



Minutes of Budget Committee Meeting 6 February 2017

Call to Order: A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM by Chair Win Williams.

Roll Call: Win Williams, Chair; James Dyer, Vice Chair; Jack Rogala; Rita Anderson; Len VanGaasbeek Jr.; Lenny VanGaasbeek III; Meg Gardner; Martha Turner, Secretary.

Select Board: Mike Seely.

Others present: Vera Littlefield, Nancy Conway, Roberta Ramsdell, John Paul Rondeau.

Review of Minutes: Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of 30 January 2017. Motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence: None

Old Business:

0100 Administration

This item was tabled from last meeting. Motion was made and seconded to remove 0100 Administration from the table and reopen it for review. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Seely distributed a copy of budget 0100 amended on 2-1-17. The total request of \$157,001 has not changed. Mr. Williams noted that with a population of approximately 4400, the town is spending approximately \$40 per person per year to support the administration budget.

Mr. Seely explained that the agreement with NDS has been amended, which has resulted in reallocation of \$24,000 in computer-related expenses among three subaccounts: 0042, 0122, and 0122.1. He noted that many computer problems can now be solved remotely; and for some computer problems, it is more cost effective to replace the computer rather than repairing it.

Questions were raised concerning the process by which each department's budget makes its way to the Budget Committee. Mr. Seely explained that each department head was asked to develop a budget and then make an appointment to review it with the Select Board. After the review, department heads signed a document stating that this is their budget request for the coming year. Mr. Seely stated that he would not make any cuts without consulting the department head. Rita asked if the Budget Committee could make cuts. Mr. Seely replied that if the Committee recommends a cut, he would take that request back to the department head.

Motion was made and seconded to approve the budget of 0100 Administration in the amount of \$157,001 as requested. Motion carried 7-0-0.



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1300 Insurance

This item was tabled from last meeting. Motion was made and seconded to remove 1300 Insurance from the table and reopen it for review. Motion carried unanimously.

In answer to previous questions about the provision of dental insurance, Mr. Seely distributed copies of the 1992 warrant and the 2011 personnel policy concerning insurance benefits. Lengthy discussion followed concerning the pros and cons of offering health, dental, and life insurance to town employees. Mr. Seely explained that there are currently 14 town employees eligible, but not all of those eligible have elected to take these benefits.

Len made a motion to approve the insurance budget minus the cost of dental insurance, \$7,316.40, for a total of \$246,002. The motion was seconded and discussed. Discussion included the possibility of putting dental insurance on the warrant as a separate article. If this article does not pass, employees would lose their dental coverage, which some have had for many years. The motion failed by a vote of 3-4-0.

Motion was made and seconded to approve the 1300 Insurance budget in the amount of \$253,318.02 as requested. The motion carried 6-1-0.

New Business:

0103 Treasurer

Mr. Seely noted that this budget includes one-third of the cost of the Deputy. In answer to a question about line item 0101 Deeds, Mr. Seely explained that the Treasurer has to process the deed if there is a foreclosure. The Tax Collector and the Treasurer work together on foreclosures. Mr. Dyer asked about the increase in line item 0042 Computer Expense. Mr. Seely replied that the full amount \$1500 may not be needed next year, but it needs to be available if needed. He noted that department heads cannot use money from another department's budget, but they can use line item amounts for other line items within their own budgets if necessary.

Motion was made and seconded to approve the budget for 0103 Treasurer in the amount of \$50,948.69 as requested. The motion carried 7-0-0.

0104 Town Clerk

This budget also includes one-third of the cost of the Deputy. Mr. Seely noted that not all town employees are scheduled to receive the 3% raise next this year. The Deputy did not receive this increase because the position had a built-in raise this year.

In response to a question regarding the increase in line item 0030 Training & Workshops, Mr. Seely noted that both the Town Clerk and the Deputy are required to be certified and must both attend training at the State level. They must also both be Notaries. He emphasized that every time the State changes requirements and procedures, such as at the polls, both must attend the training, which sometimes lasts more than one day and requires



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overnight accommodations. Mr. Seely also noted that the cost of many of the workshops has increased, as well as the number of workshops that must be attended.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$50,134 for 0104 Town Clerk. The motion carried 7-0-0.

0105 Elections

Mr. Seely noted that this department is also facing an increase in required workshops and advanced training. He emphasized that the ballot clerks are paid minimum wage, which has increased to \$9.00/hour this year.

In response to questions concerning line item 0016 Coding/Ballots, Mr. Seely explained that for every election, the voting machines have to be recoded to read each new ballot, such as this past year for the presidential election. He also noted that each time a Special Town Meeting is called, that will add extra expense.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$26,945 as requested for 0105 Elections. The motion carried 7-0-0.

0106 Tax Collector

Mr. Dyer asked about the difference between line item 0040 "Office Supplies" and 0044 "Supplies." Mr. Williams stated that the Tax Collector often requires the purchase of specialized forms, such as for vehicle registrations. He also noted that the increase in the request from this department is less than \$2000 over last year's request.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$58,249 for 0106 Tax Collector. The motion carried 7-0-0.

0107 Assessor

Mr. Seely stated that Hollis is experiencing an increase in the number of new houses, as well as subdivisions. He explained that when the CEO gives her a copy of a permit, the assessor has to inspect the property, including inside, and review and assess the work that has been completed. He noted that a contractor is being hired to do a revaluation of the whole town, but the assessor will continue to do individual assessments. Mr. Williams noted that if the assessor has to attend tax school, it can last from 3 - 5 days, and will require overnight accommodations. Mr. Seely also stated that the town's tax maps are being redone to bring them up to date, and all maps will be computerized.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$60,750 for 0107 Assessor as requested. The motion carried 6-0-1.



0800 Salmon Falls Library

Mrs. Anderson questioned the amount of \$1450 for training and workshops, suggesting that adequate training could be obtained locally rather than requiring a trip to Chicago. Ms. Gardner explained that this is not training, but is an annual national library conference. Ms. Gardner also explained that the Salmon Falls Library is not designated a historic building, but it is located within a designated historic district. In response to questions concerning the Town of Hollis having two libraries, Mr. Williams replied that Hollis used to support five libraries. Mr. Seely noted that the price of books has risen, especially with increased demand for more audio books.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$48,343 as requested for 0800 Salmon Falls Library. The motion carried 4-3-0.

0810 Hollis Center Library

A question was raised concerning the support of a privately owned library. Ms. Gardner noted that most communities in Maine have private libraries that are supported by the town, including Portland. Mrs. Anderson asked why this is not being included with the other non-municipal requests. Mr. Seely responded that both of the libraries in Hollis have always been included in the same warrant article every year.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$35,000 as requested for 0810 Hollis Center Library. The motion carried 5-2-0.

1000 General Assistance

In explaining the \$3000 under line item 0020, Mr. Seely noted that this would cover hours spent by Select Board members outside of regular office hours, as when a resident requires assistance at night or on weekends or holidays. He emphasized that the Select Board members do not get paid twice for these hours. In response to comments that other towns only provide GA during regular office hours, Mr. Seely replied that in Hollis the Select Board will not make someone in need wait for two or three days when they need help right away.

Mrs. Anderson asked what happens to the reimbursements received from the State. Mr. Seely replied that this money goes into the General Fund. He stated that the reimbursement rate is 70%, but the State ultimately decides when, if, and how much to reimburse.

Mr. Seely noted that the \$15,000 requested is based on what has been spent so far and what is anticipated to be required in the future. He emphasized the need to have the funds available if needed. He noted that insufficient funds were requested last year. He stated that requests have been increasing, and he expects they will continue to increase.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$15,000 as requested for 1000 General Assistance. The motion carried 7-0-0.



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2350 Community Clothing Closet

Mr. Seely stated that there is a new ambulance arriving in April, and the Clothing Closet must be moved out of the fire station by then. When asked why they don't use one of the houses that has been foreclosed, Mr. Seely replied that the existing location is close to the Food Pantry, making it convenient for those in need.

Mrs. Anderson stated that she doesn't feel \$2000 is sufficient, and made a motion to increase the requested amount to \$3000. The motion was seconded and discussed. The motion failed 2-5-0.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$2000 for 2350 Community Clothing Closet as requested. The motion carried 6-0-1.

2500 Code Enforcement Officer

Tabled for next meeting.

Next Meeting: Monday 13 February 2017 at 6:00 PM at the Community Building.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Minutes submitted by Martha Turner, Secretary
Approved by Budget Committee 20 February 2017