

Budget Advisory Committee

Minutes

January 10, 2024

Present: Tim Fiske, Bill Ezell, Mike Darnell, Rob Kenney, George Willard, Peter Allen, Gall Cromwell. Gary Scholl (by speaker phone)

Tim Fiske, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7 pm. Chair Scholl had advised that he would stay home because of covid but would dial in.

The Committee reviewed the known budget line by line and added some missing items which Rob entered into the budget on his computer.

Bill Ezell advised the group that the Select Board would probably give raises only to the Highway Department. There is a problem with the Town Clerk who came on with the resignation last summer of Wendy Drouin. She has attended the available training sessions but it is a difficult job to pick up in just a few months. As a result it is proposed that \$1500 be added to the Deputy salary to get some professional help for the Clerk. The current deputy is willing to continue in that role until March but probably not afterwards. The town has been paying Drouin to come in to help the Clerk, perhaps \$150/month. Possibly the training line could be used. Joyce Kullgren was suggested as another possibility for help. It is up to the select board to resolve this issue.

Some highlights:

The office postage meter annual cost has increased to \$1032 from 700. SB Postage add \$100. Printing and Advertising also up to \$1373, what was spent last year.

Vital statistics can go down to \$400. Only \$240 was spent last year.

The annual cost of Quickbooks is going up but we await advice from Ed Holz on other software needs.

The town attorney can be reduced to \$20,000 from \$30,000 and Other Legal from \$2,000 to \$1,000.

Ballfield expense must now accommodate a handicapped accessible portapotty, (add \$150) and other expenses raise the need to \$1500.

Health insurance will increase from \$74,000 to \$89,676, even taking into account that a third highway worker is not likely to be added until March.

Due to a change in service provider, the Town Hall Custodial Help will reduce from \$10,000 to \$4,000.

Cemetery Maintenance is to go up by \$2,000 for a survey of the new area.

TEEC has not yet responded, \$1 as a placeholder.

Police budget. Is. Up from \$276K to \$322K, with a possible \$25,000 surplus to offset.

Town gasoline will be estimated at 6,000 and diesel at \$26,000.

The Highway Department has requested a clothing allowance of \$500. , vehicle repairs/ maintenance from \$20,000 to \$25,000, with the most significant addition being a request for \$5000 to pay for a new highway worker to obtain a CDL license. A contract will be required which will obligate the new person to remain with the department for x years or pay it back.

Animal Control requests a \$200 mileage line.

Patriotic Purposes requests \$300 for a new American flag.

The total estimated budget at this point is \$1,558,091, compared to last year \$1,362,660, a 12.6% increase.

It was agreed that the Budget Hearing will be Thursday, Feb 8, at 6:30 pm.

The minutes of Dec 13, 2023 were approved as written.

Respectfully,

Gail Cromwell