

# Joint Town Council and Budget Committee Meeting February 20, 2020

Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. Saluted the Flag.

## **Council Members Present:**

Kieth Bennett, Chair  
Nicholas Konstantoulakis  
John Emery II

## **Budget Members Present:**

Lou Goulet  
Brian Ahlquist  
Tom Walton

## **Staff and Others Present:**

Zakk Maher, Town Manager	Julie Ward, Town Clerk
Lisa Prevost, Treasurer	Nancy Petersons
Eriks Petersons, Sun Journal	Mary Allen
Andrea Winn	

## **Members Absent:**

Tarsha Downing	Lou Annance
Peter Ford	

The Chair of the Budget Committee will be done on March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Town Manager Zakk Maher started presentation announcing schedule meetings of March 5<sup>th</sup>, March 19<sup>th</sup> and April 6<sup>th</sup> would be Public Hearing for Council to approve the Budget warrant. June 9<sup>th</sup> is the Municipal election with Budget Items on Ballot.

Town Manager Zakk Maher explained the breakdown of meeting as follows:

2/20 Boards and Council, Legal Services, Town Clerk/Elections, Administration, Safety Officer, Utilities, Code Enforcement/Planning and Library

3/5 Recreation, Social Services/Welfare, Assessor, Auditor, Contingency, Debt Service, Pensions/Insurance and Animal Control.

3/19 Dispatcher, EMA, Fire Department, Police Department, Rescue, Public Works, Transfer Station, County Tax.

Town Manager Zakk Maher talked about year to date revenues being at 66%. He also provided items for revenues and expenses line by line from 2015-present. We are currently saving for a revaluation of the town with about \$100,000 saved up so far. We have been budgeting around \$10,000-\$15,000 a year. In last year's budget we were expecting to be in the new building and with breaking out cost to different departments has our numbers skewed. Town Manager Zakk Maher explained the biggest change to this upcoming budget is bringing back the Municipal Complex because of the plan to stay in the current building. Our net to be raised by tax payers is \$56,651. Unfortunately, we could provide all numbers due to Mil Rate Calculation sheet not yet available.

Town Manager Zakk Maher also explained that there will be a change in our Homestead Exemptions this year. We had approximately 649 tax payers receiving this exemption this year. The current exemption is 20,000 with the State reimbursing the Town at 62.5%. This upcoming year, the have increased to 30,000 and the town is due to receive 75% reimbursement from the State. The Town also only has about 2 years left on the 800k that was borrowed to redo the Town Office. Once that is paid down it should free up some of our debt service for a new complex.

There are funds sitting in the bank to pay down the 700k loan taken out for the new building. This needs voter approval, total expenditures listed on the budget summary is only about 100k.

Tom Walton asked about staffing changes and how it will affect the current budget. Town Manager Zakk Maher explained that the Police Department will be a little high with over time, and with having an opening in the Clerk's office should be ok. We are currently looking for 4 positions which are Deputy Clerk, Police Officer, Transfer Station Manager and Water Department Technician.

Last year there was 185k applied to the budget from the fund balance, this year is going to be around 190k. Town Manager Zakk Maher explained even though we do not have any tax acquired sales this year, it should not impact the general fund. The town is also received additional funds of \$3500 for Marijuana fees.

### **Boards and Council:**

The training and travel and legal fees are the only changes this year.

Lou Goulet asked when the last time there was an adjustment on the payment to members. Treasurer Lisa Prevost said she hasn't seen one since she has been here for 25 years. Lou Goulet suggested Planning Board and Appeals be raised from \$10.00 per meeting to \$25.00 a meeting. Tom Walton asked if we could look at surrounding towns and find out their fees. Town Manager Zakk Maher will look into it and present numbers at next Budget Meeting.

The decrease in the minor CIP was due to the Website and Town signs that were approved this year. The change in Website was more than expected as well as the signs.

### **Municipal Complex:**

Because the plan was to be in the new building, the current budget this line item had been removed. Since there is no plan to move, it was best to bring this back 2018-19 budget was 91,075 and the proposed budget is \$85,574. This includes building utilities, and contracted services. We are currently running the pellet burner to help with heating cost.

Town Manager Zakk Maher explained we are stuck in a contract with First light and have about a year left. Speeds are slow in the building due to internal wiring. He had looked into changing to Spectrum which is around 6k less a year. Once we are done our contract, the town will switch.

Tom Walton asked about the status of 22 Pleasant Street, and Lou Goulet asked if the town would still consider 22 pleasant if it does not sell. Town Manager Zakk Maher stated no interest as of yet.

### **Town Clerk:**

With changes in the Clerks office year with staffing, the Safety Officer was taken out of Town Clerks duties. Other changes included pulling out all allocated services that were prorated by department which decreased the budget by \$4986.00.

### **Administration:**

The only change in the Admin budget was pulling out of allocated services and put back into Municipal Complex, which is \$6129.00

**Safety Officer:**

Town Manager Zakk Maher said with speaking to the Fire Department it would make more sense to move this item to that Department with a stipend of \$8,382 and \$525.00 for training. The Transfer Station Manager used to have this position but unfortunately the current manager has a full-time job and is unable to do so now. Currently the Town Manager is covering.

**Utilities:**

Decreased by \$1575 because elevator service back into Municipal Complex

**Code Enforcement Office:**

Removal of allocated expenses which decreased by \$4366. Tom Walton asked why the legal services were 2,000 less than other departments, Town Manager feels like it would be less used in this department and more likely in the Planning Board or Council. Legal services are always hard to determine because there could be years of not using it and then something pops up.

**Library:**

Decreased by \$3528.00 due to reduction in allocated expenses. Nancy Petersons talked about how her year was going and the usage.

Town Manager ended with providing up to date # in couple weeks at the next meeting.

Councilor Konstantoulakis motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Emery, all in favor, so voted. Adjourned @ 8:25pm

Next meeting 3/5/2020 @ 7pm