

Budget Committee
December 9, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Present:

Chair Joe Caristi, Vice Chair Dave Carr, Walter Waring, Charles Therriault, Tom Kaempfer, and Select Board Representative Les Dion.

Others Present:

Nik Coates, Town Administrator; Bob Blanchette, Finance/Human Resources Director; Raymah Simpson, Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Absent:

Janet Cavanagh.

Call to Order:

Chair Joe Caristi called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve November 25, 2019 minutes by Ms. Dion, seconded by Mr. Waring. Motion passed 6-0-0.

Correspondence:

Mr. Caristi relayed to the committee that Ms. Cavanagh would be absent for tonight's meeting and next Monday's meeting. Mr. Caristi stated that he read an article from NHPR regarding lack of funding for Meals on Wheel statewide. He reached out to the local group and they replied they have not seen a decrease. He is also looking into what it would take to bring back recycling and looking at the financial costs behind it.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

Mr. Caristi passed around copies of a diagram for parliamentary procedures for motions and amendments to motions made.

4140 – Election, Registrations and Voting

Ms. Simpson stated she increased the budget for three additional ballot clerks to insure full staffing for the Presidential Primary, State Primary, and the General Election in addition to the four-day advertisement for election information and other advertisements. Postage also increased due to higher volume of registration renewal notices being mailed out. Motion to move bottom line of 4140 Election,

Registrations and Voting in the amount of \$84,524 by Mr. Therriault, seconded by Mr. Kaempfer. Motion passed 6-0-0.

4150 – Finance Administration/Tax Collector

Ms. Simpson stated that redemptions are sent out every two weeks along with notification of deeds. Both go out as certified mail at \$6 a letter. Tax Lien Expense increased to retain former tax researcher. The current tax researcher was cost effective, but work results were poor so the decision was made to hire the former researcher back whose work was satisfactory. Motion to move bottom line of 4150 Finance Administration/Tax Collector in the amount of \$175,544 by Ms. Dion, seconded by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed 6-0-0.

4711 - Principal L/T Debt and 4712 - Interest L/T Debt

Mr. Blanchette stated that the debt and interest for the Central Square Project will be revisited as the NH Bond Bank is refinancing the loan. He foresees a decrease in the budget amount as a result. Mr. Coates stated that the principal for the Pumper Truck has increased while the interest has decreased by \$1,800 for the long-term loan due to the loan coming to the end of term. Mr. Caristi stated that the committee should wait to vote on these lines until a final budget figure can be given by Mr. Blanchette.

4723 – Tax

Mr. Coates stated that the Town budget is not on a fiscal year, but a calendar year which means the budget and tax collection does not line up. This results in the Town being low on cash at the time when the largest bills come in such as the County tax bill and School tax bill. This results in a need for a TAN. The Select Board has begun discussing moving to a fiscal year. What would need to happen is for the Select Board to plan ahead two or three years ahead, including an 18-month budget. Motion to move the bottom line of 4723 Tax in the amount of \$251 by Mr. Therriault, seconded by Mr. Kaempfer. Motion passed 6-0-0.

4155 - Personnel Administration

Mr. Coates stated this section includes a proposed COLA since an adjustment to the wage scale hasn't been 2016 where COLA has gone up close to 6% since then. The proposal in the budget is to do a COLA adjustment of 3% percent this year with the anticipation that another 3% adjustment would be included in the 2021 budget. The employees agreed to this with the Select Board in exchange for forgoing merit adjustments in 2020 and 2021. Workers Compensation has decreased due to the employees working on assessing and eliminating risks sooner. Mr. Caristi inquired on the reason for overspending on Employee Testing & Screening line. Mr. Coates replied that there was some turnover with employees this year in addition to new volunteers coming on board, so the Town completed more background and screening tests than were anticipated. Motion to move bottom line of 4155 Personnel Administration in the amount of \$553,463 by Mr. Waring, seconded by Mr. Kaempfer. Motion passed 6-0-0.

4130 – Executive

Mr. Coates stated that line 560: Meetings/Memberships/Training has increased so that he can attend the national ICMA conference along with other conferences, management trainings, and a state

certification training. He has held off on attending these meetings for several years and the Select Board has encouraged him to attend as part of his professional developmental goals. The Office Supplies line includes the purchase of tape, batteries, ink, Town checks, and other office items. The Selectmen's Expense line reflects the purchase of new laptops for the committees and Select Board to use at meetings along with the annual employee appreciation lunches. New Equipment reflects the new keyboard and office chairs that were purchased to replace the old equipment and chairs that were falling apart and not repairable. Mr. Coates informed the committee that as the Town is further moving toward paperless, and that they are requesting an increase in funding and responsibilities to line 120. This position would include additional administrative functions such as more filing, scanning, and organizing for multiple offices. Motion to move bottom line of 4130 in the amount of \$199,902 by Mr. Therriault, seconded by Mr. Waring. Motion passed 5-1-0. Motion to amend bottom line of 4130 Executive in the amount of \$202,055 by Mr. Kaempfer, seconded by Ms. Dion. Discussion followed. Motion failed 1-5-0.

4153 – Legal

Mr. Coates started off by stating that there is no way to predict legal issues that arise, but the Select Board budgets for them as best as possible. They are continuing a lawsuit that has been going on for three or four years on a road issue. The current Fairpoint lawsuit was finally settled and the Town is now being sued by the new owners of the hydro dam over the value of property which could continue over the next two or three years. Legal expenses and lawsuits also stem from employee issues and general legal guidance or reviews of warrants. The Town currently has two law firms on retainer. Mr. Coates also informed the committee that the Legal budget is proactively spent on preparing for potential issues that may arise. Motion to move bottom line of 4153 Legal in the amount of \$70,000 by Ms. Dion, seconded by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed 6-0-0.

4194 - General Government and Buildings

Mr. Coates stated that 2019 expenditures were higher due to unforeseen expenses such as a new fire alarm system at the new Town Office as the one from the old building were not adaptable to the new building. The proposed increases in 2020 relate to the Town website being updated to be more user friendly and economic development focused through the marketing and branding initiative and would include adding graphics and an economic development page as more people tend to turn to the website than coming into the office to get what they need. Computer Expenses include the break fix contract with the IT company and projects as well as contracts for all of the software systems for departments. Mr. Caristi stepped down as Chair for the discussion and Mr. Carr carried as Chair. Motion to move bottom line of 4194 General Government and Buildings in the amount of \$249,400 by Mr. Caristi, seconded by Mr. Therriault with the intent that the reduction intended as \$1,000 from Town Signage and \$1,000 from Copier. Motion passed 5-1-0.

4195 - Cemeteries

Mr. Coates stated that there are no changes to this budget as the \$250 each year is for the repair of gravestones and other general maintenance. Motion to move bottom line of 4195 Cemeteries in the amount of \$250 by Ms. Dion, seconded by Mr. Kaempfer. Motion passed 6-0-0.

4196 - Insurance

Mr. Coates mentioned that there is a minimal increase in insurance due to adding the new Town Office building and new vehicles. The Highway Department took an old Freightliner off and added a new Freightliner and added a bucket truck, and the Police Department added a new cruiser as they do each year for vehicle rotations. Each vehicle had been purchased through Capital Reserve Funds. Motion to move bottom line of 4196 Insurance in the amount of \$48,717 by Mr. Kaempfer, seconded by Ms. Dion. Motion passed 6-0-0.

4521 - Beach

Mr. Coates informed the committee that the budget was reduced by \$3,000. There is a proposed increase in order to add more attendants for the busy weekends such as the 4th of July and other town events. Materials and supplies include costs of rakes, stickers, chairs, gloves, and receipt books. New swim lines were added this year under but are not needed in 2020. There is also a proposed increase for uniforms so each attendant can have two shirts instead of just one. The beaches are close to cost neutral due to the revenues that are brought in. Motion to move bottom line of 4521 Beach in the amount of \$17,101 by Mr. Waring, seconded by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed 6-0-0.

4651 – Economic Development Committee

Mr. Coates stated that there is a proposed reduction to this budget this year. What has been spent this year is on the creation of a town seal, guidelines and strategies for growing the local and regional economy through marketing and branding. The Economic Development Committee has received a technical assistance grant from the USDA to cover the planning stages of an economic development and planning/zoning plan. The proposed funding in the 2020 budget is keep the consultant on after her work is finished in September to work on implementation of the strategies. Motion to move bottom line of 4651 Economic Development in the amount of \$6,000 by Mr. Kaempfer, seconded by Ms. Dion. Motion passed 6-0-0.

Member Comments:

None.

Select Board Comments:

None.

Staff Comments:

None.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:04pm made by Mr. Kaempfer, seconded by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shannon Wharton