

Budget Committee
November 29, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Present:

Chair Paul Regan, Vice Chair Rob Glassett, Charlie Therriault, Walter Waring, Sue Sodano, and Select Board Representative Carroll Brown, Jr.

Absent:

Janet Cavanagh

Others Present:

Christina Goodwin, Interim Deputy Town Administrator; Chief Ben LaRoche, Fire Department; and Chief Jim McIntire, Police Department

Call to Order:

Mr. Regan called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Budget Goals and Properties

Mr. Therriault addressed the Committee regarding budget goals. The 2023 budget overall is proposed to increase by 11%; 7.4% increase in operating budgets and 3.6% when adding the public safety building payments. Mr. Therriault recommended that the members should set a goal or keep in mind at each meeting when deliberating budget sections to think about how to decrease the percentage of increase to 5% through 8%. Discussion continued from Committee members regarding feedback and thoughts on budget goals.

Police Department #4210

Motion to move the bottom line of #4210 Police Department by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Glassett.

Chief McIntire stated the budget overall is level funded and the Department will also be slightly under budget for the 2022 year but not all bills have been submitted. He noted increases to personnel lines, health insurance, and fuel costs. He also noted that building costs will change once moved out of the current building and the new public safety building construction begins in approximately March. The Department could be out of the building for six months or more. Mr. Therriault asked if line #144 Holiday Pay is consistent. Chief McIntire stated that it is; the patrol officers get 11 paid holidays per year but work a set schedule irregardless of holidays and are compensated for holidays with out of and payouts being twice a year from this line. Mrs. Sodano asked about pay increases for staff. Chief McIntire stated an employee retired and another employee got promoted to that position, but the personnel lines do balance out. Ms. Goodwin added that the increases in pay lines in the Police budget were approved in 2022. Mr. Waring asked Chief McIntire if there were any lines in the budget that could be decreased. Chief McIntire replied that he came in with a level funded budget and it would be difficult to make cuts. Chief McIntire noted that a cut could be made to line #640 Custodial Services, which covers the weekly cleaning of the building. Line #431 Building Maintenance/Custodial pays for safety checks and plumbing needs. Discussion continued that the Police servers along with the Town's needing to be moved were funded from the Capital Reserve Funds. Mr. Therriault asked about line #660 Cruiser Maintenance. Chief McIntire stated that anything not under warranty is covered under this line. Line #143 Court Prosecution Services funds an outside agency or special prosecutor if one is needed and line #190 Certified Special Police funds

a part-time officer for special events. Ms. Goodwin noted that she will remove "Custodial" from that budget line as it is confusing. Mr. Waring asked if line #290 Travel would be spent. Chief McIntire stated yes if a detective or officer course was offered. Travel has not been spent to date due to COVID.

Motion to amend line #410 Electricity to \$6,500 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Waring. Mr. Therriault's reasoning behind the amendment is that the Department will be vacated for six or more months out of 2023 and will not need a full year's budget. Chief McIntire stated that construction will need electricity on site to run tools and such and that it would be beneficial to have a full year of funding for construction use of electricity or if the construction timeline changes and the Department stays in the building past March. Mr. Glassett and Mr. Regan would like the Chief or Ms. Goodwin to review the construction contract to identify electrical or other utility needs. Motion passed, 4-0-2.

Motion to amend line #411 Heating/Propane to \$3,500 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Glassett. The Committee inquired on what the Contingency Fund has spent and Ms. Goodwin stated an anticipated \$10,000 will be taken from the Fund for electrical work at the Library in 2022. Do not remember this. If true, should state why contingency funds are needed and for what budget year. Mr. Therriault withdrew his motion after further discussion to keep 75% of the line amount. Motion to amend line #411 Heating/Propane to \$5,250 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mrs. Sodano. Motion passed, 5-1-0.

Motion to amend line #431 Building Maintenance to \$1,500 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mrs. Sodano. Motion passed, 5-1-0.

Motion to amend line #640 Custodial Services to \$2,000 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Waring. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Motion to move the amended bottom line of #4210 Police Department in the amount of \$1,238,945 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed, 4-1-1.

Fire Department #4220

Motion to move the bottom line of #4220 Fire Department by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault. There was discussion on whether the Committee moved the Select Board number or the Department Head number and it was confirmed that they move the Department Head number. The Committee inquired on the difference between the two budgets and Ms. Goodwin noted that the final number for line #225 Medicare is correct in the Select Board's column of the budget and is not reflected correctly in the Department Budget column.

Chief LaRoche stated there are no open positions but were some personnel changes such as promotions. There is a 17% increase in OT but the major increases for 2023 is line #330 Ambulance Billing Service with Comstar, line #395 Lakes Region Fire Dispatch and the new radio system. Some of the Reserves will be used to offset the new system. Chief LaRoche also noted a 57% increase in line #411 Heating Oil and line #635 Gas/Diesel due to increased prices along with maintenance costs. Mr. Therriault asked about line #893 Fire Detail. Chief LaRoche stated detail for races or events was paid out of payroll lines and a line specifically for this event detail was added to the budget. Mr. Waring asked Chief LaRoche if he could recommend budget lines that could be decreased. The Chief stated no, being that there is a small 7% increase in his budget. He also stated that Fire Department revenues have increased enough to decrease the tax burden on Town residents for the Fire Department budget.

Motion to amend line # 225 Medicare to \$10,583 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Waring. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Motion to move the amended bottom line of #4220 Fire Department in the amount of \$1,254,259 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Waring. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Forestry #4230

Motion to move the bottom line of #4230 Forestry in the amount of \$3,450 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mrs. Sodano.

Chief LaRoche stated that lines #810 New Equipment and #812 Hose could be decreased to \$1. The lines still need to be open to allow and keep grant funding.

Motion to amend line #810 New Equipment to \$1 by Mr. Glassett, second by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Motion to amend line #812 Hose to \$1 by Mr. Glassett, second by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Mr. Glassett asked if Forestry could be added to the Fire Department budget. Chief LaRoche said he is unsure but has known Forestry to be its own budget section for many years. Mr. Regan asked that a discussion between the Chief and the Select Board should determine where Forestry belongs. Ms. Goodwin stated this conversation is not ready to be had at this point, and it would be pending, if any grants require a separate Forestry budget first.

Motion to amend line #661 Truck to \$1 by Mr. Glassett, second by Mr. Regan. The Forestry Truck has been replaced and can be added to the Fire Department budget where the funding will be for the truck and maintenance. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Motion to amend line #635 Gas to \$1 by Mr. Glassett, second by Mr. Regan. Discussion followed regarding price increases of True Fuel. Mrs. Sodano asked what Forestry does and the need for gas. Chief LaRoche stated that Forestry staff handles brush fire and outside fires with equipment that requires non ethanol fuel. Motion failed, 2-4-0. Motion to amend line #635 Gas to \$200 by Mrs. Sodano, second by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed, 5-1-0.

Motion to amend line #430 Maintenance and Repairs to \$1 by Mr. Glassett, second by Mrs. Sodano. Chief LaRoche stated that the budget line is not accurate due to new software. Mrs. Sodano supports Mr. Glassett's motion withdrawal until an accurate budget is reflected. Motion to table discussion and voting on #4230 Forestry by Mr. Waring, second by Mr. Brown. Motion failed, 2-4-0. Motion to move the amended bottom line of #4230 Forestry in the amount of \$1,203. Motion passed, 4-1-1.

Reopening of Fire Department #4220

Motion to reopen the bottom line of #4220 Fire Department by Mr. Regan, second by Mrs. Sodano. Motion passed, 5-1-0. Motion to amend line #667 Vehicle Maintenance in the amount of \$1,500 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mrs. Sodano. Motion passed, 5-0-0.

Motion to move the amended bottom line of #4220 Fire Department in the amount of \$1,255,259 by Mr. Glassett, second by Mr. Regan. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Emergency Management #4290

Motion to move the bottom line of #4290 Emergency Management in the amount of \$1,002 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Regan. Discussion followed regarding trailer maintenance, but no further changes were made to this budget. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Historic District Commission #4612

Motion to table discussion on #4612 Historic District Commission by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault. Ms. Goodwin stated that she does not have the answers from the questions and concerns asked by the Committee during the last budget meeting. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

CIP Presentation

Motion to table Capital Improvements Program Committee (CIP) Presentation discussion until the next meeting by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Regan. Ms. Goodwin stated the wrong report was given to the Committee and will have the current report for the next meeting. Mr. Waring raised a concern about the plan and the possibility of proposed Warrant Articles. Mr. Regan stated that if items became Warrant Articles, the Committee would appreciate justification and could also vote on the Warrant Articles. Ms. Goodwin reminded the Committee that the CIP is a sub-committee of the Planning Board, whose function is to develop a 10-year plan approved by the Planning Board with recommendations of capital equipment purchases, including buildings, structures, etc, to keep the budget stable. Then presentation goes in front of the Select Board and Budget Committee for consideration as an advisory tool only. Ms. Goodwin stated that Mr. Milbrand was unable to make the meeting.

Old Business:

Motion to amend date on November minutes from 16th to 15th by Mr. Regan, second by Mrs. Sodano. Motion to approve November 15th, 2022, amended minutes by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault. Motion passed, 4-0-2.

Correspondence:

Mr. Therriault would like to reopen Kelley Park for comments and further discussion.

Mr. Regan relayed to the Committee Mr. Waring's letter to Lakes Region Visiting Nurses and will share the response when he receives it.

Mr. Regan relayed Mrs. Cavanagh's request for tax revenues and delinquencies. The Committee agreed that tax information is not a function of the Budget Committee. Ms. Goodwin added that the information on tax revenues and delinquencies are online and available to the public, although not a listing of specific delinquencies. She added that Bristol had a 98% tax collection rate in spring of 2022 and a 92% tax collection rate for 2021, but billings had just been sent out.

Member Comments:

Mr. Regan informed Mr. Therriault of the order change in the operating budget.

Mr. Brown asked for feedback regarding ways to present the budget to taxpayers. More discussion will continue.

Ms. Goodwin has a PDF file of the Budget Workbook and will send out to interested Committee members along with information regarding the proposed Energy Solar Exemption. The Select Board has not yet voted in favor or not of the Warrant Article.

Select Board Comments/Staff Comments:

None

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn meeting at 9:13pm by Mr. Regan, second by Mrs. Sodano. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for December 13th, 2022, at 6pm in Town Office Meeting Room A. The following items are scheduled: Executive, Town Clerk, Finance/Tax Collector, Legal, Personnel Admin, General Government, Cemeteries, Insurance, Regional Associations, Health Agencies, Beach, Economic Development Committee, Principal L/T Debt, Interest L/T Debt, Interest TAN, Library

Respectfully Submitted,
Shannon Wharton