

TOWN OF DEERFIELD, NH
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
George B. White Building
8 Raymond Rd. Deerfield, NH 03037

December 3, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Called to Order by Chair at 7:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

In Attendance: Bill Von Hassel, John Dubiansky, Zach Langlois, Herman Pretorius,
JoAnne Bradbury, Phil Bilodeau, Bonnie Beaubain, Alden Dill,
Andy Robertson

Unexcused Absence: Terry Roy, Bradley Briggs

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Mr. Dill to approve the minutes of meeting on 11/26/2019

2nd: Zach Langlois

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 1 Abstain

Mr. Pretorius noted that the minutes from the meeting on 11/19/2019 were not available
at

this time due to technical difficulty and would be approved at the next meeting.

Discussion of Town & School Budgets

Mr. Robertson handed out the Parks & Rec Revolving Fund figures as requested from the MBC at the last meeting. Nick Lawrence was present to answer questions in regard to the Revolving Fund and Parks & Rec budget. Mr. Pretorius said he would prefer to discuss during Budget Review.

Mr. Langlois said the school board would be meeting on 12/4/2019, hoping to wrap up the school budget at that meeting. Mr. Pretorius asked if they should push the 12/7/2019 MBC meeting to 12/10/2019. Motion made by Mr. Pretorius to postpone 12/7/2019 MBC meeting to 12/10/2019. 2nd by JoAnne Bradbury. Vote was unanimous to postpone.

New Business: Budget Review

Parks & Rec

Mr. Robertson reminded the committee that the discussion at the previous meeting was regarding \$5200 to be added to the Parks & Rec budget for activities that do not

generate income and operate at a deficit, ie Old Home Day. Nick Lawrence from DPR was in attendance to answer questions from the MBC.

Mr. Lawrence gave a rundown of the budget. The budget pays for the Director's salary, half of the Assistant Director's salary, several lines with \$1 to keep them open. The proposal made would add \$5200 to the Parks & Rec budget to support town events that open to everyone and are free of cost and cause a loss that the Revolving Fund has to absorb. Parks & Rec has spent a lot in the last couple of years on updates and improvements to facilities, wage adjustments. The purpose of the Revolving Fund is to put money back into the programs but that fund can't always support massive losses. Mr. Pretorius asked for breakdown of incomes & expenses in the Revolving Fund. Mr. Lawrence explained that all employees for the after school & summer programs are paid through the Revolving Fund, plus the director for those programs, and half of the Parks & Rec Assistant Director's salary. Mr. Pretorius asked where the \$81,000 balance came from. Mr. Lawrence explained that it was higher but a lot of money has been spent on updates and improvements. The surplus is narrowing, which is what they want, they don't want to be running a large surplus. Mr. Pretorius asked about a loss of \$35,000. Mr. Lawrence said that came from the \$81,000 surplus and listed several expenses being paid; wage increases from \$8 to \$10.00/hour, the Hartford Brook project, softball field restoration, replaced flooring at the GBW for the after school program, outsourced mowing to make administration more efficient.

Mr. Von Hassel made a motion to move \$2700 to the Parks & Rec budget to cover expenses for Old Home Day and the Gazebo field. The motion was not seconded.

Mr. Langlois said that the Revolving Fund is for Rec programs, not facility maintenance and asked if those are considered town buildings and should be paid through a different line in the budget. Mr. Robertson said several years ago a few selectmen wanted Parks & Rec to fully fund itself. Mr. Langlois asked what will happen if the Revolving Fund runs out of money. Mr. Robertson said the budget will have to change and that Parks & Rec will likely go to the BOS and ask them to fund those programs that are well loved and enjoyed by the whole town. Mr. Pretorius asked Mr. Lawrence if he could use profits from programs that are profitable, ie after school & summer programs, to fund those programs that aren't profitable, ie Old Home Day. Mr. Lawrence said they can and they have but it has been questioned how ethical it is to rely on the 150 +/- families who pay for after school care and summer camp to fund programs that the whole town uses and benefits from.

Mr. Von Hassel made a motion to change the Old Home Day line, line 570, from \$3001 to \$2600. Motion was seconded by Mr. Dubiansky. Mr. Robertson urged the MBC to consider the \$5200 and stated that a lot of thought was put into it, they were not just figures picked randomly. Mr. Von Hassel said a majority of the items that generate a loss aren't programs, they're overhead, ie FICA, Medicaid, SS, capital

improvements, and that no amount of money going into other lines is going to change those expenses. Mr. Pretorius asked if the health & other benefits are covered by the town. Mr. Robertson said most Parks & Recs employees are part time. Mr. Harrington said there are only two full time employees, the Director and the Assistant Director, and FICA, Medicaid, SS are all covered in the town budget. Retirement is half of the Assistant Director's retirement.

The Chair called for a vote on Mr. Von Hassel's motion. Vote was 1 Yay, 7 Nay, 0 Abstain.

Mr. Langlois made a motion to change line 660 Vehicles Maintenance & Repairs from \$1.00 to \$1,250.00. Motion was seconded by Mr. Pretorius. Mr. Langlois stated that we should be maintaining town property and that should be in the budget, not in the Revolving Fund. Mr. Dill said in his opinion the Revolving Fund is set up for direct programs. Mr. Dill said his concern is that we are pulling out of Parks & Rec to make repairs to the GBW, taxpayers aren't paying for that, and that should be in the budget, not Parks & Rec vehicles and fields. Mr. Robertson reminded the committee members that the MBC doesn't decide how Parks & Rec spends their budget.

Mr. Pretorius and Mr. Bilodeau both asked why the grant line is \$0. Mr. Robertson wasn't sure. Mr. Harrington said the line should be at least \$1.00. Mr. Pretorius made a motion to increase the line to \$1.00. Motion was seconded by Mr. Langlois. Vote on the motion was unanimous to increase the amount to \$1.00.

Mr. Langlois made a motion to increase the supplies line to \$1.00. Motion was seconded by Mr. Pretorius. Vote on the motion was unanimous to increase the line to \$1.00.

The Chair asked for further discussion or questions for Mr. Lawrence. After no further discussion, Mr. Pretorius made a motion to approve the Parks & Rec budget in the amount of \$78,173.00.

Motion: Mr. Pretorius

2nd: Ms. Bradbury

Vote: 8 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstained

Motion Carried

Fire/Rescue: \$305,069.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Fire Chief Matt Fisher explained that the Fire and Rescue departments had merged and their budgets had combined. The largest increase to the budget, he explained, is that they are hoping to add a part time 30 hours/week Firefighter/EMT to have two part timers at all times Monday-Friday.

Mr. Harrington said figures handed out include Fire, Rescue, and Water Holes and that the motion should be amended to just Fire & Rescue total on the bottom of page 35 in the amount of \$298,106.00.

Motion: Mr. Robertson made a motion to amend the amount to \$298,106.00

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Vote: unanimous to amend motion

Mr. Langlois made a motion to increase the full time firefighter line to \$1.00

Motion: Mr. Langlois

2nd: Mr. Pretorius

Discussion: Mr. Langlois stated that if the BOS needs the flexibility to hire a full time firefighter, he wants them to have the ability to do that. He explained that as a school board member, he has a responsibility to provide fire and medical services to approximately 550 students and 100 staff members. Mr. Pretorius asked Mr. Fisher how strained the department is at this time and if there are times when no one is available. Mr. Fisher said not this year because they added 4 part time firefighter/EMTs to at least cover Monday-Friday 7:00 AM-5:00 PM. Outside of those times, the department relies on volunteers to be available. Mr. Fisher said that the day after Thanksgiving the department wasn't able to respond to a call for mutual aid in Candia because no one was available. He said that while that wasn't a Deerfield call, the department should be able to respond to calls for mutual aid because we have a partnership with those towns and they respond to our calls for mutual aid.

Mr. Dill asked for clarification on the number of part time firefighters/EMTs. Mr. Fisher explained they have a pool of part time firefighters/EMTs to cover two 30 hour/week positions because most have full time jobs elsewhere and aren't available the 30 hours that are needed to cover. Mr. Dubiansky said that adding the part time will allow the department to cover medical calls and most fire calls with two people. He said two people are needed to respond to a call. Mr. Von Hassel asked, in regards to the day after Thanksgiving request for mutual aid, why couldn't our department respond. Mr. Fisher explained that we only had 1 person on duty and that in his opinion is an inadequate response. At least two people are needed to respond to a call for mutual aid. Ms. Bradbury asked how often the department isn't able to respond to calls for mutual aid. Mr. Fisher said he can't recall another instance. Mr. Robertson stated there are no plans to hire a full time firefighter at this time. The BOS is happy with the Chief's recommendations for a pool of part time firefighters/EMTs. Ms. Bradbury recalled that during the 9/17/2019 MBC meeting, Kevin Verville had suggested that the budget failed last year due to increasing the full time firefighter line to \$1 and that she wasn't sure if Mr. Verville was correct or not. Mr. Langlois said he was not. Mr. Robertson said he disagrees with Mr. Verville's assessment. Ms. Bradbury said since there are no plans to hire a full time firefighter, perhaps test Mr. Verville's theory and make that line \$0. Mr. Pretorius asked Mr. Fisher if it is his recommendation to not hire a full time firefighter. Mr. Fisher said he has not asked the BOS to hire a full time firefighter. He said if he can

continue to staff with part time, that is sufficient. Mr. Langlois said that the reason to increase the line to \$1.00 is to give flexibility to the BOS should they need it if the Chief is unable to staff the department with part time firefighters. Mr. Langlois said if the budget fails and goes to default, it will stay \$0 anyway. Mr. Dill said we keep \$1.00 on a lot of lines to keep them open in case they are needed. Mr. Von Hassel asked Mr. Fisher how many full time firefighters he would be able to hire with the current part time amount. Mr. Fisher said probably only one, to cover 8 hours/day Monday-Friday. Ms. Beaubein asked if the \$1.00 could be removed at town meeting if there was a large upset from the community. Mr. Langlois stated yes, it can be removed during deliberation. The Chair called for a vote on the motion to add \$1.00 to the full time firefighter line.

Vote: 4 Yay, 2 Nay, 2 Abstain

Motion Carried, \$1.00 added to full time firefighter line, changing the amount of the Fire/Rescue budget to \$298,107.00.

The Chair called for a vote on the motion to approve the Fire/Rescue budget in the amount of \$298,107.00.

Vote: 6 Yay, 1 Nay, 1 Abstained

Motion Carried

Water Holes & Forest Fires: \$6,963.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Fisher explained this covers the allowance for water hole maintenance and if we have a forest fire. He explained the state pays for half and town pays half for a forest fire.

Vote: 8 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstained

Motion Carried

Revaluation of Property: \$145,457.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson explained that this is the assessing budget. A renewal contract from Avatar was received. The BOS did put out an RFP. Only 1 competitor responded and that bid wasn't competitive and would have used Avatar's software. BOS didn't find it in the town's best interest to pay more money for a 3rd party. Mr. Pretorius asked why the amount is doubled. Mr. Robertson explained it is the first year of the new contract. Mr. Harrington stated that \$94,000 is a one time charge for revaluation, \$28,000/year is for annual services. Mr. Langlois asked about \$25,000 that is owed by PSNH/NH Co-op, are they ever going to pay their share? Mr. Robertson said they are in negotiations, continuing to fight them rather than pay what they want us to pay them back. He explained that they are looking for hundreds of thousands of dollars that they believe they were overtaxed.

Vote: 8 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstained

Motion Carried

Mr. Dubiansky had to leave the meeting at 8:27 PM.

Town Administration: \$247,587.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Legal: \$42,000.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Dill asked about the actual expenses for the current year being different than budgeted for next. Mr. Harrington stated that Year To Date actual legal expenses are \$7,531.00. Mr. Robertson said that they carry a substantial amount on this line as they can't anticipate legal expenses until they are incurred.

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Insurance: \$430,590.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson explained that they carry a high deductible plan to keep plan premiums low and the town reimburses a portion of the deductible for employees. Mr. Harrington said the current plan has a \$3000 deductible. The employee pays the first \$500 of the deductible, town pays up to the remaining \$2500 of the deductible.

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Personnel Administration: \$95,100.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson explained this is for payroll deductions, FICA, Medicaid, SS, and a small amount for Performance Pay should they want to recognize someone.

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Library: Representatives from the library were unavailable at this meeting and discussion of this budget was tabled until the next meeting on 12/10/2019.

Veasey Park: \$35,968.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson said they would like to hire another part time swim instructor/certified lifeguard.

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Dams: \$400.00

Motion: Mr. Langlois

2nd: Mr. Dill

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Bridges: \$100.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Dill

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Highway & Streets: \$551,548.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson spoke as the Road Agent was not available for this meeting. Mr. Robertson said this is a level funded budget by the Road Agent and reminded the committee that the BOS has discussed presenting a warrant article for road reconstruction and repair, that is non-specific, in the area of \$200,000.00. He said to also note that the Road Agent has three primary paving projects coming up - the shimming and overlay of a portion of Middle Road, a portion of South Road, and resurfacing of Church Street. Mr. Pretorius noted that the Road Agent is up for reelection this year and that the Road Agent has stated that he saves the town money by discounting the rate for use of his equipment. Mr. Pretorius asked if he will be running for Road Agent again. Mr. Robertson said they do not know that at this time. Mr. Pretorius asked if the results from the survey of roads conducted earlier this year were reflected in the budget. Mr. Robertson said those results haven't been received yet, expect them after the first of the year. Mr. Pretorius asked if the roads expected to be a priority weren't the the roads listed as priority on the survey results, would the BOS overrule the survey results? Mr. Robertson explained that the Road Agent has authority as an elected official and that the BOS could only withhold funds if they didn't agree with the course of action.

Vote: 7 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Building Department/Transfer Station: \$64,858.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson explained the increase is due to the difficulty in getting rid of recyclable materials and increased cost of hauling trash. Mr. Pretorius asked if they were hiring a new full time employee. Mr. Robertson said no. Mr. Pretorius asked about the 32% increase. Mr. Robertson said the only full time employee is the Building Inspector. The Building Inspector had asked for a part time employee but they were able to split hours and get coverage. Mr. Pretorius asked what 20% for TS is. Mr. Robertson said TS is Transfer Station because he's a part time employee who splits duties between the Transfer Station and Building Inspector/Code Enforcement. Mr. Robertson made a motion to continue this discussion when Mr. Pelletier is available to answer questions. Mr. Dill withdrew his motion. Mr. Pretorius agreed to reschedule with Mr. Pelletier.

Citizen Comments: None

Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Langlois

2nd: Mr. Dill

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM

These minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Tina St. Peter, Recording Secretary

Pending approval by the Municipal Budget Committee