



Town of Hopkinton

Office of Select Board

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**SELECT BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2019
APPROVED NOVEMBER 18, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman O'Brien called this regular meeting of the Select Board to order at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, 2019, in the Dunlap Room at the Town Hall. Chairman O'Brien introduced the members of the Board.

Members Present: Jim O'Brien, Ken Traum, Steven Whitley and Anna Wells.
Absent: Sabrina Dunlap

Staff Present: Neal Cass, Town Administrator, Robin Buchanan, Administrative Assessing Assistant, Deb Gallant, Finance Director, Steve Pecora, Police Chief, Jeff Yale, Fire Chief and Dan Blanchette, Director of Public Works

Public Present: Lorraine Smith, Linda Menze, Janet Krzyzaniak, Bianca Acebron Peco, Webster Select Board Member and Clarke Kidder

Jim O'Brien led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Traum noted the ceremony was moving at Civil War Park was held on Monday, November 11, 2019.

Mr. Whitley congratulated the Hopkinton High School Girls Soccer team for their back to back championships.

ADMINISTRATIVE

The Board reviewed documents for signature and approved (4-0) the consent Agenda, taking the following action on a motion made by Mr. Traum and seconded by Mrs. Wells.

Consent Agenda 11-12-2019

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANIFEST

\$58,922.80

\$20,352.30

PAYROLL MANIFEST

\$70,110.27

BUILDING PERMITS

Chris Boudette 1057 Boundtree Rd addition

Chris Boudette 852 Broad Cove Rd pole barn

NEW HAMPSHIRE THE BEAUTIFUL-RECYCLING GRANT

RIGHT TO BURY

Deborah G. Price Nicholson

2019 2nd Issue Tax Warrant

\$11,893,143.79

The Board reviewed the Select Board Meeting Minutes of Monday, November 4, 2019. Mr. Traum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whitley, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of Monday, November 4, 2019.

VOTE: Traum, Whitley and Wells voting in favor of the motion; no votes against, O'Brien abstaining; MOTION APPROVED 3-0-1.

APPOINTMENTS:

Steve Pecora Police Department: Police Chief Steve Pecora presented his budget for the Police Department for 2020, which is a 4.46% increase over the 2019 budget. He stated adjustments were made for long term goals. He noted a decrease in grants as funds have been cut for New Hampshire. Chief Pecora stated that there is a small increase in Contract Fees, which covers the IMC Software, vendor fee for County Attorney Prosecution, the copy machine, generator maintenance and a computer internet secure line. He noted that heat and electricity have been removed from the Police budget and moved to Government Buildings.

Mrs. Wells inquired about the Contract Fees year to date amount. Police Chief Pecora stated that most of the billing for that account will occur in December. Discussion ensued, with regards to the overtime budget. Chief Pecora noted that the Police Department is 24/7, 52 weeks a year and in order to remain frugal, he moves shifts around. He also noted that an incident at the end of someone's shift also causes overtime.

Mr. Traum thanked Chief Pecora for all that the Police Department does. Mr. Traum inquired about special details. Chief Pecora noted that a company will ask for a detail and that company is billed for the officer and the vehicle; it does not come out of the Town budget. Mr. Cass noted that it comes out of the Police revolving fund.

Chief Pecora noted that last year, they did not purchase a cruiser and that in the CIP he is scheduled for one in 2020. Mr. Traum inquired if the portable radios could be replaced with less

expensive technology. Chief Pecora stated it is not less expensive. Discussion ensued, with regards to the portable radios, the life of those radios and the cost to replace them. Mr. Cass noted that replacement radios are scheduled for replacement through the CIP for both the police and fire department.

Mr. Whitley inquired about the increase in Officer Wages. Chief Pecora noted that is because of an increase in the wage scale.

Emergency Management: Chief Pecora noted that this budget is the same as last year: \$1.00. This line is for an easier transition with grants.

Animal Control: Chief Pecora noted that this budget is down 2.56% from the 2019 budget. He noted that he has eliminated the conference and training, dues and subscriptions. Also zeroed out is the NHSPCA dues. Chief Pecora noted that the police department has fostered a relationship with the NHSPCA. If an officer comes upon an incident beyond his training and ability, the NHSPCA will act as a resource. This work relationship has been more effective.

Chairman O'Brien stated that the Board appreciated the level of service that the Police Department provides for Hopkinton.

Jeff Yale, Fire Department: Fire Chief Jeff Yale presented his 2020 Fire Department budget, which has a 2.41% increase over 2019. He noted an increase in the phone line of his budget; stated that it now reflects actual use. He noted a slight increase in computer software. He noted that the work schedule is a computer based program, as well as the Firehouse Software, Image Tread Cad upgrade and ambulance billing are all in this line item.

Discussion ensued, with regards to the radio repair line. Chief Yale stated that they maintain approximately 32 portable radios, noting they are the same ones the Police Department use. Chairman O'Brien inquired as to the cost for replacement. Chief Yale stated we replace them when we get a new truck.

Fire Chief Yale noted that Professional Services and Dispatch, which is dictated by Concord Dispatch have not increased. He further stated that Equipment/Repair/Maintenance has increased by 8.87%. Chief Yale stated that this line includes aerial and ground ladder testing, fire pump testing, fire hose testing, and SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) systems tests. Fire Chief Yale stated the vehicle inspections line is down, due to having a town mechanic, who is instrumental in keeping the vehicles in service.

Chief Yale noted that the Small tools, Hose & Equipment has increased by 15%. This line item is responsible for the upkeep for rescue squad tools, hose replacements, rescue equipment, boat and motor repair. Chief Yale noted that within the CIP, he is due for new rescue equipment. He is currently checking into grants to help with purchases. He also noted that last year's grant money has not been awarded yet.

Chief Yale stated within the Capital Reserve Fund, there is funds for the replacement of a new truck, as the current truck is 25 years old, noting it passed some tests, but failed others. Mr.

Whitley inquired as to the cost of a rebuilt pump. Chief Yale replied the gear box alone is \$18,000 and the pump would be at least \$5,000 in parts plus labor.

Mr. Whitley inquired about the breathing apparatus, which is also up for replacement in 2020. Chief Yale stated we originally purchased the apparatus in 2009 and were purchased with a grant. He further stated the breathing apparatus needs to be in good order as it is a lifeline for our firefighters.

Jeff Yale, Ambulance Budget: Fire Chief Yale presented the 2020 Ambulance budget, which is up 2.89% over 2019. He stated that wages are up slightly due to the wage scale. He noted that part-time wages stayed the same, however, as training and overtime were cut last year, he anticipated overspending in 2019. He noted that he has increased both those lines for 2020. He requested that the Select Board not cut the overtime line.

Mr. Traum inquired if part-time wages will stay below budget. Fire Chief Yale replied yes, as wages were increased last year.

Fire Chief Yale stated the Ambulance Repair line is up by \$1,000, noting he has worked with the town mechanic and what would have been a \$3,500 job at the repair shop, only cost \$1,500 with the town mechanic. He noted that this line includes maintenance and repairs for both ambulances.

Discussion ensued, with regards to Comstar billing (the ambulance billing service) and the number of runs and calls for the year.

Mr. Whitley noted that the CIP calls for the replacement of an ambulance in 2023. Fire Chief Yale agreed, noting that he is still waiting for the 2018 ambulance, which should be in Maine at the dealership by the second week of December and then will be delivered to Hopkinton.

Fire Chief Yale noted that he spoke with Mr. Cass in regards to the heat and electricity of the buildings being pulled out of the department's budget and going into Government Buildings. He believes it takes away from the management of the building. He stated that he is no longer sharing pellets with the Highway Department.

In closing, Fire Chief Yale stated he is proud of the fact that there are five (5) people who are graduating at Firefighter level 2 and that the Fire Department provides good service to the Town. He further stated that the Department is expanding, but at a reasonable rate.

Chairman O'Brien thanked Chief Yale for all the work and effort the Fire Department puts forward.

Dan Blanchette, Public Works Administration: Director of Public Works, Dan Blanchette, presented the 2020 budget for Public Works Administration, which is up 3.59% from the 2019 budget. He noted that the Uniform line is up, staff wanted to continue with the service instead of a stipend. He also noted that there are no positions open at this time.

Dan Blanchette, Streets and Highways: Mr. Blanchette stated that the Radio Repair line is up; as there is a \$1,000.00 increase that line. Shimming & Paving line is up by 5% which, Mr. Blanchette reminded the Board that they promised he would get that this year. There will be no paving in 2020 as most of the money will be put into failing culverts. He asked the Board to encumber all funds not spent in 2019.

Mr. Blanchette stated that the Equipment Lease/Contract line is up; this is due to an increase in contracts. With regards to the Engineering line, Mr. Blanchette noted that no money has been spent to date, however, he is waiting for several invoices to come in before December. There was no increase in this line for 2020.

Mr. Blanchette noted an increase in both the Sand and Gravel lines. Mr. Traum inquired about sand from West Hopkinton site. Mr. Blanchette replied it is mostly clay.

Mr. Traum inquired about the status of Stickney Hill Road. Mr. Blanchette replied that he had expected to hear from the Department of Environmental Services (DES) as the fifty (50) day deadline was Saturday, November 8, 2019, but he has not heard from them. Mr. Traum inquired if weather could delay the culvert from going in. Mr. Blanchette replied yes, if it gets too cold, we can't do it.

Mrs. Wells inquired about the engineering for the Kearsarge Avenue project, with regards to fund available. Mr. Blanchette replied some will come out of this year and some will come from next year.

Discussion ensued, with regards to the cost to replace culverts with a bond. Mr. Blanchette noted that it will cost approximately \$750,000 to replace the all culverts. Mr. Blanchette reminded the Board that all permits for these things have deadlines. Mr. Whitley stated that if we do no paving next year, we will be even further behind. Mr. Blanchette agreed and stated we need two (2) more culverts on Briar Hill and Tyler Bridge needs repair as the abutments are rotting.

Dan Blanchette, Buildings & Grounds: Mr. Blanchette stated the only significant increase is in the Grounds Maintenance line. He stated Greg Roberts received a request for a watering station at cost of \$10,000. Mr. Blanchette stated he does not agree with this request and noted that the Board could save \$10,000 by cutting it. Discussion ensued, with regards to what kind of watering station it would be as it is listed in the budget as a dog watering station. Mrs. Wells stated that she received a text from a resident that was listening to the meeting online, and it is a watering station to refill water bottles.

Dan Blanchette, Sewer: Mr. Blanchette stated there are changes in this budget from last year, because what we are currently doing is not working out. He noted that the position will be for a full time person, with the Contoocook Village Precinct paying for ½ of the position, which includes wages, overtime wages, social security, Medicare, health and dental insurance, and NH Retirement. Discussion ensued with regards to sludge removal and the cost of that removal.

Mr. Whitley inquired as to the increase in Travel/Meals. Mr. Blanchette stated he increased it for the new employee to use his own vehicle to travel to and from the sewer plant to Concord. Training that requires an out of town overnight stay.

Mr. Whitley inquired if the current situation is not working, can it be corrected or just not workable. Mr. Blanchette replied it is not workable for us. He further stated that Professional Services line dropped, however, we will continue to use WSO to cover the Sewer Plant during vacations.

Dan Blanchette, Transfer Station: Mr. Blanchette was joined by Webster Select Board Member, Bianca Acebron Peco. Mr. Blanchette stated that there is an increase in the Demolition Tipping Fees line. Mr. Blanchette made note that it should show as 900 tons; not trips. Discussion ensued, regarding commercial revenue, as well as Webster's share.

Mr. Whitley inquired about a Capital Improvement Plant appropriation for \$50,000 for a bailer in 2022, but an appropriation for \$15,000 for a bailer in 2020. Mr. Blanchette replied the vertical bailer was purchased through a grant. We were looking at a horizontal bailer to replace the vertical bailer in 2022. However, since recycling as slowed down, I decided to withdraw the horizontal bailer and instead get another vertical bailer.

Mr. Whitley inquired about the repairs for the bathroom/office space. Mr. Blanchette stated the space is in desperate need of repairs, noting freezing pipes and falling ceiling tiles.

Dan Blanchette, Solid Waste-Landfill: Mr. Blanchette stated that there is no change in this budget from 2019. Discussion ensued regarding Engineering Fees, which covers testing for the septage lagoons.

Dan Blanchette, Community Well: Mr. Blanchette stated that we are moving from using Professional Services to having Kent Barton oversee the Community Well, which is reflected in a decrease in the Professional Services line.

Chairman O'Brien thanked Mr. Blanchette and the whole Highway Department for their work.

Lorraine Smith and Linda Menze, abutters to the rail trail were in for an update. Ms. Menze is concerned that the water pipes will freeze, as they are now exposed to the elements and it is getting colder. Mr. Cass noted that we received the letter from the arborist today. However, it is not clear from his letter, which trees need to be removed. Discussion ensued, regarding locating the pipes and covering them with loam, so that they will not freeze. Discussion ensued, regarding the tax map error that caused the volunteers to go onto private property.

Clarke Kidder was in to speak to the Board with regards to the two driveways merging together at Main Street. He stated that we need to do something to make the exit safer, perhaps a stop sign, a line, something to indicate that traffic is merging. Discussion ensued, with regards to the best way to approach the issue.

Neal Cass, Revenues: Mr. Cass noted that most of the items have been previously discussed. He stated that the PILOTS have been adjusted to the new assessments, noting we have a new PILOT, Beech Hill School.

Chairman O'Brien inquired how the Pay-By-Bag Program is going. Mr. Cass replied that is it consistent.

Mr. Cass noted that the heat and electric have been moved from the Department Budget to a Government Buildings Budget. The only buildings that the heat and electric remain within the Department's Budget are the Library and the Transfer Station.

Mr. Cass thanked Deb Gallant, Finance Director, for all the work she does on the budget.

OTHER: YTD Financials: Mr. Cass stated the Revenues look good and the Expenses are in good shape also. Mr. Traum stated the Town Clerk/Tax Collector looks high. Mr. Cass noted that it was due to additional computer expenses.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Buchanan
Administrative Assessing Assistant