



Office of Board of Selectmen

143 Main Street, P.O. Box 310, Belmont, New Hampshire 03220-0310

Telephone: (603) 267-8300 Fax: (603) 267-8327

Selectmen's Budget Review Workshop Minutes

Wednesday, October 27, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

Belmont Mill

Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude Patten, Jr., TA Alicia Jipson, Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman, Finance Director Katherine Davis, Fire Chief Mike Newhall, Library Director Eileen Gilbert, Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge, and Library Trustees Mary Charnley and Hilary Ciampi-Horn.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Library Trustees:

Library Trustee Mary Charnley stated they are requesting \$217,817.18 this year. There are two full-time positions with salary and benefits. Insurance must be offered, and the budget was projected to cover those costs. They may elect to opt out, but it must be budgeted. Selectman Jon Pike asked if the position was advertised as full-time with benefits. Library Director Eileen Gilbert stated the new position will continue at 32 hours per week part time through 2022 and then start full time in January 2023. TA Alicia Jipson clarified the position was hired as part-time to start, with the intention to move to full-time. Much of the budget increase was due to increasing utility and legal fees. Selectman Pike asked about the maintenance and repairs line and the Duffy Fund. Trustee Charnley explained the Duffy Fund is not used for minor maintenance and repairs, so they still need some funds for items like general repairs.

Selectman Pike moved to approve the proposed Library budget of \$217,817.18 as presented. Selectman Claude Patten seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed and approved the Library's Capital Reserve request of \$25,000. It is the same amount as always, but the wording was amended. TA Jipson reported the account balance is \$311,241 as of today. Selectman Pike asked whether the balance includes any Duffy Funds. Trustee Charnley said it does not, and they are waiting for a new statement from the Duffy Fund.

Old Home Day/Patriotic Purposes:

Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge and Old Home Day Treasurer Gretta Olson-Wilder were present to answer questions about how funding and accounting work for Old Home Day, and how the money flows.

Old Home Day Treasurer Gretta Olson-Wilder explained Old Home Day requires a revolving fund. There is money coming in from vendors and road race participants and advertising for the program book. The money can't go into the general fund and not be used to support Old Home Day activities. There are costs associated with the parade, Casella disposal, port-a-potties and other in and outflows. There are incoming payments and outgoing expenses paid from the Old Home Day account. Some years there is money from the Sargent Fund (\$500-\$1,000) as well as the Town's portion (\$5,500) that goes into the account. The amounts can be different each year. Last year the amount of large checks issued was \$9,200. It would sound like money was lost but there was not because of the incoming advertising and vendor fees. These fees offset other expenses such as hiring bands.

Chairman Mooney had concerns about auditing. Finance Director Katherine Davis explained there is a Town-owned Recreation Fund separate from the Old Home Day Fund. The Old Home Day Fund is not subject to the Town audit, however the expenditures to the Old Home Day Fund are subject to audit. Selectman Pike had concerns about what happens when the Old Home Day Treasurer moves on, and who will take over. Currently Parks & Recreation Director St. Onge does deposits, and Treasurer Olson-Wilder issues checks and reconciles the account to help maintain separation of duties. If there are more expenditures than incoming revenues, there are funds in the account to help cover those. The last statement balance was \$8,309. Last year former TA Jeanne Beaudin requested a spend down and accounting of the expenditure for Old Home Day, however in past years it was a one-time lump sum to the Old Home Day account. It is confusing. TA Jipson likened it to the Town making a donation to the Old Home Day Committee. There was discussion about the bank account, authorized signers and tax identification numbers. The Board directed the Parks & Recreation Director and Old Home Day Treasurer to consult with the Finance Director to iron out how things should work with the finances and how they should be accounted for. TA Jipson urged that a formal Old Home Day Committee be established with officers and a treasurer and secretary, and that meeting minutes be publicly posted. There should be more than one signer on the bank account.

Selectman Pike moved to approve the proposed Patriotic Purposes budget of \$17,500 as presented. Selectman Patten seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Building & Grounds – Vehicle Request:

TA Jipson stated a Capital Improvement request was made by Building and Grounds for a side-by-side vehicle to use in the downtown area. At a previous meeting Selectman Pike suggested taking it out of the budget instead of having an additional warrant article. She asked if that was still the Board's recommendation. Selectman Pike proposed that the Building and Grounds crew share the Fire Department's side by side because it is not used a lot. Chief

Newhall said they bought the unit for forestry purposes and can share it with Buildings & Grounds. There may be times when they need it and will have to take it, but it will be easy because it will be downtown. The Board would like to try this for one season and see how it works out.

Finance Director Davis will back that amount out of the budget line. There was an additional \$12,000 added to the custodial line for cleaning services at Town Hall. This will cover twice weekly cleaning and is only a little more expensive than a part-time employee. Building & Grounds will continue to clean the Mill building when it is used. The quote for cleaning the Mill next year was not favorable and the cost would exceed that of hiring a new full-time employee who could clean and help in other areas. There was also an increase in the part-time line for additional seasonal winter work.

Selectman Pike moved to approve the proposed Buildings & Grounds budget of \$475,804.90 as presented. Selectman Patten seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Fire Department - Capital Outlay & Reserves:

Fire Department Chief Mike Newhall reviewed his capital requests and the Ambulance Fund. There is currently an Ambulance Fund balance of \$301,295.93, with an outstanding billed amount of \$172,891. \$36,325 is over 180 days old.

Chief Newhall has been checking on pricing and bids for the utility truck. Selectman Pike requested he obtain bids for Ford, Chevy and GMC. Chief Newhall said the cost of \$78,181 is locked in but he will still request additional bids. Chairman Mooney confirmed that is the price for a brand-new truck.

It will take about 20 months to get the new ambulance. It comes in two parts as a chassis and a box. The department uses a commercial chassis. They have requested RFPs from three companies but only one responded. The interest rate is 2.6 -2.7%. There is one payment due at the time of purchase and no others due until delivery. Chief Newhall confirmed the interest rate will be held until purchase. They can get a VIN number quickly to commit to the deal. The \$50,000 is the deposit, with a total purchase price of \$575,000. The life of an ambulance is about 10 years, and their other ambulance is at the 5-year mark. Another replacement ambulance will be needed in five years. This will be a warrant article. With anticipated revenues of about \$300,000 per year, the ambulance almost pays for itself.

The \$25,000 for hose replacement will cover all of their rigs. They do remove bad sections of hose and reuse shorter pieces when they can but it gets worn out and needs to be replaced.

The Pumper line for \$225,000 covers a full 100% refurbish on Engine 1 including paint, compartments, pump, valves, etc. It is 11 years old and they want to keep it for another 10

years. It is more cost effective to spend \$225,000 for another 10 years rather than \$1,000,000 for a new truck.

TA Jipson had concerns about the amount of funds already committed for the pumper payment and other Fire Department items. The new capital items are \$378,000 but there is already a commitment for \$60,000 for the pumper payment and \$124,000 for the general fund. Everything together would expend the account to almost zero. There was discussion about pushing off the refurbish another year to build the account back up, but there were concerns about increasing costs. It was suggested to delay the spending until later in the year when the account would be built back up again. Chief Newhall said he will work with TA Jipson on the timing, but the work would need to be paid for before January 2024.

Chairman Mooney moved to approve the proposed Capital Outlay of \$398,181 as presented. Selectman Pike seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Fire Department - Budget:

The union contract has not yet been approved so this budget is using the 2022 wages. If there are changes made after negotiations the Board can approve an amendment to the budget.

Chairman Mooney moved to approve the proposed Fire Department budget of \$1,986,734.86 as presented. Selectman Patten seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Capital Outlay & Reserves:

The Mill line item is a placeholder for a pending quote in case additional funds are necessary.

The Environmental Contingency line can be used for building removal, issues with oil cleanup, etc. The budgeted amount this past year was \$20,000 but less than \$2,000 has been spent. Finance Director Davis indicated this is not a reserve account and it lapses every year. The funds can also be used for remediation. Selectman Pike noted this fund was used to clean up some old trailers in previous years. There may be some clean ups needed next year. He recommended that any associated DPW expenses be billed out and the funds recouped. The Board agreed with the \$20,000 request.

The Board agreed on \$100,000 for the Capital Reserve Accrued Liability. This account is used for retirements and vacation buybacks. Estimates for 2023 were generated based on who would be eligible to retire. This is offset with revenue from the unassigned fund balance.

The Heavy Equipment line was kept the same at \$20,000.

The \$10,000 request for Information Technology is used for computers and upgrades and additional equipment for new staff.

The Bridge Repair line is typically \$25,000. It looks like \$125,588 because of Highway Block Grant money. We will accept the funds and let them lapse. \$5,000 is the Town portion of this line.

Cemetery Trustee Sharon Ciampi spoke to the Board about their Capital Reserve request of \$10,000. She said they are trying to build up a reserve for expensive projects. They would like to do something with Randlett, and Swallow Road could use stone replacements. There are nine people buried there but only one stone is left. That stone was repaired this weekend at no charge. They are trying to identify smaller areas to work on and they are looking into an abandoned cemetery that will require some legal work to take over. They have found a consultant who can work with them to figure out what do with the perpetual care funds. They don't have much money and the longer they wait, costs increase. There was discussion about the uncompleted fence job where the deposit has not been returned by the vendor and recommendations for the bidding process. The Cemetery Trustees are considering legal action but a lawyer could cost as much as the deposit they want to get back. Trustee Ciampi mentioned filing in Small Claims Court as an alternative. Trustee Ciampi said they also received insurance funds towards the fence cost.

Some of their plans moving forward are to continue with restorations, provide signage and restore records. She asked for their request to be put on the ballot and let the voters decide.

There was discussion about repairs for fencing rather than full replacement. The plastic fence is getting old and brittle and chipping and getting damaged. A new basic metal fence is preferred by the Trustees. Selectman Pike recommended speaking with other Town Departments such as DPW when there are projects to be done to take advantage of special pricing that may be available by grouping some projects together.

There was additional discussion about pursuing the unrefunded deposit for the fencing and using Small Claims Court. Chairman Mooney recommended the Trustees proceed with Small Claims Court.

The Trustees are attending conferences, joining associations, and using Ancestry to rebuild cemetery records. There are costs for ink and paper, filing folders, and a filing cabinet. Chairman Mooney suggested the Trustees may need to consider focusing on one or two things at a time and not spread themselves so thin.

Selectman Patten suggested \$3,000 for this line. Chairman Mooney recommended \$5,000 which is the typical request. Selectman Patten agreed to \$5,000 and Selectman Pike abstained from the decision.

The Municipal Facilities account has \$469,000. Requesting \$300,000 should leave a little bit of a buffer after Mill renovations. Hopefully a quote will be received in November.

There are no upcoming highway drainage projects.

The Highway Reconstruction line has a \$750,000 request which has no change. Selectman Patten recommended reducing the line to \$500,000 this year because of funds that were received from the state. Some projects are winding down. Other funds such as Highway Block Grant funds and encumbrances were used this year. The Board agreed to reduce the Highway Reconstruction line to \$500,000.

There is an increase from \$25,000 to \$75,000 for the Assessing/Property Tax line for the continuation of the sales update next year and saving towards the next full reassessment.

The Water System Repair and Maintenance amount of \$100,000 comes from the unassigned fund balance.

The Hydrant & Cistern line \$2,500 had no change.

The Election line \$1,000 is towards new chips and stands that will be required by the state in the future.

The Durrell Mountain Road line \$5,000 is offset by revenues from a pit owner in Gilford.

Post-COVID, Towns were advised to create a Public Health & Safety account. The account balance of \$50,368.99 includes state and federal funds. There is no request for additional funding this year.

Selectman Pike moved to approve the Capital Reserve budget of \$1,309,388 as presented. Selectman Patten seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Update on Outstanding Changes Due to Benefit Changes:

Budgets have been updated to reflect changes made for vacation buybacks, health insurance buyouts, and medical and dental rates.

Executive:

Chairman Mooney moved to approve the proposed Executive budget of \$345,422.79 as presented. Selectman Pike seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Finance Administration:

Changes in this budget also include a part-time Finance Clerk position.


Selectman Patten moved to approve the proposed Finance budget of \$309,481.78 as presented. Chairman Mooney seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Police Department:

Chairman Mooney moved to approve the proposed Police Department budget of \$2,544,802.10 as presented. Selectman Patten seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Other: None

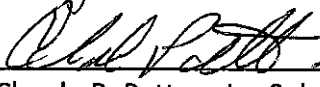
The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.



Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman



Jon Pike, Vice Chairman



Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman