

Selectboard Minutes
November 21, 2023

Present: Jenn Jones, chair
Jon Morgan
Russ Kelly
Paul Kleinman

At 6pm, Jones called the meeting to order.

The Board signed the payroll and accounts payable summary register.

Kleinman motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the consent agenda which consisted of public minutes from 11/14/23, intent to cut, treasurer's report (found at the end of these minutes), and the following building permits:

- Sevim Perry & Mary-Jo Kohl, 63 Stevens Drive, Electrical
- Robert & Audrey Gerkin, 141 Pickpocket Road, Building – deck
- Eric & Catherine Turer, 33 Peabody Drive, Plumbing
- James & Stephanie Fraser, 204 South Road, Minor Project – garage
- Hayley & Paul Breagy, 21 Longmeadow Drive, Minor Project – deck

All were in favor.

Jones opened the meeting to public comment at 6:04pm.

Liz Faria, South Road, was present with a 91A request for the number of full-time employees. Jones responded she does not believe that needs to be a Right-To-Know Request. Faria stated it does because it gives a time limit on receiving the information. She also asked if all full-time employees receive life insurance coverage. Karen Clement, Town Administrator, stated they do.

Faria questioned the recreation budget. She asked why the salaries were increasing 27% and the budget was going up 16% if COLA/merit were maxed at 5%. Jones explained the questions would be answered during the Recreation Department's budget presentation.

Jones closed public comment at 6:07pm.

Morgan motioned, seconded by Kleinman, to open the public hearing for the acceptance of the library's unanticipated funds of \$156,963 at 6:07pm. All were in favor.

Janice Wiers, library director, presented the town with 2 checks. A check from the Friends of the Library for \$145,105 and a check from MEB Library for \$11,858. Wiers explained the check from the Friends of the Library were donations separate from the GoFundme and raffles.

Wiers also requested the contracts for the amphitheater project be signed by the Selectboard. She explained the town will be the fiduciary agent and therefore should sign the contract. Morgan asked if the contract had been reviewed. Wiers responded Clement had "written the contract". Clement asked if it was the standard contract or if Highland changed anything in the contract. Wiers was unsure if changes were made. Morgan expressed concern in signing the contract without it being reviewed. Jones expressed her hesitation in signing the contracts because they had not been reviewed.

Chris Carmody, Crawley Falls Road, Friends of the Library chair expressed his appreciation for the hard work of the library in raising the funds to get the project started. He thanked the library staff for their work above and beyond.

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Liz Faria, South Road, stated the Johnson family should be thanked for their contribution. She questioned the difference in the amount being accepted. She believed the amount raised was \$151,000. Clement responded it was a difference of \$147 and referenced Wiers' explanation at the previous board meeting. She explained it was due to the fee GoFundme collects when money is disbursed.

Morgan motioned, seconded by Kleinman to accept the unanticipated revenue of \$156,963. All were in favor.

The public hearing was closed at 6:13pm.

Russ Kelly arrived at the meeting at 6:14pm.

Wayne Robinson, Road Agent, was present to discuss his budgets.

Robinson explained other towns are paying more for highway personnel. He stated he needs to increase the salary to ensure he has staff for the winter. Morgan asked Robinson to explain the employment situation in Fremont. Robinson shared that Fremont only has the road agent remaining. He added that other towns and the state have lost several drivers. Robinson stated it takes 3 hours for 1 driver to do his route. He added there is a need to run all 4 trucks for every storm.

Highway Budget

- Proposed budget of \$468,457
- Increase in some budget lines
 - Salary lines
 - COLA and merit for year-round employees
 - Increase for seasonal drivers
 - Electricity line
 - Rise in electricity rates
 - Usage of 2 buildings
 - Heating/oil/gas
 - Higher rates
 - Usage of 2 buildings
 - Vehicle repairs
 - Supplies & parts
 - To cover breakdowns
 - Increase of \$3,000
 - Hand tools
 - Care of trees
- Level-funded for many budget lines
 - Equipment rental
 - Office supplies
 - Tele/Comm
 - Mowing Equipment
 - Signs
 - Guardrails
 - Culverts/basins
 - Crushed stone
 - Cold patch

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- Building repair
- Road construction

Jones shared she would like to reduce the number of warrants presented at Town Meeting. She suggested Robinson's road construction/paving warrant of \$350,000 be added to the general operating budget. She asked Robinson if he had any opposition to it. He stated he did not as long as the \$30,000 in the budget remains and is added to. Jones asked for thoughts from the board on rolling the \$350,000 requested as a warrant into the general operating budget.

Morgan supported the idea as long as it was made clear to the taxpayers why the budget was increasing so drastically. Kleinman asked how long the warrant article has been set at \$350,000. Clement responded she believes it has been about 6 years. There was no opposition to adding the road construction amount into the budget.

Morgan motioned, seconded by Kleinman, to accept the highway budget of \$818,457. All were in favor.

Highway Snow/Ice Budget

- Proposed budget of \$232,074
- Increase in some budget lines
 - Salaries – to remain competitive
 - Equipment maintenance
 - Sand/salt/cold patch
 - Increase of \$5208.50
 - Due to increased costs

Kleinman questioned the third employee listed in the highway budget. Robinson explained that is for a current vacancy. Kleinman asked how long the position has been vacant. Clement responded since about March.

Kleinman motioned, seconded by Kelly, to accept the highway snow/ice budget in the amount of \$232,074 with an increase. All were in favor.

Andy Gray, Recreation Director, was in attendance to present his budget.

Gray explained to the Selectboard his need to add a 17-week summer camp director position to his budget. He explained the role would be from May – August. Gray added that he has someone who has been in the camp director role but working only about 20 – 25 hours per week leading into summer camp. He stated the increase in hours prior to camp would allow for planning of field trips, accepting payments, scheduling buses, enrolling campers, purchasing necessary supplies, and more.

Gray explained he desires to continue offering an affordable option for camp. Morgan asked Gray to briefly speak about the revenue growth. Gray responded that the summer camp increased from an average of 20 – 25 kids per day to 35 – 40 kids per day this past summer. He added that is about \$800 – \$1,000 per attendee. Gray shared that the use of funds from the revolving fund help keep camp affordable for families. It also allows Gray to pay for the camp director and camp counselors.

Jones clarified the 17-week position already existed. Gray confirmed that was accurate and added the 25-hour position was paid for out of the revolving fund. Jones asked about the financial side of the enrollment. She asked if the camp breaks even or if it makes a profit. Gray responded camp generally generates profit as it is the biggest program of the rec center. He noted the summer of Covid was an exception. Clement added that seasonal employees do not qualify for benefits or overtime. Jones asked if it would be possible to add a separate line item for the camp director instead of lumping it in together. Clement responded it would be the board's preference on how they would like it listed. Jones feels it would be cleaner for the camp director to have his own line in the budget.

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Kleinman asked for an explanation of a revolving fund. Clement responded it was established as a result of a vote at Town meeting. Money is added to the fund from money received from programming. Clement added the money can only be expended for specific purposes. Gray stated he currently uses some of that funding to help keep camp rates lower. Kleinman asked what other camps charge. Gray responded Exeter averages about \$1,000 per child. He added they have access to items Brentwood Rec does not including pools. Brentwood currently charges about \$800, according to Gray.

Kleinman asked if the position is new or expanded. Clement responded it would begin in early May. Jones added it would offer additional hours. Morgan asked Gray to explain what revolving funds are used for. Gray responded for general upkeep, maintenance of the facilities, purchasing sporting equipment, offering youth sports as well as adult and senior programs. He added there are events like fall paddle and senior luncheons that do not charge the community to participate, but there is still a cost to run the events. That is paid for from the revolving fund, according to Gray.

Valerie Rogers, recreation commissioner, also added it pays for items such as electricity. Gray explained electricity is a 55/45 split. The town pays 55% and the revolving fund pays 45%. Rogers pointed out it is not just the programming, but also the general use of the facilities.

Kleinman asked what it would cost the taxpayers to add this position. Morgan responded the tax impact would be \$13,600 greater on this specific budget. He added the rec is being used a lot more and is also taking in more money. Morgan stated it was about 40% more just this past summer that went into the revolving fund.

Kleinman asked how much is in the rec revolving fund. Gray responded there is about \$79,000 currently in the account, but it will drop to about \$20,000 after the town bill is paid. Once the fall programming fees are added, Gray explained the balance should increase to about \$27,000.

Kleinman asked who the camp director is. Gray responded it is currently a resident named Jason Gagnon. He added that Gagnon started as a counselor and has worked his way into the role as Camp Director.

Recreation Budget

- Budget increase of 18.5%
 - Increase due to COLA/merit increase
 - Adding more hours to camp director position
 - Moving camp director salary out of revolving fund and into operating budget
- Level funding of most lines
 - Training
 - Electric
 - Heat/oil
 - Dues & subscriptions
 - Telephone/communication
 - Equipment maintenance
 - Portable toilets
 - Town events
 - Land maintenance
 - Trails
 - Land & facility improvements

Morgan motioned, seconded by Kelly, to accept the Recreation budget of \$112,636. All were in favor.

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Andy Gray, Joint Loss chair, presented the budget for Joint Loss Management.

Joint Loss Budget

- Budget level-funded
- Proposed \$241

Morgan motioned, seconded by Kelly, to accept the Joint Loss Management budget in the amount of \$241. All were in favor.

Faria asked what Joint Loss is. Jones responded it is a committee that meets quarterly to discuss safety issues, maintenance issues, concerns and risks. She added the committee has representatives from lots of department including fire, library, cemetery, police, and selectboard.

Karen Clement, Town Administrator, presented the Mosquito Control budget.

Mosquito Control Budget

- Budget level-funded
- Proposed \$30,200

Morgan motioned, seconded by Kelly, to accept the Mosquito Control budget of \$30,200. All were in favor.

Clement presented the Health Officer Budget.

Health Officer Budget

- Budget level-funded
- Proposed \$1

Morgan motioned, seconded by Kelly to accept the Health Officer budget of \$1. All were in favor.

Stefanie Lewendon and Josh Bertoulin from the Communications Subcommittee were present to share the new website. They gave a demonstration on the tabs and various ways to find the information a person might be looking for. Jones stated the new website can be viewed on a phone. She added the usability of this feature will be an improvement. Clement will distribute preview links to board members so they can navigate the site ahead of its launch.

Jones asked how data heavy files will be handled. Lewendon responded some more recent items will be on the website, others will be accessed through a different server. Jones asked for the anticipated launch date. Lewendon responded in December. Bertoulin explained he would offer a training session for employees who will be making changes on the website. He added once Clement gives the okay, the URL will become active.

Jones asked how residents will be able to sign up for alerts. Bertoulin and Lewendon demonstrated how to get to the e-alerts which allows residents to subscribe to various options. Bertoulin shared the calendar updates can sync with google calendar or apple calendar.

Kelly thanked Lewendon, Bertoulin, and the committee for their hard work.

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Bertoulin reviewed the audio/visual (AV) quotes. He explained the vendor quotes installed range from \$65,000 to \$80,000. Bertoulin stated the quotes include 2-3 monitors, microphones and streaming options. He also provided the board with a self-install option and explained the Communications Subcommittee members would volunteer their time to install the system. Morgan asked if the members would have the expertise to put it together. Bertoulin's responded they did, and their recommendation was the self-installation option with an estimated cost of \$21,646.13. He also explained some of the quote could be modified or adjusted.

Planning Board pledged \$6,000 toward the project and town hall impact fees could cover the remainder, according to Clement. Morgan asked how much is in the impact fee account. Clement responded \$60,000. She noted \$12,000 is earmarked for the fingerprinting machine and \$16,000 is planned for the website contract.

Jones asked Bertoulin if the committee is ready to execute the proposal. Bertoulin responded yes. He explained the pricing is based on current pricing available.

Kleinman asked what could be cut from the proposal. He asked what the Barco Clickshare Wireless presentation is and if it could be eliminated from the quote. Bertoulin explained what the item is which allows for wireless connection opposed to having to run HDMI cable. He noted the presentation would not necessarily be available to remote attendees. Bertoulin explained it could be integrated with online apps like zoom. Morgan asked if it could be added on later. Bertoulin confirmed it could be.

Kleinman questioned cutting out the control section. Bertoulin responded that cutting out the control section would eliminate the one touch automation option and require the user to follow a checklist to livestream or record any meetings. Jones did not support cutting out the control section. Jones asked if the current camera could be utilized. Bertoulin responded it could be and a new camera was not priced out for the self-install option. Morgan asked if the number of microphones could be reduced from the suggested 9 to 6 or 7 microphones. Bertoulin said it could be possible to share.

Jones asked Letty Bedard, school board member, if the school board shares microphones. She confirmed that the school board members share microphones and noted it is doable with 2 people per microphone, but 3 people per microphone is a challenge.

Kelly motioned, seconded by Morgan, to move forward with the purchase of the AV equipment in the amount of \$17,046.13 using \$6,000 from Planning Board and the remainder from the Town Office Impact Fees. All were in favor.

Chief Bird, fire chief, and Chief Ventura, police chief, was present to propose to the Selectboard changes for earned time accrual. Clement explained the proposal was to make earned time equitable across all departments. She explained earned time accruals are currently between 13 – 26 days depending on the tenure of employees.

Jones asked if the proposals were based on averages of the towns around us. Kleinman questioned the amount of time proposed. He requested a spreadsheet of what other towns offer. Chief Ventura, police chief, stated the proposal is competitive. Chief Bird agreed. Jones asked what earned time can be used for. Clement responded it is vacation, personal time, and sick time. She added employees have access to a sick pool but are required to be out for 3 days before they can use their sick pool time.

Clement stated Bow offers the following to their employees: 4 weeks for 0-5 years of service, 240 hours for 6-14 years of service, 320 hours for 15 – 19 years of service, and 400 hours for 20 or more years of service. In addition, their employees cap put at 720 hours of sick pool. Jones asked if Bird's proposal is similar to Epping. Bird responded it was similar, but not exact.

Jones stated she trusts Clement and both chiefs with their research. Morgan supports the people serving the residents. Chief

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Ventura stated he knows the employees appreciate the support of the board. He added that support helps retain employees and the town to remain competitive. Kleinman believes it is imperative to have documentation of other towns and their accruals before the board makes a decision.

Chief Ventura stated Wakefield and Kingston offer higher amounts than proposed. Chief Bird also noted that some towns are union and he is not looking to complicate the comparisons. Ventura believes earned time, holidays and sick pool should be addressed. Jones asked what the financial impact to the town would be. Ventura responded most of the time, an employee being out does not result in overtime. He stated there are times when that happens, but typically he can manage coverage without the need for overtime. Ventura understands that time off equals wellness.

Kleinman asked what happens to time that cannot be used. Clement responded the fire department is allowed to carry over 84 hours and all other full-time employees are permitted to carry over 80 hours. Kelly asked if the vote needed to be done tonight. Bird responded a decision is needed for him to adequately prepare his budget.

Chief Bird also desired to discuss holidays and how fire fighters are compensated. He proposed his full-timers be paid for a 12-hour holiday opposed to 8 hours. He explained it would be about a \$5,000 increase in his budget. The proposal would also cover town office employees. Clement explained that if a holiday fell on a day an employee typically works 12 hours due to meetings, the employee would be paid for 12 hours of holiday. Currently, she explained, employees are paid for 8 hours and then need to make up the additional hours somewhere else in the week or use earned time to reach their 40 hours. Clement explained there would be no financial impact to offer that to town office employees. Ventura stated it would be about \$7,200 impact to offer full-time police 10-hour holidays.

The board decided to not vote on the proposals tonight. Accruals and holidays will be discussed next week. Kleinman requested a chart laying out the proposals and what other towns offer.

Clement presented the board with the mosquito permit application for the state of NH. Morgan motioned, seconded by Kelly, to sign the permit. All were in favor.

Jones signed the Mosquito Control permit application.

Morgan had no committee updates.

Kelly shared the Energy & Efficiency committee held their second public hearing which reportedly went smoothly. Jones added there was some discussion about residents who have solar systems and pre-existing deals with the solar companies. It was recommended those residents consider all sides before signing onto community power.

Kleinman reported that the Planning Board adopted the vision and transportation chapters of the master plan. Clement shared the CIP will be presented to the Selectboard mid-December after budgets have been presented.

Doug Finan, planning board member, reminded Kleinman about the survey for the housing in Brentwood. Kleinman added there will be a meeting on December 7 at 7pm to discuss the community housing grant.

Jones shared a Conservation Commission update. She explained the Exeter River Advisory Committee did not have a quorum for the meeting that was scheduled for last week. Jones shared there were about 30 people in the audience. She added that after about 20 minutes of waiting, the meeting was cancelled. Jones explained she delivered a letter to Russ Dean. She also reported the meeting will be rescheduled but the date has not yet been set.

Kelly asked how many people are on the Exeter River Advisory board. Jones replied it is an 11-person board, with 2 non-voting members. They would need 5 people present to reach a quorum Jones stated.

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Clement offered an update on the dam situation. She stated she spoke to Jim Weber from NH DES. She added the Town of Exeter did complete an alternative analysis study through VHB. DES does not have access to the study right now. Clement reached out to Robert Span to see if that is one of the items he requested as part of the 91-A request. She said Span has a few files on a thumb drive, but he has not had time to review them yet.

Clement stated the Exeter Selectboard voted to remove the dam but it does not mean it will ultimately be removed. She added that the Town of Exeter is the owner of the dam and the owner of the water rights. Additionally, she explained the Town of Exeter has no obligation legal or otherwise to notify the Town of Brentwood and any information shared would be done as a courtesy.

Clement added as part of their regular studies they would normally look at river bottom and aquatic passage. She added, Weber shared those studies would be within a few thousand feet from the dam. Clement shared that if Exeter moves forward with their wetlands permitting, abutters will be noticed at that point.

Clement shared there is no intervenor status for the Town of Brentwood. DES said it should not affect property lines in Brentwood, according to Clement. As part of the NOAA grant, they will likely have to study the impact of wells upstream. Clement added one of the main concerns of residents is that their wells will go dry. She stated that would most likely be addressed by the federal government as part of the NOAA grant. Jones stated that information lines up with the tone of the letter that was sent.

Jones shared the Secretary of State confirmed the election will be 1/23/2024. After learning the date was set, she reached out to the school board chair to officially request use of Swasey for the election.

At 8:11pm, Morgan motioned, seconded by Kelly, to go into non-public for personnel. Morgan – aye; Kelly – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

At 8:24pm, Kelly motioned, seconded by Morgan, to enter public session. All in favor.

Kelly motioned, seconded by Morgan, to seal the minutes. All were in favor,

At 8:24pm, Kelly motioned seconded by Morgan, to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamera Peek

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| WEEKLY TREASURER'S REPORT | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------|
| DATE: | | | 11/21/2023 | |
| General Fund: | | | TD BANK | |
| Previous Balance: | | | 2,563,750.55 | |
| Deposits: | | | 944,566.19 | |
| Payroll: | | | 30,435.14 | DDP: \$30,435.14 |
| | | | | CHK: \$ |
| FICA: | | | 7066.45 | |
| A/P: | | | 59,416.01 | Reg A/P Cks \$59,416.01 |
| | | | | Swasey \$ |
| Transfer to REC CC | | | | NHRS \$ |
| Pd Analysis Fee | | | (35.00) | CO-OP: \$ |
| Voided Check 48578 | | | \$653.36 | |
| Transfer to Impact Fees | | | | |
| Account Balance: | | | 3,412,017.50 | |
| Interest Earned YTD: | | | 112,622.45 | |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Joyce A. Gallant, Treasurer | | | | |