

Minutes of December 4, 2023 Budget Committee Meeting with Selectman and Highway Department

ATTENDEES: Tom Seymour, Chairman of the Board, Charles Estes, School Board Ex-Officio, Frank Razzaboni, Selectman Ex-Officio, Wendy Rosa, Secretary, Joann Irving, Betty Hanks, Bruce Blazon, Frank Simeone

Highway Department Head, Gregg Paradise, Selectman Sean Bresnahan, Later entry, Fire Chief Jamie Moulton

ABSENT: Joan Machado, excused

Tom Seymour opened the meeting at approximately 6:30pm with introduction of New Highway Department Head, Gregg Paradise who began his budget presentation promptly. He went through line by line and then entertained questions from the Committee. The Budget proposal and comparison budget is attached.

Questions began with Frank Simeone inquiring about what equipment we rent?

GP: Excavator, a bigger one for culverts that need replacing. Sean Bresnahan stated they also rent a side mount mower. Currently renting the mower at \$65/hr but they plan to look around for something more efficient.

Bruce Blazon asked why there is no expense for payroll taxes?

SB: The payroll tax expenses are calculated at the end of the year and presented at that time.

FS: What about the health insurance, it looks like they get a 50% raise, where do they get it?

SB: It comes from Primex, an insurance pool for municipalities for the state of NH.

FS: Do we have to buy from them? SB: No, this is the first big increase that we have seen from them in a long time. Tom Seymour added that historically the Insurance pool does better for municipalities than other types of insurance. SB: said they will be looking into whether or not they can do better. FS: How many employees receive this? SB: It is a three-employee husband and wife plan. Part of the increase in the plan was bringing on another employee. FS: Curious about claim driven increase? SB: States that it is a pool shared by other towns so with that added employee benefits plus an overall rate increase of 15% seemingly a common percentage of increase. FS: recapped with stating so this is for covering 6 people when it had been 4.

FS: Who pays for sand? Why do we pay for sand?

GP: Wants to rent a screener to be able to screen out all of our own sand and use it buying only the salt to mix. Which would lower our sand costs. SB: notes that currently we pay \$14.75 per yard for sand. GP: reiterated that by screening we would be putting that yardage cost back into the town and also the byproduct removed from it would then be crushed and used for gravel further saving the town.

TS: Inquired about the increase in the building maintenance line for next year.

GP: Yes, Door replacements, heating service and the building has not been maintained for a long unknown amount of time. GP would like to paint the inside of the building if the budget allows to get the building back to where the town can be proud of it.

Betty Hanks inquired as to what the Professional Services line entails?

GP: Estimates in services we need like Tree Services and such.

FS: Can you tell us what equipment we have now and what condition it is in?

GP: International 6-wheel 2008 est, Peterbilt 6-wheel 5yrs, Sno-Cat Backhoe between PB and International, 420 Road Tie, Backhoe 4 wheel drive grader, John Deere loader, Chevy 6500

FS: Any slated for replacement

GP: The grader will not last another 10 yrs. Expensive. That would be a lease to own; Grappone has good graders.

JL: How many hours a year to use a grader?

GP: This year will be a lot. Spring and upkeep will warrant the increase in grader use.

SB: The grader and the International truck are the equipment that is going to need replacement.

FS: What is the plan for the roads?

SB: Finish up Bunker then Murray Hill wash next guess Cass Mill portion. Looking at roads that are breaking apart. Confidence in Gregg and his expertise.

Ratio of paved versus graveled road?

SB: 12mi paved Class IV roads & Dirt 38 mi. Total mi ratio between paved and dirt, 12:38

Charles Estes: Concerned about 49K offset \$456,205

SB: \$49K on revenue side been using for paving project 505 49K added without offset revenue taxes are going to be raised for 505K hwy block grant offsets the 150k Dispute of 49K deducted from 505K

FS: Any revenues besides the block grant?

SB: 10k for bridges to be brought before public hearing for acceptance. 15k for road maintenance as well for acceptance

TS: Wage Adjustments? How are you going to go about that?

SB: Wanting feedback from Committee

BB: What is the mean pay rate for hwy dept.?

SB: \$26.67

FS: Overtime?

SB: probably 90hrs OT

BB: Opinion of low hrly wage may lose people

Frank Razzaboni: Notes that we do have very good Health Insurance which makes us more competitive

CE: why are wages nearly 8500 less

SB: Separate line for overtime

CE: Reconstruction line?

SB: Discussion has not been had so the question cannot be answered at this time, we track the expenses and go from there.

CE: Can we anticipate the 49K for that

SB: The selectman has not had discussion yet, cannot answer that, until we talk about the paving plan

BB: Notes that with the benefits 15k worth in regard to wages and WR expressed merit-based wage increase be considered as well.

No more questions.

Discussion Questions Turn to Sanitation presented by Gregg Paradise

Frank Simeone: What is Waste Innovation?

SB: The actual cost of disposing of the waste; Under new contract with Waste Management who takes care of everything which will make the Waste Innovation/Recycling line disappear.

FS: Employed?

SB: Two

CE: Money in metal?

SB: Yes, a little bit

BB: Fees to taxpayers?

SB: Yes, for tires, electronics, light bulbs (fluorescent), air conditioners. 10,755K collected in 2022 and all revenues from the Sanitation Dept. will be discussed at another meeting.

Joann Irving notes that the Town Budget does not grow very much from year to year and commends them for doing a good job!

That completed the Highway Departments Sanitation Discussions.

Next Order of Business: Selectman Executive Budget Recommendations presented by Ex-Officio for Budget Committee and Selectman, Frank Razzaboni

FR presented in accordance with the format and then opened it up for questions. He also notes that workman's comp. went up due to injuries mainly in the highway dept.

WR: Asked if the injuries were due to faulty equipment

SB: No, the ones that I know of, no. It's also that we are in a pool so there are other towns involved.

Joann Irving: Questions on the mowing

SB: Three Separate Entities: Parks-N-Rec, Town, & Cemeteries

Bruce Blazon: Asking about evaluation of Property Taxes

SB: Has been going up and is planned to continue; discussion of putting money in the capital reserves starting in 2025.

The final information coming from the Office Selectman will be scheduled for January 22 review with review from the Office of Water Commissioners hopeful on that date as well

SB: Offers statement on Revenues earlier than that meeting

TS: Welcomed that information early.

Further Business for the Budget Committee Included Minute format discussions and Preliminary voting relevance. The results will be Board Budget comparisons will be made available and we will continue with the preliminary voting as this is felt to help the committees see potentially where or if they can adjust.

Motion to Close, Seconded and Meeting was adjourned approximately 2.5hrs after beginning