

Budget Committee
November 9th, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Present:

Chair Charles Therriault, Vice Chair Joe Caristi, Walter Waring, Paul Regan, Sue Sodano, and Select Board Representative Shaun Lagueux.

Others Present:

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

Absent:

Janet Cavanagh

Call to Order:

Mr. Therriault called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

Review and Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve September 23rd minute by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Waring. Motion passed 5-0-1.

Motion to approve the amended September 28th minutes by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Regan. Motion passed 5-0-1. Mr. Regan asked that the three towns provided with the more services were Thornton, Campton, and Plymouth (in replace of Bristol).

Motion to approve October 26th minutes by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Regan. Motion passed 5-0-1. Motion to reopen minutes by Mrs. Sodano. Page two under Financial Admin, the statement was amended to clarify compensation for a current position. Motion to approve amended minutes by Mrs. Sodano, seconded by Mr. Lagueux. Motion passed 5-0-1.

New Business:

Before going into deliberations, Mr. Therriault reminded the committee the focus was on the main work of the 2022 budget season along with grouping sections by those who run the departments to respect their time. If there were questions that needed to be answered later, the section could be passed upon and come back to another time. Mr. Therriault stated there are budget meeting dates without an agenda for further deliberation.

Executive

Motion to move the bottom line of #4130 Executive in the amount of \$212,743 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Lagueux motioned to increase line #312 in the amount of \$30,000, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Motion passed, 6-0-0. Mr. Lagueux discussed this line was for the contracted Project Manager for the Economic Development Committee. This will benefit and help the EDC to focus on projects and assist with grants, along with relieving Mr. Coates from the responsibility to better fulfill his position as Town Administrator. Mr. Coates stated the Fiber Project is a five year build out along with a ten-year plan to take over tenure projects from DOT. Mr. Caristi stated along with the current progress, he hopes to see more job creations then to solely rely on Frudenburg as the town's major employer. Mr. Regan asked about increases to line #620, #625, and #810. Mr. Coates stated he undercut

his budget last year. Postage is under a new system and expenses are currently being tracked. Mr. Coates stated he would like some new office furniture such as a monitor stand, chair, and desk as his current ones are about ten years old and falling apart. Motion to move the amended bottom line of #4130 Executive in the amount of \$242,743 by Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Town Clerk Finance/Tax Collector

Motion to move the bottom line of #4140 Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Finance in the amount of \$173,461 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Therriault asked if there were any updates to the budget. Mrs. Simpson stated no that everything has stayed the same. Mr. Caristi stated the request was reasonable. Mr. Therriault stated that lines #110 and #130 reflected a 3% COLA on key positions. Mr. Coates mentioned the COLAs lag a year behind and are given on a merit-based system through evaluations. The lines reflect the current wages, approved by the Select Board last year. Mrs. Sodano asked how many elections were in 2020 and upcoming. Mrs. Simpson stated there were four in 2020 and three upcoming. Mrs. Sodano asked about the increase to line #131 Supervisors of the Checklist. Mrs. Simpson stated that the supervisors meet monthly and hold additional meetings closer to elections. Mrs. Sodano inquired on the new equipment funding for the printer. Mrs. Simpson stated the printer, given by the State, is not working correctly, and cannot be serviced. She is looking into other updated printers like the one she currently has. Mr. Therriault asked the committee if the printer should be budgeted for or wait to be paid for out of an end of the year surplus. The Budget committee discussed that the printer will need to be replaced by the end of the year. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Financial Administration

Motion to move the bottom line of #4150 Financial Administration in the amount of \$105,184 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Lagueux mentioned the only changes are yearly increases to salaries. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Legal

Motion to move the bottom line of #4153 Legal in the amount of \$130,000 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Lagueux motioned to amend line #320 to \$100,000, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Motion passed 6-0-0. Mr. Lagueux stated that as a few things are wrapping up, the Select Board realized they could make cuts to this section. Mr. Coates stated some properties in town are being cleaned up and there are many steps in the process to get properties in compliance along with planning and zoning challenges. Bristol is currently fighting one company along with settling with Fairpoint. Mr. Regan asked if Mr. Coates agreed with the changes. Mr. Coates stated yes that he has told the Select Board not to add additional funding unless the occasion arises. Motion to move the amended bottom line #4153 in the amount of \$100,000 by Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Personnel Admin

Motion to move the bottom line of #4155 Personnel Admin by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Lagueux recommended to amend the bottom line to \$665,420. The difference would come from lines #210. Motion to amend #210 to \$520,879 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Waring. This reflects the updated numbers from the health insurance company. Mr. Waring asked if employee deductions changed, Mr. Regan's question followed regarding any future figure updates. Mr. Blanchette mentioned rates may stay the same, but if there were any changes, the rates would go down and not up. Mr. Regan asked if this also included new hires. Mr. Blanchette stated that there were new hires along with family changes such as going from a single to a family plan. Motion to move the amended bottom line of #4155 in the amount of \$665,420. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

General Government

Motion to move the bottom line of #4149 General Government in the amount of \$309,930 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Therriault noted the big increases were to lines #433 Town Signage and #435 Security. Two more signs will be added to entrances into town along with fiber optics and increases surveillance on the trails. Mr. Coates stated that cameras would be placed at the trails and had other locations in mind as well. He hopes to add cameras in other key locations around town over the next few years. Mr. Coates also noted that the controls to the smoke detectors had been repaired but may die in the future and was quoted at \$19,000 to be replaced in 2022. The current control is no longer serviced by the provider. Mr. Coates said the goal is to cover the cost between this line and the building maintenance line. Mrs. Sodano asked about the increase on line #342. Mr. Therriault stated it is to protect the town from hacks and hopefully upgrade the latest Microsoft Office that holds data only in North America. Mr. Coates said being offensive and prepared is key as the town moves into the digital, paperless office. Mr. Therriault also noted on line #413, the change is due to cost of adjustments to the chemical toilets. Motion to move bottom line of #4149 in the amount of \$309,930. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Cemeteries

Motion to move the bottom line of #4195 Cemeteries in the amount of \$1,200 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Lagueux stated the increase is for the repair of headstones. Mr. Coates added it was to include training for volunteers. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Insurance

Motion to move the bottom line of #4196 Insurance in the amount of \$59,954 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mrs. Sodano. Mr. Regan asked why the increase. Mr. Blanchette stated it was based on an actual quote. Mr. Therriault asked about line #485. Mr. Coates stated it is a split cost between the town who owns the building, and the Historical Society, a nonprofit whom with the town shares the building with. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Regional Associations

Motion to move the bottom line of #4197 Regional Associations in the amount of \$10,984 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Waring. One large increase is the Pasquaney Garden Club as they are now responsible for maintenance of the Butterfly Garden. The costs include mulching and invasive species control. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Health Agencies

Motion to move the bottom line of #4415 Health Agencies in the amount of \$33,400 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Therriault stated this goes to NANA, who currently merged with Lakes Region VNA. NANA promised and has been persistent with continued support in Bristol. Mr. Lagueux stated their request has been the same since 2019. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Beaches

Motion to move the bottom line of #4521 Beaches in the amount of \$124,085 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Motion to amend line #430 to \$1,500, seconded by Mrs. Sodano. Mr. Lagueux discussed the Select Board's meeting on Monday and as work finishes up, Mr. Coates and the town engineer will come together to work on simplifying the existing plans and designs for the beaches. Mr. Lagueux stated the spending should go to the actual renovations and less towards the designing aspect and this could turn into a Warrant Article. Mr. Waring asked about the plans for beach work. Mr. Lagueux talked about

adding sea walls for stabilization at Avery along with stabilizing and accessibility at Cummings on the north side at the foot of the lake. Motion to amended line #430 in the amount of \$1,500 passed, 6-0-0. Mr. Lagueux also noted the increase to the attendant's line, like last year in hopes to hire more attendants along with appropriate wages. Mr. Waring stated it was more pleasant and relaxing at the beaches this year then it has been in the past. Motion to approve amended line #4521 Beaches in the amount of \$25,585 by Mr. Caristi, seconded by Mr. Waring. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Economic Development Committee

Motion to move the bottom line of #4651 Economic Development Committee in the amount of \$63,688 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Lagueux motioned to zero out line #131, #211, #212, #220, #225, and #230, seconded by Mr. Regan. Motion passed, 6-0-0. Mr. Lagueux stated that the budget originally drafted was intended to hire an Economic Development Director, however the Select Board agreed it would be effective to contract out, budgeted in the Executive lines. Mr. Therriault asked about current and upcoming projects. Mr. Coates discussed the EDC marketing of their page on the Town website along with an application for electric charging port grants. Motion to move amended bottom line of #4651 EDC in the amount of \$5,000 by Mr. Caristi, seconded by Mr. Regan. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Principal L/T Debt

Motion to move the bottom line of #4711 Principal and Debt in the amount of \$230,521 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Waring. The library is in its final year of paying towards principal along with the fire truck line zeroed out. Mr. Lagueux stated that line #732 was added for the new plow truck. Mr. Coates added the truck is to take on the more difficult and dangerous roads on the plow list. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Interest L/T Debt

Motion to move the bottom line of #4721 Interest and Debt in the amount of \$38,829 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Lagueux stated interest has been down for two years from the fire truck and library. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Interest TAN

Motion to move the bottom line of #4723 in the amount of \$3,001 by Mr. Lagueux, seconded by Mr. Caristi. Mr. Lagueux stated the goal every year is not to take a TAN; however, timing of events like setting the tax rate and cash flow can be challenging and often out of the town's control. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Old Business:

None

Correspondence:

Mr. Waring mentioned Mrs. Overton's resignation as library director and moving into a new position with the library in Hooksett. Mr. Regan asked if the library budget discussion should take place before Mrs. Overton leaves. Mr. Coates stated that the chair of the Library Trustees is hopeful an interim director will be in attendance to discuss the budget.

Member /Select Board/Staff Comments:

Mr. Coates asked the committee if they would entertain the prospect of purchasing a new vehicle off a lease. The current town car, inherited from the police department, is rusting and not worth the repairs along with high mileage. The committee agreed a new vehicle was needed, furthering discussion

whether it should follow under new equipment in the budget or be added as a Warrant Article. Mr. Lagueux stated that the current vehicle is not able to be sold due to its condition and the new purchase could be added into the budget as it is not every year item. Mr. Therriault stated it would make more sense to add as a Warrant Article.

Mr. Lagueux stated the tax rate is set at \$20.21, a reduction offset using the fund balance.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, December 7th, 2021, at 6pm. Town Office Meeting Room A.

Deliberations on Highway Department, Highway Projects, Streets/Bridges, Solid Waste, Fire Betterment, Sewer Surplus Transfer, Sewer Capital Projects, Sewer Operations, Sewer Principal L/T Debt, Sewer Interest L/T Debt, Water Surplus Transfer, Water Operations, Water Capital Projects, Water Principal L/T Debt, Water Interest L/T Debt

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:13pm by Mr. Regan, seconded by Mr. Lagueux. Motion passed 6-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shannon Wharton