

Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865



BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting: November 28, 2023

Call to Order: 6:33pm

ROLL CALL:

Katie Knutsen, *Chair* - present
Doug Thompson, *Vice Chair* - present
Richard Anthony, *Budget Committee*- present
Ted Carves, *Budget Committee* – excused
Margo Collins, *Budget Committee* - excused
David Gerns, *Budget Committee* – present
Elizabeth Kosta, *Budget Committee* -present
John Sherman, *Budget Committee* – excused
Jay DeRoche, *Selectmen's Representative* - present
Darrell Britton, *Selectmen's Alternate* - excused
Greg Colby, Town Manager/Finance Director - excused

Agenda Item 4: Review/Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 7, 2023 meeting had been distributed in advance.

D. Thompson moved, second by E. Kosta to approve the minutes as issued.

The motion was approved 6-0-0

Agenda Item 5: Budget Related Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Agenda Item 6: Budgets

Patriotic/Cultural - Ch. Knutsen noted the 2023 budget year to date is \$23,354.38 and the Board of Selectmen has approved the 2024 budget for \$40,600.00 which is an increase of \$17,245.62. She noted the Patriotic/Cultural Committee had gone to the Board of Selectmen because next year will be Plaistow's 275th anniversary and they are planning several days of events to mark the occasion. She noted they had asked for \$67,000 but they believe there will be donations to offset some of the costs. J. DeRoche said that in the past Republic has offered sponsorship of public events and there is \$10,000 in the Old Home Day trust fund which can be used. They will look for other sponsors as well.

J. DeRoche noted that the six members of the committee have worked very hard on this and encouraged members of the public to get involved.

The original figure was \$67,000 and included a Thursday night activity with games for children and families; Friday night would see a dinner and music on the Town Green with ticket sales to offset the cost. A revolving fund might be used to help reduce costs. Saturday would see enhanced Old Home Day activities.

R. Anthony asked about benchmarking for closing the funding gap. J. DeRoche explained how the fundraising and trust fund work; he noted they have not started fundraising yet.

J. DeRoche moved, second by L. Kosta to approve the Patriotic/Cultural budget for \$40,600

E. Kosta noted the fund also pays for Veteran's Day, 9/11 and Memorial Day activities. J. DeRoche noted there was \$600 within the budget for these and there is a line in the Executive budget which also contributes. The Historical Society funding was removed to a warrant article. There was discussion of vendor fees and how they are used. J. DeRoche said the Old Home Day committee came to the selectmen with a breakdown of the budget item costs. Her said the lion's share of the budget is for the parade, dinner and fireworks and the Saturday activities on the green.

The motion was approved 5-1-0 (R. Anthony opposed)

Water - Ch. Knutsen noted the 2023 budget is \$494,090.00 and the 2024 budget approved by the Board of Selectman is \$520,014.00, and increase of \$25, 924.00. There was a question about the purchase of the water; J. DeRoche explained that when the program was started, there were certain dates when capacity had to be bought at a specific rate, and if it wasn't purchased then the Town would lose the ability to purchase it. If the Town went over the capacity it had purchased it would be penalized. He said the Town is using 20-30,000 gallons a day but as the system grows it will get closer to the capacity rate. He noted new hookups will likely double the

current capacity. R. Anthony asked about the water sampling line and contamination in the water; it was explained that the money was used to mitigate the problem. Water testing at the pump house and tank are done on a monthly basis. J. DeRoche said they have approached the State to get assistance due to the amount of testing that's done while bringing the system online. R. Anthony asked about the dollar amount for the purging that was done; J. DeRoche will find out. He said the water system is self-sustaining now, that the subscribers fees pay for the budget, and if there is surplus, that will go towards future expansion. R. Anthony asked for a breakdown of the revenue that is covering the expense.

D. Gerns moved, second by D. Thompson to approve the Water budget for \$520,014.00

The motion was approved 6-0-0

Elections- Ch. Knutsen noted that the State is meeting in December to possibly make a choice of voting machines. She said if the machines are bought out of this year's funds the money does not need to be appropriated for next year, So the Committee will wait to see what the State does.

Agenda Item 7: New Business/Old Business

Police Dept. Tower: Ch. Knutsen spoke to the questions about the Tower from the last meeting and referred to the photos that had been distributed of one of the Tower's welds. She read an email from Jay Corso the service coordinator for the two-way radios and tower.

"Chuck Palmer gave me this photo, which is the photo of one of the several cracked welds on the tower. We don't have other photos because we aren't the ones who got up that high, only licensed climbers are allowed. Its not in the PM reports, but it has been addressed with prior chiefs, another Town Counsel, attached an invoice of when of when climbers demanded a man lift because they wouldn't climb a tower with cracked welds. Welding was also brought up by a prior chief but that deemed to be an insufficient solution. "

Ch. Knutsen has been told there are several significant cracks. She said the tower is really old and welding is not an option, so they going to see if the tower can be replaced in sections, or entirely. Until it is fixed, they will continue to use the man lift.

D. Gerns said there is a difference between an aluminum and a steel tower and welding won't work on aluminum. It was unknown if this is an aluminum or steel tower. D. Gerns said that if they could fix it by welding it would probably have to be disassembled, do the welding on the ground and then rehang the tower and the cost of the labor would be near the cost of a new one. J. DeRoche said the money for the lift needs to be in the budget to give them time to study and determine the correct action.

There was discussion about how and from whom information has been received, about construction and repair costs for the Safety Complex, about septic systems, roof repairs, etc. D. Gerns said that antenna maintenance must be done, and climbing the tower cannot be done due to damage, Money must be spent for the maintenance. At the same time they need to go to the CIP and get a ballpark number for planning purposes which will buy time to do the research for repair or replacement. He noted patching the tower would not be good stewardship. J. DeRoche will look for an inspection report on the tower.

Recreation – Ch. Knutsen reported on a question about the electrical line for pumping water to five homes. She said G. Colby said that with regards to the electricity line item that previously due to potential contamination from the landfill/highway salt shed at least two wells were deemed unsafe. The solution was to create a public water system using the well at PARC. The well was determined to have enough capacity to handle the needs of two households. The five is a typo in the budget explanation. The usage is due to keeping the pumps going year round.

Warrant Articles: The Select Board looked at a initial list and they are still working on the numbers. J. DeRoche said there was a CIP meeting which just discussed the highway portion, and they have not seen the whole CIP report yet. He said the CIP committee is meeting on Dec. 14th and they hope to have information from them after that.

Ch. Knutsen said that Mr. Anthony and Mr. Sherman are the Committee's representative to the CIP committee but that Mr. Sherman is recuperating and we need another person to take his place. E. Kosta volunteered and D. Gerns volunteered.as alternate.

Agenda Item 8: Next Meeting

It was agreed to meet on December 19th.

Agenda Item 11: Adjournment

There was no additional business presented. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene Glorieux
Recording Secretary