

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes  
Monday, November 29, 2021

At the Selectmen's meeting held on Monday, November 29, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. the following people were in attendance: John Tholl, Shawn White, and Peter Corey.

Others in attendance: Rob Larson, Public Works Director; Fred Ingerson, Water Superintendent; Tom Ladd

Chair Corey called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Budgets:

Airport: Shawn said the request would be the same as prior years, \$9,000.

Public Works Departments:

Rob Larson, Public Works Director, reviewed the Highways & Streets budget. He said the total budget increase is \$23,751, a 2.94% increase. Main increases are for: Salaries, Retirement, Vehicle Fuel, Asphalt/Hot Mix/Cold Patch. Heating oil is down because of the new outside wood boiler. Shawn asked Rob when he does the PO's to break out the costs by the piece of equipment. Rob said that will all be taken care of when we get the new asset management program up and running. Shawn said it is good to see how much is spent on each piece of equipment. Shawn said Napa can do separate slips, and they can put on the slip what piece of equipment it is for. It is easier for the Board to know what piece of equipment the money is being spent on.

Street Lighting – The street lighting budget is down by \$4,400. We are finally realizing the savings on the LED lights.

Transfer Station –

Major increase is Rob added a part-time employee. Hazardous Waste Collection is up \$800. Tipping fees is up \$691. We decreased the line item for the pay-per-bag purchases because Rob was able to purchase the bags for next year in this year's budget. Worried about getting them next year with the supply issues. Storage containers took out the \$3,500 because we can't get a container for that price. Overall budget is up \$9,711 – 5.23%. Rob said that we talked previously about raising the price per bag for the public, but not convinced we want to do that now. Shawn thinks we need to leave the \$10,000 in the budget for the pay per bag purchases. Shawn doesn't agree with adding a part-time person at the transfer station. The part-time person covers when Jimmy takes his time off. Rob said his issue is having someone working by themselves in a remote area on hydraulic equipment is dangerous. Rob said he was told when he was brought on he wasn't going to be micromanaged on his budget if he meets the budget

requirements. He has a trained, certified person, and Jimmy takes vacation or gets sick we have someone who can run the show. Shawn said he went through the time cards, and that person is working days they are not open. Peter is ok with leaving the salaries, but he agrees with Shawn we should put something in for the bags then the budget is more representative of what we will see from year to year. Shawn thinks \$7,000 would be a good number. Peter's personal opinion is the bag fees need to increase. Look at bag fees and see what the surrounding towns are charging, we are low. Rob said he would think about increasing the bag charge. Shawn said a lot of the costs went up, then we see things on the side of the road. Peter said he is not taking any comments tonight from the public on the solid waste budget.

Water Budget: Only has about a \$1000 increase, but that does not include the salary increases and benefits figured in yet. Rob said he is proposing that all income above the budget will be placed in a 50/50 split to savings and debt reduction. Rob wants to ask about setting up a capital reserve account for the water department. We average \$40,000 to \$45,000 income more than the budget. With that notion, that 28-year loan we have with USDA we could save 7 years about \$388,000 by doing it the way Rob is projecting it. That is one extra payment a year. We do quarterly billing—we could do quarterly injections into that loan so we could pay it off sooner. We would have a capital reserve and we have the contingency fund of \$300,000. The money is there in the enterprise fund. Rob said there is a water savings account, which could have money put into it. Rob thinks it is a way to fund capital reserve and debt reduction. Rob could come approach the board about a payment for debt reduction when the funds were there. Peter's biggest concern is what are we projecting to do, and will we have funds to do the projects. We have been fortunate to get \$10 million in grant funds over the past few years. What is on the capital project plan for the water department, and where is the money going to come from? Likes the idea of debt reduction, but where will the money come from to do the projects. John thinks we are better off to put money aside for future projects rather than paying off the debt. Shawn said why don't we put it in a savings and save the water users in the long run. Rob said the water rates are within state standards about 45% of the scale. Shawn said he is thinking about putting the money away for future projects. Peter said it will be a once-a-year decision when we look and see how much money is in the water account. We either have the money or we don't. The Water Department has to have a capital improvement plan so we will know what we need in the account. Rob said he will have something on this by the first of the year. No questions on the proposed budget. Fred said the tank cleaning line item, what is budgeted is not what we are going to be spending. We have \$5,000 budgeted for next year. Fred thinks it more like than \$10,000. We can change it to that quote—the money is in the account. We don't use the money every year.

Sewer Budget – The big increase is we will start paying on the second bond in 2022. An increase of \$91,471. Chemicals and sludge disposal also have an increase—those are new things we have never had to do before with the lagoon. Sewer chemicals went up to \$16,000. We historically have set aside \$500 but that went up significantly because of our new process. There

are now three phone lines going to this facility--the regular phone line plus the two security systems. Sludge Removal is going to be the line item to pay Casella. Rob said that money is built into the rest of the budget. Rob didn't put a line item in there. So far this year, we have only spent \$3,000 because we have only been sludging since August. We are up and down with our process. We don't have a final number yet on what will be generated this year. Peter thinks it will be prudent to put a number into that line item. We know we have to pay to get rid of the stuff. It probably should be \$12,000. Rob was going to use pump station line item, but it really should go where it is being spent from. Peter asked about septage receiving revenue. Rob said that we were doing well, but the ammonia levels shot up so we had to shut it down. It overtaxed the system, so we had to stop taking it. Last week we started taking it again for only Whitefield residents. Rob said this is watched on an hourly basis by Wright-Pierce. They call Willis and Rob and let them know when things seem to get out of line.

Rob said we have been inconsistent with taking sludge out and with taking sludge in. There have been valve situations so they wouldn't balance automatically. We have had daily issues that need to be ironed out. The sludge number is so up and down. Once we get that ironed out, it will be a nice income base. It may not be as high as it was when we initially started taking it in.

Shawn said in reference to the pay scale, if you are not on the step increase then you don't get an increase for that year. We will need to go back and look at the salary line item.

Rob reviewed his warrant articles and capital reserve items for next year he would leave those the same as 2021, but there is no longer a need for the Septage Receiving Station. Rob said in 2021 he has an article for \$175,000 to Repair & Pave Kimball Hill Road. For 2022, he would be looking at \$198,000 to do South Whitefield Road. Shawn said he feels when Rob has a DPW project it should be allocated to come from the road projects capital reserve account. By doing a separate warrant article, it locks us into a specific road and then you can only use that money for that specific road in the warrant article. Rob said the project he is looking to do would be one mile of reconstruction just after Peter's house from Varney Road to the top of the hill where the paving ends. Shawn said he is thinking that doing overlay on in-town roads would be a better way to spend the money. Shawn said that View Street should have been done in 2018 because the drainage has failed. Shawn said he feels that should be on the priority list prior to South Whitefield Road. Rob said he took the study Shawn had done and had their critical list updated and South Whitefield is the next one on the list. Rob said a lot of the roads need work. Rob said the board can decide what roads need to be fixed. Shawn said in his experience that \$198,000 should be to plan on reclaiming that and putting pavement down. Rob said it is a full excavation. Rob said 18 inches, and Shawn said that is not enough. Shawn feels to do the road right would cost \$350,000. The road needs more of a base to it. Shawn said he thinks we should look at overlays and take care some of our roads. Don't neglect some roads so the roads dive off and it will cost more to take care of. It would be nice to do South Whitefield, but we may be better off to look at roads that need minor maintenance where we can get more bang for our buck. What would it cost to do View Street? Shawn said \$100,000, and Rob said or more. We can do View

Street, but Rob said he doesn't know what we are going to tie the drainage in to. Rob said tell him what we want to do, as there is no confidence in his decision making, and he is fine with that. He understands the basis of the decision. The board can tell him what he can do. Shawn said he did not say he didn't have confidence in Rob. He is just saying he thinks we are putting a lot of money into a road with no base, and throwing that amount money into it with no base is a waste. That is Shawn's recommendation. Peter said he doesn't have experience in road building, and whatever we do we hope it is done right so it doesn't come back every 5 to 6 years needing more pavement on it. When we do a road, we should do everything--fix the sidewalk, do the drainage, and be sure everything is done on that road. If you can't do the water and sewer right and do the road right, then don't do it. Shawn said living in the north country fully reclaimed roads need more money put back into them within 10 years. It is where we live. It is frost, heaving, etc. The state roads go with overlay every year. Peter doesn't want us to do a lot of little things that doesn't fix anything right. Shawn said we can have an expert come in like Phil Beaulieu and explain that. If we put that \$198,000 into the road capital reserve account along with the \$100,000 we will have about \$300,000 added to the roads capital reserve account in 2022. John said there is supposed to be funds coming from the federal government for infrastructure improvements. Peter said he did not think it would do in-town roads. Peter said we have agreed on the amount, \$300,000. We will just need to determine what projects we want to do.

Chair Corey signed the January 2022 Medical Renewal.

The Board signed two Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber:

Map 233/Lot 36 – Larry & Kathy Rexford

Map 243/Lot 41 – Edwin & Diane Richey

Fred and Rob pointed out that the Rexford's Intent is in the well-head protection area. We will have the logger contact them to go over what precautions need to be taken in that area. Rob will also discuss with them if they need a driveway permit.

The Board reviewed the information from Health Trust on the Health Reimbursement Account for 2022, and approved having Health Trust manage the Town's HRA.

John Tholl made a motion to approve the November 15, 2021 Selectmen's Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Shawn White. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

Peter said we received a copy of the Level II Environment Assessment that was done by the State of NH DES. It was 274 pages long. Peter said he did read through it, but thought it would be good if we could set up a work session with DES to give us a presentation on what this all means in layman's terms. Judy will reach out to DES to schedule this.

Shawn asked Rob about the prior approval request for a tire changer for \$14,000. Shawn thought that seemed like a lot of money, and do we spend that much on getting tires balanced and

changed at the area garages? Rob said he will put together the annual costs for this and get it to the Board for their review.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.