



Plus: Senior Tax Relief	3,834,310
Plus: Reserve for Uncollected Taxes/Other Credits	<u>5,327,639</u>
Gross Amount to be Raised by Taxation	\$315,317,856

Mark McDermott, District 7 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Jill Vergara, District 7 moved to reduce the Contribution to Surplus by \$1,020,000 stating that the projected surplus is \$4.8 million which is well within the 10% according to Town policy and to maintain the AAA bond rating. She noted that unlike other towns, surplus funds have not been used during the pandemic, Superstorm Sandy, or emergency roof replacements and equates to taxpayers being overtaxed by close to \$5 million. Pamela Iacono, District 8 seconded the motion.

First Selectwoman Kupchick explained at the time of the BOF vote the surplus was projected at \$3.2 million; current project is now \$4.8 million. She cautioned against a larger reduction because of the pending public corruption case and fill pile issues.

**VOTE:** The motion to reduce the Contribution to Surplus by \$1,020,000 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Bill Gerber, District 2 moved to reduce Contingency by \$180,000 stating he felt there was enough cushion based on the tax collection rate and the number of CBAs under negotiation, duly seconded.

Jeff Steele, District 2 asked about the impact of this reduction. Controller Caitlin Bosse explained the budgeted amount contains settlement assumptions and accruals that were addressed by the external auditors and based on estimated risk estimates for negotiations.

Jill Vergara asked for the revised mill rate calculation based on the \$1,020,000 cut that was approved. CFO Jared Schmitt noted it would be 27.0. Ms. Vergara asked if it would get into the 26's if the \$180,000 was approved. Mr. Schmitt said he would defer to the BOF as it would be based on their actions.

BOF Chair Jim Brown said he highly doubted that the BOF would increase the mill rate; however, they could adjust the tax collection rate based on collections experience so it could be in the 26-something range.

**VOTE:** The motion to reduce Contingency by \$180,000 failed with 20 in favor and 20 opposed.

**IN FAVOR:** Gerber, Perham, Jacobs, Nickel, Pistilli, Karson, A. Kelly, Odinak, Spolyar, Diaz, Garskof, Siebert, Wolk, Ambrose, Havey, Bove, McDermott, Vergara, Wackerman.

**OPPOSED:** Mahoney, Monahan, O'Shea, Ruggiero, McCormack, Steele, Durrell, Gale, Powell-Dunmore, Ference, Iacono, Messina, Tallman, Grauer, C. Kelly, Perugini, Altobelli, Britton, Grant, Petise.

Alice Kelly, District 4 moved to cut \$60,000 from 1350-57000 for the Town website redesign, stating this is not the year to be adding to the tax burden, duly seconded.

Pamela Iacono, District 8 noted that there have been many issues with the website and urged the Body not to cut the funding. Dru Georgiadis, District 9 concurred and noted that better maintenance is needed. First Selectwoman Kupchick said the website is antiquated and lacks functionality; she said it is one of the complaints she hears most from residents is how the Town website is not user friendly. Jill Vergara, District 7 said between the surplus and stimulus funds there is certain funds can be found to improve this technology. Cindy Perham, District 2 felt it was not the year to fund this although she and senior residents as well utilize the website daily.

**VOTE:** The motion to cut \$60,000 from 1350-57000 for the Town website redesign failed with 19 in favor and 21 opposed.

**IN FAVOR:** Gerber, Perham, Nickel, Pistilli, Karson, A. Kelly, Odinak, Spolyar, Diaz, Garskof, Siebert, Wolk, Ambrose, Havey, Bove, McDermott, Vergara, Wackerman.

**OPPOSED:** Mahoney, Monahan, O'Shea, Ruggiero, McCormack, Steele, Durrell, Jacobs, Gale, Powell-Dunmore, Ference, Iacono, Messina, Tallman, Grauer, C. Kelly, Perugini, Altobelli, Britton, Grant, Petise.

Mr. Gerber asked BOF Chair Jim Brown if the collection rate would be adjusted in line with this year's collections. Mr. Brown said the current year is at .9861 along with conservative budgeting due to Covid19 and felt it could be adjusted to .9856. Mr. Gerber agreed that it should be adjusted to "get it right" as opposed to "a cushion".

Jill Vergara, District 7 moved to reduce contingency by \$80,000 for the non-contractual salary increases as she felt it belonged in the department lines so they could be discussed rather than contingency, duly seconded.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said these funds are for department head raises which they did not get last year while other bargaining units received their raises along with the teachers union who received a 2.4% wage increase approved by the RTM a few months ago. She felt cutting \$80,000 from the budget would have little impact on the mill rate, but would make a difference to the department heads who worked very hard during the pandemic.

Pamela Iacono, District 8 explained that because of the accrual it was probably best to put the funds in contingency and then they are moved into the salary lines because of the Charter. First Selectwoman Kupchick said that past practice the First Selectmen would have reviews with department heads and then the monies would be moved accordingly into the departments; she felt she should be given the same opportunity to review job performances as had been done in the past. Mr. Brown said basically the salary reviews are incomplete. Ms. Vergara felt the funds were hidden in contingency. Cindy Perham, District 2 asked why the senior center director's salary increase was in the department budget last year. First Selectwoman Kupchick noted that was a job reclassification.

Ms. Vergara said she had not seen a 5.6% tax increase like this before. The pandemic is not over, people are moving out of town, the revaluation has increased property values and she's trying to get costs down as much as possible.

Karen McCormack, District 2 said she had reviewed past budgets from revaluation years and this increase is not outrageous; she further noted that the budget increases are driven by the BOE expense.

**VOTE:** The motion to reduce contingency by \$80,000 for non-contractual salary increases failed with 12 in favor and 28 opposed.

**IN FAVOR:** Perham, Nickel, Karson, A. Kelly, Diaz, Wolk, Ambrose, Havey, Bove, Vergara, Wackerman, Georgiadis.

**OPPOSED:** Mahoney, Monahan, O'Shea, Ruggiero, Gerber, McCormack, Steele, Durrell, Jacobs, Pistilli, Odinak, Spolyar, Garskof, Siebert, Gale, Powell-Dunmore, McDermott, Ference, Iacono, Messina, Tallman, Grauer, C. Kelly, Perugini, Altobelli, Britton, Grant, Petise.

Jeff Steele, District 2 asked if any funds would be returned by the BOE to the Town from the savings realized in health insurance and funding coming from the federal government. Superintendent Mike Cummings said the ESSER2 funding is a \$1.2 million grant over two years some of which will fund the summer school program. The American Relief funding is \$3.2 million but no specific details have been received to date other than 20% must be spent on learning loss due to the pandemic. The State has revised the insurance rates again resulting in \$1 million in savings. Open enrollment is currently underway and the BOE is trying to utilize any insurance savings to minimize the impact of the reduction that has already been made to the budget.

BOE Chair Christine Vitale reiterated that the Board continues to deal with the ramifications of Covid19.

Pamela Iacono, District 8 noted that there is still a potential revenue increase of \$500,000 due to Open Choice along with the ESSR2 grant and American Relief funding therefore the impact of the reduction has decreased. She hoped the BOE would use the opportunity to begin structural change. Supt. Cummings stated the Board has begun work on structural change.

Karen Wackerman, District 7 stated she would vote no on the overall budget because she felt the Town side increase was too big.

**VOTE:** The appropriations in the amount of \$332,341,651 for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 were approved with 23 in favor and 17 opposed.

**IN FAVOR:** Mahoney, Monahan, O'Shea, Ruggiero, McCormack, Steele, Durrell, Jacobs, Pistilli, Siebert, Gale, Powell-Dunmore, Ference, Iacono, Messina, Tallman, Grauer, C. Kelly, Perugini, Altobelli, Britton, Grant, Petise.

**OPPOSED:** Gerber, Perham, Nickel, Karson, A. Kelly, Odinak, Spolyar, Diaz, Garskof, Wolk, Ambrose, Havey, Bove, McDermott, Vergara, Wackerman, Georgiadis.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne, MMC, MCTC  
Town Clerk