

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
BUDGETARY TOWN MEETING
March 11, 2020**

The Bedford Budgetary Town Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at the Bedford High School auditorium. Present on the stage were Town Moderator Bill Klein, Bill Duschatko (TC Chairman), Melissa Stevens (TC Vice Chairwoman), Councilors: Chris Bandazian, David Gilbert, Phil Greazzo, Denise Ricciardi, and Catherine Rombeau, Rick Sawyer – Town Manager, Tammy Penny – Finance Director, and Sally Kellar – Town Clerk.

Moderator Klein opened the meeting at 7:03 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moderator Klein thanked and recognized Joan McMahan as this was her final evening as Supervisor of the Checklist after about 13 years. She received a standing ovation. Moderator Klein thanked her and stated that her service has been outstanding

Moderator Klein introduced on the stage Bill Duschatko – Council Chairman who then introduced Vice Chairwoman Melissa Stevens, Rick Sawyer – Town Manager, and Tammy Penny – Finance Director, and Sally Kellar – Town Clerk. Moderator Klein introduced Councilor Chris Bandazian who then introduced Dave Gilbert – Town Councilor, Catherine Rombeau – Town Councilor, Denise Ricciardi – Town Councilor, and Phil Greazzo – Town Councilor.

Moderator Klein mentioned newly elected positions: Bill Klein –Town Moderator, Sally Kellar –Town Clerk, Bill Carter – Town Councilor, Lori Radke – Town Councilor, Hugh Donovan – Supervisor of the Checklist, Barbara Chagnon – Supervisor of the Checklist, Beverly Yuksel – Supervisor of the Checklist, Robert Brooks – Library Trustee, and Joe Fahey – Trustee of the Trust Funds (write-in).

Moderator Klein stated if anyone had any questions to direct them to him and not the panel. When people come up to speak at the mics, they are to have their voter card with them. They need to also clearly state their name and address and address their comments through the moderator. After questions and discussion he will ask for a motion to move the article. Articles 5 and 6 are the only items that they will be discussing. If someone wants to make an amendment to an article, they are to put it in writing and give it to one of the assistant moderators. The amendment is the only item they will discuss until they've voted on that amendment. No other motions would be in order until they finish that, then they will go back to the article or other motions to amend. On any amendment or motion they act on, following the taking of a vote on anything, he's going to ask for a motion to restrict reconsideration, so that later on, this evening they can't go back and change something that they've done.

Article 5. – Capital Reserve Fund-Projects and Equipment

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate **\$2,377,875** to be deposited into various Capital Reserve Funds. **\$1,343,375** to come from new taxation and **\$800,000** to

come from Fund Balance Reserves, \$200,000 from Recreation Impact Fees for field improvements, and \$34,500 to come from the Sewer fund.

Moderator Klein recognized Chairman Duschatko to move **Article 5** as printed.

MOTION by Chairman Duschatko to move Article 5 as written in the Town Meeting Handout. Seconded by Councilor Stevens.

Bill Gere, 17 Patton Road, had a question about the \$1m field improvement reserve. He wanted to know if that gets approved, would that mean that Sportsman Field would get the hardscape cover. Mr. Sawyer explained that the proposed was to put a synthetic surface on Sportsman Field if it gets approved. Mr. Gere wanted to confirm that they can't drive on that surface. Mr. Sawyer confirmed that it was correct. They won't allow normal light duty vehicles that they've had at previous Town events, but they would be able to bring golf carts and the tractor equipment that they use at all of the fields, so they would have to change the way they do some Town events if they continue to hold them at that location. Mr. Gere wanted to know if there had been any economic justification for doing this versus continually mowing and watering the existing field. Mr. Sawyer answered yes. They are showing a savings for the annual maintenance, because they would not be mowing and fertilizing it. There is additional cost, because the field would have to be replaced in 10 to 13 years, just like the high school field that needed to be replaced and was on the ballot this year. They hope to start a savings for this next year, which would be about \$60k, which would offset the savings they would have on the mowing, fertilizing, and watering of the field. Mr. Gere thought it seemed like almost \$100k a year to keep that hard surface intact, because it's going to have to be replaced. He was wondering if it was really worth it and wanted to hear some discussion from some other people.

Councilor Gilbert stated that they looked at the field as a need versus a want. He explained that one of the things about Sportsman was that it was low-lying, there is a lot of water, and it would take a lot of effort to maintain it. The light standards have failed and they've had to take them down. Also, they would be able to use that field longer in the fall and bring it up earlier in the spring, so all of the sports programs have more time to use it. Also, Town leagues weren't going to get charged for it as far as he knows, but leagues outside of Town that have more participants on their team that are from out of Town, will have to pay to play on that field. If they do it now, they are going to get an economy of scale with the high school, because they are going to use the same construction company that they are going to use to do their field. The School is just resurfacing their field. The cost for Sportsman Field is to put LED lights in and to put the field in place. When they replace it in 10, 12 years, it's not another million dollars. It's just going to be replacing the field itself. It's also a safety issue, because right now that field is not safe to play on. It's also cost avoidance, because they would just be throwing money at it now trying to keep maintaining it and it always drains poorly. In the spring, you have to wait until the snow melts. Also, it's going to be an enhancement to taxpayers. It would look good and would show that the Town was caring about sports and recreation, and when people come to move to Bedford, they are going to like that. He thought it propped up the property values.

Frank Zito, 24 South Hills Drive, wanted to know what the synthetic material was and if it was the same as AstroTurf. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's the same surface that is at the high school field. Mr. Zito stated that the high school put in \$793k. At their public hearing, he talked about concerns with AstroTurf that hit the national news back in 2015 and 2016. Soccer players kick up some particles, the players breathe those particles, and the incidents of cancer was up to 500% more for kids and young women playing soccer than their siblings who didn't play soccer. He asked at that public hearing if that could be investigated and the superintendent said they would check into it and get back to him and he hasn't heard a thing. He's concerned about that and would like to see that reserve removed and put in next year if they decide there isn't a cancer causing material. His daughter lives in a town outside of Washington, D.C., and their town in Maryland ripped up all of their material and went back to real grass. He was concerned that they were going to spend \$1m to put something in that could be a cancer causing agent. He never heard back from the School District on what the company said and what studies were done on it. He wanted to know if the Council had done any work on carcinogens in the turf. Mr. Sawyer explained that he was at the School public meeting and heard the superintendent say that they would put something in the bid package that would require the company to certify that it was PFAS free. That was the only chemical that he heard the superintendent focus on. That requirement was put into the bid package for both the School and the Town, which was jointly bid and those bid openings were tomorrow at 1:00 PM. Mr. Zito mentioned that the statement was also made that they were going to contact the company and ask for some kind of statement or written document from the company and he never heard a thing. He stated that it's not just PFAS that is in it according to the studies that were done and that's why the town in Maryland ripped up their fields and went back to grass. He wasn't feeling confident spending \$1m on something that may be carcinogenic for the kids anybody that uses that field. He wanted to know if a motion was in order to delete that item until they have a scientifically valid response to this and put it back in next year. Moderator Klein stated that if the team there couldn't give them an answer then yes, they could do that. It would be making an amendment to reduce it by the dollar amount he wished. Mr. Zito mentioned the field improvements reserve and wanted to know if there were other things built into that was the whole \$1m for the turf. Mr. Sawyer stated that the \$1m was for the Sportsman Field project in its entirety, which includes a lot of drainage work, the grading for the site, and all of the lights. Moderator Klein wanted to know if that could be done without affecting the turf being changed at this time. Mr. Sawyer stated that there would be no reason to do that work and have the grass there. It would be all torn up to put the lights in. If they were doing a grass field, the drainage would have to be different, the slope of the surface would have to be different and it would make no sense to him and he wouldn't recommend that the body move that forward if that's the will of the group to take just the synthetic portion of the project out. They also have no bid package for that. The bid package is currently for a full synthetic field with a lights system. Mr. Zito wanted to know if the research was done and the Town was given an answer then it could be put back in the warrant article for next year once they find out that all of the carcinogens have been removed and they are not endangering anybody playing on that field.

MOTION by Frank Zito that it be removed from the warrant article at this point and research be done, they be given the answers and with an opportunity to put it back in the budget next year.

Frank Zito, 24 South Hills Drive, stated that if they've been using a grass field all these years, another year wouldn't cause that much harm. His motion is to remove the \$1m.

Moderator Klein stated that the motion was to reduce that line item, the Recreation Improvements Reserve, by \$1m. Mr. Zito stated that was correct.

Motion was seconded by Bill Gere.

Moderator Klein explained that they are going to discuss that amendment only. The reduction of \$1m.

Frank Sledjeski, 2 Carolina Lane, stated that he was heavily involved in the Back River Road turf process 3 or 4 years ago. While it's not scientific, the way that they are doing turf now is significantly different than they were doing it back in 2010. The fields at Back River Road were probably 70-80% sand versus what used to be complete crumb rubber with carcinogens in it. They would have to find out from the vendors, but he wasn't sure that studies back from before that were valid for concerns going forward. That's his opinion dealing with four or five companies multiple years ago. In other parts of the country they can do grass, but in New England, there were very few grass fields left that were at the level that there were looking to have in Bedford for the quality of their sports. Grass in New England was not a great surface. He talked about how the pond there was filled in and no drainage was put it and that's why it has water problems. That field can only be used as a practice field the way that it is now and half of the lights were taken down, so there is half a field of lights.

Joel Provencher, 33 Olde Lantern Road, urged folks to vote against the change. He was at the School Board hearing and afterwards, he went home and did a Google search on the cancer rate connected to the field and the search brought up a report done by Washington State's Department of Health and they found no correlation between soccer players on AstroTurf and cancer. He thought you find some sort of cancer element or carcinogen in any surface or item or thing people use in daily life and they balance the concerns of those over the overall benefit of what they do. Having walked on Sportsman Field, he thought it had holes and gaps and the actual surface isn't one that would be great for a practice or playing surface. He coaches high school football and it's not a surface that he would want his players playing on. He thought there was a certain element that is a safety component and more than anything they should take the savings that are being able to be bundled with the already passed turf resurfacing and bundle that with the changing of Sportsman and get the best bang for their buck right now and to have it come not at any major tax increase or impact on them whatsoever. He thought the Board did a great job of finding a way to balance these two elements together and thought they had a really good product that they could put forward for their athletes. He urged people to vote against the amendment and keep it in the budget.

Becky Soule, 27 New Boston Road, stated that Sportsman was basically a practice field and mentioned someone's comment about resurfacing it with the turf to show other towns that Bedford cares about its fields. It's a practice field so other towns are not going to play on that field. She has a 21-year old and a 24-year old that played sports in Town. When they first started playing sports, Legacy lower field had flooding issues and the Town took it offline from playing, dug up the field, put drainage in it and re-sodded it and that field has held up very well over the years; probably a lot cheaper than the \$1m for a 10-year field. She wanted to see a cost comparison to have natural sod and drainage put it at Sportsman rather than the turf. Councilor Gilbert stated that Sportsman was much lower and wetter than Legacy. By turfing it, they might be able to do events on that that are not just practice. Another thing about Sportsman being turfed, if another any fields have a problem, it can take the overflow. If they have to take another field offline for any other reason, this field can take that.

Frank Zito, 24 South Hills Drive, wanted clarification on the motion he made. He wanted to know if the \$1m commits them to \$100k a year for a plastic field for 10 years and at the end of 10, 11, 12 years, they need to replace the field. Mr. Sawyer stated that they program just like the high school field for 10, 12, 13 or 14 years where they expect they will have to replace it. The high school field total in cost was about \$700k, but their field was larger and has a track around it and other issues of work that was being done as part of that project. He said that the Town would estimate around \$600k-700k to just replace the synthetic surface in 10- 15 years. They would save between \$60k and \$70k potentially in a capital reserve fund starting next year if they were to move forward with it. Mr. Zito wanted to know what the annual cost of maintaining the grass field as it is now. Mr. Sawyer stated that he would have to pull out some documents and get back to him. Mr. Zito stated that it would help to know and wanted to know if he could give them an estimate, because they were going to vote on this now. He wanted to know if it was anywhere near \$100k a year to maintain a grass field. Councilor Gilbert thought it was around \$90k-\$95k. Mr. Zito wanted to clarify that it would cost \$90k-\$95k to maintain a grass field. Councilor Gilbert stated that that was everything, lighting, maintenance, etc. Mr. Zito responded that they aren't talking about lighting; they are talking about just maintaining the current field. Councilor Gilbert stated that have to talk about the whole package. Mr. Zito pointed out that Mr. Sawyer said that if the plastic wasn't approved, then the lighting and all of that wouldn't be put in, so he wanted to know what it would cost to maintain a grass field. Councilor Gilbert stated that he didn't know that off the top of his head. Mr. Zito didn't think they had enough data to spend \$1m that's why he made his motion. Moderator Klein stated that when the Council put that together, they had done a lot of that research and they had all of the figures together at that point. The \$1m that they were voting on right now cancels the entire project, the whole thing and only part of that was for the field; the other was for other issues that still need to be addressed. Mr. Zito stated that they could put the \$1m in again next year and Moderator Klein stated that if the voters want to do that and the Council wants to put it on the agenda, they can.

Terry Wolf, 61 Bracken Circle, pointed out that on page three of the handout, it states that \$1.3m would come from new taxation, and she wanted to know if this motion were to pass and the \$1m to be removed, if that would reduce that number by \$1m of the new taxation. Mr. Sawyer explained that the \$1m from the Recreation Improvements is

removed from Article 5, the way that both articles were written tonight, they would reduce the revenue side by \$800k from the fund balance and \$200k from Recreation Impact Fees. They would still need to raise the rest, the \$1,343,375 from taxes. This motion wouldn't reduce the tax rate at all. Ms. Wolf wanted to know if the \$1m was removed from this particular warrant article, would it reduce that \$1.3m to \$300k. Mr. Sawyer responded no. He explained that if you look at the top, in bold, there is \$2.3m in this total article with \$1.3 being raised by taxes. As proposed by the Council, this \$1m for this field is not to be raised from new taxes; it's to be raised from \$800k of fund balance and \$200k of Recreation Impact Fees. They would be reducing the total article from \$2,377,875 to the total of \$1,343,375 from taxes plus \$34,500 from the sewer fund. Ms. Wolf wanted to know how much money was in the unreserved fund balance. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was approximately \$18m.

Dan Campbell, 1 Laurel Drive, stated that he was a small business owner. He stated that it was mentioned that it cost \$100k a year to mow the grass at one field and he wanted to volunteer his services to do that. That's a great contract whoever has it, but it's kind of ridiculous. He stated that this was their money that they are spending and he thought it was nuts to spend \$1m on a fake field that they would have to replace in 10 years. He thought it was a bad idea. Councilor Gilbert stated that he doesn't know the exact number of how much it costs to mow a grass field, but he remembered something between \$90k and \$95k, but it's not just mowing. It's everything to do with the field; it's fertilizing, mowing, lights, all kinds of different things, fencing. Mr. Campbell wanted to know if they put up a fence every year. Councilor Gilbert stated that he didn't have that detail. Mr. Campbell stated so it's \$100k to mow one field. Councilor Gilbert responded that he didn't say \$100k. Mr. Campbell stated that he said \$90k-95k. Councilor Gilbert responded that that's different than \$100k. Mr. Campbell stated that it's only a difference of \$10k, but that's still a lot of money and Councilor Gilbert agreed that it was a lot of money, but they need to invest in their Town. Mr. Campbell thought it was nuts. He works hard for his money and thought they should get quotes from 10 different contractors and they could get it done for half the price. He wanted to know if they were giving it to one guy. \$100k to mow the grass at one field and turn the lights on, but they are going to replace all the lights and put fake grass that they have to rip out in 10 years and spend another \$700k to replace and it might cause cancer. This is just nuts.

Mark Murai, 15 Shaw Drive, stated that he loves the fake fields. For those who were concerned about the carcinogens, they haven't shown up here with any kind of substantiated proof in their hands. The chemicals he puts on his lawn were probably as bad if not worse, which is why he has stopped having TruGreen and those companies come out and deal with his lawn because of the chemicals they use. From a safety standpoint, he thought it was a better option for anyone who steps on that field. He was in support of putting the field in and maintaining it as it needs to be maintained.

Frank Sledjeski, 2 Carolina Lane, stated that what's there now is not a field. It's a pile of dirt that only works essentially for those that don't play on the ground. Soccer and field hockey can't use it. There are over 900 kids in Bedford that can't utilize that facility. He thought they should also keep in mind that the lights with the situation they are in now, they've lost a significant amount of lighted field space in Bedford, which is crucial especially when they change the clocks back at the end of the year. The amount of time

they are able to use the field far outweighs what they are able to do on a grass field. The high school games can go all the way into the middle of December and on the field in the beginning of March. This field would be used a good four or five months more every year than the current pile of dirt that they have out there.

Ralph Sidore, 15 Gleneagle Drive, gave a history of when the field was built by the soccer league and when the Town took it over it wasn't kept up as good. It was built to be the number one soccer field and for the first few years it was. The reason there were wooden poles was that the site contractor who was on the soccer board got them donated and installed for free by the phone company. It was a really nice field that as time evolved and more kids were involved and with more sports in Town, it was used more heavily and got beaten down. It is something that needs to be remedied. They have to have fields that work for everybody. The need for lighted fields was obvious 30 years ago and the need for lighting now was even more critical. He thought the motion was incorrect. What was said about possible carcinogens was sketchy at best; they have conflicting studies. He thought the motion was wrong and should be defeated.

Bill Dermody, Birchwood Circle, didn't disagree with the field. He wanted to know if the life expectancy of the field, 10-14 years, was based on the wear and tear of this field. Other fields are only used for certain sports like the high school field, but this field would get more use. He wanted to know if the Council was going to assure 10-14 years out of that field or was the replacement going to be on a more frequent basis. Mr. Sawyer stated that he wasn't aware of any synthetic field that's needed to be replaced in less than 10 years even with the most aggressive use. Mr. Dermody talked about a lot of groups using the field including those having birthday parties or soccer games and kids wearing shoes that were not meant for those fields and it would get more wear. He wanted to make sure that they could convince themselves that they were going to get the kind of wear out of the field that they expect or the longevity out of the field that they are telling them about tonight. He thought it seemed like an awful long time. The synthetic field at the high school doesn't get the kind of wear and tear that they might be experiencing at this field. He wanted to make sure they were looking at the real cost. Mr. Sawyer responded absolutely. They believe all of their science and all of their research and the specifications that went into the field would provide a field that they would not have to replace in less than 10 years.

Mr. Sawyer answered a previous question and stated that the report that he has from the Public Works Department, by putting in a turf field, it would reduce their mowing costs by 4.88% and the total mowing package for all of the fields us currently shown at around \$52k and it would bring it down to just over \$49k with that reduction. They would also be showing a reduction of fertilizer across all fields of 4.8%, which is about \$1,100. The total fertilizer budget is just under \$20k across all fields. They are also showing a reduction of 2.88% for fuel, because of not needing to fuel the equipment. There is a one-time cost for buying a new surfacing piece of equipment for the field itself, but otherwise their overall equipment cost goes down about 4.8% as well. It looks like Sportsman Field is about 4.8% of their overall maintenance budget for all of their fields or that portion would be saved by doing the turf field. The cost is the replacement cost and his recommendation would be that they would also be building a replacement cost even if it was a grass field. It would need to be replaced at some point in time, because

of the condition that's out there and the amount of use that all of their fields get, especially Sportsman Field.

Sue Thomas, 36 Glen Road, wanted to clarify that the tax rate would not change with it in or out of the current proposal. Mr. Sawyer responded as currently proposed in the budget that's correct. Ms. Thomas stated that if they take out the \$1m, they just won't be drawing off of the reserve fund for this year and none of them would be affected this year and wanted to know if that was correct. Mr. Sawyer responded that that was correct. Ms. Thomas stated that she had been involved in all sports, not just in Bedford, and in the northeast especially and the northern states, most schools, colleges and high schools are transitioning in the north to artificially turfed fields for usage reasons. For safety reasons, what the snow and frost does to fields in the winter is the same that it does to roads. It causes issues. Many softball and baseball teams are going to artificial turf fields in the northern states, because overall it's much more economical. The teams get on the fields a lot quicker and they can be used longer, so the usage is more. Bedford has a lot of kids that play. Sportsman Field is not just a practice field. The high school football team practices on Sportsman Field, because the high school field either has soccer or field hockey or in the spring has lacrosse. It's used all the time. It would be a great investment in Town to have another artificially turfed field to go along with the high school field. She defended Councilor Gilbert. She stated that it's hard to sit up there and there are a million numbers they've been working on all year and then to be asked questions and to be criticized about it. She thought they've done a great job presenting this. There have been hearings on this budget and she likes the way it's been packaged.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, stated that unfortunately he didn't see a lot of the parents there tonight that have children using Sportsman Field and all fields in Town. He has grandchildren playing sports and will try to speak for them and say that they need better and improved fields all over Town. Last year, unfortunately they voted down a bond that would have improved most of their fields. They fields need to be improved and they need more fields. This field is unusable for practice or anything else right now. He was very much against the amendment. Also, he's a lot more concerned about the chemicals in fertilizer and other lawn treatments that are put on the fields and lawns than he is in any of the chemicals in artificial turf. Chemicals put on the lawns pollute the waters, streams and rivers and watershed. He would rather see them go to artificial turf, which is much less of a danger to the children and to the Town at large.

MOTION by Fred Sledjeski to end the debate. The motion was seconded. Vote taken and passed.

Frank Zito, 24 South Hills Drive, stated that for point of information, he mentioned the statement that if the \$1m was taken out to be put in next year, it wouldn't change the \$2,377,875. He didn't understand that. If Article 5 is amended for the Town to raise and appropriate \$1,377,875, he wanted to know if they are telling him that somehow the \$1m would be taken out of new taxation. Mr. Sawyer explained that the \$1m for Sportsman Field was proposed to be done without using any new taxation. It would be \$800k from fund balance and \$200k from Recreation Impact Fees. The motion would reduce the total Article to \$1,377,875. Mr. Zito stated that that was the intent of his

motion. He wanted to know if there was money in the Capital Reserve Fund without adding \$1m in new taxation. Moderator Klein responded yes. He explained that the numbers below: \$1.43m, \$800k, \$200k, and \$34,500 and that the \$1m would be coming out of that. It's still subtracted from the top, but it is not coming out of the \$1,343,375, which is the new tax. That will not change. There is no tax impact with it in or out. Mr. Zito states that it says \$1.3m would be coming from new taxation. Moderator Klein stated that that wouldn't change. They are not reducing the taxation, because the \$1m would be coming out of existing reserves.

Moderator Klein called for a vote on the amendment. If they vote yes, they are voting to reduce the Field Improvement Reserve to \$0. It's a reduction of \$1m.

Vote taken – Motion to amend fails.

MOTION by Frank Sledjeski to limit reconsideration. Seconded by Charlie Fairman. Vote taken – Motion Passed.

Vote taken on Article 5 as presented – Motion Passed.

MOTION by Frank Sledjeski to limit reconsideration. Seconded by Bill Dermody. Vote taken – Motion Passed.

Article 6. - Town Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate such sums of money for municipal operations in the ensuing year. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

General Fund	\$29,005,563
Recreation Day Camp	83,006
BCTV	457,738
Sewer Fund	<u>1,756,296</u>
Total Appropriation	\$31,302,603

MOTION by Bill Duschatko to approve Article 6. Town Operating Budget as written. Seconded by Melissa Stevens.

Charlie Fairman, 243 Liberty Hill Road, thanked the Town Council as they continue their presentation of budgets that barely affect the tax rate. They've done this for many years. As a result of that, Bedford is the only town in NH that has a Aaa bond rating. Their good control of the Town's finances enables that, which saves them money and keeps them in great shape. He thanked Chris Bandazian for his many years on the Town Council and his leadership in the role of controlling the budget. He works with Chris on the Planning Board and know how critical his leadership is to that committee as well as Town Council and many other boards and commissions that Chris works hard on. He will be missed tremendously by Planning Board. He leans on him heavily for his

knowledge, his leadership, and his fairness. He thanked Chris for all he has done for the community over the many years.

Ralph Sidore, 15 Gleneagle Drive, mentioned the road portion of the budget and wanted to know if any money had been allocated to picking up trash along the roads. Mr. Sawyer stated that they don't have a specific number for trash pick up, but the crews do try and get as much as they can when they are doing roadside mowing and they have some dedicated times when they go out and just pick up trash, but it's not a major focus of their budget or their work plan. They just don't have the staff to do what truly needs to be done on every road. Mr. Sidore stated that he wasn't questioning that. However, he and his wife spend a lot of time walking in their area of Town, which is County Road, Patten Road, Matthew Patten Road, John Goffe, all the way over to Sebbins Pond, and down Route 3/South River Road to the Bedford mall. There is a lot of trash there, a lot of which has been there a long time. He spoke to one of the Town Councilors in the past about this and there was an impression that there was going to be an attempt to make a Town clean-up day. He hasn't heard anything more about it, so he was wondering if it was happening or not. He thought there should be something in the budget that addresses this. It could be \$1.00. The intent of it is to make the picking up periodically, whether done by the citizens on a voluntary basis or the Town on a budgeted basis, of the streets so the Town looks the way it should. Some of the streets are a real disgrace. On John Goffe Drive there is a pile where somebody just threw bags of empty soda cans or beer cans; a heap on the side of John Goffe Drive. It's a lovely street with nice homes. He's talked to Councilor Rombeau about under the power lines on County Road where there was a political sign there that lasted a year and a half. He thinks that somebody finally got it, but there is all kinds of trash under there. It doesn't look good. These are major roads in the Town. He was inclined to ask that they put something in the budget to address this. It could be \$1.00. Make it a priority for the Highway Department along with their other responsibilities. They pick up as much as possible in the areas that are affected by trash. He doesn't know who the people are that throw trash down. It's a disgrace and he's very sorry to see it. He hopes they do something about it.

Frank Sledjeski, 2 Carolina Lane, wanted to know, from a Town perspective, if there was some number that would help in some cause like this that he would be willing to put up as a budget item in addition that would help the Town department to spend more time doing what the people of Bedford are interested in. He wanted to know if he made a motion to add \$50k to the operating budget, would that help clean up the Town. He thought it was a good use of resources in the type of town they have.

Mr. Sawyer stated that they have not studied what it would take to do a Town-wide clean-up. The Council has talked about having community organized clean-up days. He thought that would be a good idea, whether it's volunteers, a Scout program, or community service programs that high school students need to do. There are some safety concerns they would need to take into account when they have others do it. They do have some funds in the budget to maintain the new medians on Route 101. That was a requirement of the State if they were going to have any landscaped medians. They have some money to do that. They are going to be farming that out, and there are safety concerns. They would potentially have to have a police detail when they are

maintain those islands. As far as local roads, he doesn't have a price. He wouldn't recommend a number tonight. They are welcome to add to the bottom line. It would be up to the Council on how they would distribute that. It would be a big number to hire more staff to just be dedicated to this. Potentially they could hire high school students to be focused on this if they could find any that want that job. He thought it would be a challenge now to find anybody that would want that job at a low cost. His suggestion was to encourage the Council to look into this and come back to this group next year with something in the budget, which is much more researched with an actual number.

Councilor Catherine Rombeau stated that they are working with the Bedford Energy Commission to organize a Town clean-up day. She thought it was important for public awareness and to getting a community involved in keeping their neighborhoods cleaned up, but that doesn't necessarily address the larger problem with some of the routes that are perhaps not as safe to pick up on and are also difficult for neighbors to manage. She appreciated it being raised tonight for discussion for the budget for next year and being creative and how to address this in more of a substantial and less ad hoc manner.

Frank Zito, 24 South Hills Drive, mentioned the Town Manager line item in 2019 was \$288,704 and for 2020 it's \$328,747. He wanted to know what was built into the \$328,747. Mr. Sawyer explained that it the two employees, himself and the administrative assistant in that department. The majority of that increase is \$15k that's been appropriated for professional services to hire a surveyor to do a survey of the Town property where the Town Office Building is and the Stevens Buswell building is, so they can sell the Stevens Buswell building to the Historical Society or another group that is formed with the Historical Society as a condominium. They need to do that survey, so there is \$15k in the budget to be able to move that building over to the Historical Society as a condominium in hopes that the Historical Society can complete their plan for a community center. There is also a one-time significant increase across all departments, but it shows up significantly when it's a 2-person department, because of a 27th payroll they have this year. All of the departments have increased costs in their payroll lines. Because they typically have 26 payrolls, and because of the way they've done their finances, they have a 27th payroll, an additional two weeks of salary and associated costs. That's the difference between the two and also a 3% increase in salary. Mr. Zito noted that the \$328k covers the salary for the Town Manager and the Town Manager's administrative assistant. Mr. Sawyer stated salary, benefits, longevity, printing costs, postage costs, and professional dues. Mr. Zito wanted to know the salary of those two individuals. Mr. Sawyer stated that because there is a 27th payroll there is additional costs; it's not the typical 2,080 hours. The cost for this budget is for 2,160 hours for the additional payroll. His salary for this year if passed is \$146,793 and the administrative assistant is just under \$65k.

Mike Abbene, 21 Rosewell Road, wanted to know the total amount his taxes are going to increase per thousand with this budget. He wanted to know if it was \$0.22 per thousand or is he missing something. Mr. Sawyer responded that was correct.

Councilor Dave Gilbert made clear that this was just the Town side, not the School. It is a \$0.22 increase per thousand from last year's budget.

Sam Como, 12 Lynn Drive, was a student and not a registered voter. The audience voted and allowed him to speak. Mr. Como mentioned the Police showed a \$360k increase in patrols. He was sure it was for a very good reason, but want them to explain why there was such a large increase in Police patrols. Mr. Sawyer stated that the major impact in Police Patrol was a 14.25% increase in just regular wages primarily because the 27th payroll. That line item is over a \$2m line item, so when you have a 27th payroll, it is a significant cost. Plus this is the 3rd year of the contract with the Police Union. And there are built-in escalators in that for the Police Department, a step increase for all of the members of the Police Patrol. There is also a significant amount of new training they are proposing in this line. There is additional money, \$9,500 for Town events, primarily for the four elections they have this year versus last year. All the police officers that are needed for traffic control during that time. The 27th payroll impacts every line item that has to do with wages, so line items for overtime, vacancies overtime, training all have that built in additional cost. Uniform allowance was up a little bit, but there is nothing significant other than the training and the payroll.

MOTION by Mr. Ralph Sidore to end the debate. Vote taken – Motion Passed.

Vote taken on Article 6 as printed for the total appropriation of \$31,302,603 that includes the sum of Articles 5 and 6 in the amount of \$33,680,478. Motion Passed.

Moderator Klein thanked everyone who came out tonight. He mentioned the polls being continually cleaned on Tuesday. Everybody has been doing such a great job. The Police Department, the traffic patterns, which aren't going to change. They are open to suggestions if they have any talk to him or the assistants. They've got a great Town Council. He mentioned that there were openings on boards and committees. He stated that the only negative thing they have had was at the Primary was people confused with parties and changing them when you come in. The new Town Clerk, Sally Kellar and Gloria (MacVane) and the Supervisors will be putting out some additional information on this. June 2nd is the deadline to change your party. They have another Primary this year. The first Tuesday in September they have the State Primary. If you want to pick a ballot you have to be undeclared when you walk in or you are not going to be able to change it. If you have questions, talk to the Town Clerk.

Town Council Chairman Bill Duschatko stated that they were losing two Councilors. Catherine Rombeau decided not to run this year. Catherine was first elected in 2017. She brought a more sensitive approach to the resolution of tenacious problems and has always expressed herself in a thoughtful and involved manner. Catherine was an effective behind the scenes operative dealing with people as with Mr. Sidore with questions about cleaning up the Town. She's done her homework on various topics and has insightful questions and complete commentary. She has provided the balance to help resolve the impasse to resolve the Stevens Buswell situation. She could always be counted on to do more than her share of work that goes unseen by most. Her concerns are for the improvement of the community and I'm sure she will continue to find ways to contribute to Bedford. Thank you for your dedication and service. It's been a pleasure

working with you over the past three years. Mr. Duschatko presented Ms. Rombeau with a plaque in appreciation for her dedication and service as a Town Councilor.

Ms. Rombeau thanked everyone who was there and those at home who stay engaged with them. When she ran for office three years ago, she just wanted to be involved and she's very grateful for all of the people that gave her the chance to do it. It's been a privilege to serve. She has learned so much about her Town. They are a really big town, but they run like a small community in many good ways. She hopes that when people came to her with questions even if they didn't like her answer or didn't think she had the right answer; she appreciates giving her the chance to find answers and do more work. It's a little sad for her, but she looks forward to continue to work with people in Town in different ways and hopes to get to work with many of them again; the people she worked with on boards and commissions and Department Heads. She didn't know if everyone in Town realizes how incredible the departments are, their Heads, the staff and how hard they work, how open they are to questions and working closely with the Council. It was very eye-opening for her and hoped many of them get the opportunity to work closely with them too in the future.

Council Chairman Duschatko stated that they will now addresses the longest serving Councilor they've dealt with. His career dedicated to Bedford goes back farther than just being a Councilor. For 28 years, Chris Bandazian has served this community either as an appointed official or as an elected one. For 12 of those years, Chris has served as a Town Councilor of which he has either been Chairman or Vice Chairman three times. For his first 12 years of service to Bedford, he served on the Zoning Board of Adjustment where he was Vice Chairman for 8 years and Chairman for two. In 2007, he was appointment to fill an unexpired term of a Councilor and was elected to the Council for the first time in 2008. During his 12 years as Town Councilor, he also devoted his time serving on the Planning Board since 2010, as well as the Energy Commission, which he was active in founding in 2009. This means that he was committed to a minimum of four nights a month of meetings just for the Planning Board and Town Council not including the preparation time required to be a knowledgeable participant with normally only one day between the Planning Board and the Town Council meeting. This augmented in membership at various times on the Parks & Recreation Commission, BCTV, WBNH, a member of the Open Space Task Force for the Master Plan of 2010. He also serves on the current Think Tank for the Master Plan of 2020. As if this was not enough, Chris also serves on a very important NH legislative commission on the environment and public health impacts of Per Flourinated chemicals and representing Bedford on regional groups that are addressing issues dealing with the EPA's wastewater management permit with an effort to have the State of NH take the proper steps to empower Environmental Services to assume regulatory authority from the EPA. NH is one of the two states in the country that still relies on the EPA to run its environmental regulations. Chris continues to be a leading exponent for the use of solar power when appropriate and has assumed a leadership role in understanding opportunities and limitations of recycling projects and related waste disposal/energy generation alternatives. Throughout his period of service, he has understood the necessity of providing safe and attractive workplaces for all Town employees and investing in technology to improve the overall performance in customer service. This is a very important area and he has helped immensely in designing programs to

improvement retention and recruitment of top-level employees. He is as dedicated to the Town employees as he is to the Town residents. His contributions to Bedford do not stop at traditional town services. He was instrumental in establishing the Educational Farm at Joppa Hill and maintaining its important ties to Bedford's agricultural heritage. The self-supporting farm has provided not only a wonderful retention of open space but has created a unique facility, which is rapidly becoming a noteworthy example of the practical application and civic pride combined with concerned stewardship and continues to lead the farm as president and director. He has had the privilege of working with Chris as a Councilor for the past five years. His knowledge of not only municipal law but also the scientific and technical matters, and concern in maintaining the Town's fiscal responsibility while at the same time ensuring that we dealt with issues that resulted in part from a large turnover of senior personnel was and is exemplary. His comments are always thoughtful and well-reasoned and often bring up points that have not been considered by others. He is considerate of others, measured in his rebuttals whether they involve Councilor colleagues, citizens or petitioners. On behalf of all the people who have had the privilege of working with Chris on Bedford affairs, and particularly, those who are past and current Councilors, he would like to express sincere appreciation to Chris, particularly his family who have been kind enough to share his insight and dedication with us. We'll all miss working with and gaining benefit from Chris's remarkable experience, understanding of environmental factors and calm and cool demur. The award tonight is a very small token of our heartfelt appreciation for all his effort he's put in to make Bedford a wonderful place to live for all of us. Chris Bandazian got a standing ovation. A Town chair was presented to him.

Chris Bandazian stated that he doesn't do it for accolades and recognition, but servicing the people of this Town and working with Town employees and Town Council members, many Town Managers and Acting Town Managers, Keith Hickey, Russ Marcoux, Crystal Dionne, Pat McQueen, Jessie Levine, Steve Daly, Rick Sawyer, the best Town Manager he's had the privilege of working with. It is its own reward to work for the people of Bedford and to work with all of you. He thanked everyone for all of the wonderful years and for this recognition.

Moderator Klein called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Bill Carter to adjourn at 8:28 pm. Seconded by Frank Sledjeski. Vote taken – Motion Passed.

Submitted by:

Dawn Boufford, Executive Assistant

Sally Kellar, Town Clerk