

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
SELECTBOARD/ BUDGET MEETING

JANUARY 20, 2026

Draft

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by Owen Astbury, Chair

Present: Selectboard Members: Norman (Nope) Martin and Steve Tarleton,
Road Foreman: Randy Kennedy, Treasurer: Melissa Spear, Clerk: Nancy Robinson
Visitors In Person – None Zoom: The Wideman’s & George Spear

Additions to agenda: Melissa has received a contract from McFarland & Johnson for Engineering and Scope of Work services related to the Hale Hollow Bridge. The contract is for \$40,000 (\$10,000 for previous work not yet billed and \$30,000 services to be provided) which include overseeing the bridge project with Scott Jensen (ANR). Costs will be reimbursed by FEMA if scope of work is approved. Owen moved and Steve seconded to approve the contract. Motion carried.

The Highway budget lines were reviewed. Total highway budget is \$957,356 with an amount to be raised by taxes of \$857,356. There was discussion about purchasing a new grader. Current grader was purchased in 1991. Randy had estimates from John Deere and Caterpillar, both approx. \$400,000 less trade in. The suggestion was made to use the surplus of approx. \$109,000 and to reallocate the sand/salt shed appropriation (\$150,000) to the equipment reserve to pay down the grader. This would pay down more than half of the cost of a new grader. Owen moved to add an article to the town meeting warning to include purchasing the new grader at a cost not to exceed \$400,000, using the highway surplus and reserve funds to pay down the grader costs. Steve seconded the motion and motion carried. Randy will get more information including functionality of levers and standard controls.

The General account was then reviewed. A few changes were made to the Landfill testing line and ambulance un-collectables. Total budget is \$842,617 with an amount to be raised in taxes of \$661,067. Board discussed surplus of approx. \$200,000. Discussion of using surplus to offset taxes or to create an emergency reserve fund. Per 24 V.S.A. 1585 legislative bodies can create reserve funds using fund balance reserves. New law that towns are using to create reserve accounts due to disasters and emergencies.

The Wastewater account was reviewed. No changes since last budget meeting. Letters were sent out to town apartment and commercial properties inquiring about building use to make billing more equitable. Wastewater account budget is \$139,120 with an amount to be raised in annual fees of \$113,620.

The Town Meeting Warning was reviewed, regular articles of officers, social service funding requests, budget approval, tax due date. Will add an article to purchase a new grader at a cost not to exceed \$400,000.

Board members reviewed a draft selectboard report that Owen is working on. Will make a few minor changes.

Being no further business to come before the board, Owen moved to adjourn at 5:30 pm. Steve seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Robinson, Clerk