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Present: Committee members Mary Jo Holmes, Chair; Josh Yokela, Michael Nygren, Jon Benson, Steve Bonaccorsi, Selectmen's Representative Gene Cordes, School Board Representative Gordon Muench, Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, Recording Secretary Shawn Perreault. Present for the various Department budgets were Fire Department Deputy Chiefs Joe Nichols and Kevin Zukas; and Road Agent Leon Holmes Jr.

The Meeting was called to order by Chair Holmes at 7:03 pm and the Pledge was recited.

### **Fire Rescue Department (4220)**

Deputy Chiefs Joe Nichols and Kevin Zukas were present. Nichols brought the Fire Rescue Department's requested budget before the Committee. Chair Holmes introduced the Deputies to the Committee and welcomed them to the meeting. Nichols stated that they didn't spend as much money on meetings and training this year due to Covid-19, so there is some surplus in wages. The State shut down all training, the Fire Department did purchase training videos to stay in compliance. New gear has been purchased to fit new members, as well as annual upgrades. Some communication upgrades are currently underway.

Chair Holmes questioned the \$3,300 in the Stipend line. Carlson stated she was not sure why the numbers were different from last year, but the numbers are good requesting \$3,300 for next year as well. Tires were included in the 2020 budget for \$3,000 and they are on order, so that amount has been removed from 2021. The cost will actually be closer to \$4,000, but it can be accommodated with the current funds.

Cordes stated this is the second year of EMS on call and that our Chief has been out due to medical issues. The two deputies have really stepped up as has the membership, in a very unusual and busy year. Cordes feels the compensation program has worked well, and as planned. This group of leaders has been wonderful dealing with a rough year. Cordes has not heard anything negative from the community. Deputy Nichols stated that they have three new good candidates coming forward. Chair Holmes asked how the shifts were going. Chief Nichols stated things were going well, it has been a challenge with the State being shut down. Yokela asked the they had any stats on missed calls, time frames in responding and such. Nichols did not have that, and Yokela said he would like to see it. Nichols explained that many of the daytime calls are still covered by Raymond Ambulance, who is staffed during the day and are responding right away. The on-call coverage staffs nights and weekends. Further discussion was held.

Looking ahead at capital purchases, Nichols said they are looking to purchase a Tanker with the Capital Reserve Fund. A \$50,000 appropriation to that CRF will be the FRD's only Warrant Article on the Town ballot for 2021. There is \$200,000 currently in that Capital Reserve Fund. If they can get another \$50,000 this year, the Fire Department can start getting quotes for the new tanker. The truck they are looking to replace was acquired in 1989.

Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend \$308,751 for department 4220, seconded by Nygren. Motion Passed 6 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

The Deputies left at 7:20 pm.

### **4151 Financial Administration**

Carlson stated the only difference in this budget is a new contract for the ensuing three year Audit program, which is up about \$1,100. Perreault is doing minutes now, which is tracked differently than a contracted person. Yokela questioned the added amount in the training line. Carlson stated they added in

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a small amount in case a training came up the Treasurer/Deputy wanted to attend. The Audit is usually done in February. Discussion was held on mileage and which line it was deducted from.

Cordes made a motion to approve \$21,400 for department 4151, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed 7-0-0.

#### **4153 Judicial & Legal**

Carlson stated that the Board had spend some time with this, and decided to reduce it to \$35,000. We do not have less legal cases than last year, but we are closer to solving at least two, such as FairPoint. A couple of pending cases have to do with land use, and there is more code enforcement pending. There is a new utility statute that the Town hopes will help eliminate some of the appeal issues.

Motion made by Cordes to recommend \$35,000 for department 4153, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed 7-0-0.

#### **4197 Advertising & Regional Assoc**

Carlson stated this is two memberships for NH LGC and Rockingham Planning Dues. The difference is only \$7.00 from the prior year. Rockingham Planning dues are different than the circuit rider contract, and provide additional services. This includes training and advocacy services.

Cordes made a motion to recommend \$8,997 for department 4197, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed 6 Yes – 1 No (Yokela) – 0 Abstain.

#### **4199 Other General Government**

Carlson explained that this is the Town report cost. The printer we have been using was the lowest bid again for next year, with no price increase. We don't mail them to every home anymore, instead leaving them at certain locations for people to pick up. Chair Holmes asked if we had a surplus by not mailing them? Carlson stated that when we mailed them she had to order 1800, but now orders 650 and there are not a lot left.

Cordes made a motion to recommend \$2,900 for department 4199, seconded by Nygren. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Motion made to approve the September 9, 2020 minutes as amended by Bonaccorsi, seconded by Cordes. Amendment: Page 2 first paragraph – price correction made. Motion passed 7-0-0.

Holmes moved to approve the September 30, 2020 minutes as written. Cordes seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0.

#### **4290 Emergency Management**

Carlson stated this is up a little because we are planning to do our part of the POD training and inoculation programs that will be happening next year once a Covid vaccine is developed. We will be part of it and asked to help with supplies or personnel. The Emergency Management Director handles much of this. We have purchased many things that we did not plan on, but will be part of our lives for years to come, such as masks and other PPE. This budget is very baseline. There is an annual stipend for the Director and then budgeted expenses for supplies, materials, and training. There has been more involved this year, which has increased the reimbursement requests. Further discuss was held on what the

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Director has been doing, including frequent conference calls and updates from the State EOC and other agencies. There was some discussion about FEMA and CARES reimbursements. Chair Holmes asked if CARES was going to continue. Carlson stated no, but the deadline was extended to Oct 15th.

It was noted that Carlson and the Town Clerk did fill out a voting grant due to the number of absentee ballots they had to send. This is a good lesson in emergency planning. We have bought things that can be reused to save money.

Carlson noted that we do have to update our Hazard Mitigation Plan next year as well. This will be partially grant-funded but will require local match of personnel time and resources. Further discussion was held.

Motion was made by Cordes to recommend \$5,832 for function 4290. Nygren seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0.

### **Highway Department (4312)**

Road Agent Leon Holmes Jr arrived at 7:45 pm to present the Highway Department budget and he was welcomed by the Chair. Holmes Jr stated his goal was to get as close to last year's number as possible. He said he used the prior year as a guide. He proceeded to review the budget proposal by line item.

Sand was dropped by \$5,000 because there is currently some left from last winter. Full time wages are increased by the 2% for the two full time staff members. Carlson noted that part-time wages are over spent and full-time underspent due to our FT employee being out on short-time disability. The Highway Department is currently short-staffed and working to hire an additional part-time person.

There are no guardrails planned but \$1 is in the line to keep it open. Fuel has been reduced based on actual usage and current pricing. A snowplow is in need of replacement. The money will be taken from the Capital Reserve Fund. Chair Holmes asked if they would have enough money left in the current budget to purchase it now. Holmes is unsure if they will have enough left. Further discussion was held.

Holmes Jr said the backhoe is fine now, but the maintenance is very expensive when things break due to age. He will be doing preventative maintenance in Tuck Woods next week fixing cracks and such. He has money for two days. If they can't finish it, it will be finished next year. Hottop – he is proposing to finish Bean Road, Chester Road, Shirkin Road (from Rogers to Leavitt) and fix the intersection there. There is a lot of traffic in the area, and he would like to make a 90 degree intersection to make sure everyone can see.

He mowed the roadsides twice this year, in June and again around Labor Day. He did the main and side roads in September, and only the main roads in June. He noted a lot of people out walking while they are home through Covid, and he wants everyone to be safe. Painting lines were doubled because he used the fog paint. Chester Road was done and he is hoping to do North Road. This is in addition to going over the roads already done. Bean and Chester and some work on Shirkin Road is the engineering cost.

The total request is \$622,708 which is up \$17,000 over the current year. Chair Holmes said she would like to see what equipment can be purchased with any funds left over. Bonaccorsi asked if sander maintenance is up, should this line be increased yearly? Holmes stated no, because it isn't something he uses every year. It just happens once in a while, the chains last ten years. Yokela stated last year they were trying to figure out a different way to do the road without the Warrant Articles. Spending a certain amount every year, in 20 years we would be at a good place, so we don't go up and down so much. He wondered if Holmes was able to come up with something to get rid of the Warrant Articles? Holmes Jr

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stated he can give the amounts spent on road from 2011 to present, but we are still way behind. Cordes feels the board needs to be careful adding to the operating budget. We need to get the operating budget passed, adding a large amount risks it passing. Further discussion was held about the logistics of Warrant Articles versus in the budget, and that the overall dollar effect is the same.

Holmes Jr stated there are three major projects left to look at, Martin Road, Mast Tree Estates and Whittier Drive. Not every road needs the same amount/depth of work. Benson stated his concern with the Warrant Articles naming certain roads was only those effected will vote for it. Holmes Jr stated that over the past years, everyone has been approving these articles. Holmes Jr went over the work and numbers for the Mast Tree Estate work, total being approximately \$244,000. Further discussion was held on what to put into the yearly operating budget instead of the Highway Department operating budget. Holmes Jr stated it would be helpful to know what he had up front yearly. Cordes would be concerned about getting a default budget, but stated he will go back to the Selectmen and talk to them about adding certain items to the operating budget. Cordes reminded the Committee that Warrant Article money can only be spent on that project, but the operating budget is not that specific. People are not going to look closely at the operating budget and just see the increase. Holmes Jr does know that Brentwood set a number for paving in there budget a few years ago and it works.

Yokela made a motion to change the Committee's recommendation for Hottop and Reconstruction Materials (4312720) from \$177,788 to \$421,000, this would include all the work that have been discussed by the Department/Selectmen as Warrant Articles. Bonaccorsi seconded. Lengthy further discussion was held. Homes Jr noted that having the engineering assistance on every road, has been amazing. Chair Holmes cautions everyone this is not the only large budget we have. Yokela stated once we don't recommend the Warrant Article it will be the same amount, the Selectmen could take the Warrant Articles out altogether. Further discussion held. Motion to increase that one line passed 6 Yes – 0 No – 1 Abstain (Holmes). No vote was taken on the overall Highway Department operating budget.

### **Warrant Articles - Mast Tree Estates**

Holmes Jr had engineering review all three roads in the Mast Tree Estates Subdivision. Holmes went over everything that will be done to each of the roads, the cost of each individual step and the people needed, such as flaggers. Deer Run will cost a little over \$123,000. Kelsey Road is about \$89,000, and Kristen's Landing is about \$31,500. The whole package will be about \$244,046. Due to the way the subdivision was built, it is a large cost. The large plow can no longer be used because of how fragile the roads are.

Chair Holmes stated the Committee would like to wait until all the large budget have been seen once and thus will put this budget aside. She doesn't feel that Holmes Jr will need to come back in, if things change she will let him know.

Road Agent Leon Holmes Jr left at 8:48 pm.

Chair Holmes informed the Committee that Superintendent Hutton sent her an email concerning Sanborn Tuition, which will be approved around November 4<sup>th</sup>. Hutton feels it will be approved by the School Board and ready for the Committee for discussion on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Holmes said she would prefer to see the budget all at once instead of two halves. There was further discussion about this and clarification that the better (more updated) numbers will be the November 18<sup>th</sup> numbers (versus earlier estimate). Holmes feels that seeing the more specific numbers would be better than looking at it twice. Muench stated the numbers from Sanborn do affect Ellis and what can be done at Ellis. Further discussion was held on when the School Board should come in with their budget, and Yokela's point was that he wanted to know what the School Board would like without the pressure of making reductions based on cutting to

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accommodate the Sanborn tuition increases. Muench felt that in delaying last year until they had better information, worked out better than doing it in parts. Cordes asked for a show of hands who wanted to wait until November 18<sup>th</sup> to review 6 people raised their hands. Further discussion was held. Muench stated November 1<sup>st</sup> is an estimate and then Dec 15<sup>th</sup> is when the real numbers come in, which history shows is very different from the estimate.

Holmes reviewed dates left for meetings, as there are two to three weeks to finish the Town if the Committee schedules meeting with the School Board on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The updated meeting dates, all to begin at 6:30 pm are Wednesdays October 28, November 4, 11 for the Town and November 18 to begin the School Budget. Carlson cannot be here November 4<sup>th</sup>. Holmes asked about next week as well, but several people had commitments.

Motion to adjourn made by Yokela at 9:07 pm. Bonaccorsi seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 28 October 2020 at 6:30 pm in the Town Hall Basement Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault  
Recording Secretary