

BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 14, 2023

Members Present: Carl Hagstrom, Andrew Wood, Ben Thomas, Bill Davis, Barbara Brooks, Jeff Cesaitis, & Brian Doerpholz, Selectman's Representative

Members Absent: Virginia Doerpholz & Debbie Favreau, Town Administrator

Guests: Glenn Smith, Mary Kisinger, Mike Grab, John Holman, Pat Deyo, Robin Bates, Martin Nolan, & Nancy Carney

Mr. Hagstrom opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Cemetery: Mike Grab began his budget presentation by stating he went 3 months without the second person, therefore Line 120 Part Time Salary is showing a lower than usual amount expended. He will need to recruit another seasonal worker for the upcoming spring. Line 318 Labor Contract Services is for tree work and he is requesting an additional \$500. Some trees are in a difficult location and crane-work is needed, which comes as a higher cost. Mr. Doerpholz questioned if this line and Line 380 Hired Equipment is sufficient for the work needing to be done. Line 560 Dues/Subscriptions has been over expended by \$477 for 2023 to date. This, Mr. Grab explained, is for the background checks required for potential employees. Mr. Grab stated he over-winters the equipment by using ethanol free gas, which comes with a price tag of \$20/gallon (Line 635 Gasoline). Mr. Thomas inquired about the use of battery powered equipment. Mr. Grab indicated that they are not for professional use and also there are no charging capabilities at the cemeteries.

DPW: Director Glenn Smith presented and provided a comparable from New Ipswich to illustrate that the increases he is experiencing are not just Fitzwilliam but are happening in other towns as well. He stated that a lot of the increases in his budget for the past 3 years have been for vehicle repairs. Chairman Hagstrom inquired about Line 315 Consultant Services. Director Smith shared with the committee that he uses a Swanzey friend for estimating some of his projects, who does not charge, but he would like to have some amount available should those services end. The request for Line 341 Telephone has been lowered based on what has been spent so far. Director Smith has a town cell phone he shares with the after-hours on-call employees. Mr. Wood questioned why this was not consistent with the other departments that receive a stipend for using their personal phones. Mr. Doerpholz responded that the stipend is

less cost to the town. Line 357 Radio has been increased by \$1000 over 2023 because a radio will need to be installed in the new truck being purchased. Ms. Brooks asked what happens if a department's budget exceeds the approved amount with Mr. Doerpholz answering that the Selectman may move money from other town line items. The request in Line 411 Heat & Oil has increased based on what was already expended. They use a waste oil furnace, so no costs for the oil, but the repairs are what is driving the increase. Mr. Wood thinks the repair costs should go into line 430 Bldg. Repairs/Maintenance. He suggested Line 411 remain at \$1000, since the back-up system requires heating oil, and Line 430 should be \$2500. Chairman Hagstrom asked about the adjustment made to Line 830 Training, which was reduced to \$1000 from \$6500. Director Smith answered that the new hire came with a CDL license saving the town a substantial amount. Mr. Cesaitis inquired why that is not a prerequisite. Director Smith responded that it is very hard to find applicants with a CDL. Line 661 Tires is down \$5000 from last year's request. Last year tires were needed for the grader and this coming year, only the trucks will need tires. Line 685 Materials is for cold patch and gravel, which is staying the same as last year. Line 695 Rented Equipment is up by \$1000. Director Smith responded to Mr. Wood's inquiry by stating they sometimes need a mini excavator and this year they may need to rent a larger roller than what they already have.

Transfer Station: DPW Director Glenn Smith presented. Line 318 Labor Contracts is for Monadnock Disposal Service which picks up the compacter weekly. Mr. Cesaitis brought up the lack of sticker enforcement that he has noticed. Director Smith stated he has encouraged his employees to be monitoring this, but at times it can be very difficult, especially with the seasonal residents. People can get irate and he doesn't want trash and other items on the sides of the roads. Mr. Thomas mentioned the C&D disposal costs and how they fluctuate. Director Smith indicated that they are consistent with the other towns. The variables that affect the charges are the size and type of vehicle and how full the vehicle is. His employees use their best judgement in determining the cost. He also added that there are many things in the C&D dumpster that could have easily gone in the compacter. Line 430 Repairs/Maintenance up \$3500 due to a need to replace the electrical panel. This was slated for 2023, but it was not completed. Since those funds did not get used, they went back to the General Fund and a request for 2024 is required. Mr. Wood felt it should be able to be encumbered with Mr. Doerpholz disagreeing.

Minutes: Mr. Cesaitis made a motion to accept the minutes of December 7, 2023 as written with a second by Ms. Brooks. **All voted in favor (6-0-0).**

With nothing further to discuss, Mr. Wood made a motion to adjourn the meeting with a second by Mr. Cesaitis. **All voted in favor (6-0-0).**

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Minutes submitted by Marion Wheeler

