

TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE DISCUSSION
June 2016

TO ALL TOWN RESIDENTS:

I have created this "discussion" sheet, as it appears that I will not be able to attend this year's annual Town Meeting. I have received a medical diagnosis of a small cell carcinoma of a rare kind of neuro-endocrine cancer. Medical treatments, unfortunately, have conflicted with the Town Meeting day. It may have been the perfect forum to unveil my newly bald head, but I did not want to distract from the important Town business at hand!

IN GENERAL:

The warrant articles have been set in a similar fashion as last year's with one exception. The Town budget articles go down thru Expenses (Articles 3 thru 27); then the Revenue articles (28&29); then The Ordinance Adoption section (Articles 32 thru 35) with the Town Business Section (standard, every year) articles at the end (36 thru 43). The one exception can be found in the "expense" articles (Article 6) where the Code Enforcement/Licensed Plumbing Inspector (CEO/LPI) department has been combined with the Assessing Department. These two departments work quite closely with each other; so the thought this year was to show their expenses as one combined warrant article.

Before I forget, there are 2 typos that have already been found-#1) Article 16 the Select Board recommendation states that the funds be raised from taxes. The Ambulance department is an enterprise account. The funds will be raised from the Ambulance Enterprise Account and not from taxes. #2) Article 23 The Select Board recommendation states that the funds be raised from taxes. The Harbor department is an enterprise account. The funds will be raised from the Harbor Enterprise Account and not from taxes. There are probably other typos- no one is perfect after all- but as I pen this, these are the only ones that have been brought to my attention.

The Town net-to-be-raised amount this year as presented is \$1,000.00 more than last year. This total is shown on the Town Department Financial Summary comparison which is attached to this narrative. Total Town expenses increased \$54,381.00 over last year's total. The total revenues increased \$53,381.00, leaving a net increase of the \$1,000.00.

The Select Board did invest in an important infrastructure component in the year's proposed budget- the Town's employees and their wages. The Board conducted a wage/salary survey this past spring and at its conclusion, adopted a wage grid payment plan for all Town employees who get paid on an hourly basis. This new payment structure has been included in the proposed budget. Further, the Board invested specifically in the Public Works Department by proposing that three full time employee positions be utilized instead of 2 full time and 2 part time positions. Better work efficiency across more work responsibilities are the goal. If approved, the new full time position will begin on September 1st. Funding for this change is included in Article 17. Paving of a portion of the Muskrat Farm Road and Green Valley Road is also included in this article.

Another expense priority included in this budget proposal was **equipment funding**. Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA Air Packs in the Fire Department (\$30,000.00 in Article 14) and Harbor Docks & Piers Capital Reserve (\$20,000.00 in Article 27).

SPECIFIC WARRANT ARTICLE COMMENTS:

Article 20 seeks the Town's approval for the Select Board to negotiate and authorize a 15-year agreement for trash processing. Last year, the Town granted the Select Board the authorization to sign multi-year agreements, but only those with durations of 3 years or less. As you may be aware, the Town's current trash processing agreement expires in 2018. The Board has considered 2 competing contracts. Either one of which has a duration of at least 15 years. The Board needs the Town's authorization then, to proceed with a new contract. A yes vote on this Article would allow the Board to proceed with completing a new Penobscot Energy Recovery Company, Limited Partnership (PERC) trash processing contract which has an initial timeframe of 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2033, or for 15 years.

Article 24 is the Parks department funding. The \$2,995.00 requested increase is predominantly from a "contracted services" line item. The Town would like to hire a tree cutting service to clear out several old/dying trees that are too big for the Public Works crew to handle.

Article 27 is the Capital Reserve funding article. I want to point out there is a new reserve being created- Economic Development and that there is an increase in the amount that is going towards Harbor-Dock& Piers. Economic Development is a priority for the Board. As there are no concrete plans to present to the Town, the Select Board decided to place funds here so that future funding will be available.

Funds in the Harbor reserve are being transferred to the capital reserve account to fund the \$19,000.00 increase. The Harbor Committee recommended this transfer and agreed that to replace the docks and piers would be very expensive.

Article 30 is the article that refers to the Town's LD1 Limit vote. As presented, this budget proposal is \$18,030.00 UNDER the calculated LD1 limit. Unless the net-to-be-raised amount is increased past this \$18,030.00 amount, the article can be passed over.

Articles 32-34 are proposed changes recommended by the Town's Planning Board to the Site Plan Review and Land Use Ordinances. Copies of these changes can be found on pages 99 thru 103.

Article 35 contains the vote on a new proposed ordinance- Solid Waste Flow & Recycling Ordinance. In reviewing a new contract with a solid waste processing facility, it was discovered that all facilities require that the Town have "control" over the waste that will be sent to their facilities. This ordinance draft is the Town's response to the required "control".

The ordinance only refers to that waste and recycling items collected curbside. It supports the current collection process that requires that tags be placed on the waste containers and that recycling items be separated out and collected on a different day than waste. The ordinance also authorizes the Select Board to establish rules and regulations regarding such curbside collection.

A **YES** vote will enact the ordinance; A **NO** vote will not affect the prior vote that was done on Article 20.

Article 36 is the article that sets the tax due dates. Please note that the recommended due dates are both **TUESDAYS**.

Article 37 deals with the process of "selling" off tax acquired properties. As proposed: If the property is to be sold back to the persons or heirs or assigns against whom the taxes were assessed, then it can only happen after completion of a not more than 4-successive-month payment plan arrangement that has paid off ALL of the outstanding taxes for the property.

If the property is to be sold to any "nonrelated" party, then this article requires the property to be advertised for sealed bids on the property, with the highest bidder winning the property.

For Example:

#1: Back taxes on property XYZ total \$6000.00. (Year #1:\$1500;Year#2:\$2000;Year#3:\$2500)

Mr.Smith is the person to whom the taxes were assessed.

He has a payment arrangement with the Select Board which calls for 3 payments of \$2000.00 payable in June, July, and August. When the August payment is received, the Town will issue to Mr. Smith a quit claim deed giving the title to the property back to him.

#2: There are no heirs or assigns to the foreclosed property. Back taxes owed total \$6000.00.The property was advertised with a minimum bid of \$6000.00. There were 2 bids- \$6001.00 and \$6250.00. The property was sold to the \$6250.00 bidder.

Article 43 allows the transfer of unexpended balances and overspent balances to be taken from the Town's Unassigned Fund Balance. Projections as of June 16th, show that there are 3 departments which may be overspent: Technology-\$1,870; General Assistance-\$578; and E-911/EMA- \$143.

I again apologize for not making the Town Meeting. I am thankful that you did!

Marnie

