

Town of Nelson
Selectmen's Budget Caucus Meeting 7:00 PM
February 12, 2020

Executive Board Attending: David Upton, Maury Collins, Gary Robinson, Edie Drinkwater, Admin. Assist.

Others attending: General attendance

At 7:04 PM David Upton opened the February 12, 2020 Budget Caucus meeting of the Nelson Select Board. Upon opening David explained the purpose of the meeting was to review and give notice of the 2020 Annual Warrant and Budget.

● David then began review of the Warrant Articles.

- Article #2 – Purchase of a Grader – David explained that this article is required to precede all other articles because a bond or note would be covering some of the payment.

Mike Tarr presented information on the proposed grader and informed the audience on the status of the current grader. He reminded everyone that he had cautioned one year ago that the grader had exceeded its useful life and would likely begin to fail.

David explained the Board's opposition to the purchase as it would be contrary to the Board's goals for reducing the use of diesel and transitioning to vehicles and equipment fueled by renewable energy by 2050.

David addressed concerns over road maintenance during Mud season if the current grader failed during the coming year:

1. Use the current grader for small jobs or emergency safety issues only
2. Rent if necessary for a month or two to perform annual larger projects
3. Research to find a used grader to purchase next year with an expected life of 10-12 years and then invest in a grader powered by renewable energy. He presented a brief review of some used graders found by doing an online search.

David noted that several manufacturers are currently working on vehicles and large equipment that are showing promise in the area of hydrogen fuel cells for power.

J. Bunce presented options for voters to consider:

1. Do nothing
2. Buy the same as the current grader (Size, weight, etc.)
3. Consider good used grader
4. Listen to the Road Agent

Discussion continued with questions thoughts from the audience:

Is it possibility of converting a new grader to Bio-diesel?

A new Grader would be less harmful to the environment due to improved emission standards.

Can the article be amended at or following this meeting.

Since the Select Board approved the Warrant as Final and submitted it to DRA as final no amendment could be made until Town Meeting and only an amendment that is considered not to change the intent or purpose. (Number amounts can be changed at that time as well)

- Article #3 – Operating Budget for the Town – David reviewed this article explaining that it is as always, a contingency budget to be spent only as needed.
Question – was any unspent surplus put to reduce taxes this past year?
David Answered – Yes \$200,000

- Article #4 – Grid-Tied Solar Array – Following a presentation of the article by David, which included an explanation of how Net metering works and how sun exposure in the Northeast compares to other parts of the country when producing electricity, discussion spawned several questions:
 1. Was a Ground Mount considered that cars could park under?
 2. Was Wind power ever considered?
 3. What is the payback time to begin receiving a profit?
 4. Is this a legal use of Town Building Capital Reserve Funds?
 5. Where would future expansion of the system be placed?
 6. Could expansion ever be large enough to cover electric vehicles?

- Articles #5 thru #18 were quickly touched upon and for the most part remain the same each year.
 1. Article #13 to add funds to Bridge Expendable Trust – It was explained that the Bailey Brook Bridge remains “Red Listed” and a failure of the deteriorating culvert would cost far more than the current fund availability. (Even with a 20/80 Federal Grant)
 2. Article #15 to Reclaim and Repave Center Pond Road – It was explained that this is a non-lapsing article as the reclaiming portion would take place in 2020 and the finish paving would occur in 2021

8:58 PM Meeting Adjourned.

For February 12, 2020

David Upton, Chair

Maury Collins, Selectman

Gary Robinson, Selectman