Board members present: Chairman LaCourse, Selectman Brown and Selectman Bugbee
Others present: Annie Gasowski, Caren Rossi, Don Quigley, John Tappan, Linda Reinhold, Ruth Eifert, Steve Bulle, Tom Dronsfield, Pat Jenkins, Pat Barbour, Rebecca Hawthorne, Katrinka Pellecchia, Scott Nemet, Deb Schanda, Town Secretary Denise Duval and Town Administrator Julie Glover.

1. Chairman LaCourse calls the meeting to order via Zoom at 6:00 pm.

   “As Chairman of the Select Board, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is meeting electronically utilizing the Zoom platform. We previously gave notice to the public of how to access this meeting using Zoom and instructions are provided on the Town of Lee’s website at: www.leenh.org

   If anybody has a problem with access, please call 603-659-5414

   Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

   Let’s start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

   Selectman Bugbee is here and he is alone. Selectman Brown is here and he is alone. Chairman LaCourse is here and he is alone.

2. Chairman LaCourse opens the 1st Budget Public Hearing at 6:01pm.

   a. TA Glover begins with the proposed FY22 Budget which is 6 1/2% higher than the current Fiscal Year due primarily to the proposed new police officer, the proposed new children’s librarian, Health insurance increases, the increase in the required town’s contribution to the NH Retirement System and the proposed new firefighter. The other budgets remained flat.

   Chairman LaCourse will take comments from the Board first and then comments from the floor. There are none.

   Pat Barbour, Wednesday Hill Road and member of the ABC, will speak her opinion (not as an ABC member) with regards to the new police and firefighter positions. She strongly supports both of them. The most important role of the town government is ensuring the safety of the community. Both Chiefs work diligently to provide Lee with the professional responsiveness that it deserves. It is the town government’s responsibility that they have the resources to do this. She states that the police have 8 full-time and 1 part-time and FBI data indicates that they should have 10-14 full-time. She adds that the days of an all volunteer firefighter force are gone and staffing has grown increasingly difficult. The new firefighter would allow Chief Nemet to move to a new 24 hour staffing model that would improve recruitment and retention and provides more flexible staffing options. She does not believe that the town should stand still while we are paying for the school.

   Selectman Brown supports the statement that Ms. Barbour just made.
Chairman LaCourse asks the TA to go through the budget by departments. If there any comments, please call out.

There is no recommended change to the Board of Selectman budget from the current fiscal year. There is an increase in Deputy TC/TC wage line and the Finance Assistant wage line for making these two part-time positions into one full-time position in March 2020. The IT budget has increased due to the need for a new server. There is a slight increase in the Assessing line in anticipation of a new contract in the new fiscal year. Personnel has a number of increases due to the proposed new police and fire positions and NH Retirement System costs. There is a slight decrease in Planning & Zoning. There is an increase in Government Buildings due to the new costs that will come with the Daley building such as higher utility costs. Almost all of the costs of the renovations and 12 months of lease payments are coming out of the Unassigned Fund Balance. The police department budget has an increase due to the full-time officer they are proposing. The Chief recommended cutting a part-time officer and the ABC proposed cutting a new cruiser as well in order to cover the cost of the new officer in the new FY. Chief Dronsfield supports his need for another officer. They are struggling to cover everything. He has had to cover some evening shifts for patrol. Selectman Bugbee adds that felonies are up by 36.1%. Felony offenses take up much more time and usually grow in the amount of follow-up work. Both dispatch budgets have increased due to requests from the agencies. The new firefighter costs will not be seen in the proposed budget because the Chief did not request that in his budget, but it does appear in the ABC recommendation. TA Glover provides a slide that shows the proposed costs for the new firefighter. The Fire Chief explains that he was asked to submit a flat budget so he did; however, he completely supports and needs another full-time firefighter. If he got another person, he could implement his new 24 hour staffing model which would help in many areas. He struggles with making sure that someone is available every weekend and that everyone gets a break when and if they need it. He explains how much the department has changed over the years and how family members do not volunteer like they used to. The required training is much more intense and demanding then it ever was as well. The hauling costs and solid waste disposals within the Transfer Station have both gone up. The Welfare budget has slightly decreased. The ABC has recommended cutting the ORYA budget to $15k. The Fair Committee has said that they do not need any funding at this time. The library is asking to make the children’s librarian a full-time position. The ABC proposed cutting their operating budget to make up for that. The Conservation Commission is asking for $7k this year after not asking for anything for the last few years. Ruth Eifert speaks on behalf of the library. They are going to need $1800 to cover the increase for internet. The children’s librarian has done a phenomenal job with the virtual story time and they have seen a dramatic increase in their programs. The ABC recommended $250k for the library’s budget. The library controls their hiring and firing. The ABC was not in favor of the new position. They are in support of the library but they do not support another full-time position. Ruth Eifert will be leaving half way through next year. She is asking to increase the budget by $2000 to cover the internet increase and she recommends that the children’s librarian become full-time. Rebecca Hawthorne does not think that the ABC wants to give them less money than last year and wants them to have $250k to distribute how they see fit. She wants to submit a salary request for the new Director.

Selectman Bugbee states that he spoke with the superintendent and based on the current assessed value for the town of Lee the tax rate for the school for next year will go up 9.35%.
For the Town of Lee that is a $2.07 increase which is significant. The State will be giving the Town of Lee $508,000 less for education. The school will be using $500k out of their unassigned fund balance to fund this. The 9.35% is after using this fund money so the next year it will go up even more.

TA reports that the Clerk sent a report indicating that after the first 12 days of collecting the taxes the town is running at a higher rate this year than compared to the previous year.

Ruth Eifert asks if she can submit a revised budget for the new director. The Board is ok with this. Selectman Bugbee hopes that the trustees will weigh in on this.

b. The TA reviews the draft warrant articles with the Board. There are no new Zoning Ordinance changes this year. The Default Budget is $4,133,504, but she needs to confirm something with DRA before that is a final number. Article 3 came from the Fire Chief who is proposing the purchase of a new fire engine for $650,000 out of the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Article #4 proposes to deposit $175,000 into the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund which is what has been done for the past few years. Article #5 is to deposit $20,000 into the Fire Ponds and Cisterns Capital Reserve Fund. Article #6 came from the Library Trustees who are asking to withdraw $100,000 from the Library Capital Reserve. They also submitted Article #7 asking to deposit $25,000 into the Lee Library Building Capital Reserve Fund. Article #8 is to deposit $55,000 into the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Article #9 is to deposit $60,000 into the Highway Dept Road and Bridge Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund. Article #10 is to deposit $45,000 into the Transfer Station Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Article #11 is to deposit $50,000 into the Town Buildings Capital Reserve Fund. Article #12 is to deposit $50,000 into the Town Hall Renovation Capital Reserve Fund. Article #13 is to deposit $15,000 into the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund. The ABC recommended 0. Selectman Bugbee points out that the ABC did not recommend Article #12 and they did not see Article 6 or 7. TA states that the Warrant is built around the CIP. Article #14 is to deposit $15,000 into the Internal Service Expendable Trust Fund for Accrued Benefits. The ABC recommended $30,000. Article #15 is to deposit $10,000 into the Recreation Capital Reserve Fund. Selectman Bugbee state that the ABC recommended 0. Article #16 is to deposit $20,000 into the Unassigned Fund Balance. Article #17 is to see if the Town will adopt the provisions of RSA 287-E relative to the conduct of games of bingo and the sale of lucky 7 tickets. This was brought by the Fair Committee. Selectman Bugbee asks what the lucky 7 is. Caren Rossi says that the wording comes from the statute. Article #18 is to change the purpose of the existing Fire Pond and Cistern Capital Reserve Fund to allow for maintenance and installation of new. Right now it allows for the repair and replacement of existing. Article #19 is to deposit $9249 into the Town Building Capital Reserve Fund. Selectman Bugbee states that they only received $4500. TA will change.

After some discussion the Board agrees to remove Article #15 and Article #13. Article #19 is reduced to $4500. Pat Barbour states that with regard to Article #14 the ABC thinks that this fund is substantially underfunded. Mr. Tappan speaks to Article #18 and wants it to be re-written. It should be for repairs and replacement and installation of new. He recommends not having the work maintenance in there. TA thinks the issue is maintaining the existing fire ponds. He thinks that we should have a separate non capital reserve fund for maintenance to see what those expenses are. Chief Nemet weighs in and says he is fine with adding a maintenance line in his budget for this purpose. They need to determine the correct way to take care of all of
all of this. Maintenance to the Chief is upkeep of the fire ponds such as mowing and the cutting down trees to help keep from having to dredge. Repair is when you have to excavate due to a leak in the ground as in what is happening at Elder Osbourne. If maintenance is removed then would he have to increase his budget? Chief Nemet does not have this in his budget. Steve Bullek states that it would cost $2500 for maintenance. As long as they keep up with it, it should never cost more than that. Steve and Scott will work together to put together a budget. Mr. Tappan will work with the TA on re-writing Article #18.

c. The Board is going to wait until the January 11th meeting to approve the Default Budget so the TA can check with DRA on something.

Chairman LaCourse closes the Public Hearing at 7:21pm.

3. John Tappan gives an update of the Town Hall Renovation. He presents conceptual floor and site plans, estimated costs and a schedule. This will remodel the 1968 addition which is the TC/TC office in order to make it a conference room. There will be an entry vestibule pushed over to where the bathroom is now and 2 bathrooms will be added in between the entry and the conference room. In the main hall the floor will be completely removed, the crawl space will be correctly finished, new structure for the floor will be built and the existing hardwood floor would be reinstalled. The stage which has been deemed historical will remain. A new steel beam would be installed and the column would be removed. The front door will be returned to its original size of 48” wide by 90” high. The interior stairway is historic so it will be reinforced and remain. The belief is that the chimney that was in the middle of the room once supported the beam. It is also believed that the right window was always just a shutter and never an operational window. They will install a new ADA ramp to the back door and a new external stair case to the 2nd floor to meet code requirements. The front door would not be used as the main entrance. There is an option presented to extend the back of the Town Hall. The THRC discussed putting a lift in the back of the building up to the 2nd floor. Because of the cost they decided not to include it in the design. They are thinking that it could be office space for committees and commissions but not public space. Mr. Tappan shows the site plan and goes over all the setbacks. There are 3 cost categories. 1. Pre-construction – cost of the tasks that need to be completed before LCHIP application. 2. Town Hall Building Rehabilitation – cost of the tasks directly associated with the building rehabilitation. These are the only costs that could be matched by LCHIP. It is shown as a 50/50 maximum match, but that grant amount is not expected. 3. Site Work for Town Hall, Library and Museum – cost of the tasks that follow from the change of use of the town hall and the expansion of the library.

The THRC presents estimated costs as follows: Pre-construction $48,195; Town Hall Building Rehabilitation $579,752 (shows 50% $289,876 coming from LCHIP) and Site Work for Town Hall, Library and Museum $187,732 for a total of $815,679 and $525,803 if LCHIP gives 50%.

Mr. Tappan runs through the schedule that the committee has established. It won’t be until March 2022 that they will have anything on the ballot for the public to consider. They are not presenting or asking for anything on the ballot this year.

4. a) Don Quigley states that they are still missing some information from the Secretary of State Office with regards to the Virtual Deliberative Session and Drive-up Ballot Session. If the Deliberative Session were to be in person it would be on January 30, 2021. The process that replaces the in person process or “deliberative session” is to have 2 virtual informational
sessions that could take place in February and not necessarily on January 30th. Selectman Bugbee says that the school is doing an in person Deliberative Session. He wants to see an in person Deliberative Session and says that we can use the ORHS according to Dr. Morse. Chairman LaCourse will lean on Don and Linda for their recommendations. Don defers to Caren Rossi for her opinion. Caren Rossi, the Health Officer, would rather do it virtually as would the Town Clerk and TA. Ultimately Selectman Bugbee is with John and will defer to Don and Linda for this decision. Selectman Bugbee thinks that the ability to amend articles will be taken away from the people. Caren states that if it is an in person meeting she knows many elderly people who will not go. TA sees a potential issue with all department heads being quarantined following an in person deliberative session should someone test positive. The Town Clerk thinks it should be a virtual session. Don Quigley declares the facility to be unsafe and therefore the process will be handled virtually under option HB 1129. The TA and Clerk will work on getting the voter’s list and sending out a postcard.

TA will look into increasing the participant capacity of the Zoom license.

b. TA spoke to a few other towns who previously used CCAG to do their revals and there were no outstanding reasons not to go with them so she would recommend using CCAG as they were the lowest bidder for the FY21 Reval RFP. The Board decides to go with them.

c. TA gives last update on the move to new space. The signs are going to be installed, the mailbox will be moved and the ramps are supposed to get done by Tuesday. Most of Town Hall is packed up. The shredder is coming on December 31st. The last of the packing will be done on Monday, January 4th. Moving day is January 5th.

Back to 4b to complete a vote. Chairman LaCourse moves to take the money out of the Reval Capital Reserve Fund in the amount not to exceed $39,000 to pay CCAG for the FY21 Reval. Selectman Bugbee, seconds. Roll Call Vote. Selectman Bugbee, yes, Selectman Brown, yes and Chairman LaCourse, yes. Motion Carries.

TA reports that they are working through some quarantine issues but no employees have Covid.

5. Chairman LaCourse moves to accept to Consent Agenda as presented. Selectman Bugbee, seconds. Roll Call Vote. Selectman Bugbee, yes, Selectman Brown, yes and Chairman LaCourse, yes. Motion Carries.

6. Selectman Bugbee meeting with WME tomorrow to talk about their proposal for the Town Hall renovation. They want to include a few other things in their services. The Town Hall Renovation Committee will be back on January 11th to request hiring this company.

7. Chairman LaCourse moves to enter into a non-public session RSA 91-A:3-II (c) at 8:45pm. Selectman Bugbee, seconds. Roll Call Vote. Selectman Bugbee, yes. Selectman Brown. Chairman LaCourse, yes. Motion Carries.
The Select Board returned from non-public session at 9:11 pm.

Chairman LaCourse states that nothing was really discussed during non-public. Selectman Bugbee asks the TA to work on revising the Public Works Manager’s job description. The Board requests another non-public for the next meeting to do individual department head
evaluations and have a salary pool discussion. Selectman Bugbee asks if there have been any volunteer of the year nominations. They will follow-up on this at the next meeting. TA asks if the Board is sealing the minutes. Selectman Bugbee states that they discussed department head evaluations and salary increase pool, no decisions were made. Minutes will not be sealed.

8. Chairman LaCourse moves to adjourn at **9:13pm**. Selectman Bugbee, seconds. **All in favor.**

*Motion Carries.*

Minutes transcribed by Denise Duval, Town Secretary.
Board members present: Chairman LaCourse, Selectman Bugbee and Selectman Brown
Others present: none

1. Chairman LaCourse motions to enter into Non-Public Session at 8:45 pm per RSA 91-A: 3II (a). Selectman Bugbee, seconds. To discuss matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. Roll Call Vote. Selectman Bugbee, yes, Selectman Brown, yes and Chairman LaCourse yes. Motion Carries.

2. The Board discusses department head evaluations and salary increase pool, no decisions were made. Minutes will not be sealed.

3. Chairman LaCourse moves to leave nonpublic session and return to public session. Selectman Bugbee, seconds. All in favor. Motion Carries. The Board reconvenes to public session at 9:11pm.

4. Minutes dictated to Town Secretary during public meeting by Selectman Bugbee.

Minutes typed by Denise Duval, Town Secretary