

Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865



BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

October 30, 2018

Call to Order: 6:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Bob Hamilton, *Chair Elect*
Lisa Lambert, *Vice Chair Elect*
Katie Ingalls, *Budget Committee*
Laurie Milette, *Budget Committee*
Sam Cafiso, *Budget Committee*
Dennis Heffernan, *Budget Committee, excused*
Jay DeRoche, *Budget Committee*
Greg Taillon, *Budget Committee*
Dean Nifakos, *Budget Committee*
Francine Hart, *Selectman Ex-Officio*

Also in attendance:

Greg Colby, Finance Director and Mark Pearson, Town Manager

Agenda Item 3: Pledge of Allegiance

B. Hamilton led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item 4:

Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes October 23, 2018:

- *G. Taillon moved, second by L. Milette, to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting.*

There was additional discussion on the motion. It was decided that the approval of the October 23, 2018 Budget Committee would be postponed until the next meeting because many members of the Committee had not had a chance to review the minutes.

- *G. Taillon moved, second by L. Lambert, to withdraw the motion to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting.*

Agenda Item 5: Budget Related Public Comment:

B. Hamilton offered to the public the ability to come before the BC to present questions or comments related to the budget.

Agenda Item 6a: Presentation of the BOS Proposed 2019 Operating Budget:

Presented by Greg Colby, Finance Director

- BOS approved the proposed budget with two (2) minor changes to Insurance and Solid Waste Disposal.
- 2019 Budget as presented by TM with a 2.92% increase from 2018.
- 2019 Budget was approved by the BOS with a 3.02% increase due to Insurance and Solid Waste Disposal.

2018 Warrant Articles:

- 18-02: All inclusive Operating Budget: \$9,555,795
- 18-03: New Police Contract: \$32,805
- 18-23: New Fire Department Full-time position: \$53,803

2018 Total Operating Budget: \$9,642,403

General Fund: \$9,583,803

Water Department: \$58,600

2019 Total Operating Budget:

General Fund: \$9,863,914 as presented by TM; \$9,873,806 as approved by BOS
Water Department approved: \$78,910 (Paid by user fees, with no impact to the tax rate). Increase is due to the purchase of equipment and supplies needed to change over to potable water.

Budgets seeing overall decreases:

- **Executive:** telephone and computer expenses have been moved to Other General Government and one (1) full-time positions was changed to part-time.
- **Elections:** There will be one (1) election in 2019 instead of the three (3) that took place in 2018.
- **Assessing:** A part-time position was eliminated.
- **Tax Collector:** There was a reduction in a part-time position's hours.
- **Legal:** There was a reduced anticipation of legal fees.
- **Planning:** There were no Impact Fee updates needed.
- **Zoning:** Zoning is down 7.27%.
- **Insurances:** Property Liability is up 1.2%. However, there was a decrease in the 2018 budget.
- **Building Inspection:** There was a decrease in anticipated inspections.
- **Human Services:** There was a decrease in requests from outside agencies.
- **Welfare:** There was a decrease in transportation due to a pilot program.

- **Cultural:** There was a decrease due to fireworks monies being encumbered from the 2018 budget. The Old Home Day fireworks were canceled in 2018 due to rain.
- **Conservation Committee:** There was a decrease in planned testing.
- **Debt Service:** There was a decrease in bond and interest payback.

Budgets seeing overall increases:

- **Town Clerk:** There was an increase due to payroll.
- **Finance:** There was an increase due to payroll and costs to conduct the 2019 audit.
- **Human Resources/Personnel:** There was an increase due to anticipated health insurance costs.
- **General Government Buildings:** There was an increase due to the increase of square footage at the Public Safety Complex and also planned gazebo repairs.
- **Cable:** There was an increase due to an increase in cable operator pay based upon a review of surrounding communities.
- **Police Department:** There was a 1.03% increase due to payroll. However, the overall non-payroll budget is down 9.5%
- **Fire Department:** There was a 1.68% increase due to payroll. However, the non-payroll budget is down 5.2%
- **Emergency Management:** There was a 34.83% increase due to the new hire of a EMD and also monies for the support of a CERT team.
- **Highway Department:** There was a 3.48% increase due to payroll. However, the overall non-payroll budget is up 2.59%.
- **Street Lighting:** There was an increase of 10.82% due to overall higher costs.
- **Solid Waste Collection:** There was an increase due to contract increases.
- **Solid Waste Disposal:** There was an increase of 12.77% due to a mandatory cap and landfill maintenance. This was one (1) of the two (2) minor budget changes made, which was increased by \$18,000.
- **Health:** There was an increase due to the water testing program.
- **Recreation:** There was a 12.68% increase due to field and grounds maintenance.
- **Library:** There was an increase of 2.44%.

G. Colby asked in the Committee had any questions.

B. Hamilton asked for confirmation that the Water Department will have its own warrant article.

G. Colby offered that the General Fund and the Water Department will be separate warrant articles.

Other General Government:

G. Colby offered the following information regarding Other General Government:

- In 2018 telephone expenses were consolidated into the Executive budget.

- In 2019 there will be the creation of the Other General Government category in the State of NH Chart of Accounts which will include:
 - Telephone expenses across the entire Town, not by specific departments. Cell phones will still be broken out per specific department.
 - Network and computer expenses, allows for one (1) contract to cover all departments.
 - MS4/Stormwater oversight which will include the Highway, Executive, Inspections, Planning, and the Conservation Commission departments.

Preliminary List of Additional Warrant Articles:

- CBA: Police
- CBA: Town Hall Staff
- Phase II: Public Works Garage
- Contingency
- Courthouse paving
- Pollard Park paving
- CASA
- Asset Management Loan (will be no cost to the Town)
- Transfers to CRF/ETF:
 - Highway Department equipment
 - Fire Department apparatus
 - SCBA
 - Fire Department radio
 - MICS
 - Building/Building Systems
 - Library
 - Energy
 - Recreation
 - Transportation
 - Snow removal
 - Mosquito control

There was a discussion about some of the phone and Internet expenses still being under a specific department and not yet moved to the Other General Government category.

G. Colby offered that some computer and Internet expenses could be due to cell phones or tablets used by specific departments. The movement of these expenses to the Other General Government category is an ongoing process, but ultimately all will be moved at some point in the future.

B. Hamilton offered that the next two (2) BC meetings will consist of re-reviewing and possibly approving some of the budgets. Chief Jones will be in attendance at the next BC meeting for questions.

B. Hamilton asked when the BOS expects the warrant articles to be presented to the BC.

G. Colby offered that the target date for the warrant articles to be presented to the BC will be December 4, 2018. He offered that at the request of the BC he will present the warrant articles in a Power point presentation very similar to tonight's meeting.

B. Hamilton offered gratitude on behalf of the Committee to G. Colby and M. Pearson for the work that they put into preparing the budgets and the efficiency of the presentation.

Agenda Item 6b: Discussion of Dept Heads to request coming before the BC for additional information:

B. Hamilton offered that Chief Jones will be coming to the next BC meeting to discuss and answer questions regarding the overall cost escalation in regard to dispatching and questions regarding the hiring of a county Prosecutor.

M. Pearson offered that the BOS discussed the Prosecutor at the last BOS meeting and made a decision to create a RFP for a Prosecutor and will include Danville and Kingston. Ultimately it will be put out to bid. Once the proposals come in and an agreement is made with a vendor, six (6) months notice has to be given to the County Attorney. If a bid comes in that is more favorable than the current budget, then there is a possibility of seeing some savings to the Town once the transition takes place in late 2019. Therefore, M. Pearson asked the Committee if Chief Jones needs to come in to discuss the Prosecutor or should the discussion be deferred until later in the year.

It was decided that the Committee will defer the discussion of the Prosecutor until a later date and that Chief Jones will come to the BC meeting to discuss dispatching. Any additional questions will be collected and passed to M. Pearson to route to Chief Jones.

There was discussion regarding questions that the Committee had about police officer wages and new officer retention.

M. Pearson offered that the questions about police officer wages and new officer retention were part of the collective bargaining negotiations included in a warrant article. He also offered that if an officer leaves before three (3) years, there is a payback contract that is pro-rated based upon the length of time that has passed when an officer leaves. There is a payback formula in place. There is a step sequence which allows for step increases and cost of living increases which is part of a retention strategy that is in place.

It was discussed that there will be a list of BC questions compiled and passed off to M. Pearson and G. Colby. They will answer the questions that they have history and knowledge of and will pass the question on to the department head(s) if more information or clarification is needed.

There was a discussion on whether or not it would be beneficial to partner with other towns regarding dispatching to bring expenses down.

There was discussion about population trends regarding manpower per capita. Is the Town looking at similar communities and doing analysis to decide if Plaistow's level of personnel is over or under what is actually needed.

There was discussion about the Recreation field maintenance. There is question as to what the budget line item increase actually covers and will that amount solve the problems with the current field or is it better to look into utilizing Impact Fees to build a new field on higher ground. Currently softball players have not been able to use the field because it was built too low and is always wet.

There was discussion about the Recreation software program. There is question as to whether the fee is a onetime cost or an ongoing annual fee. It was discussed that the fee is an annual fee that will be taken out of a Revolving Fund.

There was a brief discussion about finding appropriate ways to utilizing Impact Fees before they expire.

B. Hamilton asked if there were any additional questions.

B. Hamilton offered that there will be two (2) department heads that will be asked to come before the Committee to answer questions: Chief Jones and the Recreation Department, and whether or not there is a certain amount that is needed to be able to have an Old Home Day.

Agenda Item 6c: Discussion of other budget related information requests:

There was discussion about the creation of an Old Home Day Expendable Trust Fund and taking donations.

F. Hart offered that the topic of Old Home Day went before the BOS, but the BOS wants more information.

G. Colby offered an explanation of how an Expendable Trust Fund works and how it is funded. The fund would need to be fully funded for the first year in order to apply donations collected to offset the cost of the following year.

There was a brief discussion about the encumbered funds of \$6,000 from the postponement of the 2018 Old Home Day fireworks.

B. Hamilton asked if there were any additional questions. It was re-confirmed that any questions that the Committee has should be sent to B. Hamilton and he will pass them off to M. Pearson. M. Pearson will answer the questions that he is able to, and will forward any questions that need additional information or clarification to the department heads.

M. Pearson confirmed that Chief Jones and the Recreation Department head will come before the BC to answer questions.

Agenda Item 7: Committee Reports:

Highway Department:

M. Pearson discussed that November 16, 2018 the steel for the Highway Complex building will be dropped off. The building is expected to be completed by December 15th or 16th, 2018. The foundation is in and the site work is ongoing. There was a brief discussion about the project and that a tank was discovered in the ground that wasn't registered with NHDES which caused the tank to not be located during a Phase I and Phase II environmental study. It was stated that the tank was below the water table was sealed so it did not cause any contamination. The appropriate testing, approvals, and permits have been received to remove the tank from the site. M. Pearson will be going before the BOS to ask that Contingency Funds be used as it was an unanticipated expense.

M. Pearson expressed that he would like to hold off on having another meeting until after the building is complete, after December 16, 2018. At which point he will get the RFPs together for the warrant article to start Phase II. There are plans to have an Open House in March 2019.

M. Pearson offered a brief discussion about the water break in the fire suppression line and its current positioning in relation to the loading dock. The loading dock is to be removed and the water line fixed utilizing the Contingency Fund where it was an unanticipated expense. The entire pipe will be replaced, not just patched.

Agenda Item 8: New Business:

There was no new business presented.

Agenda Item 9: Old Business:

There was no old business presented.

The next Budget Committee meeting will be November 13, 2018. There will be a review of the first 1/2 of the budget and a presentation by Chief Jones.

At the November 20, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting there will be a review of the last 1/2 of the budget and a presentation by the Recreation Department head. M. Pearson will also be giving a presentation on Park.

There was no additional business presented and the meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Samantha D. Cote
Recording Secretary