



**BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
**Town of Greenland • Greenland, NH 03840**  
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**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING**

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Wednesday, December 04, 2019 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

*Members Present:* Jamie Connelly, Mark Connelly, Frank Hansler, Bob Krasko, Paul Sanderson, Rick Hussey – Selectmen's Rep

*Members Absent:* Steve McKenzie Sharon McLaughlin, Don Miller, Zack Pike, Randy Bunnell – School Board Rep

*Also Present:* Marge Morgan – Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Ralph Cresta – Fire Chief, Tara Laurent – Police Chief, Denise Grimse – Library Director, Chip Hussey and Steve Smith - Board of Selectmen, Lizbeth Cummings – Finance Director

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Chair Krasko opened the Budget Committee meeting at 6:30 p.m. A roll call was taken by the Chair; he announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded and live streamed.

1. Town Budget Review

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: The increase was due to travel time. M. Morgan is president of the NH City and Town Clerk's Association and must attend meetings. Some meetings will be reimbursed; she will not use the Town's travel money if she is reimbursed. A folding/inserting machine has been requested. Salaries were increased by 3%.

Supervisor's of the Checklist: There are four elections and a Deliberative Session on the schedule next year. M. Morgan explained the expenses associated with the elections and Deliberative Session.

Health Insurance: The Town pays 85% to 95% depending on the plan for employees eligible to receive benefits.

Town Budget: It was noted that the Town budget increased 16% over last year, which was significantly underfunded according to M. Scruton. The Highway line is over \$700,000 higher than last year due to underfunding in plowing and paving. Many paving projects were put on hold this year due to lack of funds.

Fire Department: The Fire Department budget is basically flat with the exception of overtime wages. There are less people in the department and full-time personnel must come back to do calls. There are approximately 10 part-time personnel; Chief Cresta tries to keep them under 32 hours per week. Response times have improved over the last few years. Chief Cresta will begin the process to replace the ambulance next year. The phone has increased from \$3,500 to \$4,800 due to the change in phone systems; he requested that line item be increased to \$5,600. Ambulance billing was discussed: approximately \$120,000 to \$130,000 is received annually. A warrant article may be submitted for a

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hydraulic lift for the ambulance; the cost is approximately \$37,000. There is \$156,180.25 in the Ambulance Billing account. A warrant article is submitted annually to pay the administrative fees.

A petitioned warrant article for the fire station is expected. The cost is anticipated to increase by approximately \$200,000.

It was noted that the Fire Department must operate 24/7, 365 days per year. Ambulance and fire respond to calls within the Town and on I-95. An ambulance call requires two people on the ambulance. Currently, 75% to 80% of the calls are for the ambulance and 20% to 25% are fire. Personnel are working 12 hours shifts. Shift coverage was explained by Chief Cresta and P. Sanderson. Night shift personnel must be within 10 minutes of the station or stay at the station; at least one person stays at the station on a nightly basis. Wage increases were included at 3% for part-time and full-time.

Contamination of fire gear was discussed. Chair Krasko noted that R. Hussey felt the discussion was not budget related. P. Sanderson stated that R. Hussey was wrong and given more time he would connect it to the budget. P. Sanderson continued that it was his opinion contaminated vehicles and gear from a scene also contaminate the fire station. Chief Cresta did not think the building had ever been tested. P. Sanderson felt that employees, visitors or volunteers in the building, including the Town Office and Conference Room, may be impacted by the contamination and fumes. It was noted that there was nothing included in the budget for testing the buildings. C. Hussey commented that the heat pump that was installed brings in fresh air from the outside and is delivered into the living space in the fire station. Whenever the air conditioner, ventilation or heat is running, fresh air is coming into the building with positive pressure.

Library: The Library Trustees met and approved a 3% wage increase across the board. The revised appropriation request has increased to \$304,996 or a 2.24% increase overall. The Trustees voted not to determine when they would be less than 100% operational during construction and opted not to change their budget. D. Grimse stated they did not anticipate closing. A question was asked about putting Town records in the Library; P. Sanderson clarified Town records must be under the Town Clerk's control.

Board of Selectmen: Warrant articles were not yet available.

General Discussion: P. Sanderson stated that the School budget would impact the tax rate by \$0.75; the Town increase of \$587,000 would impact the tax rate \$0.68. The combined tax rate would be \$1.43, which was unacceptable. P. Sanderson felt the Town was not using the financial tools at their disposal. There is \$277,000 in the Road Maintenance Fund; they are proposing road work through taxation. There is \$83,000 in the Town Equipment account. The Budget Committee has not received a balance for the Unreserved Fund Balance and did not know if the Town planned to use any of those funds. P. Sanderson stated he felt that was unacceptable. The tools are available so there will not be a major tax increase. L. Cummings stated that \$43,000 has been deducted from the Transfer Station fund (Town Equipment) for the new compactors. P. Sanderson noted the Budget Committee had not seen the Default Budget. The Town budget was not "ready for prime time". P. Sanderson, addressing the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen, stated they needed to use the tools available to them and figure it out. He felt that the Budget Committee should not recommend a combined tax increase of \$1.43.

M. Scruton, defending the Selectmen's budget, stated it was fair and reasonable based on what wasn't done last year and what still needs to be done. He continued that many of the CRF's are depleted to the point where the Board would rather keep them in case they are needed in the future. P. Sanderson disagreed. M. Scruton stated these are valuable assets to the Town, preserved, as well as the fund

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balance. P. Sanderson responded that they would build the budget on what they see if the Town chose to proceed that way. M. Scruton stated it could be debated at public hearings and Deliberative Session; P. Sanderson stated he would not want to be the one defending this. He felt it was inappropriate and indefensible not to use funding from any other tools. P. Sanderson requested current balances in the trust funds.

M. Scruton stated that typically a number of warrant articles have been funded through the Unreserved Fund Balance; some of those funds were used to reduce taxes this year. He felt it was an unfair comparison to use the tax rate increase as a guide; the Selectmen used the fund balance as a tool to reduce the tax rate this year. P. Sanderson stated the Budget Committee did not know how much was in the Unreserved Fund Balance and how much was used to offset the tax rate. L. Cummings stated that \$50,000 was used for Overlay and \$100,000 used to reduce taxes. The balance in the Unreserved Fund Balance is very close to \$1.5 million. They will have a better idea of where the Town stands after the final manifest of the year, which is December 23, 2019. M. Scruton does not expect to encumber any funds this year or have much left to return to the Unreserved Fund Balance. L. Cummings added the bottom line was \$5,012,134.

P. Sanderson stated more work needed to be done on the budget.

### 2. Adjournment

MOTION: J. Connelly moved to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. Second – M. Connelly; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING
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Tuesday, December 10, 2019 – 6:30 p.m., School Budget Review, Town Hall Conference Room

Submitted By: Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant