



BUDGET COMMITTEE
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MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Tuesday, November 10, 2020 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room, Zoom

Members Present: Mike Bilodeau, Todd Cadle, Mark Connelly, Frank Hansler, Bob Krasko, Sharon Hussey-McLaughlin (via Zoom), Don Miller, Zack Pike, Paul Sanderson, Jamie Connelly – Selectmen's Rep, Pat Walsh – School Board Rep (via Zoom), Steve McKenzie - Alternate (via Zoom)

Also Present: Matt Scruton – Town Administrator, Steve Smith – Board of Selectman Chairman, Tara Laurent – Police Chief (via Zoom), Denise Grimse – Weeks Library Director (via Zoom), Marcia McLaughlin – Library Trustees Chairperson

Chair Krasko opened the Budget Committee meeting at 6:30 p.m. A checklist to ensure meetings were compliant with the Right-to-Know Law during the State of Emergency was read into the record by Vice Chair P. Sanderson. A roll call was taken; it was announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being held virtually through Zoom and recorded by video and audio.

Attendance was taken by roll call: M. Bilodeau - present, T. Cadle – present, M. Connelly – present, F. Hansler - present, S. Hussey-McLaughlin - present, D. Miller – present, Z. Pike – present, P. Sanderson - present, J. Connelly – present, P. Walsh – present, S. McKenzie – present, B. Krasko - present.

1. Approval of Minutes

D. Miller corrected the minutes of Tuesday, October 20, 2020: "Chair Krasko opened the Board of Selectmen meeting" to "Chair Krasko opened the Budget Committee meeting".

MOTION: D. Miller moved to approve the minutes of Tuesday, October 20, 2020 as corrected. Second – Z. Pike; roll call vote: M. Bilodeau - yes, T. Cadle – yes, M. Connelly – yes, F. Hansler - yes, S. Hussey-McLaughlin - yes, D. Miller – yes, Z. Pike – yes, P. Sanderson - yes, J. Connelly – yes, P. Walsh – yes, S. McKenzie – yes, B. Krasko - yes. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED

MOTION: P. Sanderson moved to approve the minutes of Tuesday, October 27, 2020. Second – D. Miller; M. Bilodeau - yes, T. Cadle – yes, M. Connelly – yes, F. Hansler - yes, S. Hussey-McLaughlin - yes, D. Miller – yes, Z. Pike – yes, P. Sanderson - yes, J. Connelly – yes, P. Walsh – abstain, S. McKenzie – yes, B. Krasko - yes. Eleven in favor, one abstain (P. Walsh). MOTION CARRIED

2. Review of the Town Budget

TA Scruton reviewed the packet which included information requested by members of the Budget Committee. TA Scruton noted that the Board of Selectmen had approved the default budget. DRA and the Selectmen approved the tax rate of \$16.58; \$200,000 was used from the Fund Balance.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The Board of Selectmen discussed the Budget Committee's request to remove the Finance Director's additional hours (from part-time to full-time) from the budget and submit as a warrant article. After researching past practice, the Town included at least three similar requests in their budget. The increase in hours for the Finance Director's position remains in the Town Budget. Benefits, as previously requested by P. Sanderson, were included.

Library Budget: P. Sanderson noted that the 2020 budget was \$329,214; the requested amount is \$365,645 (difference of \$36,431). D. Miller asked about the large increase for a Library that was not complete. Marcia McLaughlin, Library Trustees Chairperson, responded that a large part of the increase was for utilities. The actual size of the Library increased by 300%; utilities will increase by 50%. The new lighting will be LED; the estimated cost increase was provided by the architect. P. Sanderson pointed out that the 2020 expenditures for utilities was \$9,085. The proposed increase to utilities is \$16,300 or a difference of \$7,215.

D. Grimse joined the meeting via Zoom. She explained that the increase included cleaning the building and additional contract services for the different systems that will be installed. Responding to a question from J. Connelly, M. McLaughlin stated that all projects went out to bid through the contractor. There was a discussion regarding the contractor for the sprinkler system. F. Hansler suggested they look at Hackworth Fire & Security, which is a small family-owned business: small operations offer less costs.

D. Grimse stated hours will be added to the Library staff to ensure there are three people in the building for safety. Increase in staff hours also includes coverage for vacations and sick leave. There are five part-time staff; Chair Krasko suggested making two of those individuals full-time. D. Grimse responded that in addition to the hours the Library is open, the cost of insurance and NH Retirement makes it more practical to use part-time staff. D. Grimse will look into the full-time vs. part-time. M. McLaughlin added they were informed by the architect that the Library was designed for three staff to be in the building at all times for safety and oversight.

Responding to F. Hansler's question about cameras, M. McLaughlin stated there will be some closed-circuit TV's available; it will not be throughout the building. F. Hansler suggested it may be more cost effective to have a monitor vs. staff in the building. There was a discussion about three people in the building.

Pest control was discussed. F. Hansler requested they get competitive pricing. He will provide information to D. Grimse. A Facilities Maintenance Manager was also discussed.

P. Sanderson noted that salaries were approximately 75% of the appropriations request. The full compliment of employees would be employed starting January 01, 2021 and continue daily throughout the year. He questioned if it was realistic in this year. D. Grimse responded completion was anticipated at the end of January/beginning of February 2021. Additional staff would be available on Saturday's to help move from the old building to the new building. Cleaning and prep work needs to be done before the move. P. Sanderson asked if they had received guidance from the State on the requirements to open the building. Under current COVID guidance, would they be able to open all the square footage of their facility immediately or would there be other conditions that had to be met before opening. M. McLaughlin stated it has been left up to the individual libraries to decide the level of opening. D. Grimse added CDC guidelines would need to be followed. Social distancing and the ventilation of the historic building currently do not meet CDC guidelines. They have not done anything with the temporary heating system to bring it to COVID standards.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The Library currently has a complimentary Comcast line that is provided to various organizations. The Library plans to add a business internet line. There will be a line available to the public and another for staff. It will serve two purposes: the staff will have its own line and the public will have a faster internet speed.

P. Walsh suggested the Library look at a monitor station for the cameras. It would be a good back up plan in case a staff member was not available. M. McLaughlin stated that the Building Committee may be looking at dropping the lines for monitoring for future use.

TA Scruton explained that the default budget proposed by the Library in the amount of \$335,000 was approved by the Board in the amount of \$329,214 which was the adopted budget from the previous year. If the default budget were voted, the amount would be \$329,214.

P. Sanderson, referring to revenue, questioned why there was no transfer from the Friends of the Library to the Weeks Library as the project continues. D. Grimse responded that she has never accepted money from the Friends to run the operation of the Library. The Friends have supported programming and unusual equipment purchases (example: 3D printer). P. Sanderson stated that this year there is a capital campaign. The Friends received donations for a certain purpose which has to be accounted for publicly. The Trustees have to accept those donations. He asked if that revenue had to be accounted for as it was received and used for this public purpose. D. Grimse stated it was not being used for the operating budget. P. Sanderson noted there was no accounting for this and asked the purpose of the donations. M. McLaughlin stated it would make up the shortfall for the monies that have been expended through the bond and Capital Reserve Fund and unanticipated (example: legal fees). The anticipated shortfall was between \$400,000 to \$425,000; it has exceeded that amount. Responding to a question from P. Sanderson, M. McLaughlin stated that an accounting of the items has not been provided to the Selectmen because it was not done by the Library but the Friends of the Library, which is independent. The Trustees have not accepted the funds. The Trustees do not have any input on what the Friends of the Library will be doing with the funds.

J. Connelly asked where the money from the GOFERR Grant received by the Friends of the Library in the amount of \$4,500 would be applied. D. Grimse stated they did receive a small grant because they were unable to do programming or fund raising this year.

GOFERR Grant: P. Walsh questioned Chief Laurent about a second round for the GOFERR Grant. She stated that Round 2 was done. Chief Laurent explained the GOFERR Grant and that the Town has been reimbursed for the maximum and has spent over that amount. Additional grants under the CARES Act may be available if the pandemic continues.

General: P. Sanderson noted there had been no discussion regarding the amount of money the Town had to spend without increasing taxes. The MS-1 states the valuation of the Town is \$7 million plus. Additional revenue will be between \$115,000 and \$120,000.

TA Scruton stated that the Board's goal was to stay at or above 10% in the Unreserved Fund Balance. The current amount retained is 11.12%. The goal is to remain at \$1,653,000. P. Sanderson explained that based on the Unreserved Fund Balance and the additional revenue, there is approximately \$300,000 that can be spent before taxes increase, and that includes Town and School.

P. Walsh stated that the School returned approximately \$500,000. P. Sanderson explained that any money returned should have gone into the Unreserved Fund Balance calculation. He suggested the Unreserved Fund Balance be reviewed for the amount that defaulted back from the School.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

3. Adjournment

MOTION: Z. Pike moved to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. Second – M. Bilodeau; roll call vote: M. Bilodeau - yes, T. Cadle – yes, M. Connelly – yes, F. Hansler - yes, S. Hussey-McLaughlin - yes, D. Miller – yes, Z. Pike – yes, P. Sanderson - yes, J. Connelly – yes, S. McKenzie – yes, B. Krasko - yes. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, December 09, 2020 - 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room and Zoom (School Budget)

Submitted By: Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant