

BUDGET COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 12, 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 7:03 p.m.

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

Ex-Officio Poul Heilmann

Also present Select Board Don Hill

Election of Officers: Whit moved to nominate Ken Jacques as Chair, Jeff Milne seconded motion. Whit moved to nominate Justin Hastings as Vice-Chair, Jeff seconded motion. The board voted unanimously to approve.

Ken shared with the Board that member Don Hill, who's term expires 2026 has resigned his position due to serving on the Select Board as an appointed member following the resignation of Jeremiah Crosby. Ken felt that moving forward with one member short would not be an issue. Don will have the opportunity to run for the remainder of his term as Budget Committee member in March. After a short discussion of the pros and cons and the number of needed members the Board, Whit moved to move forward with 6 members and the Select Board representative and allow the Town Voters to fill the position in March. Tim Cook seconded the motion, Board unanimously voted in favor.

Whit moved to accept the minutes of March 13, 2023, as written, Darrin seconded, Board unanimously agreed.

Jeff Milne moved to accept the minutes of September 28th with the addition of the year at the top of the page, Justin seconded motion, Board agreed, Darrin abstained due to be absent for the meeting.

Board moved through the current budgeted expenditures. Short discussion of the health insurance increase (15%) and the cause of it. Covid and the lack of hospital visits increased the severity of illnesses which are now being cared for at an increased cost to both insurance companies and members. In 2010 the policy was the Town would pay for full coverage for the Police Dept employees and all others would be provided a single person coverage. If they wanted/needed additional they were required to pay it. Somewhere that changed and no one knows when. Question of what the expected Legal line will be, Poul would like to see an increase in that line. Members of the Board discussed the usefulness of the New Hampshire Municipal Association on legal questions. The NHMA is a service that the Town pays for and it should be utilized. There are items that require assistance from the Town attorney that the Association are not able to provide. Whit asked if the line for Fire/Police Dispatch is correct, to which there was some discussion as to what has been done in the past, Newport, Hanover, New London. Now all calls (Police and Fire/EMS) are dispatched out of a central location in Hanover.

Discussion of the bill due on Monday December 18th to the County in the amount of \$709,000. Tax bills went out late, the amount of the increase is having a effect on the amount of usable cash currently. Does the Town have the ability to borrow to pay bills until payments are received? If the Town had approved authorizing at Town Meeting, currently this is unknown. Springfield is not the only town currently in a money pinch, Whit shared that Newport only just sent out their bills Monday and they are not due until January 8, 2024. Short discussion at to what the stated penalty is the County will charge if the payment is

late. Clarification is being sought to find out. Ken asked about the taxes the Power Plant, the assessment and who does the assessing for them. Sansoucy Associates is contracted to provide that specialized service to the Town.

Discussion of the status of the Unreserved Fund Balance. Currently \$407,000 to which Whit asked if the Town could borrow from that amount to pay the County bill. Explanation that the URFB is not actually cash that can be spent from, it is a combination of the total assets the Town owns.

Board reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan. Questions of the years to replace the police cruiser and purchasing a 1-ton for the highway department. The departments have been moving the two items between 2024 and 2025 depending on when each vehicle looks like it will work best. It has been determined that the police cruiser needs to be replaced as soon as possible. Pat Zullo has done extensive research to find the best deal for the Town. Claremont Dodge has some priced at \$41,000 and they will give us \$3,500 trade-in. Ken asked about the arrival of the new fire truck to which the Board was informed that it had arrived on the 7th. Whit asked what to expect to get for the old fire truck. The Town might get \$10,000 for it, which was a surprise that it wasn't more. Due to the age it is no longer XXXXX. Question as to the estimated cost of the Full Re-evaluation scheduled for 2025. Tamara will contact Avitar to find out.

The Board reviewed the 2024 timeline for Budget Meetings. The meetings will be as follows.

Tuesday, January 9, 2024	Budget Work Session Meeting with Department Heads	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 16, 2024	Budget Work Session	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 23, 2024	Budget Work Session	7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 7, 2024	1 st Budget Public Hearing	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 13, 2024	2 nd Budget Public Hearing, if required	7:00 p.m.
Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm		
Submitted by, Tamara Butcher		