

# *Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee*

*145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865*



## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Meeting: November 15, 2022**

**Call to Order: 6:30pm**

### **ROLL CALL:**

Katie Knutsen, *Chair* - present  
Doug Thompson, *Vice Chair* - present  
Richard Anthony, *Budget Committee*- present  
Theodore Carves, *Budget Committee* - present  
David Gerns, *Budget Committee* – present  
John Sherman, *Budget Committee* – present  
Roy Walling, *Budget Committee* – present  
Darrell Britton, *Selectmen's Representative* - present  
Jay DeRoche, *Selectmen's Alt* - excused  
Greg Colby, Town Manager/Finance Director - present

Also Present: Cab Vinton, Library Director

### **Agenda Item 4: Review/Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the October 25, 2022 meeting had been distributed in advance. It was noted that Ted Carves was present and D. Thompson is Vice Chair. There were no other corrections.

*D. Britton moved, second by T. Carves, to approve the minutes as corrected.*

*The motion was approved 6-0-2 (D. Thompson, D. Gerns)*

### **Agenda Item 5: Public Comment**

Ch. Knutsen invited public comment. There was none.

### **Agenda Item 6: Chair's Comments:**

Ch. Knutsen asked Town Manager Greg Colby for a point of clarification. G. Colby referred to some questions from the previous meeting about the previous Town Manager's contract and the

potential savings of \$300,000 in the budget. He noted the settlement agreement with the previous Town Manager covered two fiscal years beginning in July 2021 and ending in June 2022 and the approximate payout was in the neighborhood of \$250,000, of which \$125,000 is in the current budget. He said when combining the previous manager's salary and his own, there is little savings to be found. He noted that insurance was also part of the package, and that in the 2022 budget there was approximately \$900,000 split between two carriers. The larger percentage carrier had a 7% increase, the smaller one had an 11% increase. He said based on this the 2022 year cost would be \$1,000,000 but it is actually below that amount.

### **Agenda Item 7. Review and Discussion of the 2023 Budgets:**

Fire Department: The 2022 budget was approved for \$918,285; the 2023 proposed budget is for \$969,130, an increase of \$50,845, a 5.5% increase overall. This reflects an increase in the per diem firefighter payroll of \$41,458 and also a decrease in dues of \$4,400.

J. Sherman asked about the previous issues with the fire truck that had not been budget for appropriately. G. Colby said the cost of a ladder truck in the CIP was significantly below the actual cost of a new truck (\$600,000 vs \$1,500,000). J. Sherman expressed disappointment that the number was incorrect and suggested a review of the CIP for correct figures.

***D. Britton moved, second by Roy Walling, to approve the Fire Department Budget for \$969,130***

J. Sherman asked if there was discussion at the Board of Selectmen's meeting that might be relevant for the Committee. D. Britton said the BOS was fine with it. K. Knutsen said the call volume has increased significantly and there have been at least nine fires and extra people have been called in to deal with this. It was noted there are 5 full time employees including the chief, that one per diem staff person fills 6am – 6pm and two per diem fill 6pm – 6am, as well as one officer who receives a \$50 stipend and then pay for the calls if they come in. J. Sherman asked for reassurances that the chief has not cut something in the budget that might affect safety; he was assured the chief has not done that. D. Gerns asked about health insurance; G. Colby said it is in the personnel budget.

***The motion was approved 8-0-0***

Emergency Management: The 2022 budget was approved for \$20,100; the 2023 proposed budget is for \$35,550, an increase of \$12,450. This reflects part-time position payroll increase of \$7,500 and an increase for an equipment purchase of \$4,000.

***D. Britton moved, second by R. Walling, to approve the Emergency Management Budget for \$32,550***

J. Sherman asked for details of the part-time position duties. Ch. Knutsen said the person would be updating the Town's LEOP (Local Emergency Operating Plan) which is a 'play book for any incident and getting contracts in place for incidents like ice storms and tree damage. T. Carves asked about the Tower rental fee; G. Colby said the rental fee is split among the police, fire and emergency management budgets. He noted there had been training on ice storms and train car chemical leaks.

***The motion was approved 8-0-0***

Police: The 2022 budget was approved for \$2,272,468; the 2023 proposed budget is for \$2,376,203, an increase of \$103,715. This is due to increase in administrative salaries of \$58,342 and an increase in training of \$7,000

***D. Britton moved, second by R. Walling, to approve the Police Budget for \$2,376,203.***

D. Britton noted that all the raises were due to union contract obligations. R. Walling asked about equipment purchases and whether the current budget figure will be fully spent by the end of the year. G. Colby said it will be fully spent. R. Anthony asked about the long term staffing for the department. G. Colby noted the Town is advertising for a full time police chief and that person will look to future staffing. He said they are close to having all positions filled for the first time in years.

Ch. Knutsen read out the questions committee members had submitted along with their answers:

## **Budget Committee Questions for the Police Department**

**What is the police belts plan to replace the K-9 element of the dept ... if any?**

The department has no immediate plan to replace the canine at the department. The department has more pressing needs to deal with in the present. We also feel it should be something the new Chief should have the ability to decide if the department needs a canine.

**The last K-9 was purchased with donations..... are their any opportunities for grants..... alternate funding ... etc.**

We assume that there are multiple avenues to fund a canine unit some through private donations. There are also police related canine groups that donate a canine and the training to a department.

**What has been the police depts posture relative to opioid and fentanyl related events? Are the police outfitted with Narcan?**

We don't understand the first part of the question, we would need clarification on this before we could answer. Plaistow police officers are equipped and trained in the use of Narcan.

**I would like to know about the police departments long term staffing plans going forward.**

Administratively speaking the long-term goal would be for a full time chief and two captains in administrative positions.

Twenty-four-hour supervision coverage in the Patrol Division is another long-term goal. This would require another patrol sergeant position.

Another officer assigned to day and evening shift would meet our coverage needs regarding call volume and proper shift coverage.

**Does the police dept intend to sell superfluous vehicle that might not comport with their future mission.**

The department rotates vehicles on a continuous basis. When a car reaches the end of its useful life as a police vehicle we will sell it at auction or use to trade in against the cost of a new vehicle. In 2022 we sold two old cruisers at auction with the money going to the general fund.

We repurposed two old police vehicles to other town departments. One went to the building inspector, and another went to the Citizens Emergency Response Team.

**Has the police department pursued any type of Grant funding????**

Not in 2022

**Do they intend to pursue grant funding.**

Yes we are going to pursue grant funding to:

- outfit the patrol vehicles with Mobile Data Terminal equipment.
- Purchase bullet proof vests
- Portable radio purchases

- Other grants that may become available in the course of the year
- When we are properly staffed we can apply for speed, drunk driving etc enforcement grants.

**Does the police department have access to Holland Security funding with respect to training?**

If the department of Homeland Security puts out grant funded training and it is something that we need we would apply for grants.

**Are their training/partnership arrangements with homeland security.... And available grant money?**

We assume they do and if needed we would apply for the funding.

**An overview of these types of money sources would be appreciated.**

We need clarification on this question to answer for you.

There was discussion about the time it would take to fill the Police Chief slot. J. Sherman repeated his comments that the Budget Committee would expect the Police Chief to not cut something in the budget that might affect safety of their personnel.

***The motion was approved 8-0-0***

Library: The 2022 budget was approved for \$599,174; the 2023 proposed budget is for \$638,549, an increase of \$39,375. This reflects a increase in salaries of \$8,850, an increase in insurance of \$8,278 and an increase in electricity of \$8,325

***D. Britton moved, second by D. Thompson, to approve the Library Budget for \$638,549***

Library Director Cab Vinton spoke to the budget and the programs that the Library conducts. He noted that attendance and participation in the library programs has increased exponentially, and he is pleased to see the involvement. He said they try to remain level funded and to try to find funding without charging people for programs. He was asked about any capital investment in the near future and said there is nothing scheduled, but they will be approaching the Select Board for the Library Capital Reserve Fund as the building is beginning to age. He also noted there might be future expansion of the crafts space and programs areas, though the goal would be to do this with private donations as well as the Capital Reserve Fund.

*The motion was approved 8-0-0*

**Agenda Item 8: New Business/Old Business**

Ch. Knutsen said the warrant articles would be the next item for the Committee to take on and that will depend on when the BOS addresses them. She asked the Committee members to watch the BOS meetings.

Ch. Knutsen noted that a great deal of the taxes paid by residents goes to the school and that on 1/12/2023 at 7:00 PM there will be a public hearing on the proposed school budget at the Performing Arts Center. The deliberative session will be held on 2/9/2023 at 7pm.

The next meeting will be the held determined by when the warrant articles are available.

**Agenda Item 9: Adjournment**

There was no additional business presented. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Charlene Glorieux  
Recording Secretary