

BUDGET COMMITTEE

January 10, 2023

MEMORIAL BUILDING

7:00 P.M.

The following are to be considered draft minutes until approved by the Board.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Ken Jacques, Whit Smith, Justin Hastings, B. Manning, Darrin Patten, Jeff Milne, Tim Cook, and Bryan O'Day

Ex-Officio member represented as being Amy Lewis, Chief of Police Pat Zullo, and Sergeant Tim Julian

Also present Select Board members Dick Hendl and Poul Heilmann. Audience Steve Dzubak and Karen Cook

Ken asked for a roll call. All members were present include the Select Board representative.

Minutes of January 27th:

Whit requested that the statement to recognized the work Select Board member Amy Lewis did in reaching out to Mascoma Bank regarding financing for the fire truck actually state "it was with immense thank you and gratitude of the Town for the work Select Member Amy Lewis did in obtaining the fire truck loan through Mascoma Savings Bank."

Darrin moved to accept the minutes of January 27th were approved with the request that they reflect the minutes of Feb 8, 2022 and seconded by Tim Board approved. Bryan abstained due to being absent.

Ken began the discussion with a review of the schedule stating that he felt it best to meet with the two major departments individually beginning with the Police Dept tonight and the Highway Dept next week. The Police Dept potentially will have the most significant impact on the budget due to their request for a third individual and a cruiser. The individual pay and benefits would be paid out of the budget while the cruiser would be paid through a warrant article. Pat spoke to the request. With 3 individuals the town would benefit from an increase in coverage hours without needing to rely on the State Police. The schedule would be set-up as 4/10 with one patrolling Monday-Thursday the second Thursday-Sunday. Another benefit would be to assist in succession of the Dept. as Tim is planning to retire in 3 years. Additionally the situation that has occurred in the past 2 years of only one individual trying to cover the entire town would be lessened if there were 3 individuals. Having to rely on the State Police when they too are spread very thin with 82 vacancies is not ideal. B asked why the State Police were covering towns with no Departments which was causing other towns to add individuals to their forces. Pat did not have an answer and had hoped that the representative from Troop C of the State had been able to attend the meeting. He would have had answers to questions that Pat did not have. Whit asked if the town really needs three individuals. Pat responded that having three would be much better for the town. Jeff asked if there was a way to share individuals on a part-time basis with other towns. Pat replied that scenario is difficult because of contracts, and the Chiefs would have to sign an agreement to share an individual and that is difficult to do. There are very few if any part-timers available. An audience member asked if the number of calls has gone up, what are the statistics to support. Pat responded that due to the past couple of years it is hard to say, though there has been an increase in residences, he had requested town statistics from dispatch and was told the new program was not able to supply that data at this time, though there are engineers working to access it. The Department has consisted of two individuals for the past 20 years. There are recommendations that for each 500/1 residents/officers. B stated that he felt the Town was very fortunate to have Pat and Tim, both very capable individuals and the pause on approving a third

individual is purely economic and wanted to know if the Department can function with the current two individuals. Pat replied yes it is possible. Whit asked if Tim has a long-term plan. Tim responded yes. Justin asked if the plan is for three individuals and 3 cruisers. Would that be to continue or just until an individual leaves? Response was that the addition would be permanent. Amy asked if there is interest and how long is the expected timeframe to fill the spot? Pat replied that there is interest, and he knows of some personally. Ken questioned if it would be possible to hold off a year and see how the Department functions with two and revisit adding a third next year. Dick spoke about the Select Board being in support of a third individual and a third cruiser. He had asked Pixie for new voter registrations which were 100 of which was difficult to determine how many were new town but felt it was worth noting. Also an item to look at was the number of new residences built over the past 4 years came in at 24, this number does not include those with additions added.

Option 2: Stay with two individuals

Ken questioned if this option were determined to be the best would the part-time wages line be removed. Pat responded that yes, that line would be removed though there would be increases to other lines due to State requirements for increased training over the next few years. Ken thanks Pat and Tim for attending the meeting and answering the Boards questions.

Dick raised the idea that the Select Board discussed presenting two budgets to the Town. Discussion with direction from B on how exactly that could be done and some research would need to be done to do so correctly.

Discussion moved to the request by Don Hill and Jim Bednar regarding maintenance of the Memorial Building. Jeff questioned if it would be something to be funded through fundraising as was done for the lift. Suggestions were made that it is a town building and is the responsibility of the town to maintain it. Appreciation was expressed for the work that Don and Jim put into the report. Poul shared that the Select Board requested Don and Jim further research costs associated with the items of either repair or purchase and present to the Select Board so they could better determine what the budget would allow without adding additional funds. Poul volunteered to reach back out to request info prior to the next meeting. The lift maintenance is already covered by funds left to the town from the original fundraising efforts. The floor would be the next item listed with the greatest priority. Research into when the floor was last refinished will be done.

Next week the Board will be meeting with the Highway Dept regarding their budget and requested items to include a third employee.

Submitted by,
Tamara Butcher

Administrative Assistant