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SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES AMENDED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING February 9, 2023

Chairman Paight opened the public hearing at 7:30 pm at the Marlborough School. She stated that in accordance with RSA 32:5-I notice of this public hearing on the annual budget was posted at the Town Office and Post Office on January 30, 2023, and advertised in the Keene Sentinel on January 31, 2023.

Also present were Selectman Pitt and Ellen Smith, Town Administrator. There were approximately 15 people in attendance.

TA Smith noted several increases/decreases that are present throughout the budget: Health Insurance increase was 11.7%, Dental Insurance increase was 1.5%, NH Retirement decreases effective July 1, 2023, police rates decreased from 33.88 % to 31.28% and employee rates decreased from 14.06 % to 13.53%.

Executive: This budget contains the wage pool from which the Board can distribute wage increases based on performance.

Election & Registration: Ellen Orkins retired in 2022 so the budget contained some overlapping items to train her replacement. Those have been taken out for 2023.

Financial Administration: The town's annual audit fee decreased for 2023. The 2022 budget contained the cost of a one-time audit upon the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's retirement.

Assessing: The increase is due to a fixed-cost contract with Southwest Region Planning Commission for tax map updates.

Legal: 2023 will be the first full year using the Regional Prosecutor Program. There was a question asking if the prosecutor should be in the police department budget. TA Smith answered that it could but Marlborough at some point chose to report it under legal and judicial.

Planning & Zoning: The 2022 budget contained overlap to train the new clerk. That has now gone away and the budget is back to normal.

Cemeteries: Decrease in stone repairs as this line has not been fully utilized over the past few years.

Insurance: Significant increases due to the lack of premium holidays. The premiums are back up to normal levels.

Police Department: The 2023 budget reflects the department's need to hire a patrol officer to fill the open position. This includes budgeting for a 2-person insurance plan and a full complement of uniforms. There was a question about the revenues associated with the police department. Funds collected for speeding tickets are forwarded to the state. Fines associated with town ordinances are kept by the town. There was also a comment about the wages paid to officers. It was explained that the pool of candidates is rapidly decreasing making it necessary to revisit what constitutes a competitive wage.

Highway: The part-time employee has been an as-needed, mostly in the winter, position. The budget contains an increase to bring that position up to 20 hours per week which will allow for building maintenance as well as increased safety during road work.

Next were the proposed warrant articles.

1. Fire Truck \$550,000 to purchase a scaled-down truck. \$75,000 from the Capital Reserve, \$9,000 Odd Fellow donation and \$66,000 in interest from trust funds will offset the cost. The remaining \$400,000 will need to be bonded.
2. Police Cruiser Capital Reserve \$12,000, which is an increase to allow for future purchases to be in cash and avoid financing.
3. Highway Equipment Capital Reserve \$20,000—same as last year
4. Town Reassessment Capital Reserve \$8,00, which is a slight increase as we begin to save for the next revaluation in 2026.
5. Road Maintenance Capital Reserve \$10,000— same as last year
6. Municipal Facility Capital Reserve \$20,000. This is a \$10,000 decrease from last year. Funds will be used for capital improvements needed at town facilities such as furnace replacement, roof replacement or repair, and the residing of the back of the town office building.
7. Monadnock Family Services \$2,620
8. Community Kitchen \$2,500
9. Home Health Care \$5,000
10. Southwestern Community Services \$4,621
11. Stormwater Infrastructure Planning \$100,000. This is the same program used for the current downtown stormwater planning and evaluation program. This \$100,000 would be utilized for the engineering associated with the plan chosen to install proper stormwater infrastructure in the downtown area of Church and School Streets.

A brief overview of the offsetting revenues was given.

Chairman Paight asked if there were any other questions. Seeing none, the public hearing was closed at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Smith
Town Administrator

These minutes were amended by the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on March 1, 2023, to add the following:

Ms. Beh raised concerns about the welfare administration budget, and the welfare application form and raised questions about the fund balance.