

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
TOWN OF PEMBROKE, NH
DECEMBER 1, 2022 at 6:30 PM**

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

I. Attendance:

Budget Committee Present:

Clint Hanson, Dave Doherty, Andy Camidge, Sue Whitbeck, Gene Gauss, Mark LePage, Gerry Fleury, Brian Seaworth, Peter Gagyi, Jenn Johnson, Louis Caron, Matt Miller

Staff: David Jodoin, Town Administrator

II. Approval of Minutes – November 17, 2022:

Gerry Fleury moved to approve the minutes of November 17, 2022 as amended. Dave Doherty seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0. Andy Camidge abstained.

III. 2023 Water Department Budget Presentation:

Kevin Brasley, Pembroke Water Commission Chair, and Matt Gagne, Pembroke Water Superintendent, presented the Water Department 2023 Budget. Kevin explained they set the budget by taking the actuals through October and divide that figure 10 for an average, and then multiply the average by 12. They then add an automatic 3% increase. Afterwards, they go by line by line and increase or decrease. Kevin explained this year, they instituted a water ban so residential sales were lower than in the past. They do plan to institute the ban again next year but whether it is a rainy summer or dry summer will play into the residential sales numbers. The increased connection fee income last year was due to the golf course development.

Mark LePage asked what the permit fee income is derived from. Kevin answered that is a yearly fee for any additional meters. A resident would have an additional meter for items such as an irrigation system. This was once charged every 5 years, but it is now charged yearly.

Mark LePage asked why there is an increase for contract labor. Kevin explained the additional funds from last year were for the Main Street Project and the bulk of the price for next year is the Bow Lane project.

Mark LePage asked what the line “benefit hours” is referring to. Kevin explained it is the combination of all PTO for all employees.

Gerry Fleury asked if they ever had to shut down the well due to the PFAS contamination, is there a secondary location they could use. Kevin explained if they had to take the well offline, it would be ok because the secondary well they are currently blending it with has double the capacity. The issue they would face in that scenario is that the uncontaminated well they are using to blend would then be open to PFAS contamination. They are using the

first well as a barrier. They also can operate the existing 3 wells more than they do. There is a rotation schedule in place so a well is only used for 2 days at a time. It prolongs the life of the well and if they over pump, they run the risk of pulling in a contaminant. Right now, they are looking at possible interconnection with Concord and if that doesn't come to fruition, they would need to look for another source. Right now, they do not have another drill site. Gerry asked if there are reserves on the property on Bear Hill in Allenstown that could be tapped. Matt Gagne answered they couldn't with that site because it is surface water and a pull from surface water is very different. Pulling ground water is easier because the ground is a natural filtration system. Pulling surface water changes everything for the process as well as permitting and costs. Interconnection in Concord is becoming the top priority. Gerry asked what the current demand for water is vs. current ability to meet demand. Kevin explained they are well under capacity with a 20% buffer. They are actively trying to not have any large increases that may dilute the source.

Matt Miller asked what the life of a well is and what is the cost of replacing it. Kevin answered it is about \$5m to replace and the oldest well was put in 1953. That is the water source contaminated with PFAS. There isn't an exact number for the life span of a well but with proper maintenance and usage, they will last a very long time.

Jenn Johnson asked if they seek out grant Funds. Kevin answered the town has been using ARPA funds and they were approved for a grant through the State PFAS loan fund which they have utilized \$2.5m of with more to come.

IV. 2023 Police Budget Presentation:

David Jodoin explained they have recently hired new employees that came in at different rates so this budget will change in January for all payroll related items. The Police Department also received the same 5.9% COLA and NHRS raises as every other Town department.

Chief Gary Gaskell, Pembroke Police Department, presented the 2023 Pembroke Police Budget. The majority of the budget lines do not have an increase. Right now, there is a 5.46% overall increase. The County attorney was reelected and after a discussion with him on prosecutor services and dispatch service costs, he indicated to plan on a 5% increase for prosecutor services and 6% for dispatch. Those figures are not final. Dues and subscriptions are up 14.29%. Gas and Fuel is up 38.33% due to current gas prices and anticipation of prices rising to \$4.50/gallon. Vehicle Maintenance and repair is up 100%. That is due to several vehicles being out of warranty and the CIP committee suggested increasing that line to accommodate increased maintenance costs. The car they ordered in January is set to be delivered at any time. It will then need to be outfitted which could take an additional 8-10 weeks. They will go to going for a new car every year rather than the 2-1 model they have been using. There are growing concerns for the lead time to get a vehicle after a town meeting vote.

David explained that right now, there are funds in the capital reserves for all town vehicles. On the vehicle capital reserves, the agents to expend are town meeting. It may be time to change the agents to expend to the Selectman so when a deal comes up, they do not lose it. For example, Public Works is looking for a 6-wheeler and if they were agents to expend the capital reserve, they could have purchased it saved \$30,000. Since that opportunity passed,

they upped their budget to cover a more expensive vehicle. The warrant articles allow the voters to decide if they want the money to go into that fund for that purpose and are giving permission for it to be used in that fashion, with the faith and trust in the Selectboard to approve the expenditure. With the cost increase and delays, they may need to start putting the costs of new vehicles in the budgets.

Matt Miller asked how the process to change the agents to expend for a capital reserve happen. Gerry Fleury explained it take a warrant article at town meeting with a 2/3 majority vote. Sue Whitbeck asked if there is another way to get it brought up at town meeting. David answered that it can be done by a Selectman warrant article or a petitioned article.

Matt Miller asked how many people the Police Department has and what kind of training do they get. Chief Gaskell explained there are 11 employees. Firearms is a yearly training for everyone and carries the largest costs. There are several other types of trainings they take every year which differs for everyone. They budget is \$1,000 per person.

Andy Camidge asked if they feel LEAD will be more impactful than DARE. Chief Gaskell answered the age difference will be less restrictive. Part of the problem with DARE was teaching the core program in 5th grade. LEAD will hit the older kids.

Dave Doherty asked how they are doing covering the Department while down 2 officers. Chief Gaskell stated they are handling it pretty well but they are biting into the overtime budget and they are more reactive than proactive. Dave asked if there are any particular crimes that are going up or down. Chief Gaskell answered there are not.

Gerry Fleury asked why there is a 72% increase in social security costs. David explained there are now part time employees in the budget who get Social Security and Medicare because they are not full-time and therefore not part of NHRS.

Gerry Fleury asked why they have not budgeted increases for postage and when we know rates are increasing in January. Chief Gaskell answered they send a lot more through email and people are coming in to pick up reports rather than having them mailed.

Matt Miller asked why they budgeted so much in software when the actuals are less than half of the budgeted anticipated. Chief Gaskell explained they are adding body cams. The grant will pay for the cameras but not the cloud storage and there are some known increases coming from dispatch vendors. There was \$13,000 encumbered from last year to cover some costs.

Mark LePage asked what keeps him up at night. Chief Gaskell questions if the officers are safe and supported enough. Personal safety hazards are a part of the job. Mark asked if there is anything they are lacking. Chief Gaskell explained he would love to have 5 guys on at night but that's not feasible. However, they do have good mutual aid with all the surrounding departments. Every nearby service is now 24 hrs.

Gerry Fleury explained the Zoning Board is looking at an application for Live Free Recovery Drug Services to open a facility at the old TD Bank location. There was a lot of push back on the project at the last meeting. Gerry asked if there are any concerns from the Police Department. Chief Gaskell answered he has reached out to Code Enforcement and gave him the information he gathered from the City of Keene and the City of Manchester. Per the addresses of their businesses, Keene has had 3 interactions in the last year and Manchester

has had 14 at one facility and none for the other two. The Manchester calls were a few thefts, a few involuntary admittable transports, and some paperwork services. The Keene facility is down the street from Police Department, and they did not have anything concerning to report. Manchester is a large City that has a call a minute so 14 calls over a year is not too concerning. Gerry asked if he concerned about having to adapt the Department to the program. Chief Gaskell explained the Department is constantly changing and adapting but they will have to see how it works once it goes in before any changes are made.

Clint Hanson asked if they foresee the issue of the lack of recruits continuing. Chief Gaskell answered he does. It not a job that people want to do anymore. There are also sign on bonuses offered by larger departments that Pembroke can't match.

The committee recognized the personal commitment required by officers at the risk of their personal safety and thanked the Chief and his officers for their service.

V. School Budget Update:

Karen Guercia the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services will come to the Budget Committee on December 15th to discuss that portion of the budget. The Committee would like to see where special education for Pembroke has been, where are we at, and where is it going. They would also like to discuss stats on IEP vs. 504, outplacements, general trends with students, and the process of eligibility and how it is identified. The full budget discussions with the school will start January 5, 2022.

VI. Other Business:

Clint Hanson stated PACE is officially done and settled so \$86,600 in funds was returned to the Pembroke School District.

Brian Seaworth discussed the County budget process. The preliminary budget has a 2.9% increase, but it still needs to go through the budget review that will start this month.

The next meeting with be December 8th and will be Public Works and Sewer Department.

VII. Adjourn:

Clint Hanson made a motion to adjourn at 8:04 PM. Sue Whitbeck seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Mark LePage, Chairman