

## **Board of Selectmen**

**October 6, 2021**

**Present:** Mark P. Duffy, Chair; Richard C. Edwards; Kenneth G. Fifield; Dino A. Scala, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary.

Department Heads/Committee Representatives were present as indicated below. Mr. Duffy called the posted meeting to order at 5p.m.

**Community Services – Wakefield Library – Pam Wiggin and Nancy Hall** – The proposed budget reflects a slight increase over the 2021 request. Ms. Wiggin spoke to their plan to do more promotion via their website. The Library saw 533 new visitors over the past year, many of whom are there to do genealogy research. Because the Town generally contributes less than the actual operation costs, the difference is taken from the Library's investment accounts. It was clarified that the Library requested funding in the amount of \$12,850 for 2021; however, the Board supported funding at \$10,410. **Mr. Fifield moved the line for the Wakefield Library at \$12,000. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

**Community Services – Wakefield Library – Beryl Donovan and Dick DesRoches (joined the session in progress)** – Reference was made to the Literacy Program. Although this program has a separate line, Ms. Donovan noted it could easily be added to the Gafney budget. Ms. Donovan noted that were it not for the construction project, the Library would be back to normal operating hours. Mr. Scala asked about the boost to the Internet service at the Library, which was obtained at a significant cost. Ms. Donovan has tried to determine how many residents in town do not have cable. The Library has considered checking out hot spots to its patrons. Mr. Scala referred to the possibility of Federal funding to address lack of Internet access.

Mr. DesRoches noted that this budget has been flatlined (by the Selectmen) for 4 years. He explained the increase in the 2022 proposed budget: 1) A previous error in payroll taxes, carried over for a number of years, at a cost of \$3600; 2) \$2000 increase for insurance; and 3) increased cost of cleaning services for the bigger building. Mr. DesRoches referred to the current inefficient heating/cooling system and the anticipation those costs will not increase dramatically in the new building. The new operation will be all on one floor, so for safety reasons they will not need additional staff. The existing children's library will be used for programs, meetings, community use.

Ms. Donovan spoke to their income sources, including fundraising plans. Once the expansion project is complete, she hopes to increase the hours the Library is open, which would require an increase in operating costs. Membership continues to increase. **Mr. Fifield moved the line at \$145,000. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

**Mr. Duffy moved the Adult Learning line at \$25,000. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.** Mr. Scala was advised that the original front door will not be used by the public when the expansion is complete. It is anticipated that the Library will re-open in February 2022. Mr. DesRoches provided a brief overview of the costs to date of the project, as well as funding for same.

**Public Safety – Ambulance – Chief Todd Nason** – Mr. Fifield advised that the wage lines would be adjusted by a COLA, once established by the Board. Chief Nason's figures include anticipated merit increases (and will, therefore, be adjusted to reflect current pay rates). Mr. Edwards explained the difference between the COLA and a step/merit increase.

**Board of Selectmen  
October 6, 2021  
Page 2**

Considerable discussion followed regarding COLA vs. merit. Mr. Scala referred to the overtime line (01-42152-140), which is over-expended as a result of not having call personnel to fill in. **Mr. Edwards moved the revised section total at \$551,571. Mr. Duffy seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

**Public Safety – General Fire – Chief Todd Nason – Mr. Edwards moved the section total at \$210,605. Mr. Duffy seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

**Public Safety – East Wakefield, Union and Forest Fire – Chief Todd Nason – Mr. Edwards moved East Wakefield Fire at \$6811, Union Fire at \$6230 and Forest Fires at \$2000. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

**Mr. Edwards moved to adjourn at 7 p.m. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Toni Bodah, Secretary

Approval of Minutes:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark P. Duffy, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard C. Edwards

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth G. Fifield