

In the previous Selectmen's Corner, we reported that the Board of Selectmen voted on 5 July to call a special town meeting on 23 July to seek approval on several budget related questions including funding for road paving, repairs to fire equipment, and an increase to the office compensation budget.

It had been suggested that an increase to the road-paving budget for this year would be prudent due to the relative low cost of asphalt. A budget increase could have been obtained with voter approval from one of the reserve accounts established at the 2015 Town Meeting. However, subsequent discussions between the Board and the Road Commissioner led us to decide that we didn't have a plan at this time to present to the voters.

The Fire Chief, Jason Brown, had earlier reported that the department's equipment repair budget for 2016 (Article 27 of the Warrant) had been depleted by an unexpected repair to a foam pump caused by freezing during a response to a fire in Bridgton. It was expected that an increase to this budget was needed to get through the remainder of the year. Subsequently, the Administrative Assistant and the Fire Chief compiled a detailed report and submitted a claim to the town's insurance company. We hope to hear from the insurance company shortly but if approved, it would negate the need for a budget increase at this time.

We are now down to one question for consideration this coming Saturday which is an increase to the Office Compensation Budget. \$120,000 was approved at the 2016 Town Meeting (Article 7). At the Town Meeting, an additional \$1.00 per hour pay increase for the Town Clerk/Treasurer/Tax Collector was recommended and approved by the voters. This was above the amount budgeted. The Board of Selectmen later approved a pay increase for the Deputy Clerk/Treasurer/Tax Collector. In spite of the above pay increases, we were still within the approved budget but the Board of Selectmen now seeks voter approval to move the Administrative Assistant from a half time to a full time position. The Board seeks to increase the Office Compensation budget to \$130,000 to cover this for the remainder of the year. In almost every aspect of the Board of Selectmen's duties, we are finding that current events and state statutes require that we be better organized, better documented, and better prepared to handle the administrative functions of Town Government. The administrative assistant has been critical to our progress to-date and we believe we have a way to go yet. In addition, we foresee a need for someone to pick up day-to-day management of the Community Center in the near future. This new function is envisioned by the Community Center Use Committee to require several hours per week, so together it would combine to make one full-time position. We look forward to seeing you at the Special Town Meeting on Saturday.

Sincerely
Baldwin Board of Selectmen