

Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865



BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

November 27, 2018

Call to Order: 6:34 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*
Jay DeRoche, *Budget Committee*
Greg Taillon, *Budget Committee*
Dean Nifakos, *Budget Committee, excused*
Francine Hart, *Selectman Ex-Officio*

Also in attendance:

Christina Cruz, Recreation Director, Mark Pearson, Town Manager, and Greg Colby, Finance Director

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 30,2018:

- *G. Taillon moved, second by S. Cafiso, to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting.*

There was a discussion that on Page 6: “Assessing software” needs to be changed to “Recreation Software”.

There was no additional discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-1 (D. Heffernan abstaining).

Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes November 13,2018:

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2018 Budget Committee Meeting. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A)*

Agenda Item 5: Budget Related Public Comment:

Agenda Item 6.1: Christina Cruz, Recreation Director providing answers to questions the BC has submitted:

*** Presentation and discussion lead by Christina Cruz, Recreation Director:*

**** Speakers also in attendance are Bill Coye, Dave Bird, and Kate Deroche.*

C. Cruz provided each member of the BC a packet containing:

- Recreation Chapter of the Master Plan
- Strategic Plan
- Impact Fees

C. Cruz offered a PARC facility review which included a review of the current problems with the fields located at 51 Old County Rd.

C. Cruz offered a review of the proposed solutions to include:

- Installation of Cape Cod berms
- Installation of gutters on the concession stand
- Relocation of the softball field

C. Cruz offered a review of the proposed plan to include:

- Maintenance of the swales
- Birth of a Maintenance Policy to include:
 - Fall field rejuvenation
 - Mowing to be completed by an outside vendor
 - Proper raking
- Collaboration between the Recreation and Highway Departments
- additional softball field to be located on the opposite side of the field behind the Pavilion. The movement of the softball field will allow for easier access to concessions and restrooms.

C. Cruz offered that the Comprehensive Maintenance Policy outlines the needs for all of the Recreation facilities.

Questions Submitted to Christina Cruz, Recreation Director:

1. Line Item #01-4520-10-650 Groundskeeping Maintenance is up over \$30,000 from what it was budgeted this year. We are asking for the breakdown of specifically how those funds will be spent.

C. Cruz offered a review of the 2019 Goundskeeping Model which included a pie chart showing itemized costs that make up the \$30,100 total.

There was a discussion that the \$30,100 would help by making the swales and culverts functional and clear out and add additional drainage, but would probably not completely solve the problem with the fields. The fixing of the swales will be the first step in addressing the problems with the water on the fields. There is a beaver problem that needs to be solved. The goal is to make the softball field functional.

It was discussed that M. Pearson and C. Cruz will be meeting with an engineer this week to evaluate the entire field area.

There was a discussion about making the distinction between what is improvements and what is considered maintenance, to allow for Impact Fees to be allowed to be used for improvements.

C. Cruz offered that Impact Fees are used when there is impact to a program.

2. When you request BOS authorization to use funds for a project or purchase out of the Rec. CRF, the Rec. Impact Fees, or other recreation funds, how do you decide which of those two funds to use?

C. Cruz offered that the BOS ultimately makes the decision as to where the funds are taken from.

B. Hamilton offered that he recently took the opportunity to walk the fields after a couple rainy days, and in his opinion the location of the projected field seemed just as wet as the old field and didn't seem much higher in elevation. He offered that the highest point is at the concessions, then the Pavilion, and even the parking lot seems to be at a higher level than the field.

There was a brief discussion about the Cape Cod berm being used to divert the water run off from the parking lot.

There was a discussion about how often games need to be rescheduled due to rain causing wet fields. It was stated that it depends upon Mother Nature.

B. Coye offered his opinion that he feels that there needs to be much more rescheduling done in recent years than there was in the past.

C. Cruz offered that the hiring of an outside vendor will allow for improved scheduling and maintenance by not having to rely solely on the Highway Department for maintenance of the fields. The contract for the outside vendor will consist of fifteen (15) weeks of maintenance during peek season and the remaining weeks of low field use will be maintained by the Highway Department.

D. Bird, Volunteer President for Plaistow Baseball, offered that in the four (4) years that he has been working with Plaistow that in three (3) years they have not been able to play games until approximately the 2nd week of May, which is not ideal conditions. He gave a review of the typical season game schedule and the nine (9) surrounding towns that play against Plaistow. He offered an estimate that they have had to cancel or reschedule ninety (90) games in the past four (4) years. When games are rescheduled, sometimes they have to be rescheduled at another town. Typically make up games all have to be done within a three (3) to four (4) week period. There are costs associated with having to cancel or reschedule games such as the cost of the umpire. There are also some injury and safety concerns about playing on the home field. therefore games are not typically played at home.

There was discussion that the addition of a new field would allow for more creativity with teams and scheduling and would allow the practice season to start three (3) to four (4) weeks earlier in the season.

There was a brief discussion about water pockets in the infield.

C. Cruz offered that when there is inclement weather the baseball and softball teams are scrambling for indoor space. Softball has not been able to use the field for the past three (3) years.

They have been having to utilize the Junior Varsity field at the High School or another available field.

There was a brief discussion about the use of Pollard School. It was discussed that the Pollard School field was not ideal because balls were hitting the school and breaking windows.

M. Pearson offered that the preparation of the fields are typically done in the Spring. However it was brought to the BOS and explained that there is a need to get the fields ready sooner. Therefore the preparation of the fields will now be started in the Fall.

3. Are you responsible for or just take part in the annual updating of the “Recreation Strategic Plan” for planning the use of Rec. CRF and Rec. Impact Fees?

B. Hamilton reiterated that Impact Fees will expire if not used and that an additional field could prove to be an ideal use of the Impact Fees that are due to expire soon.

C. Cruz offered an explanation of the uses for the following four (4) types of accounts as they relate to the Recreation Department:

- Capital Reserve Funds
- Impact Fees
- Revolving Fund
- Operating Budget

C. Cruz offered that the Recreation Department cannot determine the use of Impact Fees. The BOS has to decide the use of the Impact Fees and the Capital Reserve Fund is linked to the Strategic Plan.

4. Why does your “Recreation Strategic Plan” for the use of Rec. Impact Fees not have specific projects listed in the plan to insure that the Impact Fees are used before they will expire?

C. Cruz offered that the packet that was provided to the BC shows the itemizations based upon the Strategic Plan. Impact Fees do not have projects attached, as the BOS decides how they are to be used.

5. According to the CIP, \$19,681 in Rec. Impact Fees will expire 12/31/19. What is the plan for these funds for 2019?

C. Cruz offered a few examples of where Impact Fees could be used. She reiterated that it is up to the BOS to decide where Impact Fees can be used.

6. How is money raised for the “Rec. Revolving Fund” and how is it used?

C. Cruz offered some examples of how Revolving Funds can be raised and that they can be used toward funding programs.

7. How do funds raised by “Friends of Rec.” get used?

C. Cruz offered that the “Friends of Recreation” is not a subcommittee of the Recreation Department. They are their own 501(c)(3) entity. They are a fund raising entity that help the Recreation Department. She provided some examples of where “Friends of Recreation” have specifically raised funds to assist the Recreation Department.

8. How often do you receive an update of the current balance in each of your recreation funds and who reports that information to you?

C. Cruz offered that Impact Fees are reviewed as they come in. Capital Reserve is straight forward as it is bound by a warrant article.

9. What are the current balances in each of your recreation funds?

10. What is the annual cost of “Rec.com” and how is it funded?

C. Cruz offered that the cost of “Rec. com” is \$3,495 per year which has been funded by Impact Fees. It will be the decision of the BOS if the cost continues to be paid using Impact Fees.

C. Cruz asked if the BC had any questions.

L. Lambert initiated a brief discussion on raising the minimum pay rate for the Recreation Department staff.

Agenda Item 6.2: Review of the Department Budgets: Part II:

Recreation Budget:

There was a brief discussion about the Recreation Overtime Seasonal Coverage and Mileage for the Recreation Director position.

There was a brief discussion about the cell phone expense for the Recreation Department.

There was a discussion about the extra \$550 budgeted for tablet and Internet usage when off-site. This offers the ability to notify parent in the case of a safety issue.

There was a discussion about raising the RC Part-Time line item by \$5,000 to allow for minimum pay rate increases for seventeen (17) positions.

- ***D. Heffernan moved, second by L. Lambert, to approve increasing the RC Part-Time line item by \$5,000. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 7-0-2 (F. Hart and G. Taillon abstaining).***

There was a discussion about the line item for electricity which includes electricity needed for the Recreation Department but also includes the cost of the well pump that is shared with surrounding residents.

There was a discussion that the “Friends of Recreation” run the concession stands and the funds that are raised go to help the Recreation Department.

K. Deroche, President of “Friends of Recreation” offered that they work with the Recreation Department and there is a “give and take” relationship. There is ongoing concern about revenues being lost when games have to be canceled.

There was a brief discussion on whether or not the electricity cost of the shared well pump could be broken out of the Recreation Department line item. It was discussed that the well pump is considered an “orphan expense” and there is really no other place to put it.

- ***G. Taillon moved, second by L. Lambert, to approve the Recreation Budget for \$220,458.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-1 (F. Hart abstaining).***

General Government Buildings:

There was a discussion about the elimination of two (2) outside contractors and the consolidation of the Public Safety Complex custodians to assist with the custodial needs of all facilities.

There was a brief discussion about unanticipated expenses such as the flooding in the basement of the Town Hall.

There was a discussion about the Safety Complex Repairs line item and it was explained that this is a necessary line item due to the fact that only part of the building is new and that the older parts of the building will require some periodic repairs.

B. Hamilton that the 2015-2017 trend was down, now the budget is going back up. Is there an explanation as to why this is?

G. Colby offered that he will review the budget and provide the BC with an answer.

There was a discussion about the status of the Historical Society HVAC system. It was discussed that the BOS took a vote for the replacement of the furnace for a cost of \$10,500 which consisted of a 80% efficiency natural gas unit. There is continued discussion on whether a 2-stage, 90% efficiency unit should be considered instead. Would the upgrade truly end up being more efficient? and is there the possibility of rebates from Unitil?

M. Pearson offered that the Historical Society was previously a garage, which is not the most energy efficient of buildings. There is a need for climate control for items of a historical nature located within the building.

- ***G. Taillon moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve the General Government Buildings Budget for \$274,274.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Police Department:

B. Hamilton offered that the Police Department budget has an increase of \$21,000.

There was a discussion about administrative salaries and the salary for a new Police Chief upon Chief Jones's retirement.

There was discussion that at the previous BC meeting Chief Jones was asked if she felt that the Police Department is sufficiently staffed in which Chief Jones stated that she did not feel that that the department is sufficiently staffed.

M. Pearson offered that more research is needed before it can be accurately determined whether the Police Department is sufficiently staffed or not. There are many factors to consider such as calls for service, miles patrolled, etc. They all need to be looked at based upon a fluctuating formula before making a determination. It cannot be based just upon a town of comparable size.

There was a brief discussion about the purchase of new computer hardware and the dispatch radio console.

There was a discussion about the Police Cruiser Replacement Schedule and the discontinuing of leasing Police Department vehicles.

M. Pearson offered that CIP will start putting money aside starting in 2020 so that when a vehicle needs to be replaced starting in 2023, it can be purchased outright instead of leased. A warrant article will be used to raise funds each year.

M. Pearson offered that there is a new chart to show vehicle's current mileage and anticipated mileage.

- ***G. Taillon moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve the Police Department Budget for \$2,096,506.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Fire Department:

B. Hamilton offered that the Fire Department budget increased by \$11,000.

There was a brief discussion about 24/7 coverage.

G. Colby offered that coverage is not 24/7, but rather 6:00am to 6:00pm, seven (7) days per week.

B. Hamilton asked if there are any questions.

S. Cafiso offered that the full year's salary for the new position includes four (4) more months than it did in 2018. 2018 was only approved for eight (8) months.

There was a brief decision about the need for a few new sets of safety equipment each year.

- ***G. Taillon moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve the Fire Department Budget for \$692,842.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Building Inspection:

- ***D. Heffernan moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve the Building Inspection Budget for \$129,724.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Emergency Management:

- ***D. Heffernan moved, second by G. Taillon, to approve the Emergency Management Budget for \$24,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 (U/A).***

Agenda Item 7: Committee Reports:

B. Hamilton offered that there were two hundred seventy-three (273) extra Town Reports found.

F. Hart offered that a total of seven hundred fifty (750) were printed.

There was discussion that the extra could be caused by it snowing on Election Day or even just by more people choosing to get information online.

M. Pearson offered that the excess may justify a reduction of the number Town Reports printed in the future.

G. Taillon offered that the Town Report Committee should be allowed to make a recommendation.

L. Lambert offered that she is on the Town Report Committee and will report back to the BC after the next meeting.

Agenda Item 8: New Business:

There was no New Business presented.

Agenda Item 9: Old Business:

There was no Old Business presented.

Next Budget Committee Meeting:

The next Budget Committee Meeting will be Tuesday, December 4, 2018, which will include the Warrant Article power point presentation to be provided by Greg Colby, Finance Director.

There was no additional business presented and the meeting was adjourned at 9:04pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Samantha D. Cote
Recording Secretary