

MINUTES: JANUARY 22, 2024

ATTENDANCE

BUDGET COMMITTEE: Tom Seymour, Chairman, Wendy Rosa, Secretary, Charles Estes, Ex-Officio School Board, Joann Irving, Joan Machado, Bruce Blazon, Frank Simeone, Betty Hanks

Parks-N-Rec: Nikki Mahoney, December Fortin, Les Dion and Rick Alpers representing Tapply Thompson Community Center (TTCC)

Selectman: Steven Thomson and Shaun Bresnahan

Public: David Thomson

*Chairman Tom Seymour called meeting to order at 6:33pm
The Parks and Recreation Committee began by expounding on the services that are provided by TTCC represented by Les Dion, Director and Rick Alpers Chairman of the Board for TTCC.*

Joann Irving reminded the board that our questions were how many children were involved with the TTCC. Les pointed out that there are 60 from Hill involved. She went on to make us aware that they have 15 take home food bags for Hill. A couple breakfasts and snacks, 10 individual items in the bags each week. Also, seven children received jackets, boots and various winter outer wear this year.

Les Dion stated that they have been working very closely with JDB regarding after-school programs and summer camp programs.

Charlie Estes praised the sports programs that the TTCC offers for Hill kids who otherwise don't have athletic experience opportunities with JDB. Also, \$1349 in scholarships from TTCC were given out to Hill children.

Rick Alpers added that the TTCC helps the Hill kids to assimilate better through the TTCC experience before they get to the Bristol and Newfound schools.

Bruce Blazon asked about the revenues which LD stated is down to 23%. They rely mainly on fundraising events. RA stated that they just received a million-dollar grant to "put some love" back into the building, they are hoping to move their services to a location where they can have their own gymnasium, they plan to do this through fund raising and he notes that it is a long-term plan.

They started a 4th summer camp due to the long wait list. They have hired a grant manager who was able to get a million-dollar grant that needed to be spent in 18mos. They use the "Fair Share Formula" 50/50. Donors contributed and one Donor was from Hill with a matching of 25K. They are a 501C tax bracket.

The center's website is www.TTCCREC.org where you can sign up for newsletters and if anyone would be interested in volunteering as a representative for their town on the TTCC board.

*Next on the Agenda: Water Works represented by Charles Estes
He reports the tank inspections are every 5yrs. by a Mass company, Aqueous, they dive the tank, test and scrub. The tank is gravity fed is good for 36hrs after power outage. Discussions with Fire Department to prepare trucks to not deplete that tank. The discussion involved the*

need to bypass treatment water for fun days or training days to lower expenses involving the treated water.

Joann Irving and Bruce Blazon asked about the two loans taken out for the water services. CE: Two bonds were taken out; one for 255K and another for 285K. The 2006 bond had only two payments left and was paid last month (2023). He further states that there are not accurate records of the Profit and Loss information. He notes that this bears no blame on any one department. No closing of 2022 and 2023. He points out that bookkeeping needs to be corrected and money needs to be put into the system.

Bruce asked questions pertaining to capital reserve money, CE states there is none for the water works service. There are three software systems that cannot be reconciled at this point. There are roughly 10 household water meters that don't work. Everyone gets a flat rate then 25c per 100 gal. used. Average use 3200 gallons monthly - \$80

CE states that the Water Works is under financial and mechanical reconstruction.

Joann Irving wondered if there would be a timeline on fixing broken meters. CE answered there are no specific timelines right now. Regulations are to be changed in 2024. Residents are encouraged to fix broken meters or convert to Wi-Fi. The hopes are to eliminate the walk-up meter reading practice.

The Water Admin is run primarily by Charlie Estes. He is the Water Commissioner and in charge of Billing and Meter Reading. The wages for meter readers were raised in 2023.

Frank Simeone asked about Federal and State contributions and CE explained that the Water Works must implement the Assets Management Program. Stating 'we then need to identify the materials and give them an engineering plan on how we want them to abate. Can take 10yrs to abate.'

Joann raises discrepancies between retainage from 2022 and 2023 and how did we get to them. CE continues to explain that this is where the issues are with the information lacking in the audits. JI continued with concerns about the proposed generator with 65K grant money in 2018, noting that the grant money did not go through. CE commented that a generator should be able to be put in the pump house for less than 65K. Shaun Bresnahan then informed the committee that it is a 3-phase power system at 400 amp and BB supposes 40-50K. CE feels that monies were set aside that did not make it into proper systems and notes that the system is not sustainably being managed the way it is right now.

In closing Steven Thomson stated that there is a lot of work to do, and they are doing it. The Water Works Dept. is now working to change things and make it understandable but are presently at a stalemate because reports don't reconcile.

SELECTMANS PROPOSED BUDGET: Shaun Bresnahan Handouts were given, Shaun began presenting and explaining the Taxes, Land Use, Yield and Interest & Penalties. He then went on to note that the Morrison Pit on 3-A may be closing down. (The town currently has two gravel pits.

Referencing Item #3120, Evans Tree Service is the company that investigates when the town is considering questionable cuts.

#3190 Tax Arrearage Report is up to date with further information being request by the Budget Committee

#3290 Dog registration compliance will be handled by the Police Chief when delinquent. He will serve in hand to resident found in non-compliance.

#3357 This line represents Flood Control, Hill and Weare are the towns most affected by floods.

#3915 Pertains to Gravel Crushing and Building Improvements

#3916 The Ferrin Fund noted there is not a lot this year.

#3934 STHE TOTAL ESTIMATED TOWN REVENUES: 712,461.28

Charlie Estes asks if the offset of line #3914 portion, water, will be given to the Water Works Dept. SB is not sure what that offset represents and will follow up with Lisa Seymour, Administrative Assistant.

Shaun then moving to the Operating Budget of 1/2023- 12/2023 states that there has been 4K added to the payroll.

#4194 Town Admin. Was able to get a better deal on Fuel Oil.

#4196 Insurance increase due to the employ of the Police Chief mainly

#4210 Police: being paid by salary vs hourly. The Chief puts in 40+ hrs. weekly. CE asked if there would be an administrative assistant for the Police Chief. SB states that the Chief does not think that will be necessary, he is able to do his paperwork in the vehicle due to new technological helps. However, he has been funded for assistance for 6mos to evaluate and will know next year for sure.

#4215 Ambulance went down slightly due to different equation formula to try and level the funding. It includes the number of calls but also tries to capture any deficit of reimbursements.

#4222 Fire SB: The budget gaps I call "splitters or lumpers"; equipment testing, and maintenance must be done yearly to be sure it is all safe. The building has gone from heating oil to propane and cost roughly 20k to change things out. The wage line isn't spent down, in 2022 over calls in service and this year they barely hit 100 calls. The Fire Dept has been doing their own reporting and recordings and they recognize the need to have an administrator do that for them. That person will be paid. There has been a recapturing need in the accuracy of reports and once they capture last year they can be better aligned for grants. CE notes there is no estimate on mutual aid for fire equipment. Such as SCBA's. SB: states that we do not have anything to give (mutual) it is an agreement that we will respond when you need us. The Fire Dept. Fund raises and are in process of raising money for the jaws of life.

4312 Highways and Streets: There has been an increase in Health Ins. 2-2person plans to 3-2person plans and one single. However, we are using less salt. A second batch is being ordered and will mix with the sand. Will not be just throwing salt down.

The Town Warrant Articles for 2024 were then presented by Shaun Bresnahan

Notable:

If Article 3 passes it will finish the 5800' left of Bunker Hill to be paved and move us to Carrier Rd needs in 2025.

Article 5: An estimate has been given by Mango Electric for installation and monitoring for new security and fire detection systems in the Hill Fire Station and the Hill Highway Garage. Their estimate is considered high, (The town will be checking with another source.)

Article 8 requests changing the purpose of the Building Improvement Capital Reserve Fund and Security Measures to include the Maintenance and Repair of town buildings. This would remove 6k from the Building Improvement line.

The taxation increase for the Town of Hill would be 61,418.72 and this concludes the Town Reporting from the Selectmen's office.

The minutes from January 8, 2024, were unanimously approved via motions and vote.

New Business included a discussion and review of the Presentation duties expected of the Budget Committee during Public Hearings for both Town and School. The Budget Chair will present the budget proposals and recommendations to the public with the body being able to answer questions along with the Chairman. Should there be questions that the Budget Committee cannot answer well, the presiding members for Town and School will be present to do so but are not expected to present the Budget Proposal recommendations and will only be referred to in cases of detailing answers more succinctly if necessary.

This was understood and agreed to by all present and motions were made for another Budget Committee meeting to review all department proposals before going to the Public Hearings. The date for such was set for Monday, January 29, 2024, 6:30pm in the Town Library. A vote was taken and the extra meeting prevailed.

Motions were then entertained for the commencing of the meeting and with unanimous vote in favor the meeting adjourned.