

**Board of Selectmen
October 12, 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 5:18 p.m.

General Government – Assessing Operations – Relf Fogg; Ken Paul; and Cindy Bickford – Reference was made to the legal line (01-41522-320). Ms. Bickford spoke to a current legal issue that will result in additional expenditures. Mr. Fifield noted that legal expenditures could increase easily—i.e., should a property owner bring suit against the Town regarding their assessment. Conversation followed regarding assessments and tax rates. Ms. Bickford advised that new assessments would take affect April 2023. There could be a possible time adjustment should the real estate market take a dive. An increase is anticipated for the statistical update contract in 2023. Current town valuation is \$1.8 billion (with utilities), up from \$1.3 billion last year. Mr. Fifield would like to see a mechanism for reviewing complaints. Mr. Fogg stated that often actions start when changes are found during yearly review of property information. Mr. Fifield stated that a property owner has a right to know why an action began.

Ms. Bickford noted that neither the mileage line (01-41522-637) nor the training line (01-41522-330) will be fully expended this year. New Property Assessment (01-41522-312) relates to 2 contracts and will be fully expended.

Mr. Fifield noted that the Board will soon vote on a COLA, following which wage lines would be adjusted. They are looking at 3%, although the Social Security is looking at 6.1%. All will get the COLA, but not all will get a step. Mr. Edwards sees the COLA as a raise, then adjustments in accordance with the wage chart are for merit. **Mr. Edwards moved the section total at \$138,384. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

Discussed the stipend for the Board of Assessors, which has not increased for a number of years. Mr. Fogg and Mr. Paul are comfortable with the current stipend.

Human Services – Welfare – Although no representative was present, the Board reviewed the proposed budget as submitted. **Mr. Duffy moved the section total at \$46,485. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.**

Public Safety – Police Department – Chief John Ventura and Lt Chris Waldron – Chief Ventura noted that Lt. Waldron prepared the proposed 2022 budgets. He stated that it is difficult to gauge the number of calls for services given the impact of COVID. He confirmed that the wage lines are based only on current rates (other than 1 officer whose evaluation is due in December). Mr. Fifield noted that the COLA will be effective as of April 1, 2022.

Chief Ventura referred to the increase in the training line (01-42101-330) due to training for the Police One software. Mr. Fifield noted that use of this software may result in less overtime. Chief Ventura stated that the software will eliminate the need to pay officers to travel to the Academy for 8-hour training days. Mr. Duffy noted that the figures in the explanation for the software line (01-42101-342) do not add up to the amount requested.

Chief Ventura added that they may revisit the body cameras being used in the 2023 budget. Mr. Fifield moved to increase the software line (01-42101-342) to \$15,300. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Mr. Fifield moved the revised section total at \$1,000,994. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Public Safety – Emergency Management – Chief John Ventura and Lt Chris Waldron – Chief Ventura noted that this budget was decreased by \$1000 as we are no longer dealing with the COVID pandemic. Mr. Duffy moved the section total at \$3500. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Public Safety – Public Safety Building – Chief John Ventura and Lt Chris Waldron – This proposed budget is the same as the 2021 budget. The explanation column will be revised to reflect current rates for #2 fuel and propane. Mr. Fifield moved the section total at \$114,693. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Public Health – Animal Control – Chief John Ventura and Lt Chris Waldron – This budget reflects a reduction in weekly hours to 18. Mr. Fifield moved the section total at \$20,100. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Financial Affairs – Capital Outlay – Chief John Ventura and Lt Chris Waldron – Mr. Fifield moved to include \$12,000 for a hazard mitigation plan grant. Mr. Duffy seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Mr. Duffy moved the section total at \$56,900. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Mr. Scala advised the Board that the rates for health insurance will drop by 8.1%, and the rates for dental insurance will drop by 1.5%. Mr. Fifield would like to compare the cost of available plans (single, 2-person and family) between the School and the Town.

Mr. Edwards moved to adjourn at 6:41 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