

Budget Committee 11/20/21

Attendance budget committee: Brendan Hubbard, Jason Spauding, Nate Holmy, Theresa Sepe (Selectmens Representative), James Rokes JR (School Board Representative). Selectmen James Rokes SR, Herbert (Chan) Stevens, Lindseigh Picard. Karey Miner, Amy Bond, Jim Tetrault, Sherri Willard, Margaret Sharra, Rick Meleski, Barry Kellom, Erik Josephson, Jemifer Rhodes, Dale Gray, Richard Lapoint, Amanda Lunt, Paul Taylor

Meeting called to order at 9:05 AM.

The November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were reviewed. Brendan makes a correction to the CVTC vote from this meeting, the minutes should reflect Nate made a motion to approve this budget, which he later amended to \$1000.00 with a second from Ben. Nate motions to approve the minutes and revision, Jason seconds. Motion carries 4-0-1 (1 abstention).

Jason asks Jim about the election workers line item. Jim explains he wants election workers to get a raise from \$7.25/hr to \$10/hour. Brendan and Nate question amount we have spent previously on election workers, hours don't add up to \$7.25/hr. Jim and Amy explain we also have increased amount of people we hire. Brendan asks about the official ballot expense. Jim says this is an increase to who we pay to print our ballots. Nate asks about vital records. Jim explains this is what we pay state of NH for these records, also explains state offsets some of this cost on the revenue side. JR asks for clarification why supplies/expenses line item has doubled. Jim adds this is from added costs for materials ie paper, ink, toner. Jim adds the state used to provide some of these supplies but now do not, also adds our older printer now uses more of these supplies. Theresa motions to approve \$124,224.00 town clerk budget, Nate seconds. Motion carries 5-0. Jim explains revenue from the Town Clerks office.

Brendan abstains from voting on the cemetery budget. Theresa asks Sherri to explain the need for the third part time employee. Sherri explains she needs this person and the decrease in hours from 30 hours to 12 was because the employee wasn't able to work all 30 hours per week. Jason asks when the third person was implemented and how previously this work was able to be done with two 30 hour employees. Sherri explains a lot of work wasn't being completed especially in the outlying cemeteries. Nate questions if 12 hours is enough time for this position. Nate asks about increase in the fence line item. Sherri notes the back section of fence was poorly constructed and needs to be completely replaced. Jason questions why the fence repair line item has not been utilized fully or at all the past few years. Sherri says she doesn't want to replace small sections of fence and wants to replace the entire fence at once. Jason has concern about how this budget has increased over the past few years. Sherri explains the previous budgets were underfunded and augmented by using the trust fund. Jason asks if less trust fund money is now being used? Sherri explains they are using about the same amount from the trust fund. Nate asks if the new fence should be a warrant article. Amy is asked the best approach for this and also explains the trust fund is not a crutch. Nate motions to make the fence replacement a warrant article, Jason seconds. Theresa explains budget committee can't vote to make a warrant article. Sherri adds a lot of lumber was left over previously, Jason adds historical context on some of this lumber. Nate rescinds his motion. JR motions to lower fence repair to \$500.00, Nate wants \$1000.00. Jason seconds fence repair for \$500.00. The vote is 2-2, motion fails. Nate motions for \$1000.00, Theresa seconds for discussion only and asks Brendan about his opinion. Brendan adds his opinion on the trust fund and fence repair. Nate amends his motion to \$2500.00, JR adds to discussion about not replacing the fence all at once. Motion fails 0-4- 1 abstention for \$2,500.00. JR motions for \$2000.00, Jason seconds. Motion carries 3-1-1 for the fence repair line item to be

\$2,000.00. JR motions to eliminate the part time laborer for \$4847.00, Amy mentions budget committee can't fire anyone. JR amends his motion to reduce this line item (4195-1-103) to \$1, Jason seconds. Motion fails 2-2-1. Theresa explains truck line item is for tires and contracted services is for Porta Potties. Nate motions to approve cemetery budget for \$68559.00 there is no second, motion fails. Jason raises concerns over increases in budget, Sherri says it was previously underfunded. Theresa explains sometimes the best thing to do during disagreement is let the town to vote at deliberative session. Theresa motions to approve \$71,559, Nate seconds. Motion passes 3-1-1 for \$71,559.00.

JR motions to pass the Health Officer budget for \$5,712.00. Jason seconds, motion carries 5-0.

JR motions to pass the Land Use budget for \$82,631.00. Theresa seconds, motion passes 5-0.

Rick explains the increase in Contracted services for the Water Department. Nate asks about the overtime line. Rick explains he is salaried and doesn't take overtime but his employees/ highway employees do during emergencies. Jason motions to approve the Water budget for \$310,379.00. Nate seconds, motion passes 5-0.

Nate asks about the contracted services for the sewer department. JR asks why there isn't a fuel line item in the sewer budget, Rick explains it comes from the vehicle maintenance line. Theresa motions to pass the sewer budget for \$407,734.00. Nate seconds, motion carries 5-0.

JR questions Barry on the uniform line item for the Ambulance. Barry states this line is used when new EMT's are hired. Jason and Barry discuss the increase in calls and increase in payroll. Amy and Theresa discuss when the billing fund is used and usually how long it funds the department. Nate motions to approve the Ambulance budget for \$121,451.00. JR seconds, motion carries 5-0.

Jason asks about swapping \$1,000.00 from the equipment line to the fuel line in the fire budget. Nate asks about the increase in Barry's stipend. Barry explains he wants to incrementally adjust his stipend to around \$10,000- \$12,000 which will match similar positions in other towns. Nate questions the office supplies line item. Jason asks what Barry's plan is with the fire truck that needs frame repairs. Barry explains his plan is to get a new one in the next 3-4 years. JR motions to swap \$1,000.00 from the equipment/supplies/expenses (2-135) line item to the gas/oil line item (2-137). Nate seconds, motion carries 5-0. Nate motions to approve the Fire budget for \$162,950.00. JR seconds, motion carries 5-0.

Theresa motions to accept the Forest Fire budget for \$13,100.00. JR seconds, motion carries 5-0.

A 5 minute recess is taken at 10:35. Brendan brings the meeting to order at 10:41.

JR and Nate question the unused officer (0-106). Erik explains his goal is to fill 5 full time positions. Nate asks about the chiefs salary, it is discussed that the selectboard agreed to this salary when he was hired. Jason points to increases in the police budget. Theresa explains most of these increases are due to employment. Discussion ensues about the number of officers needed and ways of drawing new officers. Amy discusses that previous board did eliminate 0-106 position. Brendan asks about the increase in the two part time officers (0-115, 0-117). Erik explains this is due to an expected increase in hours. Nate asks about the status of the second PT officer (0-117). Erik explains he hopes to fill this position by the end of the next fiscal year. Brendan asks about the uniform increase. Erik

explains these are for new officers they hope to hire and some old uniforms were damaged in storage. Jason questions line 5-112 for a cruiser. Erik would like to see this in the budget to replace a cruiser, maybe the one with exhaust issues. He also explains he feels its better to buy a new cruiser outright than lease one. Discussion ensues about the capital reserve. Discussion ensues about the cruiser we bought from Swanzey. Jason and JR comment they would like to see the cruiser as a warrant article. Theresa explains in the past warrants to place money in a capital reserve for new cruisers have been turned down at voting time and believes its best to avoid this and make it a line item in the budget. Theresa motions to pass the Police budget for \$711,021.00. The motion is not seconded, motion fails. Nate motions to reduce the NU officer (0-106) to \$1. JR seconds, motion passes 4-1. Nate motions to reduce the cruiser line from \$12,000 to \$1. JR seconds, motion passes 4-1. Nate motions to reduce the uniform line to \$7500. Jason seconds, motion carries 4-1. Nate motions to reduce the part time officer 0-115 to \$13,104.00 This motion is not seconded, motion fails. Brendan motions to lower the Administrative Assistant 0-110 from the selectmens approved amount of \$40,000 to \$38,995. Nate seconds, motion carries 3-2. JR motions to pass the police budget for \$676,338.00. Jason seconds, motion carries 4-1.

JR asks Jenny about the increase in salary for the welfare officer. Jenny comments on how other towns handle this position and explains her hours. Jason questions if the fuel pre buy program is overfunded. Jenny explains per gallon rates may increase if we purchase less fuel, and explains our welfare program covers gaps other services can't help with. JR motions to pass the welfare budget for \$58,252.00. Nate seconds, motion carries 5-0.

JR asks Dale about the loader payment for the Highway department. Brendan asks Dale about the tree work line item. Dale explains he is making progress but still has lots of dead trees that need to be cut. Dale also explains when the budget starts getting tight this is the first line to get cut off to use elsewhere. JR asks about the PT labor line 2-099. Dale explains this is when for instance a water department employee comes to run our equipment when needed. Dale also explains this is offset by when the highway department helps the water department during emergencies. Nate asks about tree removal near power lines and if utility companies take these trees. Dale explains the utility companies generally don't take many trees. Nate motions to approve the highway budget for \$632,354.00. JR seconds, motion carries 5-0.

Theresa motions to approve the Emergency Management budget for \$15,267.00. Jason seconds, motion carries 5-0.

Nate motions to table the Thayer Library budget to a later meeting. Theresa seconds, motion carries 3-2.

A 15 minute recess is taken at 11:56 AM. Brendan brings the meeting to order at 12:08.

Nate motions to table discussion on the Conant Library to a later meeting. JR seconds, motion carries 5-0.

Discussion ensues about discussing tabled items before the 6:00PM budget committee meeting scheduled at the school.

Nate motions to table the Landfill budget to a later meeting. JR seconds, motion carries 5-0.

JR discusses salaries of the red cross in the Health Agencies budget. Nate motions to make the

Red Cross line item \$1. JR seconds. Amy mentions if we make this line \$1 she has to send the \$1. Nate amends his motion to remove Red Cross from the Health Agencies budget. JR seconds. Motion carries 5-0. Discussion ensues about the role Red Cross has played in previous emergencies. Jason motions to approve the Health Agencies budget for \$79,750. Nate seconds, motion carries 5-0.

The following budget committee meeting dates are discussed and set.  
December 7, 6PM at the school.  
December 14, 6PM at the school.  
December 16, 6PM at the school (if needed).

Lindseigh and Karey discuss that the deliberative session is scheduled for February 5th for both the school and town budgets.

Wednesday January 12th is scheduled to be the joint BOS/ Budget committee meeting to review warrant articles.

Thursday January 13th is the scheduled date for the public hearing for the town and school budgets.

Lindseigh questions why the Budget Committee failed to increase the Administrative Assistant position for the police but approved an increase in the stipend for the welfare officer. Brendan explains his opinion is the police position is scheduled to get a COLA and is also able to qualify for a merit increase where the welfare officer cannot get these adjustments. Jason points to the welfare officer saving the town money in the decrease of her budget.

Theresa motions to adjourn at 12:41 PM. Nate seconds, motion carries 5-0.



12/13/21