

Budget Committee Minutes

November 30 2017

**** FINAL ****

Roll Call:

Ann Bond
Clint Hanson
David Doherty-School Board Representative
Mark LePage-Chairperson
Gerry Fleury-Vice Chairperson
Brian Seaworth
Marie Chouinard
Mike Connor
Pat Boucher-School Board Alternative Representative
Peter Gagy
Tina Courtemanche-Selectman Representative
David Sheldon-Selectman Alternative Representative
Karen Yeaton

Call to Order: 630pm

Minutes:

Action: Gerry Fleury moved to approve the minutes from 11/16/17. Motion seconded by Clint Hanson.

Discussion: Page 2- Under assessing services, the last sentence has to be reworded to state "The town budgets conservatively for the worst case scenario."

Page 6: Marie Chouinard's statement should read "Marie Chouinard stated that she has worked for the Bureau of Tax and Land Appeals. She stated that DRA takes the total amount approved by the voters and sets the tax rate to ensure the town has enough money to meet the voter approved budgets. DRA sets the tax rate, not the town."

Clint Hanson requested spelling of last names be reviewed as well, throughout the document.

Motion passed as amended 11-0.

Budget Review:

Recreation Budget: Rose Galligan was present to discuss the proposed budget for the 2018 fiscal year. Overall the recreation budget is up \$400 from 2017. The additional money is to fund the Summer Concert Series. This line item was not funded last year and therefore there were not any concerts.

Mark LePage requested to know if there was anything for Capital Improvements. Per Rose Galligan there were not as the Board of Selectman did not approve her requests.

Karen Yeaton requested to know about the telephone charges and if there was a way to reduce this. David Jodoin stated that there is one phone plan for the town at a government rate. The amount is then broken down per department and allocated accordingly.

Ambulance Budget: Chris Gamanche-Director of Tri-Town Ambulance was present to discuss the proposed budget for the 2018 fiscal year. This budget is a part of an inter-municipal agreement between ourselves and Allenstown. Mr Gamanche explained that over the past 3 years they have been able to turn over all of the old equipment and replaced them with new equipment with maintenance plans. In addition the department is going for a Portable Ventilator in Capital Improvements. This would allow for more extensive care to start sooner.

Mark LePage requested to know the replacement cycle of the ambulance. Mr Gamanche stated it is currently on a 6 year replacement cycle. After that first 6 years the apparatus would be moved to the secondary piece.

Karen Yeaton thanked Mr Gamanche for doing more for less.

Fire Department:

Chief Paulson was present to review the proposed budget for the Fire Department. Currently the insurance is down \$16,000 and that is due to the Full Time Employee only needing a single plan. Dispatch Services is up however this is a fixed cost through the compact in which 22 communities are a part of.

Karen Yeaton questioned why we pay \$4400 a year for hydrant rentals. Per Chief Paulson the Town of Pembroke does not own the hydrants therefore that cost is a billed to the Town by the Water department as a stand by fee. There is no contract for this agreement with the water works.

Tina Courtemanche requested to know who pays for the maintenance on the hydrants. The Water Works Department repairs the hydrants if they are broken however the Fire Department clears them of snow and debris.

Brian Seaworth requested to know how the call volume was. Per Chief Paulson they are currently about the same as last year.

Mark LePage requested to know if the fire department is dispatched for medical calls. Chief Paulson stated they don't normally, however there are certain calls that they are.

Karen Yeaton requested to know why the safety equipment is a repeat purchase from last year. Chief Paulson explained that this is in the budget every year as they need to be able to replace gear/safety equipment as they fail testing.

Town Administrator Budget:

The updated budget presented is down \$51,942.00 mainly due to insurance costs and consolidating other areas. A basic overview of each line was done by David Jodoin.

Gerry Fleury requested to know why telephone costs were so high. David Jodoin stated that this is not just for cell phones. This is for dedicated landlines, alarm systems, cell phones and fax. Gerry Fleury suggested Mr Jodoin to look into all options to see if a cheaper rate could be found.

Karen Yeaton requested to know what budgets David Jodoin manages. Town Administration, Auditing, Tax Collecting, Legal and Planning.

Karen Yeaton requested that the town look into removing all unnecessary training. Concerns were stated by Mr Jodoin in removing all training. Laws update all of the time and this may hinder the town. Per Ms Yeaton she understood the predicament and was just seeing if any of this could be reduced.

Old Business:

School Update:

Per David Doherty there was no new information from the school board. They did however have a School Board Meeting where they took 1 hour worth of comments and questions from the public. Due to this they have not been able to answer the questions from the budget committee. The priority for the Superintendent's office right now is answering the questions of the School Board.

David Sheldon requested to know when these questions would be answered. Per Mr Sheldon they are running out of time before the next budget is presented. Mr Doherty stated he would hope to have the answers in the next two weeks.

Mark LePage stated that the budget committee is looking to start reviewing the school budget as of December 21st and the budget committee needs answers to some of the questions prior to this. Per David Doherty he would expect these to be answered prior however could not guarantee this.

Gerry Fleury requested to know if there was another shortfall this year. If the superintendent is personally approving PO's and freezing discretionary spending she should know where we are at this time. Mr. Fleury stated that these are disappointing times, he has lost confidence and has a sense that the budget committee is being put off.

Mr Doherty stated he understood the concerns and he is not trying to make excuses. He believes they will respond in a timely manner.

Clint Hanson stated he had similar concerns. How was the rate created in the first place, what was the appropriation? Where do we need to start this year? He then went on to state he knows people make mistakes however we need to change our estimations on funding, and then move forward and try to not repeat this again.

Marie Chouinard stated you can't count on being refunded from other towns as Pembroke's students were up to what was budgeted.

Mark LePage stated this may be the case however it should be explored.

Gerry Fleury is concerned in the quality of education declining due to the cuts that have to be made. This may divide the town.

David Doherty stated the School Board will have to make some difficult decisions.

Motion adjourn made by Gerry Fleury, motion seconded by Brian Seaworth. Motion passed 11-0.