

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
TOWN OF PEMBROKE, NH
November 10, 2022 at 6:30 PM**

DRAFT

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

I. Attendance:

Budget Committee Present:

Clint Hanson, Dave Doherty, Andy Camidge, Mark LePage, Gerry Fleury, Brian Seaworth, Peter Gagy, Jen Johnson, Louis Caron , Matt Miller

Absent: Sue Whitbeck

Staff: David Jodoin, Town Administrator

II. Approval of Minutes – October 13, 2022:

Gerry Fleury moved to approve the minutes of October 13, 2022. Dave Doherty seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0. Louis Caron abstained.

III. 2023 Library Budget Presentation:

Ryan O’Hora, Library Director, discussed the 2023 Library budget. David Jodoin explained the operational budget has some of the same payroll and benefit increases as the rest of the town budgets; a 5.8% cost of living adjustment increase which is tied to the previous year’s social security per the CBA, 6.7% health insurance increase, and a 1.5% dental insurance increase.

Ryan discussed the telephone line and electricity line increase over last year. Gerry Fleury suggested Ryan investigate Gateway which connects via the internet and could lead to substantial savings. The Committee also discussed options for electricity delivery charges for to potentially save money.

Peter Gagy asked why they did not budget for a large increase in heating fuel. Ryan explained they heat with gas and are expecting a similar rate.

Ryan discussed the fundraising and advertising lines as well as community programming lines. He would like to add a newsletter, more programs, services, and events as resident’s needs and wants have changed post Covid.

Matt Miller asked for some detail on the health insurance. David Jodoin explained the health program is administrated by HealthTrust in Concord and dental coverage is through Delta Dental. There are different tiers to the plans, the Library and Town Hall fall under one plan while Public Works falls under another. Matt asked for

clarification as to why the increase is 44%. David clarified last year they budgeted for a 2-person plan, and this year it changed to a family plan plus the additional 6.7% overall increase. Gerry Fleury asked if the town offers an insurance buy out. David answered they do.

Louis asked why the computer software and maintenance lines show a large difference between the year to date and the budgeted. Ryan explained he is newer to the position and the previous Director took on the role of IT and performed the monthly/quarterly updates and the majority of the maintenance himself. The plan is to go back to using an outside company for these services.

Andy Camidge shared the Pembroke Library along with other surrounding community libraries applied for and received a grant to start a “Library of Things”. The Library of Things is a collection of objects that can be loaned. For example, items such as kitchen appliances, gardening equipment, power tools, or SAT prep books.

Ryan shared the library could benefit from one more employee that works 10-15 hours a week. Gerry Fleury suggested creating a plan for the new position to add to the request in next year’s budget.

IV. 2023 Town Budget Overview:

David Jodoin presented the 2023 Town Budget Overview:

- The overall increase of the budget is 9.4% which includes all the capital expenditures
- Town Administration increases are tied to the cost-of-living adjustment, retirement, and a change in health insurance coverage.
- The Town Clerk’s office used to have two full time employees. Over time, it has become one full time employee and one part time 20 hours a week position. Recently when the Town Clerk was on vacation, the part-time person quit. An arrangement was made for the Town Clerk to work remotely. He would print to the Town Hall and David would mail the registrations. The State felt it was not secure network and David was not certified to be handling the documents. After showing the State the safeguards in place and explaining that David is certified, the State still shut the Clerk’s office down and took all the records, plates, titles, and decals. The situation was eventually sorted out and the Town was allowed to resume operations. Then, David and Jim both were out with COVID in August at the same time and the Clerk’s office was closed. It is important that the town allocates money back into the budget to refill the position that was previously there.
- Election lines have an increase to purchase new elections booths.
- Revaluation lines have an increase for detail assessing work that is not included as a part of the revaluation. This year is a recertification year where they double check items like elderly exemptions and veterans’ credits. The full revaluation funds come out of the capital reserve set up for that purpose. Right now, the Town ratios are estimated at around 66%. Last year, it was 77%. 2024 is the planned every 5-year

state mandated revaluation. The Select Board will need to decide whether they will combine the recertification and the revaluation in 2023 or wait until 2024.

- Planning lines increase is salary and benefits.
- Cemetery has a new contract for mowing which is a minor increase.
- Primex has not given all the information on refunds or credits yet. The Town will find out in January and David will adjust the budget then if there are any credits.
- The Police Department was approved to add personnel last year. The Chief will discuss it further when he comes to the Committee.
- Ambulance and Fire will come next week. There will be a large decrease in the Ambulance operational budget compared to last year because capital expenditures were cut out and surplus was used due to the dissolution of the IMA.
- Fire Department has an increase due to the cost of the fuel and turn out gear. A substantial amount of money will be added to the Capital Reserve deposits to order new air packs. The air packs are failing and need to be replaced.
- Public Works has increases for salt sand and fuel.
- Debt Service increases are for the Main Street bond. The Town no longer pays for debt services out of the paving line in the budget.
- Water and Sewer budgets have not been finalized yet.
- There is a new contract for trash. Rates did go up, but the large increase is the cost to recycle. There is no market for it. The Solid Waste Committee has been meeting with Casella and made a recommendation to the Select Board on how to move forward with the recycling program.

Clint Hanson asked if David requested the dissolution of the IMA with Allenstown happen in December of 2024. David answered he did in order to alleviate problems carrying two sets of records for six months. David stated that he had a meeting with the Allenstown Fire Chief, Director Gamache, the Allenstown Town Administrator, and the billing company Comstar to start work on the process as soon as possible with regards to collections and receivables. Allenstown informed Comstar in that meeting they will no longer be using their service which will further complicates things. Pembroke will be required to continue the financial reporting for both Towns until a closeout can happen.

Andy Camidge asked if in the long run this is going to financially hurt Pembroke. David stated there will be an impact and it will hurt.

Gerry Fleury asked if the Town could bill in a way to make up the losses. David explained that there is Mutual Aid and he is not sure if he can legally bill communities differently and that is a legal question.

V. School Budget Update:

Andy Camidge discussed the School District 2023 Budget. The School Board got their first look at the budget last week. It was not the full budget yet and mostly just the buildings lines. There will be significant changes in the Special Education lines. It will so a decrease in contracted services but an increase in out of district placement. Those students will be going elsewhere for their services which is more expensive for Pembroke. They have not gotten retirement rates yet from the State. Those should be coming in the next few weeks. The SAU budget passed with a 1.9% increase. This

year is a teacher contract year and negotiations are going now. They should get the full budget soon.

VI. Other Business:

The next meeting will be November 17th at Town Hall.

VII. Adjourn:

Dave Doherty made a motion to adjourn at 8:10 PM. Clint Hanson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Mark LePage, Chairman