

BUDGET COMMITTEE
TOWN OF PEMBROKE, NH
JANUARY 21, 2020 at 6:30 PM

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

I. Attendance:

Budget Committee Present:

Andy Camidge, Clint Hanson, Mike Connor, Karen Yeaton, Gerry Fleury, Gene Gauss, Paul Hanson, Mark LePage, Brian Seaworth, Peter Gagy, Ann Bond

Excused: Armand Soucy

Staff: David Jodoin Town Administrator, Jillian McNeil Recording Secretary

II. Approval of Minutes: January 14, 2020:

Clint Hanson moved to approve the minutes of January 14, 2020 as presented. Gerry Fleury seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.

III. 2021/2022 School District Budget Presentation

Andy Camidge shared that the School Board ratified the Paraprofessional contract on Tuesday night. The Paraprofessional's Union ratified it this afternoon. The contract number for the next fiscal year will add around \$99,000 to the bottom line bringing the total of the overall budget to \$28,329,554. At the last meeting, a motion was brought forward to lower the budget but it did not get a second due to the lateness of the hour. Amber Wheeler and Patty Sherman presented \$334,000 worth of cuts they would be prepared to make if asked by the School Board. The Board discussed the larger warrant article surrounding the CIP items. Andy described the discussion as less than enthusiastic due to the Board feeling those items are needs not wants. Mark LePage stated they are unable to vote on the warrant articles tonight because they do not have a final warrant amount. Andy stated they could anticipate seeing some movement on the main budget number and there's a possibility for a small change in the large CIP warrant article but the rest of the warrant articles are firm.

Gerry Fleury asked what the impact of the 3-year Paraprofessional Union contract is year by year. Patty Sherman answered that in contract year one the total is \$99,675, in year two it is \$73,094, and year three it is \$66,736.

Karen Yeaton asked if the \$99,675 is over and above the existing values currently in the budget. Andy answered that is correct. Karen asked if there are raises in the budget or are the numbers straight from last year. Andy answered that it is straight from last year.

Gerry Fleury asked if the maintenance people and Administrators are getting raises. Andy explained there is money in the budget for administrator raises. Amber Wheeler explained that anyone that is already under agreement or anyone who is not covered under an agreement that may have gotten raises, the money is in those lines already.

Karen Yeaton asked what the employee number count included in the CBA is. Patty Sherman answered the full time equivalent is 52.8 people.

Karen Yeaton asked if they discussed resource efficiency reductions. Andy explained he discussed staffing, the end of year large surplus, and the warrant articles with the School Board as those were the three main concerns from last week's meeting. There was a para professional position at Hill School they found that would possibly be on the table.

Karen Yeaton explained that when she went through the budget documents looking at staffing, she found some potential for reduction. Karen asked why there are two music teachers and two physical education teachers at Three Rivers when at the Hill School there is one of each. Patty Sherman explained that at Three Rivers students have more time in Physical Education than at the elementary level. There is a band and a chorus teacher. Karen asked why there are two librarians at Hill School while there is only one for Three Rivers. Patty explained that one was possibly miscoded in the budget lines because there is only one Librarian and one Technology Integrator at Hill School. Andy explained a few years ago when the Librarian left, the Technology Integrator, who was working to become a certified Librarian, had her duties combined. Andy feels that is more work than is appropriate for one person. The position is now split between two people again. Karen asked why there is a full-time Technology Integrator and then there are an additional two Technology Support Specialists. Patty explained there is a Technology Integrator at each school who works directly with students and staff. The Technology Support Specialists are shared between all three schools and work on the network and the machines.

Karen Yeaton discussed the distribution of students per classroom in K-8. In grades K-5, there are four classrooms in each grade level and in 6-8 there are 5 classrooms at each grade level. There are an average of 16 students per classroom in each grade. The New Hampshire Department of Education website has an average of 19 kids per class. If the student ratio per class was brought up to 20, it would reduce the number of classes from 4 down to 3 in K-5 and 5 down to 4 from K-8. In total, it would drop 39 classes down to 30 classes allowing the possibility to reduce staff by 9. Andy Camidge explained at Hill School there has been historically five classes and as enrollment dipped, it was worked down to four as smaller classes moved through the grade levels. If there are 16 kids in four classes that comes to an average of 64 students per grade. If those are divided out over three classes, that is over 21 kids in each class. The State of New Hampshire allows a maximum of 25 kids per classroom. There are new developments in Town and that doesn't give them much room to grow. Letting teachers go and then hiring someone back the next year, could lead to

turnover because teachers don't stay at schools where they do not feel valued. Mark LePage explained that another variable to consider once the kids enter 5th grade, the structure is different and the teachers become specialized. Karen reiterated there is some opportunity for the School Board to discuss reductions in staffing because the school is not close to state average or allowable numbers. Karen stated at Pembroke Academy there are four Secretarial positions and three Administrative Assistant positions and asked if there is opportunity to consolidate those positions. Patty Sherman explained that one of them is the Registrar, one is support staff for Special Education, one is for student's needs and attendance, one is the Budget Secretary, and then one is support for Assistant Principals and Guidance. They are all specialized positions. Karen pointed out that there has been an 8% reduction in student enrollment over the last few years.

Mike Connor asked why there is a 33% revenue increase in the school lunch program. Amber Wheeler explained there was an overall reduction of \$23,000. It appears to have a large increase because the last few months of the last fiscal year, they did not receive revenue for food service while the students were remote. This year, the numbers were budgeted conservatively based on the previous year so it still appears as a large increase because of the missing revenue from those months but in actuality, there is a reduction.

Gerry Fleury asked if the State of New Hampshire mandates greater free and reduced lunch but does not pay up front for it. Amber explained yes, they submit for it and hope they get it all back and they do have to prepare for the event that they do not.

Gerry Fleury would like to see a fresh version of the school district warrant before the committee votes.

Karen Yeaton questioned what improvements are needed in order to comply with the American Disability Act and where they are located. Patty Sherman explained there are stairs that are out of compliance and a lift that is out of compliance but they will provide a full list from Josh Coughlin the Facilities Director. Gerry Fleury explained that part of the ADA upgrades went through CIP and one of the projects are the stairs in front of the SAU. He noted that he has seen other public buildings where a simple sign was used to caution that the stairs were of different heights to avoid reengineering the entire face of the building.

Mark LePage agreed he would like to see the full warrant with updated numbers before voting.

Karen Yeaton shared she would like to see reductions in the overall budget. Karen feels there are approximately 14 positions that should be looked at which amounts to a savings of around \$875,000 in the budget. Karen would also like to see \$600-650,000 in overall reductions for the Committee to consider.

Andy Camidge shared concerns that the School Board does not meet again until February 2nd which is two days before the public hearing. Mark LePage expressed frustration that they are not scheduling meetings every week during this part of the budget process. Mark is also frustrated they do not have the full warrant to vote on at this juncture. Karen Yeaton stated last year the School Board showed up at the public deliberative session and brought forward a reduced budget that the Committee had never seen and does not want to be blindsided again. Andy Camidge explained that the School Board has been meeting more frequently but they spend many hours at each meeting dealing with COVID related items and discussing the opening of the schools. On top of COVID, they had a new union negotiation they had to deal with and they just received the final numbers today. Andy stated that if the School Board can find cuts, they will present it to the deliberative session whether it is too late to make it to the packets or not.

Clint Hanson and David Doherty urged the Committee to take the way schools are funded and the \$900,000 loss of revenue of the State into consideration.

Gerry Fleury made a motion to table further discussion on the School District budget and warrant articles. Karen Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.

IV. Vote on Warrant Articles

Gerry made Fleury a motion to consider the warrants for the Town. Karen Yeaton seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.

- Gerry Fleury made a motion to approve warrant article 4 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$610,000 to be deposited into the following Capital Reserve Funds established as indicated below: The sum to come from 2021 Fund Balance/surplus and no amount will be raised by taxation.

Town Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$150,000
Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 55,000
Municipal Facilities Capital Reserve Fund	\$100,000
Fire Major Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$140,000
Fire Small Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 10,000
Roadway and Infrastructure Capital Reserve Fund	\$100,000
Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 30,000
Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 10,000
Police Small Equipment Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 10,000
Town Clock Fund	\$ 5,000
	\$610,000

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen. David Doherty seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.

- Andy Camidge made a motion to approve warrant article 5 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$320,000 to purchase a new Split body trash and recycling truck with accessories. This sum to come from 2021 Fund Balance/Surplus and no amount

will be raised from taxation. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Paul Hanson seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.

- Karen Yeaton made a motion to approve warrant article 6 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$87,000 to purchase a new 1 Ton truck and accessories and to authorize the withdrawal of a sum not to exceed \$87,000 from the Town Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Gerry Fleury seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.
- Gerry Fleury made a motion to approve warrant article 7 –. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$19,000 to purchase a new Service body to be installed on a currently owned 1 Ton truck and to authorize the withdrawal of a sum not to exceed \$19,000 from the Town Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Clint Hanson seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.
- Karen Yeaton made a motion to approve the warrant article 9 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee's recommended amount of \$8,712,950 for the 2021 municipal operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen. David Doherty seconded the motion. Motion passed 10-0.
- David Jodoin commented that the numbering of the articles approved tonight could very well change after the review by the State Department of Revenue Administration

V. Other Business

David Jodoin explained that budget materials will be available on the Town and School District websites and there will also be hard copies available at Town Hall.

The next remote meeting will be held January 28, 2021 to discuss the remaining Town and School District warrant articles.

VI. Adjourn

Gerry Fleury made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 PM. Brian Seaworth seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Mark LePage, Chairman