

**Town of Colebrook
Board of Finance**

Minutes to Meeting of February 22, 2017

Members Present

J. Millar, Chairman
R. Carfiro
T. Corvo
D. Johnstone
M. Klimkosky
M. Neal

Absent

None

Others Present

T. McKeon
C. Johnstone
J. Alciati

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman J. Millar.

1. T. McKeon presented the Selectmen's 2017-18 budget, which totals \$1,827,922, an increase of \$45,498, or 2.6%, over 2016-17. The principal increases are: (i) salaries up \$19,180 to cover a 3% wage increase and additional hours for two training positions; (ii) benefits, mostly healthcare, up \$6,412; and (iii) town hall maintenance up \$8,400 for a fiber optics internet link, copier leases, and cleaning expense. Several line items, including health insurance, tipping fees, and probate court expense, are based on preliminary estimates.
2. Subsequent discussion raised concern that the Selectmen's budget does not contain enough for road maintenance and that some salaries, the First Selectman's in particular, are significantly below those of comparable towns. Accordingly, the Board asked the Selectmen to provide additional information about the cost to adequately fund road maintenance and bring salaries closer to those of Colebrook's peer group.
3. The budgets proposed by the Boards of Selectmen and Education, together with a 3.7% increase for Region 7 received after the meeting, will require the mill rate to increase by 9.6% to 32.1 mills. By contrast, if state aid were to remain the same as 2016-17, the mill increase would be a more tolerable 2.4%. No decisions were made about the budget numbers that will be sent to referendum; however J. Millar will alert the Board of Education to the fact that we may ask for a zero increase, or even a decrease.
4. Discussed a town wide e-mail to alert the town to the impact that the Governor's proposed cuts will have on Colebrook's mill rate. However, the Board decided to wait week or two before sending anything out. Also discussed the possibility of sending a letter to K. Witkos and J. Case expressing the Board's concerns about the Governor's proposals and the lack control over the cost of the teachers' pension.
5. R. Carfiro moved to accept the minutes of February 15, 2017. Second, M. Klimkosky. Passed with the abstentions of T. Corvo and D. Johnstone who were absent from the meeting.
6. M. Neal moved to adjourn. Second, T. Corvo. Passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha F. Neal
Secretary