1-26-21

Budget Committee Minutes

 Attending:

Mary Anne Levesque

Donna Crisp Duclos

Jim Hanson

Jim Hersey

Todd Goings

Molly Morgan

Adam Jones

Recording secretary:

Carla Levesque

Members of Public Present: Marge Roy, Michelle Dudet,

Bill Bardsley, et al.

Meeting called to order 6:00 p.m.

Jim Hanson read the Public Right to Know Regulation

Town Budget – Todd Goings presenting

Molly Morgan inquired about salary increases. Todd Goings said that most increases are 3% but not all of them are.

Extra money for mailing was due to Covid 19. The audit is not final so the $3,000 is an estimate. Financial Administrive Assistant is a new employee and is not paid as high as former. Financial Bookkeeper is up by 3% raise. Donna Duclos noted the town clerk is paid hourly and extra hours not actually worked are not paid.

Legal Expenses: Molly Morgan inquired what are the legal expenses for. Donna Duclos inquired if the town’s attorney was on retainer. Marge Roy replied that he is not.

Todd Goings stated that the big jump in retirement costs under Personnel Administration was due to state mandates similar to the school’s mandates.

Planning and Zoning Board wages are up 3%.

Town Office Maintenance: Molly Morgan inquired as to how much of 2020 were Town Offices closed. Todd Goings said it was not closed to employees and to the public by appointment. Marge Roy explained that there was regular cleaning as well as specialized Covid cleaning. Covid cleaning is expensive.

PD Phone Line Item: This line reflects a big drop from $4351 to $3000 due to new technology.

Transfer Station: there will be a warrant article for $7,500 for well and septic.

Blackwater Park: Adam Jones noted that $3000 appropriated for a fence in 2020 was not spent. Was that money rolled over to 2021? There is a warrant article for this money. Todd Goings said that the money will either be in the operating budget or a warrant article but not both. Money was not rolled over into 2021 budget from 2020.

Beach House Building: Jim Hanson inquired as to what is needed. Todd Goings replied that when opened up the building needed new floor, wires were bare, need new pump, toilets broken, etc. Jim Hersey inquired if the building is trashed would the town be better off without a beach house? Marge Roy stated that no one trashed it but there was age and neglect. Todd Goings said that it was old, and pipes froze. Jim Hersey wanted to know who monitors the beach house. Marge Roy replied in the past it was the Highway Dept. Jim Hersey observed that if the town spends money on repairs then procedures need to be put in place to prevent these problems in the future.

Insurance is up 6.8%.

Advertising Budget stayed the same. Donna Duclos inquired how the town uses advertising. Marge Roy replied the Town has a page in the Beacon for things like jobs and bids.

IT Department: Marge Roy said that this year was not as expensive as anticipated. The IT company is Mainstay. Marge Roy noted that office supplies are unofficially shared with other departments. Line 149, Marge Roy stated that the $17,750 for software was encumbered from 2020. Donna Duclos inquired if the $17,750 was every year for three years. Marge Roy replied yes. Marge Roy stated that after 3 years the town would just pay for software support.

Police Department: Molly Morgan wanted to know why the budget was up 8% over 2020. Todd Goings explained that the police department had hired an officer late in 2020 so last years budget reflected only one full time officer and 2021 reflects 2 full time officers. Molly Morgan asked about the reason Deputy wages are up from $14,000 to $17,000. Marge Roy stated that in addition to deputy salary this line contains extra for overtime, sick leave and vacation coverage. Donna Duclos pointed out that deputy is paid hourly and any funds in this line not used are not spent. Donna Duclos noted that part time hours are down because now there is a second full time officer.

Highway Dept.: Todd Goings noted the change from hourly plow and sanding to a set of four contracted routes. This creates stability in costs. Todd Goings stated that when the Road Agent switched to work under the Select Board an inventory was done, and missing equipment needs to be replaced. The tires on the grader need to be replaced. The 6 wheel truck the town owned had several inspection issues and titling issues and that is why a ¾ ton truck was purchased as a replacement. Molly Morgan inquired as to why labor has gone up. Todd Goings replied Highway Dept. now has two full time employees. Marge Roy added that for most of 2020 the Highway Dept did not have the second employee. Donna Duclos inquired which department is responsible for the Beaver Deceivers. Todd Goings replied that the issue has not been resolved and is ongoing. Todd Goings stated that line 228 is an error and line 230 is correct. Molly Morgan inquired about line 226 for $85,000. This includes $42,400 for the culvert on Fendale. Jim Hanson said the Highway Dept. is trying to be proactive instead of reactive. Molly Morgan asked about calcium near waterways. Marge Roy stated that the Highway Department goes to annual trainings. Jim Hanson said we need to balance public safety with the environment.

Rental assistance has gone up from $3,500 in 2020 to $10,000 due to Covid.

Warrant Articles: Todd Goings stated that leasing to own equipment means that 80% of the cost goes towards purchase. Jim Hanson stated that quality machines should last 5 to 6 years past purchase. Todd Goings stated that the town is seeing some savings even though the change is not long in place. Need to set aside $15,000 in a capital reserve fund for replacing equipment. Todd Goings said that the town contracted for a municipal survey of the roads. Todd Goings presented a map that shows the condition of the town’s roads. Jim Hanson stated that Jon Champagne, Road Agent is a Master Road Scholar. Todd Goings stated that if warrants pass then there will be a 5.6% increase. Highway Department needs to commission a site plan for the new Highway Building proposed then it can be put out to bid and a cost to build provided. Jim Hanson said the building is going to be designed to be expandable in the future. The select board is trying to spread out costs. The Highway Advisory Committee has a three-year plan. This year the town needs to buy equipment. Next year the town will need to purchase a backhoe, then the site plan and then build the Highway Dept Building. Adam Jones asked what the projected cost of the building would be. Todd Goings estimated $350,000 with a bond.

Mary Anne Levesque moved to accept the minutes of last meeting. Donna Duclos seconded.

Roll call vote as follows:

Jim Hersey Yes

Jim Hanson Yes

Mary Anne Levesque Yes

Donna Duclos Yes

Molly Morgan Yes

Todd Goings Yes

Adam Jones Yes

Motion carried.

Mary Anne Levesque moved to adjourn. Donna Duclos seconded.

Roll call vote as follows:

Jim Hersey Yes

Jim Hanson Yes

Mary Anne Levesque Yes

Donna Duclos Yes

Molly Morgan Yes

Todd Goings Yes

Adam Jones Yes

Motion carried.