

LYNDEBOROUGH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
November 7, 2023
Final

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Mark Chamberlain called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Introduction of Members Present:

Chairman Mark Chamberlain, Selectman Fred Douglas, and Selectman Robert Howe

Town Administrator Russ Boland and minute taker Kathleen Humphreys

Public & Media Present: Finance Director Paul Hebert, Rep. Lisa Post, and Jessie Salisbury

Tonight, is a special Board of Selectmen's Meeting to set the 2023 tax rate.

The options were laid out as followed:

1. Apply no Unreserved Fund Balance, resulting in an increase of \$1.67.
2. Apply \$105,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance to retain the same municipal taxes as last year.
3. Flatten the entire tax from last year, which will bring us below the minimum Unreserved Fund Balance the State and Town recommends.

Option #3 was eliminated. The Board discussed the other two options.

Selectman Douglas said he feels secure going with Option #1 and provided reasons why which included the DRA's recommendation of a certain amount being set aside to increase the Unreserved Fund Balance. The Town has always been on the edge with putting the minimum amount away for the surplus. His concern is if we experience a catastrophic issue, would there be enough money available to cover it. There should be consideration given to increasing the Unreserved Fund Balance and increasing the taxes because he does not feel the Town can keep operating like this on the municipal side.

Selectman Douglas asked if the school enrollment is going down. Both Lisa Post and Jessie Salisbury said that enrollment is going down. Selectman Douglas said the Town is keeping its portion of the tax rate low. It is the school that is driving the cost up. Lisa Post responded to Selectman Douglas' question as to why the school budget is spiraling up which include higher teacher's salaries, cost of healthcare, and the number of employees they hired.

In closing comments, Selectman Douglas said that option #1 is extremely viable. We keep trying to balance this budget off the Unreserved Fund Balance. Yes, we still have money, but it's the minimum amount the DRA recommends.

Typically, there is \$290,000-\$300,000 in uncollected taxes, but it is down to \$180,000. There is \$540,000 in the Unreserve Fund Balance minus \$180,000.

Selectman Howe initially stated he was inclined toward option #2. He realizes the tax rate is where it is due to the hard work by the department heads and employee of the Town. His concern is similar to Selectman Douglas'; that we keep dipping into the Unreserved Fund Balance to keep the taxes down. There are a lot of things we are passing along to future years, for example, record digitization, more paving, and better benefits.

Chairman Chamberlain asked the Town Administrator Boland to run another scenario because he didn't want to go under 8% retained Unreserved Fund Balance. Using \$58,000 would leave \$480,000 in the Unreserved Fund Balance. Other scenarios were discussed, and the Board agreed to go with option #1.

VOTE: Selectman Douglas made a motion, Selectman Howe seconded to go with Option #1 presented by T/A Boland and use nothing out of the Unreserved Fund Balance. Motion passed 3-0

Another meeting is required to sign the 2023 Second Half Property Tax Warrant. The Board is considering Thursday evening or Thursday morning for that meeting. The Warrant needs to be signed before sending the tax bills are mailed out.

For the average \$200,000 home, their taxes would go up \$334; \$1.67 per \$100,000 of value.

Municipal is \$8.50
County is \$1.11
Local education is \$12.45
State education is \$1.71
<hr/>
Total Tax Rate is \$23.77

VOTE: Selectman Howe made a motion, Selectman Douglas seconded to adjourn at 6:24 p.m. Motion passed 3-0

Next regular meeting: November 15, 2023 at Citizens' Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Kathleen Humphreys, Transcriber

Chairman Mark Chamberlain _____

Selectman Fred Douglas _____

Selectman Robert Howe _____