

Budget Committee

October 29, 2020 APPROVED

Present: Jerry O'Connor, Chair; Priscilla Colbath; Dave Mankus; Elizabeth Conner; Denny Miller; Peter Kasprzyk, Sanbornville Water Precinct Rep; Paul Romano; Frank Zappala; Relf Fogg, School Board Rep; and Ken Fifield, Board of Selectmen Rep. Connie Twombly joined the session at 6:34p.m. Also present were Dino A. Scala, Town Administrator; Toni Bodah, Secretary; and Jim Miller and Ted Taylor, Clearview Community TV. Department Heads/Committee Reps were present as indicated below.

Mr. O'Connor called the posted meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. and led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Gen'l Gov't – Election, Registration, etc. – Valerie Ward

Mr. Miller moved the section total at \$113,456. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.

Community Services – Parks & Recreation – Wayne Robinson

In the Explanation column of the Salaries line (01-45201-110), reference to '54 weeks' will be changed to '52 weeks'. Mr. Kasprzyk suggested a warrant article for repair of the Annex roof be considered. **Ms. Colbath moved the section total at \$186,052. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 11-0.**

Sewer – Brock Mitchell

Mr. Mitchell explained that the Attendant spends 75% of his time at the sewer plant, and 25% of his time at the Transfer Station. He advised that the Town is currently camera-ing the sewer lines. One spot will be jetted; otherwise, the line is clear to the Mobil station. Mr. Mitchell advised Mr. Kasprzyk that he is obtaining prices to address the wet wells. **Ms. Colbath moved the Sewer budget at \$128,059. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 11-0.**

Public Works – Town Maintenance & Highway Department – Brock Mitchell

Mr. Miller received confirmation that we have a stockpile of salt. **Mr. Fogg moved these pages [\$177,000 for Town Maintenance; \$471,675 for Highway Department]. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion.** Mr. Miller questioned building maintenance (01-43122-430) going from \$16,000 to \$8000. Mr. Mitchell advised the line will not need as much funding once the boiler is replaced. He also confirmed he is still buying wood, already cut/split, as his staff has other things to address with their time.

Mr. Scala referred to the savings being realized at the Transfer Station, as well as an increase in revenues. Mr. Miller would be interested in seeing what the Board of Selectmen forecasts for revenues—perhaps at the Committee's last meeting with the Town.

Mr. Kasprzyk referred to the importance of keeping an inventory of all Town assets, noting that all businesses do so. Mr. Miller noted that the Town operates on a cash system and doesn't have to account for those assets in the same manner as a private business, which operates on an accrual system. He added that the CIP Committee does see a list of equipment, as well as an anticipated replacement schedule. Mr. Mitchell stated that he does have an inventory of all tools (except wrenches and sockets, etc.). Mr. Zappala noted such a list could be useful in the event of a break-in/theft. Mr. Kasprzyk noted it is important to be accountable since we are spending the public's money. Mr. Mitchell stated that new tools are often required to connect to the big trucks, which are all computerized now and often require updates.

In response to Mr. Fogg, Mr. Mitchell advised he has a 500 gallon tank of DEF fluid at the shop. **The motion then passed 11-0.**

Public Works – Solid Waste – Brock Mitchell and Joe Gore

Mr. Fogg moved the section total at \$470,528. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 11-0.

Mr. Fifield stated that Mr. Mitchell was the 1st Department Head to present to the Board of Selectmen, having done a great job at trimming, as well as developing additional projects. He noted it might be useful to explain the changes in operation at the Transfer Station. Mr. Mitchell referred to the purchase of a 1984 Mack. After running it for only 8 months, a savings of \$50,000 was realized in hauling costs. In addition, we are bailing our aluminum and our cardboard, for which we are now receiving revenue (rather than paying to have it hauled off). We are currently getting \$65/ton for cardboard and have just sent out a load of cans at about \$20,000. Currently, revenues equal about ½ of the operating budget. 500 tons more have been hauled this year compared to last year at this time. Mr. Miller takes pride in the entire staff. Mr. Mitchell added that the scales will be moved in about a month, which will greatly improve traffic flow. Paving should occur within a couple of weeks (although striping will wait until spring). Mr. Gore noted that the bailer has paid for itself twice over.

Mr. Scala noted that due to the virus, many summer people have turned into year-round residents. This has added greatly to the volume involved at the Transfer Station. Should the 1984 Mack break down, we would be in a difficult situation. Therefore, we have a 3-year lease for another truck, which we expect to purchase at the end of the lease. Mr. Gore noted that the savings realized in hauling costs more than covers the cost of the lease. We could wait up to 3 weeks for Waste Management to provide back-up hauling for us. Mr. Mitchell stated that if we can get 3 more cans, we would be self-sufficient. Mr. Romano was advised that the truck is currently driven by Mr. Gore; however, 2 employees are close to obtaining their CDL's. Mr. Romano asked whether Mr. Gore's absence has an effect on the rest of the crew. Mr. Mitchell noted that most of the hauls are made on Thursdays, when the facility is closed to the public. Waste Management charges at least \$220/trip. It costs the Town approximately \$40/trip to haul with our own equipment.

Mr. Kasprzyk questioned whether anyone has contacted the railroad about their putting in a spur to load train cars rather than hauling with our truck. Mr. Mitchell noted that the train does not go to Turnkey. Mr. Mankus noted that the Transfer Station staff experienced the equivalent of a blizzard all summer long. He questioned whether there is any way to quantify the increase this past year. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Gore referred to having hauled 500 tons more this year compared to last year at this time. Activity at the Transfer Station generally dies out after Labor Day—not this year. Ms. Colbath noted she has received many positive comments from the public regarding Transfer Station operations/staff. Ms. Conner suggested increasing the cost of a permit. Mr. Fogg received confirmation that brush up to 2' is accepted—no stumps—and that the brush is chipped once each year.

Public Works – Street Lights

Ms. Colbath moved the section total at \$34,600. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 11-0.

Gen'l Gov't – Assessing – Cynthia Bickford

Mr. Romano moved the section total at \$138,781. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 10-0-1 (Mr. Fogg abstaining).

Gen'l Gov't – Legal

Mr. Miller moved the section total at \$15001. Mr. Romano seconded the motion, which passed 11-0. Mr. Scala noted that he confirmed this total with Town counsel.

Gen'l Gov't – Executive

Mr. Miller noted that the Board of Selectmen works hard and are underpaid compared to surrounding communities; however, it is not the right year to double their salary. He stressed that the Department Heads were asked to come in with flat budgets. Several Committee members expressed their agreement. Mr. Scala then provided the Committee members with information regarding area salaries for Boards of Selectmen. Mr. Miller noted that \$5000 is an appropriate amount to pay a Board member; however, we should not increase that salary by 100% in 1 year, especially this year. Mr. Scala referred to the salary being last increased in the 1990's. He contacted towns used in the pay study for regular employees. The Board has worked to get the rest of the staff on track with pay, and is trying to keep the Selectmen on track as well. **Mr. Miller moved to increase the Selectmen's stipend by \$1000/year, for a total of \$10,500.** Mr. Mankus noted that the Town has searched for a Town Administrator several times in recent years. During one such time, the Selectmen stepped in for a period of time. Did that happen this year? Mr. Mankus advised that was not the case this year. Ms. Twombly referred to the amount of planned increase for the current Town Administrator, and the lack of experience involved. She asked whether a consultant was hired. Mr. Scala advised that Teresa Williams, a previous Town Administrator, was hired to assist with training, and has worked approximately 5 hours. **Mr. Fogg seconded the motion, which passed 6-5.**

Mr. Fifield referred to the increase in the Town Administrator salary line (01-41301-100), which will not occur until sometime in 2021. He stressed that the Board has worked to get all Town employees on track with respect to wages—this should include the Town Administrator. Mr. Kasprzyk noted that experience is not always the answer, noting that several people this evening have complimented the current administration. Ms. Twombly asked whether every employee is now on the pay chart. Mr. Fifield believes this has been accomplished. Ms. Twombly wants to be sure that everybody is being treated fairly. Mr. Fifield stated that some employees receive double-steps. The Board still tried to level fund the budget while bringing employee pay rates onto the current chart. Mr. Scala believes we have 2 more employees to be reviewed in December, which should bring all of the staff onto the new pay chart. This new chart has been stretched over more steps than the previous chart, which allows more room to award increases based on merit.

Mr. Zappala referred to the difference in pay in the private sector vs. the government during probationary periods. Ms. Conner referred to the proposed budget reflecting some increases at 8%, some at 6%, while others are at 3%. Mr. Fifield referred to the position of Town Administrator being very low compared to the new chart. Ms. Bodah explained that the same percentage rate cannot be applied to the steps for each position. That percentage rate is determined by the extent of the range of salaries for each position provided by participating towns. Ms. Twombly referred to Social Security's 1% increase. **Mr. Fogg moved the section total at \$150,625. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, which passed 9-2.**

Gen'l Gov't – Town Hall

Ms. Colbath moved the section total at \$58,265. Mr. Fogg seconded the motion, which passed 11-0. Ms. Twombly was advised that the 'Custodian' is actually a contracted cleaning service.

Mr. Scala referred to notes indicating the boilers may need replacement. He advised that we just had an independent inspection of our boilers at Town Hall, both of which were determined to be in good shape, although we may need a couple of vents. Notes also indicated that the system should be mapped out, as a variety of contractors have worked on various sections. However, the same independent contractor believes everything is well-marked. Our current contract expires this month and we have put the maintenance of Town Hall boilers out to bid.

Gen'l Gov't – Insurance

Mr. Fogg moved the section total at \$120,224. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Gen'l Gov't – General Administration

Ms. Colbath moved the section total at \$111,199. Mr. Fogg seconded the motion, which passed 11-0.

Mr. Miller referred to a possible start-up company providing insurance to towns/counties, which would provide healthy competition to Primex. Mr. Scala knows of no such company, but will reach out to his email thread. Mr. Scala added that he has met with CCS to get a handle on the services they provide to the Town, and he will meet with HealthTrust next. His plan is to meet with all outside contractors in order to ensure the Town is getting it's money's worth.

Minutes

Mr. Fogg moved to approve the minutes of September 28, 2020 (both the Town and School portions), with any amendments offered. Mr. Romano seconded the motion, which passed 10-0-1 (Mr. Kasprzyk abstaining).

Mr. O'Connor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 31, 2020, at 9 a.m.

Mr. Romano moved to adjourn at 7:46 p.m. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 11-0.

Respectfully submitted
Toni Bodah, Secretary