

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**JANUARY 21, 2020**

## **MEMORIAL BUILDING**

**7:00 P.M.**

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

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.; roll was called.

Present: Ken Jacques, Leigh Callaway, Darrin Patten, Jeff Milne, B. Manning, Tim Cook, Justin Hastings, and Ex-Officio Tamara Butcher. Absent: Brian Putney.

Others present: Selectman, Dick Hendl; and Tim Julian, Chief of Police; Peter Abair, Road Agent; Peter Lacaillade, Fire Chief; and Kevin Roberts, Assistant Fire Chief, all came to the meeting at various times to speak to their specific budget needs.

Minutes of January 14, 2020: Motion by Darrin to accept as written, seconded by Justin and unanimously approved. Tamara abstained.

Updates were given based on last week's minutes. Dick reported he has been in contact with Engineer Lou Caron. Lou is no longer in the business of doing site plans. He referenced Dan Nash, who used to work with Lou, and who George McCusker is familiar with through the Upper Valley Planning Commission. Lou is willing to work with Dan on the plans for the storage area and future sand shed site. Dick has asked George McCusker to contact Dan.

Janet said Sansoucy Associates will still be needed to do appraisal on Springfield Power, at least for this year. Brian, from Sansoucy Associates has reported Springfield Power has expressed an interest in meeting with the Board of Selectmen to determine an assessment value or PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes arrangement). Springfield Power is no longer producing power.

Ken asked Dick for clarification regarding the heat pumps. His understanding is the heat pumps are for more efficient air conditioning, rather than as a substantial heat source. Replacing the oil boilers with propane a few years back was to be the efficient way to deal with the heating needs and saved the cost of having the chimney rebuilt. Dick stated he received an inquiry as to why the town was not going to consider installing a system that could cover to less than 15 degrees. Dick has a request out for more information as to benefit versus cost.

Ken asked whether there were still monies left in the expendable fund (\$75,000) appropriated to purchase used trucks for the highway department. Tamara noted Peter bought a truck in 2018. There was money left over but the fund lapsed December 31, 2019.

Ken asked Janet to clarify what the Department of Revenue said about encumbering funds. Janet discussed the encumbered funds with the municipal advisor for the town. The DRA would have no problem with the way the funds were encumbered. The individual line items on the operating budget worksheets are sub-categories for local planning only. The Department reviews their main categories. As long as an amount has been budgeted in the principal category, (i.e. Revaluation ) the Select Board has the authority to make decisions how to move

money around within the budget or encumber money for the coming year where there is a contract or invoice.

Police Department: Tim Julian reported he and the Selectmen discussed adding a part-time officer. The departments hours are scheduled based on statistics of when most of the calls come in. One of the biggest complaints he has heard is there is no one available on Sundays. Those calls get forwarded to the State Police. He addressed his concern with taking the State Police away from more urgent calls. The Select Board suggested also adding part-time coverage for vacation and sick time. The line item has been appropriated at 20K. The part-time officer is fully trained and will not require training. He will be an hourly employee and complete a time sheet. The Board discussed cruiser replacement considering increased use. Tim stated cruiser replacement is every 5 years in the CIP, but typically gets moved out 6 to 7 years due to low mileage. Extra use could possibly bring this down to 5 years. Ken and B commented that Tim does a good job managing his budget and thanked him for his presentation.

Fire Department: Present Peter Lacaille, Fire Chief; and Kevin Roberts, Assistant Chief. The Board discussed the newspaper article Leigh had shared regarding Enfield Fire Department seeking a FEMA grant for a fire truck. The Board encouraged the fire department to review grants for consideration when they are ready to purchase a new truck. Finding grants and a grant writer was discussed. Pete stated the fire department will do some research as to what is available, and he will reach out to other towns through the mutual aid compact. The estimate in the CIP (500K) is a ball park amount for a basic model. The CIP has a truck for 2021 but that could be pushed out a couple of years. They try to plan for their needs so as not to overlap with the highway and police department needs. NFPA has guidelines for equipment replacement at 25 years of age. Older equipment impacts the insurance rating of the town. The Board noted their concern that this is a lot of money for a small town and is the largest ticket item encountered. Knowing exactly what year the truck must be replaced is key. All the other departments can fill in around them. Peter stated trucks go up 5 to 10K per year. It is not the basic truck that is the cost, it is all the other equipment and new safety feature requirements that must go on them. He will work on getting numbers together. Pete stated his operating budget request is basically the same. He has appropriated an additional \$4,000 for radio replacement. They have begun to replace radios on an annual basis like they do with turn-out gear. There are no other big purchases planned for this year.

Highway Department: Present: Peter Abair, Road Agent. Ken asked if the Select Board were planning to appropriate 100K from the fund balance to do the paving (Shad Hill and Twin Lake Villa) that did not get done in 2019. Dick stated that is the preference. Peter stated he has appropriated 80K for paving Nichols Hill and Cemetery Road. He has a quote from Pike (70K) but will be looking into other vendors as well.

Pete is recommending purchasing a new dump truck. He has talked with a dealership in Westminster and has a ball-park number of \$170 to 180K, plus trade-in (estimated at 15K) for a new Western Star. He expects a new truck should have a life expectancy of 10 to 15 years. If a new truck is ordered after town meeting, it would not be available until summer of 2021 due to a

back log of truck builds. Westminster has started a new 24-hour towing service and a warranty program where they have back-up trucks to lend while a truck is down. The cost for that is \$200.00 per year. An extended warranty program is also available. Croydon just purchased a truck through them. The Board discussed with Pete the concept of purchasing new versus the program that had been in place with funds available to upgrade the older trucks with newer used trucks as needed. Pete stated there is a lot of time spent repairing trucks. Used trucks in the 2015-2016 range had lots of problems with emissions until after 2016. There is so much work they can't do on trucks now because of computers and electrical. Peter stated he thinks it makes sense at this time to replace a truck with one new one, and then pick up a newer used truck when needed. Ken asked for Dick's opinion. Dick noted with the problems and time Peter has had to spend on repairs versus working on roads, he feels it makes sense to purchase new. The Board would like Peter to come back next week with more information and to find out what the warranty covers.

The proposed operating budget was briefly reviewed.

B. spoke regarding the voter training session he attended relative to blind and hearing-impaired voters and the use of equipment with a separate booth for elections. The mandate is for federal elections not state, town or school. The AG's office, the Municipal Association and the Secretary of State's office all agree this not a mandate for local elections, but it could be challenged.

The Board further discussed the highway truck issue. The idea of having money available in a fund to update used trucks as needed was to currently be updating the age of the vehicles. The last truck purchased was a truck that was available but was not newer. There was money available to enable the purchase of a newer truck that has now lapsed. The Board is concerned this has thrown off the idea and the schedule of replacing older trucks and discussed getting back into a sequence that is logical for the town. Truck purchases need to be paced out the way it was intended to space out the ages of the used trucks with the intention to rotate and update. The Budget Committee will need to decide what makes the best sense for the town and consider whether it makes sense to buy a new truck and then where does the town want to be in the next few years.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by,

Janet Roberts,  
Administrative Assistant