

Bristol Select Board
Minutes
September 23, 2021

Present: Select Board members: Chair Don Milbrand, Anita Avery, Les Dion, Shaun Lagueux and Nik Coates, Town Administrator

Absent: JP Morrison

Others Present: Robert Blanchette, Finance Officer/Human Resources Officer; Christina Goodwin, Land Use/Assessing Manager; Deborah Clarke-Tivey, Administrative Assistant

Work Session: Chair Milbrand opened the work session at 3:15pm.

Tax Rate and Revenues Planning: Mr. Coates, Mr. Blanchette and Ms. Goodwin presented to the Board the history of the Town of Bristol's tax rate for the past year to show that the current rate of \$8.10 is lower than past years. They reviewed the Town's reserves, expenditures, and evaluations from 2016 through 2020. They explained that the Town has completed everything required of them and has submitted everything needed for the tax rate to be set by the State. The Town's information is in the state queue and the Town is waiting on the State to review the documents and give their feedback.

Select Board's Goals and Priorities: Mr. Coates led a discussion with the Board to identify the Board's goals and priorities for this budget season. The Board felt it was important to get staff wages to a competitive rate to retain and show appreciation to staff. The safety and security of the Town is a priority to the Board and the Board felt it important to limit project requests.

Budget Priorities presented by Department Heads: Budget Chair Therriault opened a joint meeting between the Select Board and the Budget Committee at 5:05pm. Both Boards met with Department Heads to discuss their departments' budget priorities.

Present: Chair Don Milbrand, Les Dion, Shaun Lagueux, Select Board members; Nik Coates, Town Administrator; Chair Charles Therriault, Sue Sodano, Walter Waring, Janet Cavanagh, Paul Regan; Budget Committee Members; Robert Blanchette, Finance Officer/Human Resources Officer; Brittany Overton, Library Director; Raymah Simpson, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Christina Goodwin, Land Use/Assessing Manager; Mark Bucklin, Highway Superintendent/Transfer Station; Ben LaRoche, Fire Chief & Emergency Management; Jeff Chartier, Water and Sewer Superintendent; Jim McIntire, Police Chief; Ingrid Heidenreich, Human Services; Steve Moore, Community Member; Cade Overton, Media Manager; Deborah Clarke-Tivey, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Joseph Caristi, Anita Avery, and JP Morrison

Library: Ms. Overton explained to the Boards that the library staff has adjusted their services to the needs of their patrons. The community has shifted more to a digital world. This has affected the library's use of space and the need for the library to increase downloadable books, eBooks, computers/laptops use and providing a home delivery service carried out by volunteers. She discussed the library's leaky roof and repairs to some of the walls that have cracked and need repair.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Ms. Simpson explained to the Boards that her department will need to increase the equipment line because the printer they are currently using will need to be replaced. Her department will also need to increase the number of Supervisors needed for the three elections taking place in the coming year.

Police: Chief McIntire stated the methodology for the Police Departments budget was the same. He wishes to increase patrolmen's salaries to be competitive with other town's police departments. He felt that this would help his department fill a position they have been unable to fill and retain the staff they currently have. He explained why the travel line and canine items in the Police Department's budget were increased and that the cameras were an asset to his department in reviewing incidents, resolving complaints, and gathering evidence.

Land Use/Health & Assessing: Ms. Goodwin explained increases to the Land Use/Assessing's budget, making a part time employee full time and increasing the meeting and membership training line. She stated that the Planning Board's budget was increased to allow for chapters in the Master Plan to be written or rewritten. The Zoning Board's budget would stay the same even though there has been an increase in cases with site plans, special use permits, subdivisions, variances, and enforcement related issues. She explained that more funds will need to be added to the legal line in the budget to get properties out of compliance and into compliance. Ms. Goodwin explained the removal of the Conservation Commissions secretary being moved to the Land Use Minute Taker and an increase in water testing that was not budgeted correctly. She let the Board know that the Historic District Commission was level funded in the budget. She discussed increases for software permitting programs, chemical toilets, and maintenance to the enforcement car so it could be inspected for another year.

Highway & Transfer Station: Mr. Bucklin presented to the Board that his Operations budget would see an increase due to an additional truck driver hired to help with plowing and the maintaining of new roads the Town has picked up. There is an increase to help with the removal of trees around Town that are sick with White Ash Tree Disease. He discussed planned projects regarding drainage and the resurfacing and overlay on Town roads. In addition, the Transfer Stations budget has a proposed increase for a part time employee, repairs to equipment and needed supplies.

Fire & Emergency Management: Chief LaRoche proposed salary increases for his department and to help cover overtime requests for accrued time off for tenured employees who would lose their accrued time. He asked both Boards to please make sure that radio lease equipment was not duplicated in the budget in two different places. Chief LaRoche discussed the call activity numbers for 2019 and 2020, making comparisons. He stated he saw no increase in the Forestry portion of the budget even though the forestry truck was not in the best condition and that the Emergency Management will only see a dollar increase due to grants.

Water/Sewer: Mr. Chartier asked the Boards for an increase in his Operating budget, so his employees can receive an increase in wages and the needs for materials, supplies, and equipment for vehicles. His department hopes to hire a part time seasonal employee to help in the busy summer months. In Capital Reserves he is looking for new software and laptops in order to update to Windows 10. This will help his department reading meters and keep the department safe from any possible cyber-attacks. He is asking for funds to epoxy coat floors, a mid-size truck to check stations, collect water samples and bring them

to Concord and read meters. The North Main Water tank is due for its five-year inspection and cleaning and the department would like to purchase a line inspection camera to inspect outdated sewer lines.

Human Services: Ms. Heidenreich stated she had no big changes to her departments budget. She is requesting more funds for office supplies, for meetings and membership trainings. She stated that her department has seen an increased need from community members for their electric bills but in many cases when a patron comes into her office, she is able to direct them to other service agencies and help them utilize other resources that can help with their needs.

Everything Else: Mr. Coates and Mr. Blanchette explained to the Board that the Executive Budget was flat except for a small increase in the Moderators fee for the increase in elections. They reiterated the need to increase the legal section of the budget for upcoming litigations that were expected to arise. A priority was a 4% cost of living adjustment and bumping up some employees' salaries. They stated that the Town of Bristol's employees are one of the Town's greatest assets and they would like to retain them. Mr. Blanchette let the Boards know the Town had no projections for insurance as the Town would not receive insurance rates until mid to end of October. They reiterated the need to increase the following budget amounts to keep the enforcement car maintained for inspection, correctly budgeting for chemical toilets, supporting IT for permitting and maintaining the Town's website and maintaining the Economic Development Committees website. Mr. Coates explained to the Boards that the budget supports added security for the Central Street Pump Station, continuing the Town's signage project to support local businesses, and a stair construction project at Cummings Beach. Mr. Blanchette and Mr. Coates discussed the tenure of the fire engine, library, highway tractor and Town building loans.

Mr. Coates reminded those in attendance that the Budget Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at 6:00pm and their topics are Budget presentations by Outside Agencies, Health Agencies, Regional Associations and Goals & Priorities. He also reminded the Budget Committee that they would not have a meeting the week of Thanksgiving and that meeting has been moved to December.

Ms. Cavanagh made a motion to adjourn the joint session of the Select Board and Budget Committee at 8:19pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Warring. The Budget Committee voted 6-0-0, in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Coates led a short discussion with the Select Board to see if they were willing to add an additional meeting to their September schedule. The Board agreed to meet at 5:00pm on September 30, 2021, at the Town Office to work on the remaining wage scale.

Ms. Dion made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21pm, seconded by Mr. Lagueux. The Board voted 3-0-0, in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah A. Clarke-Tivey