

Selectboard Minutes 12/09/2019

Members Present: Bard Hill, Christy Witters, Roger Brown, David Sander

Absent: Katie Mather

Others Present: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Larry Muldoon, Police Chief; Connie Bona, Financial Dir.; Gerald Levesque, Assist. Fire Chief Pete Gosselin, Highway Foreman; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15, also attending – Bradon Yeates and Eric Adam Wood.

Called to Order: 7:00 PM

1. David welcomed everyone to the meeting, there was no public comment.

2. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

Review and discussion of the FY21 Budget for all departments:

1. Josh provided an overview of what the budget looks like after making the adjustments discussed at the previous budget meeting. There were also several areas where numbers were finalized including health insurance costs and the grand list. Taking all things into consideration the budget was at a 4.35% tax increase. An additional reduction of \$77,297 would be necessary to keep to a 2% tax increase.

2. Bard asked if the Conservation Fund should be a ballot item since it's not actually budgeted. Roger thought that the amount and duration should be clear. After discussion it was agreed to make the Conservation Fund a ballot item similar to social appropriations. Josh will look into how to proceed.

The discussion continued, Roger felt that we cannot maintain services if we keep to a 2% tax increase. Connie stated that with Conservation Fund being voted on separately the tax increase is down to 2.9% and that includes the administrative assistant position at 30hrs.

3. It was decided that with CESU vacating the 3rd floor of Town Center in mid-December the water & sewer allocations could be reduced by \$1,000.

4. Planning & Zoning office supplies were reduced by \$1,000.

5. It was decided that the Library salaries approved by the Library Board would be left as is.

6. Firefighters will receive a \$1 increase in July if the budget is approved in addition to the minimum wage increase that takes effect Jan. 1.

Bard asked the Fire Dept. to provide the Board with a call volume report that differentiates between interstate and non-interstate calls. Braden advised that all calls go through the Shelburne call center but that having their own tracking software is important. All reporting is currently done by hand so providing the report will take time.

7. After discussion it was decided that the Highway Dept. sign expenditures could be reduced by \$7500.

8. The Administrative Assistant position going to 30 hours a week was discussed. Roger felt it's important to provide the services we need to provide. Josh felt 30 hours a week is necessary to handle the ever increasing amount of paperwork and that the person currently holding the position had the capabilities and experience needed to do the job. Connie stated that she needs backup, that payroll could use full backup including Josh's part in it and having someone else who can do AP when she's out or too busy with other demands is important. Pete thinks having the Administrative Assistant available for the upcoming FEMA demands is going to be crucial. Bard suggested we leave it in for now but be prepared for explaining the need during the Town Meeting presentation.

The discussion continued with thoughts on how to disseminate budget information to the public. Of note a "fact sheet" was suggested, putting a presentation on the Town website, and having copies of the Town Meeting documents available at the Library and other places for pick up.

Larry asked if we could break out the budget by department so people can see previous year and this year side by side believing it might help the public to see the cost savings in his department and others. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

9. Addressing the Community Justice Center request for funding Bard stated that the time has passed. Larry offered that the DOJ grant funds some of the costs but they are now looking for towns to provide funding to cover costs not covered by the grant. Christy thinks letting the Legislature know it's necessary to have additional funding is important, that the burden shouldn't fall to the towns. Larry agreed stating we are required to use the programs and the money could be spent in other ways. Bard acknowledged that federally funded programs are ever increasingly being funded locally. The CJC will be at the next Selectboard meeting to do a presentation.

Bard is also concerned that because of the town's proximity to the interstate we have problems and expenses other towns don't have. We pay the costs associated with fire, rescue and police responses on the interstate, he feels there should be state help to cover those services. Larry feels the State Police help a great deal with services and we should be cautious about how we approach this. It was agreed it was a good topic for legislative breakfast Josh is attending.

10. At 2.5 % it was decided to clean up the budget and have it ready for approval Monday.

11. Josh will notify appropriation applicants that going to voice vote.

Topics for the next Selectboard Meeting:

Ballot wording, how other towns separate appropriations, whether or not appropriation requests and the Conservation Committee can present at Town Meeting are to be discussed at the next Selectboard meeting. Josh will check with VLCT on legalities.

The date and time of Town Meeting will be chosen at the next board meeting. Roger would like to look at Town Meeting structure and increasing participation possibly by having it in the evening or weekend.

How to distribute Town Report information. It was requested that the Town Clerk be available at the next meeting.

Warrants

The warrant was signed.

MOTION TO ADJOURN by Christy, seconded by Roger. All were in favor, adjourned at 8:45PM

b) Discussion of cost associated with providing pay increases of more than one step in the pay grid c)
Review of draft capital plan spreadsheet1

9:00 PM II. Executive Session if Necessary

9:10 PM III. Adjourn

Time is available at each meeting for public comment.