

12/11/23 Joint Meeting between Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen

Meeting called to order at 6:30

Budget Committee members in attendance: Ken Howe, Karen Johnson, Dan Seymour, Sean Leary, Alex Duso, Bill Nebelski, April Anderson (School Board Rep), Richard Johnson (Select Board Rep)

Excused: Mike Bomba, Denis Nadeau, Janice Nichols

Select Board: Steve Diorio, Bernie Rideout, Bill Hodgman, Mike Carrier, Richard Johnson

Others present: Kathryn Lynch (TA), Jodie Holmquist (Finance), Jack White (Water Superintendent), Josh Green (CDC), Terry Zavorotny (Fire Chief), Taran Benedict (FD)

Budget discussion began with review of the water department budget:

- Diorio stated the water dept budget was up roughly \$20K.
- Seymour asked about salaries and pay increases.
 - R. Johnson stated some salaries were adjusted in response to the recent salary study conducted by the town.
 - Lynch provided further clarification, stating that salaries needed to be more competitive with comparable positions in the region.
- Howe inquired about electricity costs.
 - White addressed the process he used to determine the projected costs of electricity.
- Seymour asked about the end of year accounting for user fees.
 - Lynch will research.

Motion made to tentatively approve the water budget as presented made by Nebelski.

Seconded by K. Johnson

8-0-0 motion passed.

Planning

- Green addressed errors in the "tax maps" and "newsletter" lines which would bring the total budget request down to \$108,243.34.

Motion made to tentatively approve the planning budget as amended (\$108,243.34) made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Duso

8-0-0 motion passed.

Fire Dept

- Lynch noted that the Fire Department and Emergency Management budgets are now rolled into one budget since the fire dept is now handling the emergency management duties.
- Zavorotny questioned the EMOC line items / Emergency management lines are zeroed out.
- The question was raised about whether or not the emergency generator at the school was a shared expense.
 - Holmquist and Leary explained that the generator in question is there to operate the emergency shelter. In the event of a town wide emergency, the school is the designated emergency shelter. Therefore, it is a town expense which is not shared by the school.
- Duso inquired about the increase in equipment maintenance.
 - Zavorotny replied that many items are in need of repair and maintenance.

New budget total after discussion \$318,943.70

Motion made to tentatively approve the Fire Dept budget as amended (\$318,943.70) made by R. Johnson

Seconded by Nebelski

8-0-0 motion passed.

Executive

- Seymour asked about the TA part time salaries.
 - Lynch provided clarification. This line covers part of multiple salaries
- Howe asked about the “bank charges” lines.
 - Lynch provided clarification on this item.
- Duso asked for further clarification for employees who were paid out of multiple departments. He would like to see more visibility with these items.
- Nebelski questioned the increases in salaries.
 - Lynch cited the salary study.
- Anderson questioned the insurance rates.
 - Lynch explained the increases from Primex.

New budget total for Executive after discussion is \$247,106.39.

Motion made to tentatively approve the Executive budget as amended (\$247,106.39) made by R. Johnson

Seconded by Duso

7-0-1 motion passed.

Election

- Seymour questioned the number of positions in the payroll lines.
 - Discussion took place – clarification is needed.

Motion made to tentatively approve the Election budget as presented made by R. Johnson

Seconded by Duso

8-0-0 motion passed.

Finance

- The armored car services line item is being removed.
- K. Johnson asked how many people are covered under the salary line.
 - Lynch stated 1.5 (1 full time and 1 part time)
- Howe asked about the computer support services line.
 - Lynch and Holmquist provided clarification. Several computers needed service or total replacement. IT infrastructure had not been kept up with for some time and now many systems need repair and maintenance.

New budget for Finance after discussion is \$180,656.22.

Motion made to tentatively approve the water budget as amended (\$180,656.22) made by Duso.

Seconded by Seymour

5-3-0 motion passed.

Tax Collector

- Duso questioned the increase on tax expense line.
- K. Johnson offered possible explanations for the increase.
- Lynch stated the tax collector could be present to answer questions at the next meeting.

Motion to table this item made by Duso.

Seconded by Howe

8-0-0 motion passed.

Revaluation

- Duso questioned the increase.
 - Lynch explained that the town is going with a new company to provide this service. She noted a long list of issues with the company who had been providing this service.

Motion made to tentatively approve the Election budget as presented made by Anderson.

Seconded by Leary

8-0-0 motion passed.

Legal

- Budget is flat.

Motion made to tentatively approve the Election budget as presented made by Duso.

Seconded by Seymour

8-0-0 motion passed.

Government Buildings

- Anderson asked about the custodial salary line. Is the town hiring an additional custodian?
 - Lynch explained that they would like to have a custodial / maintenance person for all town buildings.
- Seymour expressed concern about adding positions given the public climate towards the tax rate.
 - R. Johnson explained that the selectmen wanted to keep the line item to fund the position. If they decide something different and the money is not needed, it will not be spent.
- Duso asked if there would be an offset since some of these duties are being performed by the highway dept.
 - Hodgman said there would not be.
 - Lynch explained there actually would be an offset of some amount since custodial duties in several building would be covered by this position. In some cases that would eliminate the need to outsource.
- Seymour and K. Johnson would like more information on what those offsets would be.

Motion to table this item made by Seymour.

Seconded by Nebelski

8-0-0 motion passed.

Cemetery

- Budget is flat.
- There will be a warrant article to replace the fence at Oak Lawn

Motion made to tentatively approve the Cemetery budget as presented made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Duso

8-0-0 motion passed.

Insurance

Motion made to tentatively approve the Insurance budget as presented made by Anderson.

Seconded by Seymour

8-0-0 motion passed.

Rescue

- K. Johnson asked about increases.
- Lynch explained that we have a multi-year contract.

Motion made to tentatively approve the Rescue budget as presented made by Duso.

Seconded by Anderson

8-0-0 motion passed.

Motion to adjourn made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Seymour

8-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm