



Budget-Finance Committee

Department Head Review #1

March 1, 2022, at 6:30pm

Via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Bob Gosselin - Chair, Karen Lockwood, Abigail Geer, Denis Morse

Committee Members Absent: None (3 vacant seats)

Select Board Members Present: Teresa Sadak – Chair, Rolf Olsen, Joe Bruno, Sam Gifford

Select Board Members Absent: Lonnie Taylor

Town Staff Present:

Don Willard, Town Manager
Charisse Keach, Finance Director
Alex Sirois, Code Enforcement Officer
Bruce Tupper, Fire Chief
Cathy Gosselin, Deputy Fire Chief
Sue Look, Town Clerk

1. Called to order at 6:30pm by Chair Gosselin

2. New Business

a) Department Head Review # 1

Town Manager Willard introduced our new Finance Director, Charisse Keach. She made some changes to the budget binders – tabs, cardstock between departments. You will see the past 2 complete years and year to date will be through 12/31/2021. Some expenses have been moved – for example Registry of Deed was under Administration and is now under Assessing. I do like to regroup after the budget process to see what worked well and what could be changed.

Town Manager Willard outlined the high points of the budget:

- The option of adding the Library or not as a Town Department.
- We are looking at a significant budget increase over what we have normally seen due to adding functions to the operation of the Town.
- The Town is in very good fiscal shape, have maintained our AAA bond rating.
- We have added new functions, new programming, and new directions. I credit Chair Sadak for the leadership that has caused this to come about.
- We have great Town employees and we have gone beyond simply what we are required by statute to do for our citizens. We are doing more and are doing it very well.
- \$50,000 to renovate Public Works district one's office space to accommodate the Parks & Rec Director and possibly an administrative assistant.
- Paving cost has gone up as gas prices increase.
- \$100,000 for a revaluation.
- There has been some discussion about beginning the process to renovate the JSMS when it reverts back to the Town.
- Public Works would like to build a main office at the Salt Shed to consolidate.
- Comprehensive Plan will require some monies.

- **Administration**

- We will do an RFP for auditing services, which this will cost more than we have spent in the past.
- The Elections budget is increased due to a Gubernatorial year in 2022 and the need to replace some of our voting booths.
- Our photocopies in the Town Office need to be replaced, they are about 15 years old.
- We have taken on mailing the tax bills in-house.
- MMA dues are included in the budget. We do not use their insurance pools. The cost has gone up by 3% for everyone regardless of the level of usage. We do get a discount on trainings and advertising rfps or employment.

- **Assessing**

- The cost for a revaluation was moved to a Capital Reserve account.
- Registry of Deeds expense was moved to Assessing.
- Vision fees increased.
- Tax billing expense was also moved to Assessing.

- **Code Enforcement**

- Now has an Assistant CEO which is a \$71,000 increase. This has made an exponential difference in the office, there are very few complaints now.
- Administrative Assistant position is now full-time, and we are looking to increase the hours to 36 for FY 2022-23. Kirsten has made a huge difference.

- We have contracted with General Codes to codify our Land Use and Shoreland Zoning Ordinances. Once complete they will perform a legal review and recommend updates/corrections and any voted updates will be done by them. The goal is to get all of our Land Use ordinances complete in 5 years. We will probably have the first proposed changes in July 2022.
 - We will be over \$100,000 in revenue this year and probably next year as well.
 - We are doing permits as they come in and we have a 1-2 week turnaround (which is where we want to be). Any that are longer are due to waiting for the citizens to provide needed documents. We are catching up the previous year's permits each week. We are not getting complaints about permits not being issued anymore.
 - Both CEO vehicles were donated, and Public Works maintains them.
 - Chris does most of the inspections and Alex does most of the office visits for now. This is likely to change as the Spring season gets going. We are trying to keep someone in the office for walk-ins.
- **General Assistance**
 - The State of Maine reimburses 70%.
 - Applications are bit higher due to the pandemic and hope it will go back to "normal" levels post-pandemic.
 - We do have our Community Assistance fund (*NOTE: \$44,076.05 as of March 4, 2022*). A number of citizens have been very generous. This fund is used to help people who do not necessarily qualify for General Assistance and find themselves in need of help.
 - *NOTE: During the pandemic we have received 52 Hannaford Gift Cards in either \$25 or \$50 denominations to help those in need from generous citizens.*
 - Jenny has done a really good job.
- **Town Insurance**
 - We have increased the number of employees.
 - We have had Worker's Comp claims in the past year. We may need to develop a light-duty policy to get people back to work sooner.
- **Employee Benefits**
 - We are recommending changing our Personnel Policy to move new employees to the 6% match once they pass their probation period instead of a graduated 6-year plan as most municipalities do now. If everyone took full advantage of this it would cost about \$37,000. Possibly force employees to contribute and allow them to opt out.
 - November of 2021 there was some relief for healthcare premium due to COVID. Any employees who are contributing to the cost should be sharing in this relief.
 - The Union negotiations in Public Safety are still in progress and any changes are not included in this budget yet.

- **TIF**
 - We will be using \$116,000 for technology (for fiber, etc) and CIP.
 - Assessor Lebel will be working with the Town Attorneys and the Select Board to come up with a plan to use the TIF monies before the TIF expires.

- **Revenues**
 - We are up \$165,000, primarily due to increased State revenue sharing.
 - There will be growth based on the building permits, but the total remains to be seen.
 - The Library has not been included as yet and will not be until approved.
 - We are trying to “market” to surrounding municipalities our Public Works equipment and mechanic services.
 - We will be looking at ACO fees.
 - Motor vehicle excise tax is growing as price of vehicles increases.
 - We are taking on plowing for the RSU (we no longer use P&K for plowing, we do it in-house).

- **Public Safety**
 - Budget includes 2 new positions and we have applied for a grant which would cover the cost for 3 years.
 - We need to replace 2 trucks with 1 truck and preserve the life of another truck.
 - Rescue billing was moved from Administration to Public Safety.
 - Animal Control Vehicle Maintenance has been moved to Public Works.

- Animal Control
 - ACO Jackson was inadvertently omitted from the invite list for this meeting and will be asked to attend the next meeting.
 - We are getting a newer car for the ACO and will be invoicing Casco and Naples for their share.
 - Cumberland County is looking at Animal Control and we are helping out other Towns like Harrison for example.

- Fire Department
 - We now have 6 people doing the work of 20, mostly due to COVID concerns. We have a full staff, but due to FMLA and illness we have high overtime.
 - Psychiatric and violent cases are on the rise.
 - Fewer people want to put themselves at the risk and our calls are up 34%.
 - We have included the wage increases requested by the Union knowing that they are not approved and will change.
 - 6 surrounding departments have agreed to standardize pay for per-diem employees so we are not competing with each other. We are looking to create a pool of the per-diems for the 6 towns to draw from.

- Equipment costs are going up as everything else is.
 - We would get as many as 2 people per shift through the Federal grant (8 total employees), but we really should have 4 more per shift.
 - It takes 2 years to get someone certified.
 - \$75,000 needs to be added to CIP for ambulance replacement. This will be added to the budget.
 - The next truck will be equipped with everything needed for any emergency instead of having multiple specialized trucks. If we order it in July 2022, it will be at least a year before we receive it.
 - We are looking at standardizing equipment across 6 municipalities and will be trying to make purchases in bulk.
- Emergency Management
 - This is included under Fire Department.
 - Debt Services
 - Finance Director Keach is suggesting that we finance \$500,000 for the fire truck rather than depleting the CIP item.
 - We could issue our own bond since we have a AAA rating. Possibly analyze which is more advantageous.

3. Public Comment – none

4. Budget-Finance Committee Comment

Mr Morse asked about options for the new fire vehicle.

Select Board Comment – none

5. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:27pm by Mr Morse. Seconded by Ms Lockwood.
Unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Susan L Look, Town Clerk