



Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING October 11, 2016

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Dennis Heffernan, *Chair*
Francine Hart, *Vice Chair*
Sam Cafiso, *Excused*
Laurie Milette
Tricia Holt
Scott Sullivan
Lisa Lambert
Dean Nifakos
Martha Sumner, *Excused*
John Sherman, *Selectmen Ex-Officio*

Also Present: Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Bob Harb, Town Moderator

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Review of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

Elections & Registration – Bob Harb, Town Moderator & Nancy Jackman, Supervisor of the Checklist

Bob Harb presented the Elections and Registration 2017 budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

-	Election Recount	\$	500.00
-	Software Support	\$	600.00
-	Postage	\$	100.00
-	Training/Moderator	\$	100.00

Decreased Budget Lines:

-	Supervisors of the Checklist (-\$3,300)	\$	1,400.00
-	Salary/Administration (-\$2,996)	\$	700.00
-	Election Moderator Salary (-\$1,000)	\$	1,000.00
-	Ballot Printing & Checklist (-\$4,500)	\$	4,500.00
-	Repairs & Supplies (-\$300)	\$	200.00

-	Polling Booth Set Up (-\$725)	\$	275.00
-	Meals (-\$750)	\$	250.00
-	Equipment/Voting Booths (-\$100)	\$	0.00

Increased Budget Lines:

-	Mileage Reimbursement (+\$50)	\$	100.00
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B. Harb noted that the bottom line Elections & Registration's 2017 budget request was \$9,725.00 (decrease of \$13,621.00).

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

B. Harb noted that for comparison purposes the Committee should be looking at the budget year for 2013, which is the last time there was only a single election in the year. The single-election year accounted for the decrease in the individual budget lines.

B. Harb explained that he was seeking a \$0.50/hour raise for the Supervisors of the Checklist and the Ballot Clerks as well as a \$50.00/session increase for the Moderator and the Assistant Moderator. He noted that it had been quite some time since any of these positions received a salary increase.

There was discussion about the responsibilities of each position, which includes a lot of work done aside from what is done at the polls. It was requested that the last time an increase was given be researched and provided to the Committee (Parking Lot Item).

B. Harb then explained how the polls for the upcoming Presidential Election will be set up in order to facilitate the voting process for all. There was discussion about voters providing proper identification and what they can do if they don't have it, or choose not to show it, in order to still vote. Residents will be able to register to vote at the polls as well.

There was discussion regarding absentee balloting, handicap access to balloting and when the cut-off to register prior to the elections. There was also discussion about making the voter checklist available on-line. It was requested that be checked into (Parking Lot Item).

★D. Heffernan moved, second by T. Holt, to take the 2017 Elections & Registration's Budget in the amount of \$9,725 under consideration. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Highway Administration – Dan Garlington, Highway Supervisor

Dan Garlington, Highway Supervisor presented the Highway Administration 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

- Highway Salaries	\$171,979.00
- Highway Temporary Labor	\$ 19,500.00
- Highway Overtime	\$ 45,000.00
- Uniforms	\$ 4,000.00
- Telephone	\$ 3,600.00
- Data Processing	\$ 1,100.00
- Building Repairs	\$ 1,500.00
- Training/Conferences	\$ 600.00
- Dues	\$ 100.00
- General Supplies	\$ 3,700.00
- Office Supplies	\$ 250.00
- Equipment Maintenance	\$ 500.00

Decreased Budget Lines:

- Engineering (-\$6,000)	\$ 6,000.00
- Electric (-\$500)	\$ 6,000.00
- Gas & Oil (-\$3,000)	\$ 21,000.00

Increased Budget Lines:

- Highway Salary - Sexton (+\$6,600)	\$ 11,600.00
- Heating (+\$1,000)	\$ 3,000.00

D. Garlington noted that the bottom line Highway Administration 2017 budget request was \$299,429.00 (decrease of 1,900.00).

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

D. Garlington explained that the salaries lines were level funded, but could be adjusted based on the outcome of union negotiations. He noted that he was requesting a \$5,000.00 increase in the Cemetery Sexton's salary as the position has shown to require more work and responsibility than he had originally anticipated. He noted that he's been called out nights and weekends to meet with families. D. Garlington added that he was seeking to have an Assistant Sexton, at \$1,600.00, who could be trained to provide back-up if he was not available. It was also noted that the cemetery was being expanded, which was facilitated by a land swap with Alden Palmer.

D. Garlington explained each of the budget lines and noted that the adjustments were made mostly based on a three trend in the actual expenditures.

There was discussion regarding two (2) locations that historically flood in heavy rains and where drainage work was needed. Those locations are the intersection of Pollard Road and Congressional Ave and on Smith Corner Road. It was noted Pollard Road was the more severe situation and that a NHDES (New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services) permit was required for the work, but has been difficult to acquire.

There was discussion about the July 2016 microburst and whether or not it has affected this year's budget. It was noted that the relatively mild winter has balanced with the micro burst.

There was discussion regarding the uniforms line. D. Garlington explained that each worker is given an allowance each year to purchase t-shirts, sweatshirts, pants, boots and other equipment. He added that the uniforms needed to be comfortable as well as practical as most of their work was outside in all elements. D. Garlington also noted that he expected his workers to represent the Town well in their uniforms. S. Sullivan requested an accounting of how the uniform line has been spent out of the last few years. (Parking Lot Item)

There was discussion regarding the temporary laborer who has been hired each year since the Highway Department has taken over landscaping responsibilities for all town properties. The seasonal employee is hired for 40 hours a week for approximately 34 weeks a year (April-December). The extra man helps with the landscaping and other road work as well as allows for coverage for vacations. It was questioned whether the temporary laborer could also be the assistant cemetery sexton. D. Garlington noted that the two positions were very different in their responsibilities.

There was discussion regarding the cemetery and whether or not it was open year round. D. Garlington explained that it technically was not, but he would find it extremely difficult to tell someone that they had to wait until spring to bury their loved one. It was also noted that the Safety Complex Expansion Project would be providing a second, safer access point for the cemetery.

There was additional discussion about the uniforms. It was suggested that a single vendor be contracted for both Building Maintenance and the Highway Department uniforms. S. Fitzgerald replied that he had spoken with both D. Garlington and Paul Lucia and the previous uniforms provided by a service were found to be very uncomfortable to wear. He added that both departments use local vendors, who have the Town Seal available to them so the uniforms look professional. It was noted that the Building Maintenance uniform budget was half of the Highway Department uniform budget. It was explained that the Highway Department has very different responsibilities and are out in the elements more than the Building Maintenance Department.

There was discussion as to the consequences of the Budget Committee not taking a department budget under consideration. It was explained that taking a department budget under consideration for a stated amount did not imply that budget was approved for that amount, but only that the Budget Committee was reviewing that budget. It was offered that adjustments to any line item can still be made, as many times as needed, as part of the continuing review process. It was noted that any budget not taken under consideration could not be discussed by the Budget Committee.

★D. Heffernan moved, second by T. Holt, to take the 2017 Highway Administration Budget under consideration in the amount of \$299,429.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Highways & Streets – Dan Garlington, Highway Supervisor

D. Garlington presented the Highways & Streets 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

-	Vehicle Repairs	\$ 7,000.00
-	Crushed Stone	\$ 4,000.00
-	Drainage Improvements	\$ 50,000.00
-	Pavement Management	\$185,000.00
-	Culverts & Catch Basins	\$ 9,000.00
-	Salt & Sand	\$ 70,000.00
-	Snow Plowing	\$150,000.00
-	Tree Removal	\$ 6,000.00
-	Grounds Maintenance	\$ 17,000.00

Decreased Budget Lines:

-	General Supplies (-\$100)	\$ 100.00
-	Vehicle Maintenance Supplies (-\$1,000)	\$ 8,000.00
-	Equipment Purchase (-\$500)	\$ 4,000.00
-	Rentals & Leases (-\$3,000)	\$ 16,500.00
-	Street Sweeping (-\$2,000)	\$ 6,000.00
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Increased Budget Lines:

-	Traffic Supplies (+\$5,000)	\$ 25,000.00
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D. Garlington noted that the bottom line Highways & Streets 2017 budget request was \$557,600.00 (decrease of \$1,600).

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

D. Garlington explained each of the line items in his budget request. He noted where service and equipment maintenance supplies were included in the budget. D. Garlington offered that some equipment was staff-maintained and other, such as the CAT Loader, were sent out for service and repairs. He noted that the fog lines are alternated with the center lines on the roadways for repainting each year and guardrail repairs.

There was discussion regarding the Highway Block Grant and how it interacts with the pavement management line of the operating budget. It was noted that there are many factors relating to the re-paving of streets. The RSMS (Road Surface Maintenance System) plan helps determine what streets need attention each year based on a rating system. It was noted that paving has not taken place yet this year.

There was additional discussion of the drainage work that needs to be done on Pollard Road and whether or not the Highway Block grant could be used to obtain that permit. D. Garlington noted that the situation with this drainage issue dates back at least ten (10) years. He reiterated the problems with getting the NHDES dredge and fill permit. It was suggested that funding should be designated for the permitting, not continually budgeted for the repairs since they cannot be done without the permit. It was also questioned if funds could be used from the Unassigned Fund Balance to cover engineering, permitting and repair costs for Pollard Road. It was suggested that the Committee allow 45 days for a plan of the work to be done on the Pollard Road drainage issue to be provided to them (Parking Lot Item). It was also noted that there was a recently established Transportation Capital Reserve Account and monies were being set aside in this account for these kinds of roadway issues as well as other improvements.

S. Fitzgerald noted that the Highway Department is covered by specific RSAs that allow them to overspend their budget in the interests of public safety. This is different than the Board of Selectmen statutory use the Unassigned Fund Balance to offset taxes and provide the Town with financial stability.

★D. Heffernan moved, second by T. Holt, to take the 2017 Highways & Streets Budget under consideration in the amount of \$557,600.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Patriot – Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

S. Fitzgerald presented the Patriotic 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

- Annual Commemorations	\$ 800.00
- Patriotic Purposes	\$ 200.00

S. Fitzgerald noted that the bottom line Patriotic 2017 budget request was \$1,000.00 (level funded).

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

There were no questions regarding this budget.

★D. Nifakos moved, second by L. Lambert, to take the 2017 Patriotic Budget, under consideration in the amount of \$1,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Legal – Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

S. Fitzgerald, Town Manager presented the Legal 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

-	Cable Consultant/Attorney (-\$)	\$	0.00
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Increased Budget Lines:

-	Legal Expenses (+\$10,000)	\$	35,000.00
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S. Fitzgerald noted that the bottom line Planning Department's 2017 budget request was \$35,000.00 (decrease \$10,000.00).

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

S. Fitzgerald explained that the legal budget provided counsel to the Town for such things as Beede site, tax concerns and there had been a recent need for code enforcement actions for zoning violations. He added that some legal fees are recovered when there is a judgment in the zoning enforcement actions.

S. Fitzgerald noted that the Board of Selectmen had signed a five (5) year contract with Comcast money was not currently needed for contract negotiations.

F. Hart noted that there are legal lines included in some other budgets and asked if that was also covered in this line. It was explained that some departments and boards have specialized legal needs, for example review of proposed zoning amendments, that aren't covered in this general legal budget line.

J. Sherman offered that the Board of Selectmen supported the increase as the line had always been exceeding the budgeted amount.

There was additional discussion regarding the purpose of this legal line. It was noted that this covers review of proposed Warrant Articles, contract language, for example with the safety complex construction. It was noted that Sumner Kalman is the current Town Counsel.

There was discussion regarding the pending zoning violations. It was noted that these particular cases had gone past the local enforcement abilities and were being settled in court. Without mentioning specific properties it was noted that these were enforcement actions against the owners for property maintenance and were pursued based on neighbor complaints. It was noted that there are 5-6 cases currently in the courts.

★D. Heffernan moved, second by F. Hart, to take the 2017 Legal Budget under consideration in the amount of \$35,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Conflict of Interest – Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

S. Fitzgerald presented the Conflict of Interest 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

-	Training	\$	350.00
-	Office Supplies	\$	140.00
-	Postage	\$	110.00

S. Fitzgerald noted that the bottom line Conflict of Interest 2017 budget request was \$600.00.
(Level Funded)

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

S. Fitzgerald noted that there was training available through NHMA (New Hampshire Municipal Association) for members of the Conflict of Interest Committee.

J. Sherman added that not all training might specifically say “conflict of interest” there is other important training such as right to know laws.

It was questioned if the available training didn’t specifically say “conflict of interest” would it be payable through this budget. It was noted that it was important for elected officials to go to related training so that their process can remain fair and impartial.

★F. Hart moved, second by D. Nifakos, to take the 2017 Conflict of Interest Budget under consideration in the amount of \$600.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Insurance – Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

S. Fitzgerald presented the Insurance 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

-	Deductible Prop-Liability	\$	3,000.00
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Increased Budget Lines:

-	Property and Liability Insurance (+\$44,387)	\$122,260.00
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S. Fitzgerald noted that the bottom line Insurance 2017 budget request was \$125,260.00.
(increase \$44,387.00)

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

S. Fitzgerald noted that there had been some claims against the Town that have affected the price of the insurance premium. He added that the former LGC (Local Government Center) stopped covering municipalities and the coverage was now through Primex. It was also noted that increase in valuations of some properties also contributed to the premium increase.

There was discussion as to whether or not another carrier could be sought out that might be less expensive. It was noted that municipal insurance was a specialized product and there were not many qualified carriers. It was noted that Primex was also the insurance carrier for the school district.

F. Hart noted there was a 12% increase in valuation, but a 46% increase in premiums.

S. Fitzgerald responded that valuation was only part of the increased premium; there were also a number of claims filed.

F. Hart asked if there was anything in the contract that the Town can do to mitigate and help the premium go down.

S. Fitzgerald noted that there will be a workshop for employees and elected officials. He added that general liability was folded into this policy as well.

★D. Heffernan moved, second by L. Lambert, to take the 2017 Insurance Budget under consideration in the amount of \$125,260.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Solid Waste Collection – Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

S. Fitzgerald presented the Solid Waste Collection 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

- Household Hazardous Waste	\$ 15,000.00
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Increased Budget Lines:

- Sanitation/Solid Waste Collection (+\$125,000)	\$625,000.00
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S. Fitzgerald noted that the bottom line Conflict of Interest 2017 budget request was \$640,000.00. (increase +\$125,000.00)

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

S. Fitzgerald noted that the increase reflected a new contract value for solid waste collection. He noted a spread sheet that had been provided to the Committee showing the three (3) respondents to the RFP for solid waste collection.

D. Nifakos provided the Committee with an analysis of the current contract versus the previous contract, which included two (2) one-year extensions. Both contracts were awarded to JRM. He noted that the difference between the new contract and enforcing the two (2) extensions was approximately \$109,000.00.

There was discussion questioning why the Board of Selectmen didn't enforce the contract extensions even after going out to RFP, since it was still a valid contract. Members expressed frustration that money was "left on the table" when the contract was awarded to JRM at a higher value than would have been had the extensions been enforced. It was explained that in hindsight it might have been better to enforce the contract extensions. Efforts were being made with the new contract to address resident's concerns about the level of service JRM was providing. The Board of Selectmen didn't want to just stay with JRM without first checking what was out there. It was noted that with the new contract there was an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) that established eleven (11) standards and expectations for performance going forward. It was noted that an MOU was not legally enforceable. It was noted that complaints had significantly dropped since the implementation of the MOU. The Committee asked for a copy of the MOU between JRM and the Town of Plaistow. (Parking Lot Item)

There was discussion about additional ways to save money for solid waste collection. It was noted that if recycling were increased, solid waste collection would go down. It was also noted that the Town could go to a single-barrel limit for solid waste as well. It was also noted that weather factors can affect the amount of money spent for solid waste collection. For example, rain will affect the weight of the waste being collected.

There was discussion as to whether or not JRM also picked up commercial waste. It was noted that some small businesses are supported by curbside pick-up and had been for decades. It was again noted that recycling efforts need to be increased.

D. Nifakos asked what the consequences were of the Solid Waste Collection budget not passing with the voters.

J. Sherman explained that the budget was an all or nothing vote, not votes on individual budgets. If the entire operating budget did not pass then the default budget would be go into effect. It added that the default budget amount had not yet been set.

D. Nifakos asked if there was any way to go back to JRM with a plea for the extension instead of the new contract. It was noted that wasn't an option.

D. Heffernan questioned if JRM underbid the original contract in an effort to get into the Town.

S. Fitzgerald noted the initial contract was done through an RFP search. He added that it was a volatile industry.

F. Hart asked if there were economic consequences for non-compliance with the performance standards clause.

S. Fitzgerald offered the Town has the right to dispute bills, the Board of Selectmen can call JRM in to discuss issues at any time and there is a minimum response time or missed pick-ups.

★D. Heffernan moved, second by T. Holt, to take the 2017 Solid Waste Collection Budget under consideration in the amount of \$640,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Solid Waste Clean Up – Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

S. Fitzgerald presented the Solid Waste Clean Up 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

-	Landfill Overtime	\$ 8,000.00
-	Engineering	\$ 29,000.00
-	Grounds Keeping	\$ 10,000.00

S. Fitzgerald noted that the bottom line Solid Waste Clean Up 2017 budget request was \$47,000.00. (Level Funded)

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

S. Fitzgerald noted there was a major report due this year on the landfill cap maintenance plan.

J. Sherman suggested there might be a \$10,000 posting error between lines #310 and #650 and asked that it be looked into. (Parking Lot Item)

★F. Hart moved, second by L. Lambert, to take the 2017 Solid Waste Clean Up Budget under consideration in the amount of \$47,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

Street Lights – Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

S. Fitzgerald presented the Street Lights 2017 Budget request noting the following:

Level Funded Budget Lines:

-	Street Lights	\$ 97,000.00
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S. Fitzgerald noted that the bottom line Street Lights 2017 budget request was \$97,000.00. (Level Funded)

It was noted that this was the same amount approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion:

S, Fitzgerald noted that he has been looking costs of converting the street lights to LED fixtures, but Unitil will not sell the lights to the Town.

There was discussion of the possibility of involving local legislative officials in the process to try and convert the lights. It was noted that Unitil was heroic in their restoration efforts after the microburst, but they are not working with the Town on converting the street lights to LED. It is also not possible to replace burnt lights with LEDs without Unitil's cooperation. It was noted that there are really no options for converting unless Unitil is will to sell the lights to the Town.

S. Fitzgerald noted that he was continuing to explore possibilities.

★D. Heffernan moved, second by S. Sullivan, to take the 2017 Street Lights Budget under consideration in the amount of \$97,000.00. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 8-0-0 U/A.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety Building Committee

D. Heffernan noted that the groundbreaking ceremony, held the previous Saturday, went very well. He added that the next meeting would be Thursday (10/13/16) at 8:00 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business before the Committee at this meeting

OLD BUSINESS

J. Sherman noted that the Timberlane Regional School District now has a CIP.

Parking Lot

Pending items:

- The MS4 locations and testing sites map was emailed to the members
- The amortization table for the Safety Complex bond was in the member folders

New Items Added:

- Last time the Supervisor of the Checklist, Ballot Clerks, Town Moderator and Assistant Town Moderator received raises – S. Fitzgerald
- Check on the possibility of putting the voter checklist on the website – S. Fitzgerald
- Reconciliation of the Highway Department Uniform line expenditures – D. Garlington
- Update on the drainage improvements needed at the intersection of Pollard Road and Congressional Av (45 days out due date) – S. Fitzgerald/J. Sherman

- Analysis of the Highway Block Grant and operating budget for roadway pavement – S. Fitzgerald
- JRM performance memorandum of understanding from last contract
- Verify Solid Waste Clean-Up lines #310 and #650 to determine if there is a \$10,000 posting error

There was no additional business before the Committee and the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Dee Voss
Recording Secretary