

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
TOWN OF PEMBROKE, NH
August 20, 2020 at 6:30 PM**

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

I. Attendance:

Budget Committee Present:

Daniel Crean, Peter Gagy, Michael Connor, Brian Seaworth, Gerry Fleury, Mark LePage, Armand Soucy, Sandy Goulet, and Marie Chouinard

Excused: Andy Camidge, Paul Hanson, Karen Yeaton, Gene Gauss

Staff: David Jodoin Town Administrator

II. Approval of Minutes: June 11, 2020:

Gerry Fleury moved to approve the minutes of July 16, 2020; Marie Chouinard seconded the motion. Marie Chouinard and Sandy Goulet abstained. Motion passed 7-0.

III. Update from Town on Budget

David explained that three major items property tax interest, motor vehicle registrations, and interest income are down. Property tax interest is down \$46,312 from last year, motor vehicle registrations have increased recently but are still down around \$16,000 compared to the prior year. Interest income is down \$11,000 bringing the total revenue loss to \$73,469. The Selectman still have the spending freeze in place. Right now, the Town does not look as though it will need to borrow but that may change when the Town has to pay the School District all of the appropriations that were deferred until January 2021. The funds from the CARES Act have come back for the first two submittals. The regulations have changed allowing communities to seek reimbursement for anyone in the emergency field. The Town was allotted \$167,000 and have used \$15,000 to this point. Once the remainder of the payroll is submitted, it will likely use up the rest of the \$167,000. The Selectman have made the decision to change to touchless faucets, make upgrades to air systems in all buildings, and purchase back pack hydrostatic cleaners. One for will go to the Police Department, one is for Ambulance/Fire, one will remain at Town Hall which will also be used at the Library, and one will go to Public Works.

David explained that there will be discussion at the Selectmen level as to where the Town will go with janitorial staffing. The Library just lost their janitor and one full time Public Works employee is doing janitorial for safety center, town hall, and

public works. They may look into a cleaning company. The school is also looking and they cannot find anyone.

David shared that the MS-434 has been submitted and all other required paperwork is at New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

Gerry Fleury asked what the qualifications are for a janitor. David stated they are looking for anyone. It is posted on Indeed.com, local newspapers, and NHMA Classifieds. There has only been from one candidate and he stopped returning calls. The school is also having a major problem finding help. They are also looking for a part-time transfer station attendant. The full-time public works attendants have Mondays off. There is one person on Mondays to man the transfer station, pick up trash, and do side projects.

Dan Crean asked if there is any way to get estimates of property tax rates any time soon. David answered that the school submitted their estimated surplus for the end of the year. The Town as a whole was originally looking at a \$2.94 increase but after the surplus is returned, that would decrease the \$2.94 by \$0.87. The hope, is that there will be additional taxable value from the golf course housing project. The homes would have had to been completed as of April 1st. That would further lower the tax rate increase. The Town portion is not changing from the \$0.02 increase voted at Town Meeting. Any revenues that are lost will be taken from the fund balance at the end of the year to cover the deficit.

Armand Soucy asked if they have thought about putting the job ads on the Facebook pages. David stated that they have and it is going to be reposted. No one was volunteering for Supervisors of the Checklist but once they threatened to not be able to hold elections and offered to pay, they were able to fill all three openings. The Trustees of the Trust Funds also has no one right now. They are not having luck with posting on Facebook.

Gerry Fleury shared that he is not concerned about the tax bill this fall but the committee will have to look at requested expenditures going forward. If they have to dip into the reserves and surpluses, how much revenue are they going to have to raise in order to offset the expenditures that they will be asked to approve at the March Meetings. Gerry hopes that as budgets come in, they are going to be paired against updated revenue numbers so they can have an early glimpse of what's going to happen with the tax rate. If there are going to be big ticket items, there needs to be revenue to match it. CIP will be meeting with the School District next week to see what their planned capital improvements are.

IV. Update from School on Budget Situation and Preparations for

Mark explained that there was a SAU meeting and the members of the School Board chose to attend that meeting instead of the Budget Committee meeting. Mark shared that the schools will be opening to staff and teachers begin Monday. They will have

one full week of staff time that is intended to figure out the logistics going forward. Kids will start on August 31st remote for two weeks and then hybrid or fully remote based on parent preference for the following four weeks. The School Board originally wanted to be fully remote but after many comments, they revisited and ended up with the hybrid model. The school sent out a survey to all parents asking what they intend to do during the hybrid timeframe. At TRS, there are roughly 15-17 parents that have indicated that they want their kids to remain fully remote. The remote instruction will be conducted from school grounds.

Gerry Fleury commented that the community is relatively divided on the subject. Gerry expressed concerns for the AREA towns having a problem paying full tuition for students that will only be part time at the school and part time electronic.

Armand Soucy discussed offering parents' choice for school. Mark stated that the issue of school choice is the under the purview of the School Board.

Gerry Fleury shared that CIP has largely concluded with their visits of Town departments. The CIP has not met with the Sewer Department however, he did attend one of their meetings where they are discussing a bond proposal. Allenstown Commission is not allowing additional flow. The Pembroke Commission has been talking with the City of Concord about running an interceptor line. Concord is willing to take 3 or 4 times the current flow but it would require upgrades to the pumper stations. It could allow better development of the industrial area of town. Dan Crean commented that he has been mentioning in meetings for years that Pembroke has to come up with an alternative to Allenstown. The Selectmen and the Sewer Commission need to discuss this but the Budget Committee should opine on the situation to help get the situation resolved.

Armand Soucy asked how the school is handling special education. Mark explained they were given the same choice. The intent is not to have any school personnel going to a kid's home to deliver services. If they need services, the children need to be brought to the school.

V. Other Business

Gerry Fleury stated that CIP is meeting with School on August 26th and will deliberate and hold the public hearing on September 9th. The Budget Committee could meet any time after that. Mark stated that sticking with the same proposed schedule, the Budget Committee could meet on September 17th. David answered the report could be done for the 17th. Mark asked the Committee to start thinking about a schedule going forward after the 17th. David asked for the Committee to start thinking about how they may have to handle town meeting and voting. Even though drive by voting has been approved, it will be difficult in the month of March to find

people to volunteer to sit outside and collect ballots. If anyone has any ideas, he could forward them along to NHMA and Secretary of State.

VI. Adjourn

Dan Crean made a motion to adjourn at 7:10 PM. Armand Soucy seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Mark LePage, Chairman