MINUTES OF SPECIAL TOWN BUDGET MEETING HELD MAY 17, 2024

The duly warned and notified special town budget meeting was held Friday, May 17, 2024 at the Cornwall Consolidated School Gathering Room at 7:30 p.m. Approximately 27 townspeople were present.

Gordon Ridgway, First Selectman, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Scott Cady was elected moderator. Vera Dinneen, Town Clerk, read the call of the meeting.

Mr. Ridgway made a motion to approve the proposed budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, as recommended by the Board of Finance. The motion was seconded by Rocco Botto. The budget total is $8,061,695. Anna Timell questioned the decrease in the Project Sage budget line. First Selectman Ridgway stated that he believed that the budgeted amount is the amount that Project Sage requested. He said that they will look into it and make changes, if necessary. Ms. Timell also stated that the Economic Development Commission budget it not itemized and asked what their money is spent on. Mr. Ridgway explained that the EDC budget is only $6,500 and is used for Cornwall Days, brochures, the Cornwall map and supporting businesses in town. The EDC budget was not increased this year. The total budget increase of 4% (down from the originally projected 5%) is due to more students at the high school, storm damage and inflationary pressures. Region One increase and storm damage are out of our control. There was not enough storm damage regionally to be eligible for funding from other sources. Joe Pryor stated that the town needs to build the reserves back up and keep its rainy-day fund. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Ridgway made the following motion “Upon recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, to adopt an ordinance for the establishment of an affordable Housing Fund.” Jennifer Markow seconded the motion. The fund will not be used to build housing, but to help organizations to work toward construction. Anna Timell, a member of the Housing Task Force, stated that the Task Force recommended that Cornwall model Salisbury’s housing fund. They requested $10,000. She asked if the town will be able to fund more in the future. Mr. Ridgway replied that the funding may increase, but it will need other sources such as donations and grants. Richard Bramley pointed out that approval for expenditures will be a two-step process, first from the Affordable Housing Commission, then from the Board of Selectmen. It is a non-budgetary fund. Jill Cutler, Chairman of the Affordable Housing Commission, pointed out that there is nothing in the ordinance about communication and education, which was a major charge of the commission. She made a motion to amend item 3 of the ordinance to add: “Reasonable administrative expenses for communication and education about affordable housing.” Michelle Shipp seconded the motion. It was unanimously voted to amend the motion. The main motion was also unanimously approved.

Richard Wolkowitz made a motion to adjourn. Michelle Shipp seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 7:59pm.

Respectfully submitted

Vera L. Dinneen

Town Clerk