

This update includes information on the Board of Selectman (**BoS**) and an update of the proposed school budget for next year.

The BoS agenda for tonight's meeting

1. Report of the Benefits Review Committee (Selectman Crisp)

2. The police and dispatch budgets

FYI: Here is an article entitled "Public Employee Pay Gains Outpace Private Sector".

The article is by Dennis Cauchon of USA TODAY and is dated 2/1/2008.

*There is a widening gap between the total compensation (pay and benefits) of state/local government workers and private sector employees, according to a recent article "State, local government workers see pay gains" in USA Today. This conclusion is based on an analysis of data reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which shows that **state and local government employees now earn an average of \$39.50 per hour in total compensation versus the \$26.09 an hour earned on average by private sector workers.***

The data show that the gap has been widening every year, rising by an average of \$1.02 an hour last year and \$2.45 an hour over the past three years.

*The article points out that **benefits are a big factor in the growing gap**, as private sector companies have trimmed pension benefits and asked employees to pay a greater share of medical costs, while few governments have imposed similar restraints.*

Average hourly wages:

Year	Public	Private
2007	\$39.50	\$26.09
2004	\$34.72	\$23.76

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

State and local government workers are enjoying major gains in compensation, pushing the value of their average wages and benefits far ahead of private workers, a USA TODAY analysis of federal data shows.

The gap is widening every year, rising by an average \$1.02 an hour last year and \$2.45 an hour over the past three years. The better pay and benefits for public employees come as private-sector workers face stagnant wages and rising unemployment.

State and local government workers now earn an average of \$39.50 per hour in total compensation, reports the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Private workers earn an average of \$26.09 an hour.

Benefits are a big reason for the gap.

Companies have trimmed pension benefits and asked employees to pay a greater share of medical costs.

*Few governments have imposed similar cuts on teachers, snowplow drivers, lawyers and other civil servants. **From 2000 to 2007, public employees enjoyed a 16% increase in compensation after adjusting for inflation compared with 11% for private workers.***

*The nation has 20 million state and local government employees. About 116 million people work in the private sector. The 2.7 million federal workers are **not** included in the BLS compensation data.*

Friday evenings BoS meeting will cover the budgets of Public Works and Solid Waste
Saturdays BoS meeting (starts @ 8am) will cover the budgets of the Heritage Commission, Community Development, Planning & Zoning Boards, Coed Enforcement, Welfare, Assessing, Finance Office, Treasurer, Audit, Insurances, Debt Service, Information System, Budget Committee, Executive, Emergency Management, and finally Warrant Articles.

School Board & Budget Committee update:

Last night the budget committee held a required public meeting to inform the voters of what would be included in next years school budget. This budget will be voted on by those residents attending the March 13 (yes it is Friday the 13th) to be held in the Bow High auditorium at 7PM.

The highlights of the meeting are as follows:

Budget information

Warrant Article 3

\$24,169,382 Total Proposed Operating budget for 2009-2010

\$24,292,695 Total approved for 2008-2009*

(* However this included an over estimate of approximately \$333,000 for employee health insurance which the board said it would return to the taxpayers.)

\$23,959,695 Adjusted operating budget for 2008-2009 **

(** operating budget for the health insurance over statement)

Proposed increase of \$209,687 or about 1%

Warrant article #4

To see if the voters will approve a teacher's union 1 year contract that increases their salaries by \$356,310 or 3.64%. This amount includes increases in the base salary schedule, their automatic step increases and their automatic longevity increases.

If this article passes it will trigger an Evergreen Clause which means in all future contract negotiations teachers will continue to receive increases according to the last contract even though they are working without a new contract. The non Ever Green contract recognized that there was no contract and thus everyone in the union remained at the previous salary. The Ever Green clause was proposed by the unions and passed by the New Hampshire Legislature last year along party lines (Democrats favored Republicans opposed)

Warrant articles 4 is a second bite of the apple for those proposing the increase in article 4. Article 5 says, if article 4 is defeated by the voters the Board will be approved to call another meeting of the voters to see if they really were serious when they rejected the teacher's contract increases the first time.

Warrant articles 6, 7 & 8

These articles involve spending money that has already collected (capital reserve funds) for the purchase of paving at the elementary school (\$60,500), a new phone system (\$95,000) and resurfacing of the High School track and some new equipment. If these

articles are rejected the money would continue to remain in the capital reserve fund and earn interest.

Warrant article 9 notifies everyone that they will be voting in the town election in May on whether or not to adopt what is commonly known as SB2. (There will be a public session later in the year to spell out what SB2 means so don't worry at this point if you do not completely understand this issue).

Warrant Article 10 is proposed to mandate the School Board and the Budget committees to show the vote count (for example 3 in favor 2 against) in all warrant articles.

This year the Budget committee and the School Board WILL NOT show how members voted. (FYI, the select board has indicated it will continue to show their votes on all warrant articles.)

All Bow voters can vote on these articles at the Annual School Meeting.

Mark your calendar for Friday March 13 at 7PM in the High School auditorium.