

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**JANUARY 14, 2019**

## **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. and roll was called.

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

Others present: Dick Hendl and Peter Abair.

Minutes of December 20, 2019: It was noted the date of the Budget Committee's Public Hearing has been changed to Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. due to the primaries being held on February 11<sup>th</sup>. Leigh moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Jeff and unanimously approved.

In Tamara's absence, Dick reviewed the proposed operating budget.

Police Department: Dick reported, Jim Burroughs, retiring Newport Police Chief, has been appointed as a part-time officer with the Town to fill in for vacation and sick days and other times as needed. State Police respond when a local officer is not on duty. Tim hopes to be able to alleviate some of those calls that take State Police away from calls of higher importance. The Board will review further questions with Tim next week.

Dick reported, due to computer and software issues, Jeff Evans is no longer able to provide the data that is required for Lou Caron to complete the design of the storage and sand shed site as planned. Engineering will also be required to address the approach at Nichols Hill Road so that line item appropriation has stayed the same. Dick has reached out to Lou Caron for suggestions of what he needs and other suggestions for engineers.

The Board addressed revaluation requirements for the annual appraisal of Springfield Power. They question the need for the plant to be appraised again this year, and to find out why it continues to need an annual appraisal now that the plant is no longer operating. Janet will check in with George Hildum. The Board also addressed concern with encumbering of funds from 2019 budget for the statistical update. The Board asked Janet to check with the Department of Revenue.

Dick explained there is a significant increase in an appropriation for legal fees. Currently, there are three and potentially a fourth case with litigation pending.

Health insurance costs rose just under 8%. Dick reported the Board is continuing the cost share a flexible spending program with eligible employees, which began when the plan was decreased last year. This still results in about a 60% savings to the town.

The Selectmen have reviewed the installation of mini splits for the town office, primarily to handle air-conditioning needs, but also as a back up heat source. The Board has encumbered funds from 2019 for that purpose. Dick stated someone has asked that the Board look into the higher rated heating units. He is in the process of researching that.

Dick discussed with the Board the replacement of radios for the police and highway department. The existing radios are outdated, and parts are not readily available. Tim already had to replace a radio in 2019. The Selectmen voted to encumber \$7,000 to replace police radios and \$5,800 for highway. The Board discussed encumbering versus appropriation through the unreserved fund balance or purchasing them before the end of 2019. Budget considerations and timing were part of the considerations made when encumbering.

Peter noted his proposed budget is staying essentially the same. He would like a warrant article to appropriate the 100K for paving for Shad Hill and Twin Lake Villa. Due to a vacancy in the highway department and the weather, that paving was not able to be completed. He would like that money to be re-appropriated from the fund balance. Pete has 80K proposed in 2020 for Nichols Hill and Cemetery Roads for 2020. He plans to keep the backhoe but will need to replace all 4 tires at a cost of \$6,000. Peter noted that something needs to be done on the sand shed. If the site work is not moving forward, he would like to just add a roof and be done with it.

The Board discussed the work at the intersection of Nichols Hill Road. Dick stated he has contacted Lou Caron about this. Darrin stated when they met with Lou Caron in the past, he had suggested the project didn't require a lot of engineering, that someone with a dump truck and excavator could go in and improve the approach. Dick noted the abutters will want to see something more formal before agreeing to move that project forward for their property.

Peter stated he has started to get numbers for a truck to replace the 08 Sterling. New trucks are in the ballpark of \$180K and up depending on specs. He is looking for one with a stainless body. Pete stated the 06 and the 08 are about in the same shape body wise. The front carrier recently had to be replaced on the 08 Sterling at a cost of \$6300. The extended warranty on the expired and would not have covered the carrier anyway. His plan is to trade-in the old truck. Ken asked if he is moving away from having money available in an account to buy used trucks? Peter stated used trucks that become available now are all in the age range when there were issues with functions of emissions and computers. With the new technology, they are no longer going to be able to do repairs themselves.

Dick reported there will be a public hearing held by the Board of Selectmen on January 27<sup>th</sup> to accept funds from the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration Trust. The request of the 250<sup>th</sup> committee is to use the funds to purchase and install a lift at the Town Meetinghouse so the second floor can be more easily accessed for people with mobility issues. He noted, this may be a good time to also install a back-up generator to run the lift in case of a power outage. This would also allow the Meetinghouse to also be used as an emergency shelter. The estimated cost for a generator is \$8,000 to \$8,500. Leigh stated there is just about \$80,000 raised by the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee. Their intent is to reimburse the town for some line item expenditures the town incurred to

accommodate the events. The Committee will request the Selectmen to use the remaining funds to purchase and install a lift.

Leigh read a recent article from the Valley News regarding the Town of Enfield's proposal to purchase a new fire truck at a cost of \$550K. Enfield is looking into a grant to help them offset the cost of a new truck to the Town. He will forward the article to be shared with the Budget Committee.

The Board voted to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Janet Roberts,  
Administrative Assistant