. Page 11.

Karen Umberger: Yeah, I got that.

Robert T. Anderson: Second one down. Sewer Capital Improvements: they decided to close that account out, says right there. Account closing proceeds to sewer. And if you go to the sewer, um, balance sheet, I'm not sure what page it's on that they put that in the sewer account. So now sewer account has like 2 million in change in that 2,900,000 something I'd like this money to go into Sewer Capital Improvement Account.

Jason Gagnon: Capital Reserve?

Robert T. Anderson: Capital Reserves, excuse me. Yeah. So that it's used for Sewer Capital Improvement. That's what it's for. Instead of in the checkbook.

Chris Meier: Jason. Yes.

Jason Gagnon: So, so just to address uh, Tim's comment real quick. So historically we've always had two checking accounts within one fund. So both for water and for sewer, we had a water, regular water account and then a water capital improvements account. Both were regular checking accounts, neither were capital reserve accounts, but for, for whatever reason, we had, and maybe Kris can shed some light on why we had two separate accounts, but we had two separate accounts both in the water fund and in the sewer fund. And they were just separate checking accounts. Probably used for different purposes within the operating expenses.

Kristine Cluff: Different revenue source.

Jason Gagnon: Yep. Okay. Um, but as we've been working with our accountants to try and streamline some of our bank accounts, there are a lot of places out there who do everything out of, they have one bank account and all the accounting is handled in the financial software as to what belongs in what fund and so on and so forth. We're not ready to go to that extreme, but what we have done is we've tried to consolidate, so that's why the sewer capital improvements checking account got closed out and put into the sewer checking account because really they are used today for the same purpose. So it didn't make sense to have two separate checking accounts. So I think what Tim's asking, and uh, sorry to put words in your mouth, if they're not right, I'm sure you'll correct me, but I think what Tim is saying is that the, the balance that we have in that sewer checking account is high enough that we should take some of that money out of the checking account and put it into Capital Reserve to be used for infrastructure projects specifically.

Robert T. Anderson: Correct.

Karen Umberger: Where do I see those numbers in the sewer...

Robert T. Anderson: It's on page 10.

Karen Umberger: I got it.

Jason Gagnon: Yeah. So it is not a budget item. It's, it's nothing to do with that. It literally is just closing one bank account and adding that balance to the other bank account that's for the same similar purpose.

Kristine Cluff: I just have a quick question, Jason.

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Chris Meier: Yes.

Kristine Cluff: Um, who authorized the closing of the account?

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Did the board take a vote and did the Treasurer sign off or was he aware that you were doing this?

Jason Gagnon: Um, we have...

Hannah Andersen: There was a vote in 2020.

Jason Gagnon: Okay. So there was a vote by the Commissioners in 2020.

Kristine Cluff: In 2020?

Hannah Andersen: It's just taken a long time to get there.

Kristine Cluff: 3 years?

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Kristine Cluff: Wow. Okay. And Tim you signed off on these?

Robert T. Anderson: I can't remember that.

Kristine Cluff: You would've... at 1.9 million I'd imagine there was paperwork...

Chris Meier: Jim?

Kristine Cluff: Yep, that was it.

Jim Umberger: Jim Umberger, 136 Birch Bend. This does not have any impact on the Capital Reserve Funds for Sewer?

Jason Gagnon: No. Nope!

Jim Umberger: Okay. That's my concern.

Jason Gagnon: No, the Capital Reserve Funds are separate. This is, this was 2 operating fund checkbooks that we had that we just consolidated into, into one account at the bank.

Kristine Cluff: Jason, you're going to put this in the Sewer Capital, uh, Infrastructure, Capital Reserve.

Jason Gagnon: That's what Tim has asked.

Kristine Cluff: My question to you is, is that revenue source for that account is buy-in fees. So do we need to do something special at this meeting to make that revenue source different?

Jason Gagnon: I think, I think, again, Tim correct me if I'm wrong, we have two capital reserve accounts for water and two capital reserve accounts for sewer. Yes. Both of them have the same use purpose, but they have different revenue streams, like, like Kris was saying. So this money would technically have to go into the regular sewer capital reserve because it's the buy-in fees that go into the infrastructure, but they both serve the same purpose.

Kristine Cluff: Right.

Robert T. Anderson: I get that.

Kristine Cluff: So we can make an exception here. Put it directly in the infrastructure you want.

Robert T. Anderson: So I'm only bringing this up cause we're talking about sewer right now. I'm not interested in changing the bottom line of the sewer or any of that thing. All I'm interested in doing is moving this 1, 4 25 in the capital reserve. So it's used for sewer capital improvements. That's all I'm interested. I just get a little concerned when we got \$2,975,609 in the checkbook. I got 609.72 in mine.

Jim Umberger: Good for us!

Tim Anderson: You're right. If I get done here tonight, it probably won't be.

Jason Gagnon: So, so this is one of those things that um, we've talked about it in the past where we don't have an, an existing set of financial policies and every utility and every government really every municipal government has a different set of financial policies that, that provide guidelines to the Commissioners and to the staff for how much money you should have in different places. And it goes into a justification for why you should have that much money in different places. So our sewer checkbooks and our water checkbooks and our Commissioner's checkbooks, those are used for cash flow throughout the year. I don't know what the right level is to have in that cash, in that checking account. I do know that we have large bond payments that come out at certain times of the year. So when you look at ending year balances, they may not be representative of what happens throughout the year.

Those things may go way down and then come way back up as we get different revenue sources and streams. I know that's the case with the Commissioner's checking account. So I think it's important for us as a Precinct, and really this is something that we've been talking about for 4 or 5 years, is developing those policies, but getting somebody involved who again, like with our rate study knows this stuff and knows what they're doing and can make intelligent financial recommendations about what is an appropriate fund balance to have in your sewer fund. Should it be 1 million? Is that good enough? Should it be 2 million? The short answer is I don't know what that recommendation is because that, that's not my background. I do know that it, sorry, I know I'm long-winded. I do know that at certain times of the year that that balance is significantly lower than what it shows at the end of the year. So we do need to have some cushion in there and I, I don't have a good answer for what that cushion should actually be until we look into it farther and come up with a good policy.

Robert T. Anderson: To move this along. Could I just make a suggestion then to the Commission and you, Jason and I guess Hannah you're involved in, it could say the 1st of August you give us an answer on what we can move over and what we don't have to move over and maybe by then we can have an answer on what that bottom number should be Precinct wide.

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, I think we can definitely move in that, that direction and start taking those steps and come up with a recommendation. I'd love to give you a date on it, but I haven't even reached out to people who do that stuff yet. So I don't know.

Kristine Cluff: I know that Coos County... Cohos Advisors, can help you with that cause Tammy did that for us once before. So maybe, Maggie could help you. My question is, with this money that's in your sewer checking account and your water checking account and what we vote to move to Capital Reserve tonight, when do you make those capital reserve payments? Because you have to make them before December 15th by statute.

Jason Gagnon: Yep. What time of year do we usually do our Capital Reserve Transfers?

Hannah Andersen: Uh, last year I think it was June?

Kristine Cluff: I just want to make sure that you, you gotta leave yourself enough money to pay your capital reserve, whatever we vote to go into Capital Reserve. And they have to be paid by the 15th of December.

Jason Gagnon: One of the things that's a little unique about the Precinct and the way that we've always operated is as we do these projects, we have always had the cash reserves to be able to pay the contractor out of our own reserves and then get reimbursed at the end. By doing that, we avoid paying all that construction period interest back to DES. So there is, there's some savings and having that money available for cash flow versus having to get the disbursement from DES right away and then pay extra interest on it throughout the construction life of the project.

Kristine Cluff: But even if you move the money to your capital reserve account, the Board of Commissioners are agents to expend. So if you came in and said, I need \$50,000 to pay this bill, they're going to give it to you.

Jason Gagnon: Sure. It's just a process where then it's not in the bank, you have to go through the town trustees...

Kristine Cluff: There's a nice paper trail there.

Karen Umberger: Karen Umberger... So Tim, are you changing your motion to read or to say that...

Robert T. Anderson: I didn't make a motion.

Karen: Oh, you...

Chris Meier: There is no motion on the floor. It's just a suggestion.

Karen Umberger: So the request was that by August you come back and left the Precinct know what...

Robert T. Anderson: That was a suggestion, Karen. That's all.

Karen Umberger: Well, I, I don't disagree with what, uh, Tim is saying that we need to get a handle on this. I agree that 3 million in the checking account, not earning interest, not good.

William Hounsell: William Hounsell, 112 Thompson Rd. Does that Capital Reserve Account make interest?

Jason Gagnon: They all make interest. They all make about the same amount. Yeah. Uh, which is not a whole lot... We can invest in certain things. We could go to the Public Deposit Investment Pool, which has generally good results but has had some mixed results lately where they have not performed as advertised. So there's, there's risk everywhere.

William Hounsell: So, we're saving interest by self, self-funding. Some of the payments that we can make out of that.

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, the construction period interest on a DES loan might be 1.75% or something like that. And, and don't quote me on that number, but that might be what it is. And the amount of interest we're earning in the bank might be 0.5% or 0.75%.

William Hounsell: So you're saying we're saving on interest...

Jason Gagnon: If you're paying for projects. If you're not paying for projects, obviously you're losing that .5%.

William Hounsell: Well I would just say that I think our Treasurer has done a good job researching that and leading us into more inquisitiveness about it.

Chris Meier: Further comment? Yes.

Robert T. Anderson: They're properly adding up... we've got about \$33,000 in interest this year.

Chris Meier: Okay. Other comments, amendments on Article 5. Seeing none, I will call the vote on Article 5. Again, this is a secret ballot by petition. So we are going to tear off our 'B's. B as in Bravo. Ballot box is in the same place.

Chris Meier: Uh, various positions that we voted on, uh, Jim Umberger has uh, prevailed for Commissioner with 18 votes. Don Ekberg has prevailed for Moderator with 28 votes. Uh, Robert Anderson has prevailed for Treasurer with 29 votes and Gary Chandler, uh, has won the Clerk spot with 31 votes.

Chris Meier: Uh, on Article 4, which was ballot question A, uh, that Article 4 passed 20 votes in the affirmative and 8 votes in the negative.

Chris Meier: Has everybody voted on Article 5? The B ballot? If you haven't voted, raise your hand seeing nobody. I am closing the balloting on uh, Article 5 and we will move to Article 6.

Chris Meier: Uh, can I have a motion to please Article 6 on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: Yes, I will move to place Article 6 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second!

Article 06 Operating Budget - Fire Department

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$903,862 for the operating budget of the fire department for the ensuing year. This is a tax funded Article.

[Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0]

Chris Meier: Okay, Article 6 is on the floor. Uh, Chief do you want to take that?

Chad McCarthy: Yes; thank you. Uh, Like Jason, uh, said earlier throughout the budget process and the budget here, we did talk about this fire department budget and, and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Sol Rosman: Sol Rosman, 142 Intervale Crossroad. Do you have any idea roughly, um, what the member response has been for day calls and night calls?

Chad McCarthy: Uh, depending on the call, I would say during the day, obviously myself and the Assistant Chief and probably 2 or 3 others during the day, depending on the call, it's a major call building fire, everybody knows we get a good response on the building fire. But a normal medical aid call, like today we had a medical aid call. It was just myself and the Assistant Chief

Sol Rosman: And 2 of those days a week, the Assistant Chief is not there. He works Saturday and Sunday?

Chad McCarthy: Yes.

Sol Rosman: And at night? Both fire and medical...

Chad McCarthy: At night, Uh I would say anywhere from 3 to 5 maybe depending on the call. Uh, I know last month we had a couple of calls, uh, we didn't have anybody come.

Sol Rosman: Um, pretty consistent over the years that the call volume's gone up.

Chad McCarthy: Yes.

Sol Rosman: And it's only been a full-time Chief and Assistant Chief since, uh,

Chad McCarthy: For 50 years. 45 years. Something like that.

Robert T. Anderson: 53 Years.

Chad McCarthy: 53 years.

Sol Rosman: Um, I'd like to make a motion?

Chris Meier: Go ahead.

Sol Rosman: To add 140,000 into the Fire Department's operating budget, um, for the purpose of hiring a full-time firefighter, which would bring that total, um, operating budget up to \$1,000,043 860, I'm sorry, 1,043,862.

Chris Meier: Okay. I've got a motion on the table to raise Article 6 from 9 0 3 8 6 2 by \$140,000 to 1 0 4 3 8 6 2. Do I have a second?

Jeff Currier: Jeff Currier.

Chris Meier: Thank you. Alright, uh, discussion on the amendment. Kris, yes.

Kristine Cluff: Um, my question is, obviously we all know that Conway Village Fire District voted to dissolve last night in 2025. That means that we are going to lose in this year's budget \$190,000 worth of revenue on the out of Precinct that is going to have to go into that next, that 2025 budget. So that would be another \$190,000 at some point is going to get added to this 140,000. And I'm not against it, I just want to make sure you guys all know that if the town of Conway is going to have a fire department, they're not going to pay us up here to the non Precinct would not make sense. So I want you all to know that with the addition of this, we are looking at losing our outer Precinct reside.

Chris Meier: Mr. Rosman?

Sol Rosman: I think, do we realistically think that the Upper West Side road areas that they're going to send Conway from Conway Village and not send North Conway? Um, I mean could it happen? Absolutely, yes. Do I think that the people that live in those areas are going to have twice the response time? I don't think they're going to be happy about it. So, you know, our call volumes going up and we've been running 2 people for 53 years back when there was probably less than 200 calls a year to over 1,350 calls. And that's a huge demand on the fire department and it's a huge demand when you're not getting as good as a response during the day or at night, um, that you used to. And people have jobs, people in this economy have to work and support themselves and their employers don't let them leave. So, you know what, where I think we've come after all these years, um, I I think that it's time to, to bring someone on to, to help. I mean, when, when the Assistant Chief is out doing an inspection, you know, he can't always just leave. I mean people come from, you know, out of state that own property and they need to be inspected and the last thing they want to do is have their time wasted. You know, I mean there are some obligations on that end.

Chris Meier: Let's go with 1, 2, 3...

Robert F. Porter: Bob Porter. I have commented for years that we needed a full-time person in the department, if not one more than one.

Chris Meier: Karen?

Karen Umberger: Could you give me a breakdown of this hundred 40,000? How much is salary? How much is benefits?.... Not you...

Chad McCarthy: Oh, sorry! I'm sorry.

Karen Umberger: I mean, you know, you gotta, I gotta understand, uh, the 140,000

Sol Rosman: Yep.

Karen Umberger: Is 100,000 for the pay and 40,000 for benefits?

Sol Rosman: Benefits or I can't give a specific breakdown because there's obviously the pay that would have to be determined. However, in my mind, I know roughly what other fire departments, you know, are paying people. Um, and that's dependent upon their certifications when they come into the job. But there's pay that has to go to the state retirement, there's pay that has to go to worker's comp. They have to plan for the worst as far as, you know, a family plan versus a single person plan. Um, and then you've got the pay, I have spoken with the Chief and asked, you know, roughly what he thinks it would cost. Um, knowing a lot more about what he believes the pay should be, you know, within a margin and what the, the other associated costs are. Um, so I mean, I, I can't,

Karen Umberger: So bottom line is, you don't know.

Sol Rosman: I don't know specifically.

Karen Umberger: That's all I wanted to know.

Chris Meier: I got one in the back.

Nick Preece: Good. Yeah. Um, I think it's a good idea moving forward to kind of take a step in the right direction. Adding people, as you mentioned before is, you know, if the Chief or assistant fire Chief are out doing place of assembly permits or certificate of occupancy inspections. Um, but with the current growth and development of this community and Water Precinct, especially at the Pine Hill development and everything else going in with the hotels, you know, there are times where I was sat at home on my day off at work. I've heard the page go off 3 times at night for a fire alarm before people sign on. Um, I know that he's proposing adding a rotating stipend shift at night for the officers, so we have coverage at nighttime, but I think it's a good conversation to get started in terms of adding full-time coverage. Cause almost every other community or town of this size population call volume has about 3 to 4 firefighters on shift 24 hours a day, not including the Fire Chief or Assistant Chief. So if it comes down to cost or revenues, there are other ways to get around that. If it's a startup fee, you can look into a few months safer grant, which pays for the salaries and benefits for the first 3 years with no impact on us. Um, and another really good revenue stream as well is a fire based ambulance service. Cuz then you can fill out every call you go on for rescue as compared to now or every time he's on a medical call, you guys are eating that cost. And a private ambulance service is collecting 3 grand a pop just something to keep, keep in mind for years coming down the road...

Chris Meier: Can you add your name and address?

Nick Preece: Oh, sorry. Nick Preece. 49 White Horse Road.

Chris Meier: Kris, I had your hand up...

Kristine Cluff: My only, my I would you consider amending your motion to say firefighter emt? I would hate to see...

Chad McCarthy: It would be.

Kristine Cluff: Is that what you would want?

Chad McCarthy: It would be.

Kristine Cluff: Alright. So, okay. That answers my question.

Chris Meier: Yeah. And just for clarification, the the money goes to the budget, what you're, you can't line item budgets so it would, the money would go to him and it, it's an advisory as to how to use it. But...

Sol Rosman: So my intent was for people to understand why, why I was asking for that one.

Chris Meier: Understood. Jason, did you want to go? Good. Ok. Jim?

Jim Umberger: Jim Umberger, 136 Birch Bend. I'd like to have the Chief tell me what you think of this motion.

Chad McCarthy: What do I think?

Jim Umberger: Is it something you should have brought forward or...

Chad McCarthy: My plan. And I did talk to the Board once or twice about it, about bringing it forward for this year. Um, and I didn't because it was up already. The budget was up already. Uh, we are making it right now. We're struggling but we are making it. Um, and I was going to bring it forth next year, but you know...

Jim Umberger: follow up?

Chris Meier: Yes, sir.

Jim Umberger: We need to clearly understand everyone here that this is tax increase.

Chad McCarthy: Yes.

Jim Umberger: This is not revenue. This is tax. It's going to go on people's tax bill.

Chris Meier: Tim?

Robert T. Anderson: I'll take a little bit of exception please saying we're struggling. Okay. I look at the numbers every week.

Chad McCarthy: Yep.

Robert T. Anderson: Um, we are getting more people showing up at calls than we have in the last few years.

Chad McCarthy: Yes. When I say struggling, I mean daytime hours, working hours.

Robert T. Anderson: You're getting the same as you always had and you are getting a couple extras. I see 'em. So am I opposed to you putting a third person on? I'm not sure. I think maybe, um, what Mr. Preece said, if we looked into the SAFER grants, I don't know how long they'll take you but.... Um, I know you have proposed, I don't know if it's gone to the commission yet about raising the rates on your...

Chad McCarthy: The fee rates?

Robert T. Anderson: Your fee rates. Yes. Um, I don't know where that's gone. Um, I know we have been looking into, uh, billing insurance companies for revenue. You never know how much you're going to get.

Chad McCarthy: Right.

Tim Anderson: If you decide you want, if the Commission decides and the Chief decides they want to put an ambulance in the place, uh, that's going to be a huge outlay of money to start with, um, I'm not quite sure whether revenue versus the expense comes in. Thank you.

Suzanne Nelson: Um, as you mentioned before, this would just be an increase in the budget and it would be, you know, up to us to figure out how to do it. I do wanna say that this is a conversation that has, has already started here. We're all well aware of the growth of the Precinct. The, um, increase in the number of calls is significant. We know that we have to move in that direction. There are a lot of different options. It's not something that we should be deciding at an Annual Meeting, but it's something that the Commissioners, um, have started working on and will continue and, you know, we are going to have to do something. We don't have that. We need more time to figure that out and to research it.

Chris Meier: Yes, Mr. Hounsell.

William Hounsell: Bill Hounsell, 112 Thompson Road. I, I want to respond to the, uh, part about the Conway Village, the dissolution, the town taking it over. Keep in mind, I just want everybody to be thinking a little differently about this. Uh, keep in mind that everything that town does is going to require an inter municipal agreement with us. Cause we have the, the capacity to serve the town. We're going to have to do it in a fair and equitable manner to all of the people in the town. And we're all in this together. Now, when we look at that, we, uh, we, we have to remind ourselves that if

we're doing an inter municipal agreement for water, for sewer that flows through Conway Village's pipes, or whether it's with an inter municipal agreement with the town to go up 302 to the courthouse of police station outdoor potential industrial zone on East Conway Road, affordable housing, it's in the benefit of all the taxpayers in the town Conway to, to, uh, decide whether they want to pass the bonds to do that or not.

But the, in the municipal agreements to do that is going to require that they also are fair and equitable to us on the, on the fire. You can't be fair and equitable on one side, and say we're not going to be on the other. So when they become a town fire, we're going to have to sit down and work out an inter municipal agreement between a sub-governmental entity of the State, that's us and the town of Conway, and I'm, I'm consent, I'm convinced we can do it. We did it between Conway Village and we'll revisit it now and we'll uh, we'll look at the differences, points of view of each side and come up with a fair and equitable understanding of each person's per perspective. For the benefit of everybody in the, in this valley, we're going to be looking at the same sort of, inter municipal agreement in Lower Bartlett.

So I don't think we, we need to think antagonistically about Conway taking something away from us or not. It all is going to be linked together and we're going to treat each other very fair and very equitable. Uh, we've done a magnificent job here, you voters, and led by the Commissioners and great Superintendents. We've created a regional capacity plant for the valley. And the hopes of what this master plan is going to look at now is where... what's the vision going to take us where we can is all going to depend on water. You can't do anything. You can't have dense, dense, uh, housing, affordable housing or anything without waste water. And so we're right in the center of it all and fair and keep that in your mind. Nobody's antagonistic to anybody when you look at it from that point of view.

Kristine Cluff: I don't think it would be antagonistic. It's just, it is something that we need to keep in the back of our minds that we are going to need an IMA or we're not going to have an IMA. It's an either or and it's something that we're going to have to look at in the future. So it still has to be in our minds that this may cost us money or it may not, but it's also going to be in the Chief's mind that he's got to think about that in his next budget season. That's all that we're trying to do here is to make everybody aware this could happen. Not saying it's going to happen, just saying that might, and I don't think anybody wants to be agonistic, uh, to an IMA you know, Jason's done very well working with IMA's in inter municipal agreement. So that's, we just need to look forward...

Sol Rosman: Uh, alluding to what Nick was saying about, you know, the growth. I mean as we continue to grow, we're going to bring in some additional taxation money. I mean, we're going to bring in water and sewer revenue, which I understand is separate, but those places are still going to get taxed on the fire department's rate. Which, I mean there's gotta be, I don't know if it'd be a hundred percent off offset or not, but I mean there's gotta be some offset as we continue to grow. Um, and, and you know, I mean I'll back Nick a hundred percent. There are a lot of other towns this size that are providing way more service, um, than we are. I mean you look at Berlin, they still have 4 on a shift, 24 hours a day and the plant's been closed for years. So, I mean, I'm not saying we need to compete with that. I'm just trying to make it realistic.

William Hounsell: I was just talking about how we should think about the ability for IMA in regards to the uh, the money. I vote right. Put it in. But I rely on what the Commissioners have said. They need a little more time. Uh, I think we should absolutely give the department whatever they need. We always have. As much as you've given us what we need on water and wastewater, I think we need to continue thinking that way and then access every grant that the Chief can find and maybe increase some rates. But that's what they need time to figure out. I don't think you'll have any problem with negotiating what you need.

Chris Meier: Okay. You ready for a vote on the amendment? So this is the amendment to Article 6 to increase the amount of Article 6 from 903,862 by 140,000 to 1,043,862. All in favor of the amendment? Pardon?

Robert T. Anderson: I have 1 question on that...

Chris Meier: Yes.

Robert T. Anderson: ... so the 140,000 is still on the bottom line budget?

Chris Meier: Correct.

Robert T. Anderson: So even if we vote in the 140,000, that does not necessarily mean the Commission is going to give the Chief permission to hire a person between now and December 31st.

Chris Meier: Correct.

William Hounsell: Do the Commissioners want us to vote for the 140,000 now?

Jim Umberger: That's not a fair question.

Suzanne Nelson: No it's not.

William Hounsell: No that's not fair. We'll have to use our own discretion.

Robert T. Andersen: You're on your own, Bill!

Chris Meier: Okay, any other points of order before we vote? Nope. Seeing none. All in favor? Please raise your hand and say aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed, please raise your hand and say nay.

Crowd: Nay.

Chris Meier: That's close. So I'm going to do it again and count them. So all in favor? Raise your hand and say aye. And keep 'em up so we can count 'em. Are you up, Miss. Seavey? Okay. All opposed, raise your hand and say nay and keep em up. I've got 8 in favor and 10 opposed. Uh, the amendment fails. So we are back to Article 6 as written.

Suzanne Nelson: We will be looking into this though, we will be looking into this.

Chris Meier: So Article 6 as written. Do I have any other comments, questions, or amendments to Article 6 as written? Yes sir.

Nick Preece: Nick Preece, 149 Whitehorse Road. Uh, would it be worth looking into in this year's budget, adding 5 grand as a just in case safety net for grant writer. So if 9, 10 months down the road you guys have your conversations about staffing, we can possibly hire a grant writer to look into a SAFER grant? Or is that something that you might want to push off another year?

Chris Meier: Was that question to anybody in particular? Do you want, do you want somebody to answer that?

Nick Preece: Yeh, I was just wondering if the Commissioners had a comment...

Robert F. Porter: On, I would bring it up when we get into the budget so we can add it to it if we want to.

Suzanne Nelson: We're in the budget.

Robert F. Porter: Oh, no I know but I'm talking about the dollar value. Alright. Never mind. I'm off base, it's getting late. So I don't have a problem adding 5 grand so we can study it.

Karen Umberger: No that's not what you...

Robert F. Porter: Pardon?

Suzanne Nelson: He's asking for, to hire...

Robert F. Porter: Put 5 grand in the budget so we can hire a grant writer...

Jim Umberger: You can't specify what it's going to be for.

Chris Meier: Yeah, it would just, it would just raise the bottom line with the suggestion that you might consider it to use it for the budget.

Nick Preece: So another comment on the FEMA grants for fire departments. I don't know how FEMA grants work with other municipalities, but at least for the fire department, uh, if you are awarded a grant, FEMA will reimburse the grant writer as well. Um, so that's another thing to look at too. So if you'd have to raise the money for it, but if we were to do a grant, look into it for next year and when it would be reimbursed as well.

Chris Meier: I think probably if we want to discuss that, you should make the amendment and then we can discuss the amendment.

Nick Preece: Sure.

Chris Meier: So you're making an amendment to increase Article 6 by \$5,000?

Nick Preece: Yes.

Chris Meier: For the, for the purpose of hiring a grant writer?

Nick Preece: Yes.

Robert T. Anderson: Second.

Chris Meier: Okay. Anderson second. Any discussion on that Motion to increase Article 6 by \$5,000?

Suzanne Nelson: Yeah, I, I think, um, we go ahead and we look at this and we decide which direction to take and we get to the point where we're ready to hire someone to write grants for \$5,000 with a bottom line budget. I think we can probably come up with that amount of money in the budget that we have and go ahead and do that. I don't, I don't know that you have to add in to the bottom line budget, but you know, that's, you're, you know, you're coming up with some great ideas, Nick, and, you know, we'll be, we'll be looking into stuff.

Chris Meier: Okay. Further comment questions on the amendment. Seeing none, I will call the question on the amendment. So this is to raise, uh, raise the amount in Article 6 by \$5,000. Uh, all in favor, please raise your hand and say aye.

Crowd: Aye. Aye. Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed, please raise your hand and say nay.

Crowd: Nay.

Chris Meier: So that one, the ayes have it, uh, so the Article 6 is raised by \$5,000. Uh, so the new number on Article 6 is 908,862. Any further comments, questions, amendments on Article 6 as now amended?

Karen Umberger: It's 9...

Chris Meier: It's now 908,862

Karen Umberger: I can't math...

Chris Meier: That was quick math, but yeah, I think I got it right. Uh, all right. So, uh, seeing no further comments, questions, uh, or amendments, I'm going to call the question on Article 6.

Chris Meier: So, all in favor of Article 6 as amended to 908,862. Please raise your hand.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed, please raise your hand and say, nay.

Crowd: Nay.

Chris Meier: Article 6 passes as amended. 908,862.

Chris Meier: Let's move on to Article 7. So I need a motion to place Article 7 on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I move to place Article 7 on the floor.

Chris Meier: You have a second?

Robert F. Porter: I'll take it.

Article 07 Appropriation - Collective Bargaining Agreement

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct

will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the North Conway Water Precinct and Local 1984 SEA/SEIU Water Precinct Employees which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

2023 NEW COST \$36,457

WATER	SEWER
\$12,626	\$23,831

ADDITIONAL YEARS:

2024	2025	2026	2027
\$21,731	\$22,491	\$23,279	\$24,093

And to further raise and appropriate the sum of \$36,457 for the 2023 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would have been paid at the current staffing levels. This Article will be offset by \$12,626 from water fees/revenues and \$23,831 from sewer fees/revenues with no additional tax impact.

Chris Meier: Okay. Uh, Article 7 is on the floor. Uh, this is an appropriation for the collective bargaining agreement. Uh, Commissioner Nelson, do you want, are you taking this one? Have some comments?

Suzanne Nelson: Well, we went, went through, um, bargaining with the union and we came up, um, with what everyone seemed to think was fair. And these are, these are the numbers that were, you know, that we have and we're asking you to approve the numbers. Um, certainly the people working here are doing a fantastic job and deserve these increases.

Chris Meier: Okay. Any comments on this?

Sol Rosman: Yes.

Chris Meier: What is the first name please?

Sol Rosman: Sorry. Sol Rosman. Um, what's the percent increase they are getting for a raise?

Suzanne Nelson: Well, it's a 5 year contract.

Sol Rosman: Yep.

Suzanne Nelson: And we, um, we kind of back loaded it so that the first year is higher because of what's happened to inflation.

Sol Rosman: Yep.

Suzanne Nelson: I don't wanna give them the wrong numbers... Do you know?

Jason Gagnon: So, so the baseline for the contract is 5% this year. We also did, uh, a reevaluation of the positions and the position descriptions.

Sol Rosman: Yep.

Jason Gagnon: Because when the union was originally formed, it was based off of highway worker positions, which are not good comps for what we're actually doing here. So now we have water operators and, and wastewater operators so we can better comp between other similar facilities. So what we found in that was that there were a couple people who needed a bump that were higher than 5% in order to get them in that right range for the correct comp. For example, we had a laborer and heavy equipment operator here. That's not what they do. Right. And, but they were being compared to laborers and heavy equipment operators at other places and other highway departments. What we do here is obviously much more skilled technical labor. So some people got a little bit higher than that 5% to bump them up into that, where they should be for their actual job duties. But the baseline was 5%.

Sol Rosman: and then how does that carry over through the following 4 years?

Jason Gagnon: For the following 4 years? It's 3.5 percent each year.

Chris Meier: Further comments, questions on Article 7? Seeing none, I'm going to call Article 7 to a vote. Uh, all in favor, please raise your hand and say Aye.

Crowd: Aye. Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed, please raise your hand and say nay. The ayes have it. Article 7 passes as written.

Chris Meier: Uh, before we move on to Article 8, I have the, uh, results of Article 5, which was ballot box B. Article 5 passes by a vote of 21. Yes. Votes to 2 no votes in 1 blank Article 5 passes.

Chris Meier: Uh, now we move on to Article 8. This is, uh, special meeting for defeated CBA. Uh, I need a motion to place Article 8 on floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I move to place Article 8 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Article 08 Special Meeting for Defeated CBA

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct, if Article 7: Appropriation – Collective Bargaining Agreement is defeated, authorize the governing body to call 1 special meeting, at its option, to address Article 7 cost items only. (Majority vote required)

(Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0)

Chris Meier: Thank you. Article 8's on the floor. Jason, do you want to take this?

Jason Gagnon: Sure. This is essentially moot because Article 7 has passed, but I'll defer to our attorney if we still need to vote on this or not?

Steve Bennett: Since you've passed the Collective Bargaining Agreement, there's no need for a vote, unless this is reconsidered...

Kristine Cluff: I make a motion that we pass over Article 8.

Sol Rosman: Second.

Chris Meier: Ok. Motion and a second. Uh, motion is to pass over Article 8. All in favor?

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed? Motion passes. We are passing over Article 8.

Hannah Andersen: Who was the second?

Chris Meier: Who was the Second?

Jason Gagnon: Sol.

Chris Meier: Uh, so we're on Article 9. I need a motion to add, uh, place Article 9 on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I move to place Article 9 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Article 09 Appropriation to Capital Reserve Funds

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$668,611 to be added to the following Capital Reserve Funds previously established. \$43,584 to come from Water fund

balance, \$100,000 to come from water usage fees and revenues, \$175,027 to come from Sewer fund balance, \$100,000 to come from sewer usage fees and revenues, and \$250,000 to come from general taxation.

Capital Reserve Fund	Amount	Revenue Source
Fire Equipment	\$225,000	Taxation
Uncompensated Absences	\$25,000	Water Revenues
	\$25,000	Sewer Revenues
	\$25,000	Taxation
Water Infrastructure	\$43,584	Water Fund Balance
Water Vehicle	\$75,000	Water Revenues
Sewer Infrastructure	\$134,668	Sewer Fund Balance
Sewer Vehicle	\$75,000	Sewer Revenues
Green Energy	\$40,359	Sewer Fund Balance

(Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0)

Chris Meier: Appropriation to Capital reserve funds is on the floor. Uh, Jason, did you have comments on this?

Jason Gagnon: So again, we've gone over this one in budget hearing, it's the same things we do every year. If anybody has any specific questions, happy to answer them.

Chris Meier: Kris.

Kristine Cluff: 1 quick question on when you're taking money from fund balance Okay. And putting it in, like for example, this year on the fire department vehicle equipment, it said the Article passed at \$205,000, but on the fire department budget you only moved \$200,000. Is that because the other \$5,000 came from fund balance or did do you not move it?

Jason Gagnon: No. So I think it was the, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I think that Warrent Article was \$200,000 raised by taxation with the \$5,000 supposed to come from the sale of the old vehicle. And I think that's where...

Kristine Cluff: At some point, can you revisit that?

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Kristine Cluff: For me, um, 2021's Chief's report said under his Chief's report, under number one, \$205,000 was going to go to the fire vehicle. Item number 6 said \$4,000 for the sale of R 2. I just wanna make sure we didn't short that Article.

Jason Gagnon: Okay.

Kristine Cluff: \$4,000 and that 5,000 came from fund. So, okay, we're looking for \$9,000 here.

Jason Gagnon: We'll check into that.

Kristine: Just to make, I mean if he needs 4,000 moved, it's just as good in that account.

Jason Gagnon: That's a great point. Thank you.

Chris Meier: Tim.

Robert T. Anderson: Tim, again. I just want to bring up one point under the fire equipment line 225. Okay. We brought that up from 205 to 225 this year. Uh, myself and the Chief had several conversations about that number over the time. We've gone back and revisited our schedule plan that goes out now to 44 or 46. I think we went 22 years. Okay. And I can tell you right now at 225, we are at least 150,000 a year short to be able to buy that truck in 44 based on the current, uh, percentages of increases. So that's another part he and the 3 are going to have to visit next year. If you want to continue to fund fire trucks without bonding or borrowing money, I'll be long gone by time 44 gets here.

Jim Umberger: Are you sure?

Chris Meier: Okay. Further comments on Article 9. Seeing none, I am going to call Article 9 for a vote. All in favor, please raise your hand and say Aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed, please raise your hand. Hand and say nay. The eyes have it. Article 9 passes as written.

Chris Meier: Article 10, uh, I need a motion.

Suzanne Nelson: I will move to place Article 10 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Article 10 Water Energy Efficiency Upgrades

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to rescind the approval of Article 13 "Water Energy Efficiency Upgrades" on the 2022 Warrant and authorize the sum of \$530,000 for the purpose of Energy Efficiency Upgrades through the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Sustainability Grant Program, to be offset by a \$200,000 grant from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, anticipated Federal Direct Payment of \$120,000, and \$40,000 from Green Energy capital reserve funds, with the remainder to come from water enterprise funds. This Article also authorizes the Commissioners of the North Conway Water Precinct to enter into and approve a grant agreement with New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services in the amount of \$200,000 to the North Conway Water Precinct and authorizes Superintendent Jason Gagnon to sign paperwork associated with such grant on behalf of the Precinct.

This Article has been designated as special and will be non-lapsing until December 31, 2028, or until the project is completed, whichever comes first.

(Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0)

Chris Meier: Thank you. Article 10's on the floor. Jason?

Jason Gagnon: Okay, so this is a little bit of a confusing Article. So I want to actually explain this one. Last year we had a sustainability grant through New Hampshire DES that looked at energy efficiency improvements at our water facilities. It included a small rooftop solar array on the Well 2 control building plus some HVAC upgrades at facilities across the water system. Shortly after we approved that, the feds released the Inflation Reduction Act. It included for the first time ever significant incentives for municipalities to do solar projects. So in the past, if you were a private developer, you were eligible for a 30% tax credit. We don't pay taxes, we can't get credits. Through the Inflation Reduction Act. Now municipalities can receive that tax credit as a direct payment. Now it's not just 30%, there's 30%, there's 20% based on one thing, there's 10% based on another, there's 30% based on another item. Uh, as long as your contractor can hit these certain criteria... you're familiar with those types of criteria in SRF loans where you might have to use Buy American, right? If you hit a certain comp percentage of American components, then you get a higher level brand or something like that. Same deal with this inflation reduction act. So there's a potential that we can get 60 to 70% direct payment from the feds in addition to the quote unquote guaranteed \$200,000 in grant from DES. So out of the 530,000 that's in the Article now, we may pay very little of that out of pocket. Most of it, most of it should be Grant. Now I say should because the treasury hasn't finished releasing their guidance and there's always, they love to throw curve balls, but they've been working very closely with DES on this, on their guidance stuff. And we feel very, very strongly that there's that minimum 60 to 70% grant all in on this project.

So we put this out to RFP. We got a proposal, uh, that was submitted for the, by the same company that did the solar array out back. They were the, the winning proposal. We got that in late February. Since that time, the solar panels themselves that they quoted have already sold out. These incentives are really motivating people across the country to invest in these projects. So we're trying really hard to get ahead of that demand, which is why we're trying to rescind the Article from last year and approve this new Article so that we can sign that contract with Revision Energy and get going asap. Now because those solar panels have sold out already that they quoted us, they have to use a different panel. So they have asked if we would be willing to raise the price by \$15,500 to cover the difference in the, the new panels that they have to get. The result is the array's going to be a little bit bigger. So we are getting a little bit more

for that extra \$15,000. But once we approve that, we sign that contract, then the price is locked in. The reason they have the ability to do the, to ask for a price increase now is because we haven't signed a contract yet because it hasn't been approved.

Jason Gagnon: So I guess if, if somebody was willing, it would be great if we could a, make a motion to add that 15,500 to the Article.

William Hounsell: So moved.

Chris Meier: Second?

Suzanne Nelson: Second.

Chris Meier: Okay. So the, the amendment is to amend the amount on the second line of Article 10 from 530,000 to 545,000. Discussion on the amendment?

John Santuccio: Sue did.

Jason Gagnon: He was asking for discussion, if there was any.

Chris Meier: Discussion on the Amendment... Did you have, you've got something.

Suzanne Nelson: I don't.

Chris Meier: Okay. All right.

John Santuccio: Sue seconded the amendment.

Suzanne Nelson: I see. No, I did. Yeah, that's not what he's asking.

Chris Meier: Oh, got it. Sorry. I'll speak up. Uh, any, no discussion on the amendment.

Chris Meier: So, all in favor of the amendment. To increase the amount in Article 10 from 530 to 545 please raise your hand and say aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed, please raise your hand and say, nay. Article 10 is amended to increase the amount line to 545. Okay, so further discussion on Article 10 as amended?

Robert T. Anderson: I got a couple questions, Jason.

Jason Gagnon: Yep...

Robert T. Anderson: I, um, had some conversation in the last couple weeks, not about this place but solar in general and these panels, as I was told, degrade over time. They degrade and not bring in as much power because they're dirty. Are we cleaning ours?

Jason Gagnon: We are not cleaning them going out there and physically cleaning them. So when they do their projections for their 40 year lifespan, that's, that's what they base their projections on is a 40 year lifespan. And I, I forget what the percentage is, but they, they figured that they degrade a certain percent over that 40 years. They factor in all of those things into their projections for what you're getting for power.

Robert T. Anderson: So you really don't know what you're getting for power out of each panel. This is another discussion we had...

Jason Gagnon: Out of each panel. I don't, I think for some specific inverters have the ability to measure what each panel is putting out. But other inverter systems we that...

Robert T. Anderson: ...we don't have that on these systems.

Jason Gagnon: No, no. And in general, on on the large systems, you don't because it's expensive to do an inverter for every panel.

Robert T. Anderson: Okay. So maybe we ought think about cleaning them. We might get an extra... might be able to pay for that extra person!

Chris Meier: Good.

Jason Gagnon: We, we did go out there this year and take the, the skid steer and move the snow away from the bottom of them so the snow would fall off and we wouldn't get short changed from the snow.

Chris Meier: All right. Uh, time to move the time to call the question Article 10. Um, so this is Article 10 as amended to 545. Uh, all in favor, please raise your hand and say aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed, please raise your hand and say nay... Ayes have it. Article 10, uh, passes as amended to 545,000.

Chris Meier: Uh, Article 11, a motion?

Suzanne Nelson: I move to place Article 11 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second!

Article 11 Wastewater Pickup Truck Replacement

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 for replacement of the Wastewater pickup truck with plow. Funding for this Article will come from the Sewer Vehicle Capital Reserve, with no amount to be raised by taxation.

[Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0]

Chris Meier: Thank you. Article 11 is on the floor. Uh, Jason, you have thoughts on this one?

Jason Gagnon: Yeah, so for Article 11, it's just a standard vehicle replacement. Uh, we've held off in the last couple years because the vehicle availability and pricing has been insane as anybody who's bought a vehicle knows. But we just can't wait forever. We gotta replace these vehicles. Otherwise we're going to keep getting behind. So this year we're doing a new one ton pickup truck at the wastewater plant with a, with a plow.

Chris Meier: Any further comments, questions on Article 11? Seeing none, I will, uh, call, uh, Article 11 for a vote. All in favor? Raise your hand and say aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed? Okay, Article 11 passes.

Chris Meier: Article 12, Water Pickup Truck Replacement. I'll take a motion to place that on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I move to place Article 12 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second!

Article 12 Water Pickup Truck Replacement

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 for replacement of a Water pickup truck with plow and utility body. Funding for this Article will come from the Water Vehicle Capital Reserve, with no amount to be raised by taxation.

(Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0)

Chris Meier: Okay, Article 12 is on the floor. Jason, you have comments on this one?

Jason Gagnon: Same thing I just said, except for the water department.

Chris Meier: Okay. Anybody else have comments on Article 12 or questions or amendments? Seeing none, I will call the question on Article 12. All in favor? Raise your hand and say aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed? Article 12 passes.

Chris Meier: Article 13 Appropriation to the Pope Memorial Library. Uh, I'll take a motion to place on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: Move to place Article 13 on the floor.

Robert Porter: Second.

Article 13 Appropriation to Pope Memorial Library

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 for the purpose of supporting the programs of the Pope Memorial Library (North Conway Public Library). This is a tax funded Article.

[Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0]

Chris Meier: Okay. Uh, Article 13 is on the floor. Uh, Sue you want to, did you want to speak to this one? You're listed here.

Suzanne Nelson: Um, Okay.

Chris Meier: You're listed here.

Suzanne Nelson: This is, this isn't, this is something we have every year. It's the same amount. We don't have anybody here from the Pope Library, um, to speak for it. Um, it's your decision.

Chris Meier: Okay. Okay. Anybody want to speak on Article 13?

Karen Umberger: It's important that we do this as part of our community service.

William Hounsell: I agree.

Chris Meier: Okay. Anybody else have comments, questions, concerns, amendments? Seeing none, uh, I will call the question on Article 13. Uh, all in favor? Raise your hand and say, aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed? Article 13 passes is written.

Chris Meier: Article 14 appropriation to Schouler Park skating rink. Take a motion to place that on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I'll move to place Article 14 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Article 14 Appropriation to Schouler Park Skating Rink

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,750 for the purpose of supporting the programs of the Schouler Park Skating Rink. This is a tax funded Article.

[Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3-0-0]

Chris Meier: Okay. Article 14 is on the floor. Thoughts on that? Yes.

Robert T. Anderson: Yeah. Uh, I would ask the Commissioners to ask the town for a breakdown on cost on that statement, please. Um, I know personally it was only open 3 days this year, so, you know, yeah. You take \$6,700, divided by 3... Pretty expensive. And we provide free water to make ice, which I know they didn't get the ice until February.

Chris Meier: Okay, further comments, questions, amendments? Seeing none, I will place Article 14. Uh, uh, call Article 14 for vote. Uh, all in favor? Raise your hand and say Aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed?

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: The ayes have it. Article 14 passes.

Chris Meier: Article 15, this is a cell tower lease. I'll take a motion to place this on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: Uh, make a motion to place Article 15 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Article 15 Cell Tower Lease

To see if the Precinct will authorize its Board of Commissioners to negotiate a lease of property with a private entity on such terms and conditions as it deems to be in the best interest of the Precinct for the purpose of installing, constructing, maintaining, repairing, modifying and operating a commercial telecommunications facility on Precinct property located at either the Hurricane Tank parcel (Town Lot 204-6) or the Pine Hill Tank parcel (Town Lot 251-159) with the understanding that the Board of Commissioners may decline to enter into an agreement if it deems the terms and conditions not to be in the best interest of the Precinct.

(Recommended by the Commissioners 3-0-0)

Chris Meier: Okay, it's on the floor. Jason do you have comments on this one?

Jason Gagnon: Sure. So this is, uh, one of those quests that we have to try and bring in additional revenue to the Precinct. Other water departments do it with, uh, cell facilities on their water towers, which are often at the highest points or higher points in town. What this Article does is it authorizes the Commissioners to start talking to people about the potential of a cell tower lease. And if they find the favor, the conditions of that lease to be favorable to enter into a lease, we still have to go. We as the Precinct, still have to go through the Town Planning Board review process. I think it's the zoning board of adjustment that specifically deals with the special exception for cell towers. The two sites that we're looking at that are listed in this Article. So these are the only two sites we would consider would be our water tanks, Pine Hill Tank or Hurricane Tank.

Chris Meier: Thoughts, comments, amendments on this Article? Yes, Mr. Hounsell?

William Hounsell: I think maybe the cell tower, um, might be an issue that they would be talking about, um, on the master plan update. Um, so I'm pleased to hear it's going to the town and go through the planning board. It'll be integrated into the vision of what the town wants. Uh, I know there's great concern about the environmental...keeping things intact environmentally! So I look forward to that. Hearing that discussion.

Chris Meier: Kris?

Kristine Cluff: Jason, are we any further ahead in negotiations? We talked about it at that deliberative and you still haven't made any decisions.

Jason Gagnon: We, we have not moved ahead in any negotiations. So what we've done is we've, we had one cell tower developer reach out to us and send us a, a model lease, but no discussions if it had about what the rent would be or what the specific tower would be or anything. We wanted voter approval before we even went down that road.

Chris Meier: Anything further? Seeing nothing? Uh, I'll call Article 15 for a vote. All in favor? Raise your hand and say aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed? The ayes have it. Article 15 passes is written.

Chris Meier: Uh, Article 16, I'll entertain a vote to your motion to place that on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I will move to place Article 16 on the floor.

Robert Porter: Second.

Article 16 Ratify Auditor

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will ratify Plodzik & Sanderson as the Precinct auditor for the calendar year 2023.

[Recommended by the Board of Commissioners 3 – 0 – 0]

Chris Meier: Okay. Uh, does anyone have any comm... yes?

Kristine Cluff: If you look in this book, it says that the 2021 audit is in draft. We do not have a 21 audit yet and we don't have a 22 audit.

Jason Gagnon: Right. That, that's one of the things that we're hoping to be able to move ahead on by adding that extra office staff. So we were behind, uh,

Kristine Cluff: 1 year last year.

Jason Gagnon: Yeah. In combination because of our inability to, to get stuff out on time. And then it was compounded by our old auditor's inability to then move forward very quickly at all. So we've, we've fixed the auditor issue and we are making significant progress in getting our stuff together faster too. So our goal is within the next year or 2 to be able to have that draft audit letter for the previous year in our annual report.

Kristine Cluff: Right. And we always used to, it just the last couple years is we, we always had a final draft letter for the previous year. This is...

Jason Gagnon: For 21, yeh.

Kris Cluff: Right, so you're saying you're going to, you're saying to me then at the end of this year we will have 21 audit done?

Hannah Anderson: At the end of this year? Yeah.

Kristine Cluff: Is it done now?

Hannah Andersen: The, I mean everything is,

Kristine Cluff: it's still a draft though?

Hannah Andersen: Yeah, it's drafted. But they were working on a coup... Maggie and our accountant and the auditors were working on something a couple weeks ago, but they haven't needed anything from us in 4 months.

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Kristine Cluff: Maybe a call?

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

William Hounsell: A lifetime ago when I was Selectman, Plodzik and Sanderson was the Town Auditor. I was really pleased to see that they're our auditors now.

Robert T. Anderson: Bill, there' nobody there that was there when you were there, Bud.

Chris Meier: Further comments on Article 16. See none. I'm going to call, call Article 16 for a vote. All in favor is your hand and say Aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed? Ayes have it Article 16 passes.

Chris Meier: Article 17. Borrowing Against Credit of Precinct. I'll take a motion to place that on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I will move to place Article 17 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Article 17 Borrowing Against Credit of Precinct

To see if the voters of the North Conway Water Precinct will vote to allow the Commissioners to borrow against the credit of the Precinct such sums of money as may be necessary in anticipation of taxes, bond sales, water, and sewer bills as permitted in Section 6 of the Precinct Charter.

Chris Meier: Uh, Article 17 is on the floor. Any comments on Article 17? Questions? Amendments? Seeing none, I will call the vote on Article 17. Uh, all in favor? Raise your hand and say Aye.

Crowd: Aye.

Chris Meier: All opposed. Article 17 passes.

Chris Meier: Uh, Article 18 act upon any other business. I'll entertain a motion to place Article 18 on the floor.

Suzanne Nelson: I will move to place Article 18 on the floor.

Robert F. Porter: Second.

Article 18 Act Upon any other Business

To act upon any other business which may legally come before this meeting.

Chris Meier: Got it. Does anybody have any further business, Jason?

Jason Gagnon: Sorry. Uh, we, DES has lots of money and, uh, they're short on staff. So you may have heard us talking about a project that we're working on to look at the impacts of landfill leachate and PFAS which is disposed of here. They actually have a large pot of money that they, that we've been working on them with that they managed to set aside specifically for us to look at this issue. Unfortunately, they didn't get their paperwork out to us in time to get a Warrant Article on our books. So the way that Clean Water SRF works is they do 100% principle forgiveness loans. They can't call it a grant because grants come with different federal strings. So they do a hundred percent principle forgiveness loan. What that means is we have to get authority to borrow at our annual meeting or a special meeting. I talked to our attorney and he advised me against adding an Article of this hour to the existing warrant. What that means is we'll have to do a special meeting. DES told me that they need to get this processed before the end of the fiscal year this year, which means we'll be doing a special meeting. I guess my recommendation would be not in 2 weeks when the next regular commission meeting is because we have notice requirements, but in 4 weeks I wanted to ask people if it's okay to do a special meeting like that following the regular commission meeting in the middle of the day. Will we have anybody who can make it here to vote and approve it? Should we do it at night?

Chris Meier: Does anyone want to speak to that?

Kristine Cluff: I think that you probably should change your next commission or your full week to night meeting. Night meeting and have it at 7 o'clock, not 6 o'clock when people are getting outta work.

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Kristine Cluff: It's going to be a 10 minute... but under this Article right... that's on the floor right now, you can't raise and appropriate any money.

Jason Gagnon: No.

Kristine Cluff: So you've got to have a Special Meeting.

Jason Gagnon: Yep. So if the... really just looking for consensus, if that works, then that, that's what we'll do.

Kristine Cluff: Is 4 weeks enough time for your posting?

Jason Gagnon: Yes. We... 16 days to post, right?

Kristine Cluff: You have 16 days to post a Warrant?

Jason Gagnon: Yep.

Karen Umberger: Are you sure that DES is going to have it done in a month?

Jason Gagnon: Yes. I, I spoke with them on the phone yesterday... 2 days ago about it. Yep. We just have to get our, we have to get that authority to borrow. They're going to have all that application stuff to us, but it's really that authority to borrow. That's the key point that we need the meeting for.

William Hounsell: That's worth a Special Meeting.

Jason Gagnon: Yeah. Right. It's a hundred percent free money. This is 100% money returned to the Precinct.

Chris Meier: Does anybody else have further business? Jason?

Jason Gagnon: Sorry, I'm that guy tonight. Um, so Tim had brought up a good point about the Village at Kearsarge Sewer project and, um, the Precinct paying for individual pump stations. I was directed to do some research into what happened in the past and in the past, we haven't paid for individual Precinct, uh, individual pump stations in the project, though we do most likely have the capacity to buy these pumps for the people. So this is a, this is something that would change precedent. And I think it's important that the community, the, the voters weigh in. Now, this is not a, a special Article or a, or a anything like that. But I think it's important that we have a public hearing on it so that, so that the Commissioners can get the input of the, of the voters and the taxpayers and the rate payers so that they can make an informed decision on do we want to change precedent and buy pump stations for this project? Or do we want to stick with the old precedent and not do it? And and that's, I think, important that you guys are able to provide that input and provide that guidance for us on this project. So that, I just wanted everybody to know that that's where we're moving forward. That's the, the idea to move forward with that concept on that project.

Chris Meier: So you'll hold a hearing?

Jason Gagnon: to hold a public hearing. Right. It's, it's not a special meeting like this. There's no vote. It's really just a public hearing to receive public input on how the Commissioner should move forward within the budget that's already been approved for the project.

William Hounsell: I look forward to that discussion. Because David and I, uh, had projects where we might have to buy several pumps. Uh, and, uh, we, we would even talk to the people about how the pumps were and how much they would cost. And we were looking at buying in the budget. Uh, the Kearsarge Village, uh, design layout is unique. And so I look forward to the hearing so we can explain it, because...

Jason Gagnon: That's a great discussion for that hearing.

William Hounsell: A lot of, a lot of, yeah. A lot of the, uh, design was for the protection of the wellhead area and to stay away from the brook. And as a result of the change of design, 10 people have their thoughts. I take, there's money in the, uh, in the budget to do it. And I think we, I look forward to, uh, a fair and equitable discussion of why we should purchase those pumps.

Chris Meier: Okay.

William Hounsell: ... on that particular design we have.

Chris Meier: Any other items of new business?

Jason Gagnon: I'm done.

Karen Umberger: You're done? I know that, uh, John received his, uh, pump there earlier tonight, but, uh, I think that all of us are very pleased with what John has done for us over the years. And I just want to close the meeting with a nice round of applause.

*The room joined in a round of applause for John Santuccio's 50 years of selfless service
to the North Conway Water Precinct and the North Conway Fire Department.*

John Santuccio: Motion to adjourn.

Kristine Cluff: Second.

Minutes recorded by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah K. Andersen', written over a horizontal line.

Hannah K. Andersen, Recording Secretary

I, Gary R. Chandler, certify these minutes as the 2023
Annual Meeting Minutes of March 29, 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary R. Chandler', written over a horizontal line.

Gary R. Chandler, Clerk
North Conway Water Precinct