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BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES **February 6, 2020**

Chairman Pitt opened the public hearing at 7:00 pm at The Marlborough School. She noted that in accordance with NH RSA 32:5 I, notice of public hearing on the annual budget was published in the Keene Sentinel and posted at the Town Office and Post Office January 24, 2020.

Also present were Selectman Paight and Ellen Smith, Town Administrator. There were approximately 20 people in attendance.

Chairman Pitt introduced Selectman Paight and TA Smith; Selectman Nelson was unable to attend due to a work obligation. She went on to thank members of the Advisory Budget Committee.

Chairman Pitt began by explaining the items that had the biggest impact on the budget proposal for 2020.

- Executive budget contains a line item for state aid to be received in 2020. Gross budgeting requires us to include the funds in the budget in order to expend them. There is an offsetting revenue so there is no tax impact.
- Changes to the health insurance plan
- Deputy Tax Collector/Town Clerk position was changed from part time to full time due to Ellen Orkins impending retirement
- Changes to the wage and benefit allocation between several departments.
- Wage adjustments based on performance evaluations rather than an across the board cost of living adjustment
- Establishment of a health insurance stipend for those employees opting out of the town's plan
- The elimination of the funding for a part time police officer. The Board has funds available for this use if a viable candidate is brought forward.
- Proposing the purchase of a dump/plow truck for the highway department; the financing details are still being researched

Chairman Pitt then went down the handout line-by-line explaining changes for each department. When it came to the Insurance budget, TA Smith spoke. The Town changed to a higher deductible health insurance plan and added a health reimbursement account that lowered premiums, saving approximately \$20,000. The insurance budget was decreased by \$8,000 as a result of the affirmative vote of Town Meeting in 2019 to expand the use of the Insurance Expendable Trust Fund to include changes in health insurance plans, if needed. \$4,000 was added to cover the cost of any deductibles the Town may be responsible for as a result of the health reimbursement account.

Moving on to the warrant articles, there were no changes to the following:

- Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund \$10,000
- Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund \$15,000
- Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund \$20,000
- Road Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund \$20,000
- Monadnock Family Services \$ 2,579
- Community Kitchen \$ 2,500
- Home Health Care \$ 5,000

In order to meet our obligation for the 2020 cost of revaluation, the appropriation has been increased from \$6,500 to \$10,000 to the Town Reassessment Capital Reserve Fund. This is for year 4 of 5 with the total revaluation being completed in 2021.

The request from Southwest Community Services decreased from \$ 1,838 to \$ 1,729.

The two new articles for 2020 are:

The purchase of a dump/plow truck for the highway department. This will be discussed in the next public hearing being held tonight.

\$77,000 for a Stormwater Infrastructure Planning Grant; \$75,000 in principal forgiveness and \$ 2,000 for associated interest. This is very similar to the funding arrangement for the Asset Management Plan for waste water and storm water undertaken over the last couple of years. There will be a \$75,000 offsetting revenue.

The Selectmen want disclose the fact that there was a group in Town that intended to submit a petition warrant article to increase the Veteran's Credit from \$500 to \$750. Many of the signatures were unable to be verified. The Board may decide to include a similar warrant article and intend to take the matter up at an upcoming meeting.

There were several comments and questions from the public regarding the Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector becoming a full-time position. Chairman Pitt explained that the Deputy must be a Marlborough resident which makes the position difficult to fill. The Selectmen decided to make the position full-time as of December 1, 2019.

There was a question as to why the budget did not include funding to make the Library Director fulltime. There was not enough of a demonstration during the budgeting process that the need exists.

Chairman Pitt asked if there were any additional comments or questions. Noting that there were none she moved to close the public hearing at 7:50 pm, Selectman Paight seconded, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Smith
Town Administrator