

TOWN OF SEABROOK

SELECTMEN'S SPECIAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 19, 2025

Theresa A. Kyle
Srinivasan "Ravi" Ravikumar
Harold F. Eaton
William M. Manzi, III

Mrs. Kyle opened the meeting at 11:00AM.

Mrs. Kyle said there would be a traditional candidate's night, and it will be announced as soon as further information is received.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle
Second: Harold F. Eaton
Unanimous

To approve the use of
the selectmen's room
once the date is set.

PUBLIC HEARING - AMENDMENT ARTICLE 41

Mrs. Kyle said there was a citizen's petition introducing a 2% cap on the tax rate. Mr. Manzi said this hearing is pursuant to the statute requiring a public hearing. He said it outlines what the cap will do if it is enacted at the town meeting. It is a 2% cap on the tax levy not necessarily on the tax rate. It includes the budget that is offset by revenues collected, it would include warrant articles and any other spending that would have to come in at no more than 2% the previous year's tax levy.

Ravi said if the town were to raise more in revenues that amount is deducted. As long as the town's portion of the taxes does not exceed 2% then they will be in compliance.

Mrs. Kyle asked if this would have any effect on union contracts and/or personnel. Mr. Manzi said if it passed it would have effect on both the union contracts and hiring of personnel.

Ravi read the memo from Vikki Mitchell in support of the article (see attached).

Mr. Eaton said if the contribution from Next Era increases then the following year it decreases what would that do to the budget. Mr. Manzi said if the board chose to go to the full 2% and Next Era were to give less than everyone else would have to pay more, just as they do today. There was discussion on the burden to the taxpayers when Next Era pays less and/or more.

If money is used from the fund balance does that count towards the 2%. Mr. Manzi said as he understands it the board would not be penalized for using those funds towards the 2%. Mrs. Kyle

commented that they need to be careful with using money from the fund balance as they need to keep a certain amount in this fund.

Mrs. Kyle commented the taxpayers need to really think about this as she feels it is going to restrict them from operating the town.

Ravi said there are many people in town who live on fixed incomes. For these people it would be good for them to know that the taxes will not increase more than 2% in order to budget.

Mrs. Kyle said there is another article looking to reduce the exemptions for elderly and disabled. Ravi said there are 2 different things. The exemptions shift the tax burden to other taxpayers in the town.

Mr. Eaton asked if the cap would limit a capital reserve fund being created using funds from the fund balance. Mr. Manzi said it would not impact that as it is not part of the tax levy. If the town were to adopt a new development impact fee could that be used to offset the revenues so that it would not go towards the cap. Mr. Manzi said yes as long as the law says they have control of the money. The only thing that counts for the 2% is the tax levy.

Ravi supports the article as knowing the cap is 2%, he can live his life knowing his tax bill will only increase by 2%. Mr. Manzi commented that each individual tax bill may see more or less of an increase depending on the assessment values.

Aboul Khan - asked if this requires 3/5 vote and when it would be effective. Mr. Manzi said it is 3/5 vote and would begin in 2026. He said they would need to get a baseline of the tax levy for 2025 and then build the 2026 budget and warrant articles based on the baseline. The budget would be 2% or less depending on how much the articles will cost if they were all to pass. Mr. Khan said it isn't just one taxpayer whose taxes went up, they all experienced the same increase.

Earl Spruce - said it is better if the people can plan for the increase in taxes. He feels the jarration in the ups and downs with the budget doesn't work for those living on a fixed income. He also feels it will discipline the department heads here in town from the mindset that Next Era is paying so we can just make the purchase. He likes the idea of a cap and others he has spoken to do as well.

Mr. Eaton said the board cut the tax levy by \$1 million and the school budget increased \$2 million. He feels the board has done its job to cut the increase in spending. The cap does not affect the school budget.

Aboul Khan - said the board has done a tremendous job but he received an email that there was corruption on this board that came from Ravi. Ravi said it is such a ridiculous question that he is not going to answer it. Mrs. Kyle said she has heard the same thing and has been accused herself, but she knows what she has done as a board member and her dedication to this town. Mr. Eaton said he is not where it originated but feels everything is transparent.

MOTION: Ravi

To close the public

Second: Harold F. Eaton

hearing at 11:48AM.

Unanimous

LEASE - SEABROOK SPORTING ASSOCIATION

Don Felch was present for the meeting. He presented the board members' binder to the board and said a copy would remain in the town manager's office.

Board took a break at 11:50AM. Board reconvened at 11:54AM.

The board will now sign the lease with the Seabrook Sporting Association. Don Felch is signing for the association. The board congratulated the association.

Ravi said this is a good thing for the town with a lot of things happening there.

Don Felch went through the binder and what work went into putting this altogether. They had 10 committee members who met weekly for about 47 meetings to put together rules and regulations that would make it safe for the town. Range safety officers are certified to operate the range. They are in the process of purchasing additional equipment for new range safety officers.

Don Felch thanked the board for the lease and working through the process. He said they will now be working on getting the club operating. They have 3 members for the club officers and a 4th to be added. The committee officers will operate the club.

The programs will still be offered but with no police officer to oversee them. Mr. Felch believes the range safety officers can oversee those programs.

Aboul Khan - said all the credit goes to the committee as in the beginning they never thought this would be complete. He asked where they go from here. Don Felch said they are working on permits for fencing, looking to get security cameras and getting the club operating. He doesn't have a date for operation but is hoping for Spring of 2025.

Mrs. Kyle thanked Don Felch and the other committee members for bringing this group to where it is today as a highly sophisticated group. Mr. Eaton thanked them for the work to keep the Seabrook way as outdoorsmen moving forward. Mr. Manzi said this group worked very hard and diligently to get to where they are today. This use is being maintained and is the same as it has been but is being built upon to make it safer for the town.

Don Felch showed a badge that was designed by Ollie Carter. This will be part of the application process so the members will have identification.

Jim said when he first started with hunter education there were 6 people killed. He said it has been a long time since there have been any incidents where someone has been killed. Hunter education has done a great job making it safe for

<u>MOTION:</u>	Ravi	To adjourn the meeting
Second:	Harold F. Eaton	at 12:27PM.
Unanimous		

Minutes taken by Kelly J. O'Connor.

Approved and endorsed:

Harold F. Eaton
Clerk

Date: _____