

Budget Committee
APPROVED Minutes (Approved 11/13/2019)
November 6, 2019 @ 6:30 PM
Alton Town Hall
1 Monument Square, Alton, NH 03809

1. Call to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman O'Brien.

2. Roll Call

Present:

Patrick O'Brien, Chairman

David Hershey, Member

Beth Varney, Member

Bob Holt, Member

Kristi Hikel, School Board Representative (arrived at 7:03 pm)

Reuben Wentworth, Board of Selectmen Representative

Others Present:

Liz Dione, Town Administrator

Absent:

Roger Nelson, Member

3. Approval of Agenda

P. O'Brien would like to add an item to be first under New Business.

MOTION by D. Hershey to accept the Agenda as amended. Second by B. Holt. No discussion. Motion passes with all in favor. (5-0)

4. New Business

1. Resignation of Roger Nelson. P. O'Brien thanked Roger for his many years of hard work. Discussion on filling the position. Administration to put on website. Ask for volunteers to sit in vacancy. Costly to put in newspaper for the remaining number of meetings. D. Hershey would like this put out as advertising to fill this important position. L. Dione noted it would be approx. \$50 for Baysider. P. O'Brien noted also about the number of meeting left. B. Holt noted this position will be filled at the February election. Discussion how long to run an advertisement.

MOTION by P. O'Brien to Post the position for interested parties to submit a letter of intent no later than Dec 5 at noon and spend no more than \$100, anything over would come back to the Chairman for approval. Second by D. Hershey. No discussion. Motion passes with all (5-0)

2. Review Department Budgets

a. Conservation Commission - Gene Young, Chairman

One item stand out is contractual area. Asking for money to do a forest inventory on Gilman Pond properties (approx. 450 acres). Important property to the town. Known eco system of some rare species, collect hard data to properly manage land. Currently no forest management plan. There are rare flowers, hiking trails, recreational use, and need to know what the stands of trees/timber inventory is and wildlife observation. Town does harvest timber occasionally (last done in the late 90s on another property. Not used as a source of revenue, just done as good

management practice. D. Hershey asked what is the advantage to have this done. G. Young noted an old growth forest is not necessarily that productive with wildlife, etc. D. Hershey asked what does the \$5600 include. \$4500 for forester to do inventory and what could be done in different areas, suggested areas of harvesting, maintain habitats, create views, increase wildlife. \$1000 to perform a baselines survey on Coffin Brook easement. This is important for management of the conservation easement. Lot lines are known but a baseline survey has not been done. Discussion on part-time wages for town employee secretarial work. D. Hershey asked if consider taping meetings and have secretary type the next day. G. Young stated having the secretary there makes it more efficient for the secretary. P. O'Brien asked why overtime was up. Cost of living, etc. G. Young extra costs for testing for Merry Meeting for testing 12 months instead of 6 months. B. Holt, contract services how did they get the figure. G. Young spoke with several foresters and those were the numbers that were obtained. R. Wentworth noted with regard to having the Gilman property researched, old growth causes no new growth, also checking on insects, disease, etc. also could be clearing up areas for fire hazard. B. Varney asked how many other properties need to be done? Should this go to CIP? R. Wentworth noted this is not the type of project that should go to CIP. G. Young noted there is about 5000 acres of conserved land in Alton and the town owns approx. 650 of those acres and the Conservation Commission is trying to set an example of how to properly manage conservation lands. B. Holt agreed. Further discussion that water monitoring being done monthly now due to the Cyano bacteria problem. Only \$744 spent so far this year and there will be another bill before the end of the year. Recommendation from D. Hershey to strive to have overtime reduced and does not see the value for the project. P. O'Brien agrees on the overtime and seeing it reduced. R. Wentworth noted that it well worth the money to having the individual present and G. Young also noted the secretary works with the planning department and has other insight to provide the commission.

MOTION by P. O'Brien to drop overtime to \$1000. Second by K. Hikel. Discussion, D. Hershey feels better efficient management to put this to -0-. Discussion on the efficiency of having the person present. D Hershey suggest amendment to eliminate overtime. No second. Amendment fails. Motion passes with 5 in favor, 1 opposed.

Motion by P. O'Brien to accept and approve the budget for the Conservation Commission as amended with bottom line of \$21053. Second by K. Hikel. Motion passes with 5 in favor 1 opposed.

- b. Solid Waste Department Scott Simons, Solid Waste Director.
- S. Simonds reported a very busy year compared to past. A couple of lines are over. An employee left in July and have not been able to hire anyone year. Overtime is over. Sickneses have caused overtime as well. Recycling market is not doing well.
- D. Hershey asked if any days they are open which days are slower? S. Simons reported Fri or Mon depending on the season. D. Hershey asked if they have a vehicle count? S. Simons stated they do not. He added they had highway and parks and rec help to cover the short of staff. D. Hershey suggested changing

hours to help overtime. S. Simons stated that is not an option. R. Wentworth noted this is not an option as well either. Discussion they have ads out for this position and have not been able to fill this position yet. P. O'Brien asked about the elimination of line 407 to 416 going to revolving. Should these lines be refunded? S. Simons stated they do not need to be refunded. D. Hershey suggest looking into trade values for recyclables as an alternative.

MOTION by R. Wentworth to accept and approve the budget for the Solid Waste Department at \$441,053. Second by K. Hikel. No discussion. Motion passes with all in favor (6-0).

- c. Library. Betty Jane Meulenbroek, Chairman, Annette Slipp, Board of Trustees Secretary, Holly Brown, Library Director.

Holly Brown put back in computer and internet access \$716 to enhance internet access. Other change overview trustees have voted to add an increase \$1744 to wages full time line 010. Reflects a merit increase of Holly Brown completing masters degree. Merit pay added for wages for part time 016. 4 employees. Pat O'Brien bringing up the trust fund and what gets spent from that exactly. H. Brown stated what is spent does not get included in line items. Spent \$4073.88 to date. Received some fund through book sale funds, donations, membership fees (non residents), and general donations receive to date \$800. Other receivables (copies, etc.) \$1961.96.

D. Hershey - stated he had asked for a copy of the trust fund agreement - not the policy from what you spend from it. A. Slipp noted she gave all this to the Selectmen last year. R. Wentworth noted that L. Dione can provide a copy of this to David Hershey. D. Hershey noted water consumption is up this year. Holly Brown noted there some leaks in the system, landscaping causing some problems. Mary Jane Meulenbroek noted they turned off the irrigation due to some leaks. R. Wentworth noted there will be water increase this year. Line 135 - books media and materials. H. Brown note the use this line to cover other expenses (i.e. water). has more control over this line.

MOTION by B. Holt to accept and approve the budget for Gilman Library at \$143,596. Second by K. Hikel. Discussion. D. Hershey suggest to reduce by \$350. K. Hikel does not recommend cutting anything. No further discussion. Motion passes with all in favor (6-0).

- d. Fire Department, Jim Beaudoin, Fire Chief.

J. Beaudoin noted budget came in less by about 3%. 2018 two lines funding got 106 and 107 switched and has corrected and will see a discrepancy. 2018 the budget had a stipend and it was used to pay part time wages. Line 019 eliminated \$92,000 decrease. Overtime - fulltime not getting overtime. Part time staff is getting overtime, no benefits to part time employees. Most part time working over 60 hours per week. Increase on 114 - fire dispatch services. Goes up each year but did not increase last year so doubled this year to catch up.

D. Hershey asked if there is safety equipment replacement plan. J. Beaudoin noted this is in CIP. 14 year plan, lump sum. Same plan for turn out gear - after 10 years must be replaced. 4 sets a year are replaced. This plan is working well for the department.

B. Holt asked on line 450. Infectious disease now being put in employee health. Fire benefit buyout why at \$1. J. Beaudoin noted It is there in case there are employees that are eligible to use it. The 2 full time employees are not using this at this time. L. Dione explain the Warrant Article for benefit buyout. General discussion on the benefit buy out program for the town.

P. O'Brien asked if it would be better to have a capital reserve for the buy out. L. Dione stated no it works well this way. It is generally a guessing game.

B. Varney asked why the fire hydrant level went up. P. O'Brien noted the Water Commission based on a plan the anticipated life span of a hydrant. B. Varney asked about meetings and conference. J. Beaudoin stated they are sending 2 officers to the FDIC conference, can take courses and other seminars that are available to show new technology. Includes flight, hotel and classes. Also sending officers to National Fire Fighter Academy. K. Hikel would like those that attend the seminars to give debriefing to public.

B. Holt asked about line 113 fire training. J. Beaudoin noted that scheduling is a challenge (most FF have fulltime jobs).

MOTION by B. Holt to accept and approve the budget for the Fire Department at \$978,052. Second by K. Hikel. Discussion. Motion passes with 5 in favor and 1 abstention.

5. Old Business - None. Old Business closed.

6. Approval of Minutes

October 30, 2019. Add the last name to Sharon "Kierstead" under New Business 2.b.

MOTION by P. O'Brien to approved the minutes of October 30, 2019 as corrected. Second by B Varney. Motion passes with 5 in favor and 1 abstention.

7. Public Input. None seen or heard. Public Input closed.

8. Other Business (if necessary) P. O'Brien noted JMA budget committee meeting next Thurs just before this meeting. Need 3 members to sit on the committee. D. Hershey and B. Varney will help but B. Varney cannot make the meeting on the 13th.

November 13 B. Varney will not be in attendance.

9. Adjournment. MOTION by D. Hershey to adjourn at 8:16 p.m. Second by K. Hikel. No discussion. Motion passes with all in favor (6-0).

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Schaeffner, Recording Secretary