

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall Basement Meeting Room. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Committee members Mary Jo Holmes, Jon Benson, Brian McGinn, Steven Bonaccorsi, Pat Martel, Gene Cordes, and Gordon Muench. Town Administrator Heidi Carlson was also present. Committee member Josh Yokela arrived at approximately 7:20 pm.

There were no appointments scheduled.

Motion was made by Holmes and seconded by Benson to approve the meeting minutes of 13 October 2021 as presented. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0.

The Committee moved to review of Town budgets ready for a recommendation.

4130 Executive - Cordes recapped the prior Committee discussion held on this function. The Select Board got some additional Town Administrator salary information from comparable and surrounding towns. The base rate was around \$80,000 for base level experience and often surrounded by additional support positions. There was discussion to start at \$90,000 and after further discussion, the Board voted to use \$95,000. The annual impact of this number would be \$90,000 for 2022 and then \$95,000 for a full following year (2023). Cordes stated the intent is to have an annual salary of \$95,000, but you take a $\frac{3}{4}$ portion into the 2022 budget year. Further discussion was held. Muench stated that we try to run a tight budget, but we overlook how an employee does for the town. Carlson has gotten money for the town and last week saved the Town about \$2,000 on computer programing. Those are the things people don't see and don't take these things into account. Muench feels Carlson makes the Select Board look good and feels it would be silly for the Committee not to recommend this. McGinn stated he searched around the country and feels the Select Board did a good job coming up with the number, as he found that to be an average. Holmes feels there won't be any disagreements regarding this from the rest of the Committee. Cordes stated there has been a consensus of where we wanted to go. He shared that the Select Board listened to what the Budget Committee had to say. Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend 4130 in the amount of \$145,418. Muench seconded and the vote passed 7-0.

4152 Reappraisal of Property - Carlson stated we finished the 2020 revaluation (required every five years) and continue to maintain the cyclical update process every year. One quarter of the Town gets done every year, neighborhoods along with things like building permits and current use changes are all picked up on a continual basis. We are two full contracts (10 years) into the cyclical process. This contract gives us uniformity and keeps our cost down from year to year contracts. We have been using the Capital Reserve Fund to offset this amount annually, but that is weaning down. Carlson explained how DRA views these funds as off-budget. Further discussion was held on how the change in accounting impacted the town.

The Capital Reserve Fund is almost depleted, so there is a planned \$5,000 offset for 2022. The upgrading of the Vision Appraisal software will use the balance of the CRF (and not take the money from the operating budget). If we sign the contract to upgrade the system before year end, we will save \$2,000 on the cost.

Other changes to the operating budget include a slight increase in the web hosting will cost, and the CPI increase in the contract. With the Vision software upgrade, we will no longer need a server here for that data (it will be cloud based). This will make changes live instead of only the Town's uploads a few times a year. Further discussion was held. McGinn asked about the Superior Court case related to utilities. There was some discussion about how the utility values are calculated and the history of the legislative changes.

Josh Yokela entered the meeting.

Cordes made a motion to recommend 4152 Reappraisal of Property in the amount of \$49,144. Benson seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 8-0.

4155 Personnel Administration - Carlson stated the major changes include a full year for the new full time police officer approved in 2021. The other change, which is still be talked about by the Select Board, is a partial year of benefits for a full-time maintenance position. We are trying to get a better system and handle on what needs to be done in any given building or on town property. Carlson stated she put in for 8 months for the added position regarding benefits. Martel asked what budget that position would sit in. Carlson stated they are thinking the Government Buildings. Carlson and Cordes stated that if the Budget Committee made any recommendation tonight it would have to be redone because the numbers are bound to change based on those updates. Cordes recommended tabling this budget, and all agreed.

4194 Government Buildings - This budget was tabled as well due to the above discussion and impact those numbers will have on this budget as well.

4195 Cemeteries - Carlson stated that the re-graveling project at Leavitt Road Cemetery was completed this week. The Highway Department will be going over there to do some stump work and clear some more. The shed has been installed, and someone will be painting it before the year ends. The Town is also talking about contracting all the maintenance and clean-up to include the cemeteries (in the RFP currently out). The Trustees budgeted as if the Town was still employing workers to do that work, such as mowing, trimming, etc. The all-season maintenance bids are due back next week. The Sexton would not change. The current Superintendent retired at the end of this season and another worker retired about middle the of August, and one person was trying to keep up. This budget plans for the status quo. It also has some additional project work in it. Martel commented about the increase in mowing wages. Carlson stated it was due to the inability to retain anyone or get anyone to apply for the position at the prior wage rate. McGinn asked if the work is contracted how much of the money within other budget lines would be removed. Carlson will put together all the line items that may be affected by it.

The RFP does include a lot of the Town's property. Cordes feels having a company will probably be more expensive, but probably the only way we will solve the problem. The bid was sent to about 15 different companies and posted publicly. Further discussion was held. Holmes asked if this budget should be tabled as well. Carlson agreed it should be tabled until they had the bids. This is a good budget if things don't change, but there are still a number of questions. This budget was tabled.

4196 Insurance - Carlson stated the rates came out on 10/15. This is a reduction because the Town has a credit on file. The actual premium for 2022 is up. Due to good behavior and less claims due to COVID we were given a credit on our premium this year and that is sitting in our account. Instead of asking for the credit, Carlson budgeted the different. The cyber security coverage is the main reason for the increase. Right now there are only two cyber providers country-wide. McGinn stated that is due to the extremely high fines that a company is assessed if they have a breach occur. Holmes asked why the police liability was zero and Carlson explained the Town had discontinued carrying it. Further discussion was held on this policy. Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend 4196 in the amount of \$59,710. Muench seconded. Motion passed by a vote of 8-0.

4312 Highway Department - Carlson stated the reason the Budget Committee tabled this budget was due to the lack of numbers on the two pieces of new equipment. In the newest Warrant Article draft, the Select Board has included and recommended two Warrant Articles. They are both five-year leases with an escape clause. They will both need a majority vote and the first year is for the first payments. The

Caterpillar backhoe is \$27,830 and the Dump Truck is \$32,054. Holmes stated the Town will own it for a dollar at the end of the lease. Carlson stated that the Town's plan would be to include the lease payment in future years operating budgets. If the Town gets the default budget it would need to find the money some where else if it wanted to keep the equipment. Martel stated that would be roughly \$60,000 for the years of the lease. If the equipment is purchased, the maintenance costs will decrease in the 2023 budget. Carlson stated we are trading in equipment and the lease payments are based on the net. Holmes asked if the lease payment stay the same. Carlson believes the payment would remain the same or close to it.

Martel asked what was happening with the other Warrant Article that asks for \$25,000 for the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Carlson stated the Select Board chose to keep it. The current balance of that fund is \$36,000 plus interest. Cordes stated the intent was to keep all the options open and as Carlson stated prior, lease payments cannot be made from a Capital Reserve Fund, but a down payment could be. The Select Board thought of using some of the \$36,000 as the down payment but then it's close to zero. Further discussion was held. Yokela asked if there was one piece of equipment that is more important than the other. Cordes wasn't thinking that way but feels if we keep one the then maintenance costs are just going to be too high. Holmes stated she doesn't agree with all three passing. Further discussion was held on keeping all the Articles. Bonaccorsi asked if there was a way to change the wording to stated if one article passes then the other wouldn't be used. Carlson stated she did not believe DRA would allow "what if" Articles. Carlson will double check. Holmes reminded the Budget Committee that last year the paving was made part of the operating budget.

Carlson stated there was discussion on whether to add the CPI to the paving line of this budget, the number didn't change but it was part of the Select Board discussion. Further discussion was held on the paving line and how the numbers were arrived at. Carlson explained the maintenance expenses on the existing equipment to McGinn. Further discussion on possible maintenance schedule until the new equipment arrives. Carlson did explain that if all the money is not used, the following year a Warrant Article can be placed on the ballot asking the Town to put money in certain accounts from Unreserved Fund Balance. The process was explained in terms of a bottom line budget, but trying to keep within the voted line items. McGinn asked about oversight to the Department budgets, and it was indicated that it is primarily the Budget Committee, after the Select Board working with Department Heads.

With no further discussion, Bonaccorsi made a motion to recommend 4312 in the amount of \$868,290. Muench seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0-1 (Holmes).

Benson made a comment about how the Deliberative Session works and how the Budget Committee works so hard with the budget, and someone can then stand up and add \$100,000 in for a Spanish teacher (as happened in 2021). Benson asked what the recourse was for the Budget Committee. Yokela stated the Budget Committee can vote to recommend or not recommend what the public member is asking for, then as an individual you vote on voting day. Further discussion was held on the process.

Other business:

Town summary expense and revenue reports were also circulated.

The Public Budget Hearing is posted for Wednesday January 12, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Ellis School Gym. The snow date will be the following evening, January 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Ellis School Gym.

Deliberative Sessions have been set for Saturday February 5, 2022 beginning at 9:00 am at the Ellis School Gym. Both the Town and School sessions are posted for 9:00 am. School will begin at 9:00 am

to be immediately followed by the Town Session. The snow date for both meetings is Saturday February 12, 2022.

Carlson found having all the information up on FCTV was extremely helpful to residents and will be doing that again. Yokela asked where these are posted. Carlson will make sure they are posted every where and on the FCTV site. Holmes went over who's position was up, the two positions are Steve Bonaccorsi and Mary Jo Holmes. School Board positions are Amy Lesile and Emily Philips. Roger Barham is up for Select Board. Carlson reviewed the sign-up dates.

A public notice of all upcoming meetings (include November and December, along with above) was circulated for member information and scheduling.

4902 Warrant Articles – The updates with Select Board recommendations were circulated.

Carlson feels all the Warrant Articles have been touched upon. She reviewed a few articles quickly. There are a few that have no impact and at least one that will be funded by Unreserved Fund Balance.

The School Board is meeting on the 1st of November. They should have the estimate for Sanborn on the first. GMR is the due the 15th, and Muench said the School Administration will be ready. Materials will be handed out at the Budget Committee meeting on November 3rd, not before because the voting will only be taking place the Monday before the meeting.

The Town does not have the 2021 tax rate yet and there was some discussion about the amount of new appropriations it would take to raise the tax rate by \$1 and the estimate now (short of knowing the current rate); is approximately \$530,000. Further discussion was held on the Tax Rate.

Family Promise will have two representatives at the November 4th Select Board Meeting at 7:30 if anyone wants to tune in to see their presentation.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday November 3, 2021 at 7:00 pm in the main floor meeting room. This will begin the School District budget review.

Motion was made to adjourn by Cordes seconded by Bonaccorsi. The motion passed with a vote of 8-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Perreault
Recording Secretary