



Town of Plaistow ♦ Board of Selectmen
145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865

Plaistow Board of Selectmen Minutes

Date: October 24, 2022

Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Select Chairman, Jay DeRoche - Present
Select Vice Chairman, Bill Coye – Present
Selectman, John A. Blinn, Sr. – Expected to arrive soon
Selectman, Darrell Britton – Present
Selectman, Jonathan Gifford - Present

Also present: Greg Colby, Town Manager and Beth Hossack, Administrative Specialist.

Public Comment

None

Budget Presentation

Chief Kane, Captain Mazza and Communications Supervisor Catherine Gioia are present to discuss the police department budget.

Chief Kane states he has tried to streamline the budget and make it more transparent. Some new line items have been added to the budget for clarity. The budget has increased by 5.65%, however it is conservative. It is the amount needed to run the police and communications departments at the current level of service. Some of the line items which have increased the most include the personnel and overtime line items. Those line items make up 88.21% of the total budget leaving approximately \$272,098.00 which the department has control over. There is enough money in the salaries line item to hire a fulltime chief and keep an overlapping consultant for a while for training purposes. It also includes a captain position, executive assistant and a records clerk. The reason the training line has increased so much is due to an increase in the training required for the department. There are fewer free Academy courses available. The cost to send two (2) officers to supervisor training is approximately \$5000. The prior budget of \$3000 was an unrealistic figure. We need to keep officers certified. The cost of almost everything has increased such as fuel, radio maintenance, equipment purchases and general expenses.

Selectman Blinn arrived at 6:06 p.m.

Chief Kane states the approximate increase in taxes for this budget is 7.6 cents for every 1,000 of

value. For example, a home valued at \$400,000 will have a tax increase of approximately \$30.33 in 2023. Chief Kane states the police department does collect revenue. He briefly reviews the mission statement, core values, objectives and 2022 highlights of the police department.

Selectman Britton asks if we have our own prosecutor. This line-item has been fairly consistent in the past and now has increased.

Chief Kane replies, the police department has prosecutors not the Town. The prosecutors take care of most of the legal issues including reviewing and building cases, filing motions and managing juvenile cases. The prosecutors take a case from the arrest to the end. Officers do occasionally go to court to testify in trials.

Selectman Britton asks if the prosecutor works for other towns and how many days a week does Plaistow have them.

Chief Kane states prosecutors are not paid by the hour. They are contracted employees and at least one of them works every day in Plaistow. They may work for other towns but not on our dime.

Selectman Britton asks about the data processing line item. Not much has been used this year yet there is a slight increase in the budgeted amount for next year.

Chief Kane replies, the rest of the money will be gone soon to pay for the mobile data terminals recently purchased. Any future purchases will be moved to a different line item for 2023.

Selectman Britton agrees with that plan.

Selectman Britton asks why there is such a large increase in the training line.

Chief Kane replies, the previously funded amounts in that line item were very unrealistic. We have eighteen (18) full time officers to keep certified.

Selectman Britton asks about the communications tower line item.

Chief Kane replies, that is a true figure. We pay to have equipment on two (2) towers, one in Haverhill and one in Atkinson. However, we do get some revenue to offset some of the funds since we dispatch for Atkinson. We also get \$3,000 annually from Hillcrest Estates for a plan that was established when the condominiums were built.

Selectman Britton asks why nothing has been spent from the jail maintenance line item.

Captain Mazza replies, nothing has been destroyed this year.

Chief Kane states the line item for part-time officers is down because we do not have any part-time officers. We do have three (3) detail officers. Detail officers need the same training/certification as other officers. The detail officers also cover shifts for officers taking time off. They are also entitled to earned time as well as shift differentials and Earned Time Off (ETO) stipends. This is one of the reasons overtime has increased. A few new line items have been created to account for overtime, longevity stipend, education stipend, uniform cleaning and certification stipend.

Chair DeRoche asks if fuel/gas costs are locked in.

Chief Kane replies, no we are not locked into anything.

Selectman Gifford asks if we can lock in with the State like the fire department.

Chief Kane replies, he would prefer not to have the officers traveling so far out of Town to get a better rate on fuel.

Selectman Coye thanks Chief Kane for explaining the budget.

Chair DeRoche also thanks the Chief and states the presentation was informative. He would like to see the power point presentation posted to the website.

Selectman Britton motions to approve the police department budget in the amount of \$2,376,203. Seconded by Selectman Coye.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

Chief Knutsen is here to discuss the fire department budget. He starts with an overview of calls. The call volume has increased 17% since last year. The department is getting busier. In 2022 there have been eight (8) significant fires. The average response time is five (5) minutes, forty-five (45) seconds since we started the 24/7 shifts. Prior to the 24/7 shifts it would take an on-call firefighter 12-15 minutes to get to the station. Once three (3) firefighters arrived they would get their gear and leave the station. The quicker response time has significantly benefited people in the community with better health related outcomes. Sixty-five percent (65%) of calls are for residential addresses. Twenty-six percent (26%) of calls are to commercial addresses. The remaining call volume is a combination of roadway calls and mutual aid. The largest increases in this budget are for permanent positions/salaries and part-time call firefighters.

Selectman Britton asks about the data processing line.

Chief Knutsen replies, this is for contractual services.

Selectman Britton asks why only a small portion of medical services has been used.

Chief Knutsen replies, the medical costs are expended in December.

Selectman Britton asks why the year-to-date expense in dues is so high.

Chief Knutsen replies, some of it is for a one (1) time expense for a new records management system. In the 2023 budget dues for hazmat has been reallocated to the dues line item. In prior years it was a separate line item.

Selectman Britton asks why only a small portion of equipment maintenance has been used so far.

Chief Knutsen replies, items like pumps and ladders are tested in November.

Chief Knutsen states gas and vehicle maintenance costs are up. The department is moving to the State's fuel system to save some money.

Selectman Britton asks if the department does their own vehicle maintenance or sends it out.

Chief Knutsen replies, they do as much as they can in house. Complicated jobs are sent out.

The chief states the budget is up 5.5% over a two (2) year period since it was level funded last year. He is trying to be as conservative as possible.

Selectman Coye motions to approve the fire department budget in the amount of \$969,130.

Seconded by Selectman Britton.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

Chief Knutsen discusses the Emergency Management Budget. He states the department of Emergency Management has improved greatly since we started doing tabletop exercises and planning. The Director spends approximately 375 hours working on required projects and updating the Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). An actionable plan with step-by-step instructions is essential.

Selectman Britton asks how long it will take to update the plan.

Chief Knutsen replies six (6) to nine (9) months. Then constant practice and review is necessary.

Chair DeRoche asks how the Code Red System is working.

Chief Knutsen replies, very good. It was used for all the Old Home Day Vendors and will be used for the potable water system. If a water line/main breaks all those along the line can be contacted at once.

Selectman Coye motions to approve the emergency management budget in the amount of \$32,550. Seconded by Selectman Gifford.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

Library Director, Cab Vinton and some of the Library Trustees are here to present the library budget. The budget is up 6.6% with no increase to staffing or services. Fourteen (14) out of twenty-three (23) line items are level funded. Salaries are up 3% and health insurance is up 11.7%. Electric and gas costs are up. The previous electric contract with a set rate of 7.36/k will increase to 16.94/ k on December 1. The rate for the janitor position is determined by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

Library Director C. Vinton states if health insurance and energy costs are removed from the calculation the budget only increases by 1.73%.

Chair DeRoche thanks Library Director Vinton and the trustees for their work on the budget. He agrees there are a lot of items that cannot be controlled such as energy and health insurance costs.

Selectman Britton asks if the Town does the landscaping.

Director Vinton replies, no. They have three outside vendors. One does the mowing, one does the spraying for mosquitos and ticks and the last one does aesthetic work such as plantings.

Selectman Britton asks how many hours per week the janitor works.

Director Vinton replies, twenty-eight (28) and most of his time is spent at the Library. He is a Town employee.

Chair DeRoche asks about revenue.

Director Vinton states revenue ranges from about \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year. Sometimes they get large donations from individuals and/or bequests. In the past four (4) years the Trustees spend have spent about \$13,000 to \$14,000 on improvements. Anyone is welcome to provide suggestions.

Chair DeRoche asks how much revenue comes from passports.

Director Vinton replies about \$7,000 to \$8,000 per year is from passports. They try to come up with revenue ideas however according to State law library services must be free.

Chair DeRoche asks if the Library will be using any Capital Improvement Program (CIP) accounts to start saving money for future expenses.

Director Vinton replies, yes. The library started to put money in CIP and stopped in 2018. They want to start it up again and try to catch up.

Selectman Coye motions to approve the library budget in the amount of \$638,549. Seconded by Selectman Britton.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

Chair DeRoche states he spoke to the Conversation Commission Chair, Jill Senter. The reason nothing was spent from the part-time position line item is because they did not have a minute taker in 2022. They want to hire one in 2023 so they are keeping the line-item level funded. The water testing line is a fourth quarter expense, and it will be used by year end. The total conservation budget has only increased \$25 for an increase in dues.

Selectman Gifford motions to approve the conservation budget in the amount of \$7,225. Seconded by Selectman Coye.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

Approval of prior nonpublic minutes

The minutes are reviewed.

Selectman Britton motions to approve the nonpublic minutes of October 17, 2022 and keep them sealed. Seconded by Selectman Gifford.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

Approve Consent Agenda

Item Description

1. Accounts Payable Manifest – week of October 27th, 2022
2. BOS draft minutes – October 17th, 2022
3. One application for a Veterans Tax Credit
4. Cemetery Refund (selling 2 plots back to the Town)
5. Assessing Equalization Form

Selectman Britton motions to accept the consent agenda as written. Seconded by Selectman Coye

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries.

Town Managers Report/Potable Water Update

- Has been very busy with the budget.
- Working with Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) on tax rate setting. The county rate is set, and the DRA is waiting on information from the school.

- Attended a water meeting. The hook-ups for the MtBE properties are on schedule.
- Spent time working with Hampstead Area Water Company on practical questions dealing with turning water on.
- Tree cutting for the new section of the cemetery has started.
- Working with an energy supplier to lock in a lower electric rate for Town buildings.
- Working on several tax deeded properties.
- The Equalization Form listed in the consent agenda shows we are well below the ratio for values. In 2023 a statistical update will need to be completed. He has invited Marybeth Walker, Assessing Agent to the board meeting on November 7.

Selectman Britton asks when we will know the school portion of the tax rate.
Town Manager, G. Colby replies, he does not know.

Chair DeRoche asks what the next steps are to set the tax rate.
Town Manager, G. Colby replies, we will work with the DRA.

Selectmen's Reports and Sharing of Successes

Selectman Britton – nothing to report

Selectman Blinn – nothing to report

Selectman Coye

- Attended the Old Home Day Committee meeting. They are working on bylaws and gathering ideas for next year.
- Attended the Planning Board meeting.

Selectman Gifford

- Attended the Historical Society meeting – they are looking for a volunteer with experience in marketing.

Chair DeRoche

- Will attend the budget meeting tomorrow.

Events

- 10/28 Kids night out at the Library
- 10/28 Toddler Trick or Treat
- 10/29 Pumpkin Lighting
- 10/31 Town Trick or Treat
- 10/29 Household Hazardous Waste drop off in Kingston
- 11/8 Election Day
- 11/11 Veterans Day Ceremony at Town Hall at 9:30 a.m.

Other Business

A brief conversation is held regarding selectman coverage for the polls.

Chair DeRoche asks for a motion to enter a nonpublic session. He states we will not be coming back to a public meeting for further business.

Selectman Britton motions to enter nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(b) Hiring. Seconded by Selectman Coye.

Board Polled: J. DeRoche = yes. B. Coye = yes, J. Blinn = yes, D. Britton = yes, and J. Gifford = yes.

Motion carries

The public session adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Public session resumed at 7:56 p.m.

Chair DeRoche motions to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session as disclosure would have an adverse effect on reputation. Seconded by Selectman Britton.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries

Chair DeRoche motions to enter nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Public Employee. Seconded by Selectman Britton.

Board Polled: J. DeRoche = yes. B. Coye = yes, J. Blinn = yes, D. Britton = yes, and J. Gifford = yes.

Motion carries

The public session adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Public session resumed at 8:06 p.m.

Selectman Britton motions to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session as disclosure would have an adverse effect on reputation. Seconded by Selectman Blinn.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries

As there is no further business before the Board, Chair DeRoche adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hossack,
Administrative Specialist