

12/18/23 Joint Meeting between Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen

Meeting called to order at 6:06

Budget Committee members present: Alex Duso, Sean Leary, Ken Howe, Dennis Nadeau, Karen Johnson, Richard Johnson (Selectmen Rep), Dan Seymour, Bill Nebelski.

Excused: Mike Bomba, Janice Nichols, April Anderson (School board rep)

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

Others present: Kathryn Lynch (TA), Jodie Holmquist (Finance), Sarah Hudon (Program Director), Ernest Smalley (Wastewater Superintendent), Bob Truesdale (Highway Superintendent), Julie Seymour (Tax Collector), Charles Rataj (Police Chief)

With some committee members missing, the meeting recessed until the posted meeting time of 6:15pm. Bill Nebelski arrived at 6:16pm

Budget discussion began with review of the Wastewater department budget:

- Howe called for questions
- Smalley asked if everyone had the updated sheets – Yes
- Diorio noted that the budget is down 11%
- Nadeau asked about the fuel expense line
 - Smalley clarified and offered info on uniforms and labs

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

Seconded by Nadeau

8-0-0 motion passed.

Recreation total budget is broken down into several categories. First review was of

Summer Program:

- Howe asked about the salary line
 - Hudon offered clarification of which positions are included in that line

- Seymour asked about total number of staff
 - Hudon – 14
 - Lynch clarified the current staffing request. The number is 13
- K Johnson asked about the camper to counsellor ratio
 - Hudon- no more than 8 or 10 to 1, depending on behavior issues
- KJohnson asked about the history of dividing the program director salary line into multiple budget lines.
 - Hudon- It is now all under the community center budget for greater transparency
- Nebelski asked for a salary breakdown for summer staff positions
 - Lynch provided the rates
- Seymour asked about the lunch expense
 - Hudon – it is federally funded by a grant

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

Seconded by Nadeau

8-0-0 motion passed.

Community Pool

- Seymour asked about the salaries
 - Hudon – The line covers all pool staff
- Seymour asked for the salary rates
 - Lynch provided the rates
- Howe asked about the chemicals line
 - Lynch – The town had a supply of chemicals which has run out this season causing the need to purchase more. The town changed maintenance providers. Significant repairs to the pool needed to be made this year.
- Hudon stated that there are some revenues from the pool to offset some expense. Concessions this season totaled \$651 and admissions were \$2788.75. Summer camp revenues were \$17,000. Many of the summer camp attendees were pool users.

Motion made to tentatively approve the Community Pool budget as presented made by Nadeau.

Seconded by Duso

8-0-0 motion passed.

Community Center

Seymour asked about revenues

- Hudon- \$8,550 in rentals and \$300 in programs

- Duso asked about the NH Retirement System
 - Holmquist provided information
- Howe asked about the tables and chairs expense
 - Hudon explained they have broken tables and chairs that need to be replaced
- Diorio confirmed the budget amount \$132,569.09
- Duso asked about equipment longevity and increased spending
 - Hudon provided clarification

Motion made to table the Community Center budget made by Duso

Seconded by Leary

8-0-0 motion passed

- KJohnson asked if community center tables were being used outside for the Farmers Market
 - The market manager explained that the market bought three of their own this year
- Howe asked about switches and lighting
 - Lynch explained that upgrades would be covered by a grant

POINT OF ORDER brought by Diorio – The budget has been tabled, discussion should stop until the next meeting.

Welfare

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

Seconded by Nadeau

8-0-0 motion passed.

Patriotic

- Nadeau explained that \$2500 should be enough this year to cover expenses. They got a lot of donations last year. Grave markers for vets were purchased
- KJohnson asked if there was going to be a warrant article for a back up supply
- Nadeau- purchasing 600 cemetery flags each year. Patriotic spent \$5K last year between budget and donations

Motion made to tentatively approve the Patriotic budget as presented made by RJohnson.

Seconded by Duso

8-0-0 motion passed.

- Hodgman questioned the accounting for this item and suggested clearer book keeping moving forward

Parks

- Howe noted this budget is up 10.67%
- Seymour asked about the main the contributing factors
 - Diorio – Salaries
- KJohnson asked about where the salary lines come from historically

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

Seconded by Nadeau

8-0-0 motion passed.

Highway

- Howe noted that the salary line is up \$68k and Resealing / Resurfacing is up \$50k
 - RJohnson- The salary line is up due to adjustments made based on the salary study conducted by the town
- Truesdale provided information on paving needs
- KJohnson asked about staffing levels between highway / transfer station / rec dept.
- Howe asked if trucking costs were rolled into the salt and sand pricing.
 - Truesdale – Yes

Motion made to tentatively approve the Highway budget as presented made by Nadeau.

Seconded by Duso

8-0-0 motion passed.

Transfer Station / Curbside Pickup

Discussion on these budgets happened simultaneously since they are so interconnected.

- Truesdale explained that Casella is discontinuing curbside pick up. He discussed options including ranging from new pick up bins which would cost each resident \$140, to making the transfer station full time, to having independent trash pick up by private persons. Majority of the conversation revolved around a full time transfer station.
- Seymour asked what other towns are doing
 - Truesdale – Other towns have transfer stations. Hinsdale is the only one doing curbside pick up.
- Truesdale presented cost schedules
- RRJohnson presented his thoughts on a 4 day station / discontinuing blue bags, etc.

Extensive debate and conversation followed. Both boards decided to form an exploratory committee to gather further information. The committee would offer choices to the voters in the form of warrant articles for town meeting. A decision on these two budgets would be tabled for now.

Motion made to table the Curbside pick up budget made by RJohnson

Seconded by Nebelski

8-0-0 motion passed

Motion made to table the Transfer Station budget made by Nadeau

Seconded by Nebelski

8-0-0 motion passed

- Leary informed the board that hearings for warrant articles need to be completed by specific dates and that there wasn't much time for the exploratory committee to do its work.
 - Lynch- That deadline is February 12th
- Leary cautioned the boards that if both warrant articles fail, there would be no option for any kind of trash pick up OR operation of a transfer station at all. "No means No".

Police

- Rataj called attention to the special detail line. He gave a history on the line and past accounting practices. Special details have an offsetting revenue.
- Seymour would like to see the revenue line
 - Lynch – the revenue is \$121,925
- Rideout stated his opinion that this revenue line should go to offset the budget.
- Nebelski asked how much of this expense came from details in Winchester
 - Rataj – It's all rolled in together
- Seymour questioned the uniform budget
 - Rataj – Body armor and medical supplies were purchased
- Seymour questioned the radio line
 - Rataj – The radios are old and stopped working. New radios were purchased with unassigned funds in other areas of the police budget. Bottom line budget.
- Seymour questioned the cruiser supplies line
 - Rataj – The new cruiser which was approved at town meeting was purchased. He needed to equip the vehicle.
- Seymour questioned the Maintenance line
 - Rataj – The department moved to a cleaning service for facility upkeep.
- Seymour questioned why the department couldn't reduce the overall budget given the unspent monies from past budgets.
 - Rataj explained that the call volume for the department does not support a budget cut. The cuts suggested would necessitate a lower staffing level. The result would be gaps in coverage. Many current staff are still training.

Discussion around staffing followed. The voters previously approved the number of officers the department can have.

- Howe questioned the prosecutor line

- Rataj – The cost is formula based. It's a mandated cost. Hinsdale has a high volume of calls and arrests. Bulk of arrests are from box store theft, route 119 and juvenile issues.
- Lynch offered some cuts to the custodial services and water / sewer. New budget request would be \$1,747,350.96

Motion made to tentatively approve the amended Police budget by Nadeau

Seconded by Duso

7-1-0 motion passed.

Tax Collector

- JSeymour asked about the deputy & assistant salary lines
 - Lynch provided clarification with a corrected figure of \$37,329
- Discussion took place around which positions should be covered under which lines in which offices.
- Duso reiterated the need for clarification around who gets paid out of what budgets

Motion made to table the Tax Collector budget as presented made by Duso.

Seconded by Nadeau.

8-0-0 motion passed.

The next meeting was scheduled for December 26, 2023 at 6:00pm. Meeting location will be the Police Department conference room.

- Leary noted that the budget committee needs to approve minutes from several past meetings. The committee is out of compliance with posting minutes.
- Leary noted that a decision needs to be reached regarding the secretary position.

Motion to adjourn made by Nadeau

Seconded by Nebelski

8-0-0 motion passed

The meeting adjourned at 8:28pm