

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

November 19, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: In Attendance - Phil Bilodeau, JoAnne Bradbury, Bill Von Hassel, John Dubiansky, Zach Langlois, Herman Pretorius, Brad Briggs, Bonnie Beaubien, Alden Dill, Andrew Robertson
Excused Absence - Terry Roy

Approval of Minutes for 10-29-2019:

Motion: Mr. Langlois

2nd: Mr. Dill

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Discussion of Town and School Budgets

Mr. Pretorius stated that they are tracking some updates to the schedule to due to scheduling conflicts and that they are trying to accommodate as best they can.

School Budget - Mr. Langlois stated that the school board is meeting on 11-20-2019. They have a lot of work to do at that meeting, probably early December before they are done. Mr. Robertson said that the tax rate was set at \$23.11 last week, which is 4 cents higher than last year. Mr. Langlois said they are negotiating with the Para union and when that contract is approved on both sides it will come before the MBC, probably after the budget is complete in late December/early January. Mr. Langlois said that the school board does not provide drafts to the MBC. There are drafts available online for anyone who wants to see it. They don't provide a draft due to a former MBC chairperson saying that once a draft is presented the school board can no longer make changes, so it was no longer the school board's working budget so the school board now holds it until it is complete.

Cemetery: \$41, 401.00

Motion: Mr. Langlois

2nd: Mr. Dill

Discussion: Maureen Mann presented for the Cemetery Trustees. Ms. Mann explained

the increase to the cemetery being due to the former Superintendent of Cemeteries retiring, after having worked for many years for \$1600/year and doing a lot of work for the town for free. Ms. Mann asked other towns what they pay their Superintendents and the lowest was Candia, who pays their Superintendent \$5000/year. Ms. Mann said the Trustees agreed to increase the Superintendent salary line. The other increase is due to rising cost for mowing and other maintenance, such a tree work. An RFP was sent out last spring. The two bids received were both higher than the total budget for just spring & fall cleanups and mowing & trimming. Tree care has not been done because money had to be moved from the tree care line to the maintenance line to pay for mowing. Mr. Von Hassel said that he researched other towns' cemetery budgets and he questioned a 92% increase to Deerfield's. Ms. Mann explained that the town has been working with a default budget for the last couple of years but that the actual cost to maintain Deerfield's cemeteries is \$21,000. Tree work needs to be done but they haven't been able to do it. Several cemeteries are being cared for by volunteers to save money but volunteers can't do tree work. Mr. Robertson stated that the current road agent was the former superintendent and didn't bill for a lot of work - trees, gravel work - and these are the costs that the cemetery trustees are concerned with. If the cemeteries are not being cared for, the selectboard does hear about it from relatives who paid for a plot that isn't being maintained. Mr. Von Hassel asked about the cemetery trustees expressing interest in a warrant article giving the responsibility of the cemetery maintenance to the selectboard. Ms. Mann said they hope not to do that. Mr. Langlois asked if the town had considered purchasing their own mowing equipment to do maintenance themselves. Mr. Robertson said they have discussed it but the road agent has advised that it would cost more to purchase and maintain equipment than to maintain contracts for it. Mr. Bilodeau asked if the town could bundle the cemetery maintenance contracts with other mowing contracts in town. Mr. Robertson said that is a possibility, other contracts in town are bundled ie Parks & Rec, fire holes, gazebo field, GBW. The town could possibly add the cemeteries to that and possibly save money, but not a lot as the cemeteries are very time and labor intensive to care for. Mr. Pretorius called for a vote after asking for further discussion and none was had.

Vote: 8 Yay, 1 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Supervisors of the Checklist: \$5,054.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Dubiansky

Discussion: Maureen Quinn explained the increase to the budget due to an increase in the number of elections this year and the need for new software.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Conservation Commission: \$3,341.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Erick Burgland explained the \$570 increase over last year due to legal items due to a misallocation. Mr. Von Hassel asked why a misallocation. Mr. Robertson explained that there is a separate conservation fund, the conservation commission is separate from the general fund, similar to parks & rec, a revolving fund earmarked for conservation. Mr. Langlois asked about the increase in the salary line for a part time secretary. Mr. Berglund explained this is a change in the secretary's pay rate. Mr. Robertson stated that the new rate was \$18/hour, which seems like a lot but has to be higher to keep interest in the job because meetings are infrequent.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Emergency Management: \$41, 939.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Denise Greig and Kevin Barry explained increases to the budget. The first due to the generator at DCS, which had been bought under a Homeland Security grant several years ago. The town maintains a maintenance agreement for the generator, the cost for that is \$2300/year in a 3 year contract. The state is requiring generators to be licensed every year. A 4 year license is \$2000. The maintenance contract is split with DCS as the generator is mutually beneficial to both the town and school. The other major increase is due to a change in radio equipment and the need to replace radios. They are anticipating a EMPG (Emergency Management Performance Grant) to reimburse 50% of \$10,000 to upgrade the EOP (Emergency Operations Plan) and \$13,000 to upgrade emergency communications equipment. Mr. Von Hassel asked how confident they are that the grant will be approved. Ms. Greig said 100% sure.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Welfare Administration: \$71,081.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Ms. Greig stated there is little change this year, a slight increase in employee line due to cost of living adjustment. Mr. Robertson said that given Ms. Greig's qualifications and her dedication to her position, this is a miniscule amount that she is paid and that the town and community benefit greatly from having her.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Agencies Health & Social: \$38,816.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Dill

Discussion: Mr. Dill asked about the increase to the physicals & drug testing line. Mr.

Harrington explained that the National Fire Protection Agency has enabled firefighters who become ill as a result of their profession to collect benefits to pay for treatment of their illness but that they are required to have a baseline physical to qualify. Mr. Von Hassel asked if that should fall under Workers Compensation or health insurance. Mr. Robertson said no, this is separate from WC. Mr. Von Hassel asked if firefighters are not covered by WC. Mr. Robertson said they are. Mr. Robertson said this came to the BOS from the fire chief with state recommendation, that they could ask the fire chief for more specific information. Mr. Von Hassel said it would seem to align with WC. Mr. Robertson said that it is separate and above WC, specific funding for line of duty loss for firefighters. Mr. Von Hassel said he would like to revisit at a later date with the fire chief.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Executive: \$17,501.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson explained this is the selectmen's salaries, the treasurer's salary, \$1 merit increase line that they haven't used for years but would like to keep open. Mr. Pretorius asked about \$10,000 for trust fund maintenance. Mr. Von Hassel explained that that is money to pay for fees on trust funds that were not generating enough revenue (ie cemeteries) to sustain the trust fund. Fees had previously been paid out of the trust fund revenues. This is a 5 year plan to give those trust funds a chance to become self sufficient again. Mr. Bilodeau asked why trustees of the trust funds were not present to defend the increase. Mr. Robertson said the BOS can defend. The amount is based on loss of revenue from trust funds. Mr. Bilodeau moved to table the Executive budget to discuss at a later date with trustees of the trust funds. Mr. Briggs seconded the motion. There was not a vote as Mr. Bilodeau withdrew his motion. Mr. Langlois asked if other options to bolster the trust funds should be looked at, perhaps a warrant article to add \$25,000/\$50,000 to make the trust funds self sustaining again. Mr. Von Hassel said that is up to the trustees. He explained that the trustees felt the \$10,000 wouldn't be burdensome to taxpayers but would be enough to recoup some some revenue. As Ms. Mann said many cemeteries are full, not generating income, but still require maintenance. Deerfield is not unique to this. Mr. Dubiansky said that a long term plan is needed, cemeteries can't generate income with no plots to sell. Mr. Von Hassel said the trustees hands are tied, can't liquidate trusts, can't merge trusts. He said at some point the cemeteries will have to be merged into the town budget.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Ambulance: \$13,000.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson stated this is a set contract with ambulance

service in Raymond. It is a phenomenal price, much cheaper than having our own. This is the last year of the contract, will have to renegotiate next year.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

After vote was conducted, Mr. Von Hassel asked how this is different than what Deerfield's Fire & Rescue does. Mr. Dubiansky explained that when 911 is called in Deerfield, Fire & Rescue is dispatched along with Raymond Ambulance and possibly Exeter ALS. Fire & Rescue provide first response but is not licensed to transport and doesn't have a vehicle to accomodate transport. Anyone transported from Deerfield is done so by outside service.

Forestry Commission: \$6.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Debt Service: \$1 tax anticipation note

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Memorial Day: \$600.00

Motion: Mr. Robertson

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson explained this is for the purchase of flags for cemeteries for Memorial Day service.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Advertising Regional Associations: \$4,390.00

Motion: Mr. Dill

2nd: Mr. Langlois

Discussion: Mr. Robertson explained this is the NH Municipal Association dues, based on population of the community.

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain

Motion Carried

Citizen Comments: None

Motion to Adjourn: Mr. Langlois

2nd: Mr. Dill

Vote: 9 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstain
Meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM.

These minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Tina St. Peter, Recording
Secretary
Pending approval by the Municipal Budget Committee