

12/26/23 Joint Meeting between Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen

Meeting called to order at 6:15

Budget Committee members present: Alex Duso, Sean Leary, Ken Howe, Dennis Nadeau, Karen Johnson, Richard Johnson (Selectmen Rep), Dan Seymour, Bill Nebelski, Mike Bomba, April Anderson (School board rep)

Excused: Janice Nichols

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

Others present: Kathryn Lynch (TA), Jodie Holmquist (Finance), Bob Truesdale (Highway Superintendent), Julie Seymour (Tax Collector), Kim Worden

K Johnson began the discussion, inquiring as to when all of the accounting lines would be corrected

- Holmquist – It is a work in progress.
- R Johnson – Clean up from past practices is hindering progress but everyone is moving forward as efficiently as possible

Diorio updated the budget committee on the previous discussion about an exploratory committee to research solutions to the curbside pick up / transfer station issue. The selectmen have decided not to form such a committee and will work with town staff on the problem.

Howe made a motion to appoint Leary to the position of Secretary for the remainder of the budget season.

Seconded by Duso

9-0-1 motion passed (Leary abstained from the vote)

Community Center:

A revised budget total for the community center budget of \$122,668.24 was brought forward. The number was calculated after researching questions from the previous meeting.

Motion to tentatively approve the community center budget in the amount of \$122,668.24 made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Howe

9-1-0 motion passed.

Building Inspector:

- Seymour asked why the salary line decreased.
 - Lynch – they eliminated the mileage reimbursement and reduced the hours.
- K Johnson – Will there be anyone filling those hours?
 - Lynch – cross training is in progress.

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

Seconded by Howe

10-0-0 motion passed.

Streetlights:

- Nebelski commented that there are a number of streetlights that are not working.
- Seymour asked if the lights are malfunctioning or simply shut off.
 - Nebelski – they are broken.
- Bomba asked if it still the police department's responsibility to report the non-functioning lights to PSNH.
- R Johnson asked if the town owns the fixtures.
 - Lynch- Not sure. Bridge lights are the state's responsibility.
 - Worden – Citizens can report lights out to PSNH.
- R Johnson – The town is responsible to purchase the replacement LED fixtures and then pay PSNH to install the replacement.
- Seymour asked if there is money on the proposed budget amount to purchase replacements.

Motion to tentatively approve the Street Lights budget in the amount of \$14,000 made by Howe.

Seconded by Seymour

10-0-0 motion passed.

Transit:

- Nebelski – What is the bus fee?
 - Lynch – Not sure of the current fee.
- R Johnson – Is it contractual?
 - Lynch – Agreed upon annually.

Motion to tentatively approve the Transit budget in the amount of \$15,500 made by Howe.

Seconded by Nebelski

10-0-0 motion passed.

Health Officer:

- K Johnson asked if the health officer is keeping the same hours.
 - Holmquist – Yes.

Motion to tentatively approve the health Officer budget in the amount of \$2,366.21 made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Seymour

10-0-0 motion passed.

Health Agencies:

Budget is flat at \$60,042.

- Howe asked about the reason there is no increase.
 - Lynch provided information.

Motion to tentatively approve the Health Officer budget in the amount of \$60,042 made by Howe.

Seconded by Duso

10-0-0 motion passed.

Library:

Diorio noted that the increases are in the salary lines.

- K Johnson wanted a breakdown of the salary rates.
 - Lynch provided the breakdown.

Amended amount for the Library budget is \$54,932.41.

- Anderson about the COLA and Merit rate increases.
 - Lynch provided the rates.
- Seymour asked if the backup sheets were updated.
 - Holmquist – Yes.

Motion to tentatively approve the Library budget in the amount of \$54,932.41 made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Duso

9-0-1 motion passed.

Conservation:

Motion to tentatively approve the Conservation budget in the amount of \$700 made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Howe

10-0-0 motion passed.

Debt Service:

Motion to tentatively approve the Debt Service budget in the amount of \$223,605 made by Howe.

Seconded by Nebelski.

10-0-0 motion passed.

The budget committee proceeded to revisit some of the budgets that had been tabled from prior meetings as well as consider revisions to previously approved budgets:

Revaluation:

Budget amount is \$59,292. This item was then tentatively approved by the selectmen. The budget amount had previously been tentatively approved by the budget committee.

Community Pool:

New budget amount is \$48,077.82. This item was then tentatively approved by the selectmen. The budget amount had previously been tentatively approved by the budget committee on 12-18.

Government Buildings:

More information was provided regarding the proposed facilities maintenance position for all government buildings.

- Nadeau asked if the town would be able to fill this position for the proposed \$41K rate.
 - Lynch provided information.
- Seymour stated his opinion the person filling the position should not be denied overtime.
 - Truesdale – Shoveling snow was never part of the highway department’s duties until the last couple of years. He envisions more janitorial duties for this position.
- Duso stated that he was still waiting on a final number. He went on to state that the town had somebody filling this role and the position was discontinued by the previous town administrator and select board. The budget committee was told the position was not need. He was concerned because now the budget committee is being the position is, in fact, a needed position. Why is the town reversing its position.
 - Lynch – There is now a new town administrator and a new board who have determined that this position is definitely needed.

The new budget amount would be \$130,870.

Howe made a motion to table the Government Buildings budget.

Seconded by Duso

Nadeau called for discussion:

- Nadeau- We need to take care of our facilities.
- Leary- It will all cost more when it breaks.
- Howe- Can we use current staff to fill some of this need?
 - Truesdale – Yes unless we go to a full-time transfer station.
- Bomba asked questions on the revised costing handout passed around at the meeting.
 - Lynch provided clarification.
- K Johnson questioned janitorial costs at the community center.
 - Lynch provided clarification.
- Bomba- Lots of elderly people frequent the community center. It must be kept clean and disinfected to keep people healthy.

Vote to table: 9-1-0

Executive:

The town Treasurer has vetoed the idea of discontinuing t Loomis to bring deposits to the bank. New budget request for Executive is \$250,606.39.

The selectmen approved the amount.

Motion to tentatively approve the revised Executive budget in the amount of \$250,606.39 made by Duso.

Seconded by Howe.

8-2-0 motion passed.

Police Budget:

TA Lynch wanted to add \$13,000 back to the police budget for cleaning services.

Seymour asked if the cleaning line item is \$34K or \$13K.

Lynch - \$13K

New proposed police budget is \$1,760,350.96.

Since the police chief was not present for this meeting, it was suggested that no decision be made at this meeting and that the discussion should be continued at the next meeting.

The budget committee set the next meeting for Tuesday January 2nd at 6:15pm. The location will be the Police Department meeting room.

- K Johnson asked for figures for moderators and supervisors.
 - Lynch provided the information.
- Duso followed up on previous requests for the committee to receive financial updates from Town Hall on a regular basis.
 - Holmquist stated she could provide the information and asked how it should be distributed.
 - Nadeau replied that she should send it the chairperson and that the chair would send it out to the committee.

Motion made to approve the minutes from December 11, 2023, and the minutes from December 18, 2023, as amended made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Howe.

9-0-1 Motion passed.

Nadeau asked about the progress on the school budget and when it would be made available to the budget committee.

Anderson – The school board is behind due to a variety of reasons.

Leary asked the following questions:

- What was the town funds balance as of June 30th, 2023?
 - Lynch - \$874,101
- How much money was used to buy down taxes?
 - Lynch - \$533,101
- What remains in the overlay?
 - R Johnson - \$287,000
- Has the town valuation changed this year from last year?
 - Lynch – prior valuation was set at \$350,957,415 Current valuation is set at \$439,063,789.
- What is the total revised increase in the proposed 24/25 budget?
 - Holmquist- About 3%
 - Leary – Requested that once all budgets have been tentatively approved, he would like a dollar figure to accompany the percentage increase.

Motion to adjourn made by Howe.

Seconded by Anderson

10-0-0 Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:44pm