

**Town of Hill
Budget Committee
2025 Budget**

10/23/24 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Bruce Blazon (Chair), Marshall Bennett (V. Chair), Betty Hanks, Frank Simeone, Tom Angeley, Joann Irving, Bill Machado, Shaun Bresnahan (Sec/Ex-Officio), Wendy Rosa-Fuller (Ex-Officio)

Members Absent: none

Public: Gregg Paradise, Shelly Henry, Jamie Moulton, Mark Labonte, Stephen Thomson

Minutes from the 10/16/24 meeting were reviewed; there were no changes. Bruce made a motion to accept minutes as submitted; Frank seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Bruce asked Shaun for an update on the Budget Committee's (BC) request to contact DRA regarding Water Works position that it doesn't have to participate in the BC process. Shaun informed the BC that Hill's DRA representative didn't have any advice and suggested I contact NH Municipal Association (NHMA). Shaun reached out to NHMA and is awaiting a call back.

Gregg Paradise presented his proposed 2025 Highway and Sanitation budgets.

His Highway proposed budget is \$ 34,358 less than 2024 Appropriation; the major increases are as follows.

- \$1,200 increase for Cold Patch. Using more cold patch to prevent small problems from becoming big problems.
- \$1,000 increase in Equipment Rental; this line will fund 2 weeks of screening for sand and bank run gravel.
- \$5,757 increase in Wages; this represents a 3% pay raise.

Major decreases include:

- \$6,000 decrease for Diesel; this represents a cost savings from changing our supplier.
- \$12,575 decrease for Medical Insurance; Rates are up 5.5%. The budgeted amount represents the 80% amount paid by the town. In the past 100% of the cost was budgeted.
- \$10,200 decrease in Salt; Less salt is being used. Most of the salt us used to mix with sand. Salt is reserved only for icing conditions; this was only necessary for one storm in 2024.
- \$11,300 decrease in Sand; this spring the highway crew screened 1,100 cu.yds of winter sand from the towns Murray Hill pit. This is sufficient for a normal winter.
- \$3,000 decrease in Supplies; stopped what was characterized as wasteful spending.

Marshall asked about Equipment Expense? This is the line for repairs to trucks highway equipment.

Gregg discussed past and proposed use of salt and sand. The proposed budget seeks to continue screening our own sand. Screening our sand costs about \$8.00/yd while purchasing it costs \$14.75. Most of the salt is used for mixing with sand, this keeps the sand from freezing in the pile and provides some de-icing of the road. This line is budgeted for mixing with sand and 5 loads for sever icing events on paved roads. The 1,100 yds screen this year is already mixed with salt.

Health insurance is being budgeted for the towns actual expense. Shaun told the BC that in the past the auditor makes an adjustment to the books to correct this amount from 100% to 80% which the town actually pays. This proposed budget is more reflective way of presenting the true town expense.

Wages, this includes a 3% proposed raise; Gregg and the Selectmen need to do some more work on overtime. This line may go up.

In closing Gregg told the BC that in the next couple of years the town will need to purchase a new grader. Our current grader is a 1987; finding parts is getting harder and during the Spring-Summer-Fall it averages 40 hrs/month. This is food for thought and he wants to be transparent in the towns needs.

Sanitation

The proposed budget is \$2,234 higher than the 2024 appropriation; major increases are as follows.

- \$1,000 increase in recycling cost, this is the result of a contracted price increase.
- \$660 increase for wages, proposed pay raise.

There are no decreases in this line.

Brief discussion on new contract with Waste Management. Also discussed the supply line which is for misc supplies and materials.

Marshall made a motion to approve the 2025 proposed budget for Highway and Sanitation; Betty seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Shelly Henry presented her Town Clerk / Tax Collector proposed budget.

The Town Clerk budget is is \$7,859 more than the 2024 appropriation; major increases are as follows.

- \$5000.00 Election Expense; this covers a new laptop computer for Supervisors of the Checklist. Current laptop will be 6 years old next year. All so need to budget for ballot programming for tablet used for handicapped voters which is now required for every election not just Federal elections. Estimated cost is \$1,500/page.
- \$1,174 Wages TC/TX; proposed 3% pay raise.

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Major decreases:

- \$3,300 decrease Professional Services; this line covered the purchase of a new copier in 2024; in 2025 this covers half of the maintenance plan. This line all so covers Town Attorney for Town Meeting.
- \$2,500 decrease in Elections; in 2025 there is only one town election. This line pays for Supervisor of Checklist which must meet every 90 days and Ballot Clerks during election.

Tax Collector

The proposed budget is \$100 more than 2024 appropriation; Increase is as follows.

\$100 increase Computer Software Support; this is to cover increase to Avatar Software.

There are no decreases.

Shelly believes that for 2026 the town will have to purchase a new handicapped voting tablet which is about \$5,000.

Increase in Office Supplies is for the digest she uses to get retail values for vehicles not in the State DMV database.

The Deputy Town Clerk will be getting a 3% pay raise; the amount budgeted is the same as 2024 but there is enough money to cover the raise.

Joann asked about Election Wages; there are 5 ballot clerks and 3 supervisors of the checklist and they all are paid \$15.00/hr.

Joann asked why there wasn't an increase in postage. Shelly replied she purchased extra before the last increase so she will be good for 2025.

Marshall made a motion to approve the 2025 proposed budget for Town Clerk & Tax Collector; Frank seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Jamie Moulton Presented some revisions to his proposed 2025 Budget and discussed plans for 2024 appropriations.

Included \$2500 for Testing that was left out of 2024 Budget amount.

Decreased Postage to \$200.00

Discussed that 2024 appropriation and why there is a need to increase budget. There are some new firefighters that don't fit into particular pieces of protective gear; particularly boots. He would all so like to purchase a new commercial grade chainsaw. The department currently has 2 home owners sizes chainsaws.

Jamie would like to replace the roof on the fire house next year. If there is enough money left over from 2024 he would like to request it be encumbered for this project, He will be seeking 3 quotes for a new metal roof.

Proposes decreasing water line by \$800 since only about \$1,000 is billed. Shaun mentioned the \$1,800 is for hydrant fee. In the past this was a contribution to the water works to offset water used in Hydrants.

Stephen Thomson was asked if the Water Commissioners would be billing this. He said that is personal belief is this is covered in Water Works Rules which are out dated with all of the changes. He isn't sure what the status is; he would need to discuss at next Water Commissioners meeting.

There was more discussion on the Bristol Ambulance Contract. The general agreement is the selectmen should ask Franklin for a price. Everyone agrees it is likely to be higher but we would have 3 prices including the estimated coast of starting our own EMS from scratch.

Marshall made a motion to approve the 2025 proposed ambulance contract from Bristol in the amount of \$142,400 and have the selectmen seek a price from Franklin; Betty seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Bruce made a motion the accept the proposed 2025 Fire and Emergency Mgt budget; Betty seconds the motion. Motion passes 8 Yay and 1 Nay.

No new business to discuss.

Shaun made a motion to adjourn; Frank seconds motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted
Shaun Bresnahan; Secretary