

**BUDGET COMMITTEE  
TOWN OF PEMBROKE, NH  
October 15, 2020 at 6:30 PM**

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Mark LePage, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

**I. Attendance:**

Budget Committee Present:

Daniel Crean, Peter Gagy, Michael Connor, Gerry Fleury, Mark LePage, Paul Hanson, Andy Camidge, Brian Seaworth, Karen Yeaton, Clint Hanson

Excused: Gene Gauss, Sandy Goulet,

Staff: David Jodoin Town Administrator

**II. Approval of Minutes: September 17, 2020:**

Paul Hanson moved to approve the minutes of September 17, 2020 as amended; Andy Camidge seconded the motion. Mike Connor, Brian Seaworth, and Armand Soucy abstained. Motion passed 5-0.

**III. Update from Town on Budget**

David Jodoin, Town Administrator, gave an update on the Town Budget. This month's budget is still off \$82,000 on revenues. At year end, the budget is still likely to be off between \$120-150,000. 100% of CARES Act funding has been received. Some towns did not apply for their portion of the funding so there are additional funds being held at the State. If the State allows entities to apply for that funding, there are some additional items David would submit for. There is a grant available for election expenses through the CARES Act. David has not looked at the details yet but there may be some reimbursements for ballot costs available. The Selectmen have started reviewing town budgets. The Committee will hopefully have their budget binders by November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Gerry Fleury asked how close they are to getting at tax rate from NHDRA. David explained that right now, NHDRA has reviewed all forms except the MS-434 which is the revenue form. Normally, they would have contacted him by now with a rate. Everything has been pushed back due to COVID. The annual audit has also been delayed due to COVID. That would normally be completed and presented by now. Moody's Investment Services has threatened to reduce the Town's rating if the audit is not done soon.

#### **IV. Update from School on Budget Situation and Preparations for**

Andy Camidge, Chair of the Pembroke School Board, gave an update on the School Budget. Andy explained the Amber Wheeler, Business Administrator, is currently working through the budgets for all of the districts. The first draft of the SAU budget is available and has an increase of 2.3%. It was voted by the SAU Board to move to public hearing as presented on November 25<sup>th</sup>. The first draft of the Pembroke School District budget should be available at the first School Board meeting in November and Andy will forward it to the Budget Committee. November 10<sup>th</sup> is when they expect they will hear from the insurance company about the 20-21 rates. Andy read an email sent from Patty Sherman. They have had meetings with the school leadership teams and they have tried to either reduce or zero out the increases to the lines for building level requests. There are several budget lines that will see zero increases if they unfreeze the budget this year. They have been careful with spending and all requests have come through Patty for approval. Josh Coughlin, Facilities Manager, has done an excellent job picking up free supplies as they become available. As for COVID related expenses, their grant was approved and they will be utilizing that funding. The Technology Replacement Lines were unfrozen but the grant funds should cover everything that was needed. The transportation savings are not available yet. They will also need to subtract out the cost of hiring staff to provide supervision after school.

Andy explained they are running half the busses they typically have because they only have half the drivers. In order to get all the kids to school, they have been making two runs which resulted in some kids getting to school late and some leaving early. To remedy this a little, they have decided to shift the starting and end times of one of the school's days. They will still receive the same instructional time. To make that happen, they will need to hire extra staff to supervise those kids. Some of the cost savings from the running half the busses will be used for that additional staff. There will also be bussing savings due to sports busses running less.

Mark LePage asked if there are any significant outstanding COVID related purchases to be made or installed. Andy stated that everything has come in and is installed. There should not be any more large COVID related expenditures. Mark stated that he has asked Amber for a list of past and anticipated COVID related expenditures and where the funding has come from or will come from.

Gerry Fleury asked for last year's actuals. Andy explained that after all warrant articles are funded, there will be around \$675,000 to be returned to the Town as surplus. Gerry asked if revenues have hit their targets. Andy stated that last year they were very close and this year the enrollment projections Amber made were on target. They are on track to meet their revenue goals.

Gerry Fleury expressed concerns for the Budget Committees role going forward and taxes going up in November, which are due December 1<sup>st</sup>. Gerry is concerned how affordable the rates will be. The Paraprofessionals have now unionized which means another collective bargaining agreement to discuss. Andy explained that they just received an email from the Paraprofessional's Labor Relations Representative and they are scheduling those negotiating meetings now. Andy does not believe they are trying to have something ready for March of 2021 but they will find out after the first meeting and he will keep the Committee up to date. If it was to come up this year, it would put them out of sync with the Teacher's Union CBA.

David Jodoin clarified that the school surplus will be around \$600,000 and will drop the school district's portion of the tax rate by approximately \$0.80. That brings the voted on \$2.72 increase to \$1.92.

Dan Crean commented that social security expects the increase in benefits to be 1.3%. Anything above that means an increase in taxes for those on Social Security.

Gerry Fleury asked what they can expect the Town and School District meetings to look like in the Spring. Andy is hoping the State will give some guidance. It is something they are discussing as a Board.

Clint Hanson expressed concerns for the lack of State's direction during the COVID crisis and that they may not give any direction or recommendations which will leave them trying to work within the current State laws surrounding Town Meeting.

Brian Seaworth stated that he has tried to talk with NHDRA and he expects that if the State decides to set restrictions that prohibits Town Meeting, that they would also see a mitigation coming from the State. Mark shared concerns as well that the State will put out guidelines to follow but not necessarily rules or laws so then they won't put out anything in terms of mitigations.

Andy Camidge stated that the Superintendents are meeting with the Commissioner of Education on almost a weekly basis. Andy will ask Patty to raise the question to him.

## **V. Other Business**

Mark asked if they feel there is value or interest in a meeting between now and November 19<sup>th</sup> when the Town Budget is expected to be ready. Dan Crean answered that they do not need another update meeting. Gerry Fleury stated that they need to presume they will be holding a meeting in March and they need to still hold the public hearing in a timely fashion. Mark stated that currently the public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. Andy stated that he does not believe he will have anything of value to report until the School Board meets again in November.

Mark explained that according to the draft Budget Committee schedule, they would begin meeting with the School District on December 17<sup>th</sup>.

The next meeting will be held November 19<sup>th</sup>. A week prior to the meeting, they will decide whether or not the meeting will be remote or in person.

## **VI. Adjourn**

Dan Crean made a motion to adjourn at 7:11 PM. Clint Hanson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

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Mark LePage, Chairman