

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 2020
MINUTES**

PRESENT: David Lage Chairman; John Veerer, Shawn Talbot
Town Administrator Scott Butcher
Tim Carpenter, Police Chief; Ollie Niemi, Carrie Traffie, Carlene Wardwell,
Debbie Deaton, Jessica Olson, Meredith Lund, Fire Chief
Online: John Schaumloffel, Marc Fortier, Jack Low Sr

At 5:30 pm Chairman Lage initiated the discussion on the Budget Review.

Police Department & Animal Control Budget Review:

There was a discussion on retention on the police force and having a wage scale. What are some options for retaining hires, such as retention bonus, etc. Comparing salaries to other towns and cities, also noted that the cost of living in Hillsborough is higher than New Ipswich. Noted this budget has an increase of \$40K over last year, mostly in salary.

- Chief Carpenter to send list of Employees/Years of service and Salary

This conversation will continue next week.

Cemetery Budget Review:

Ollie indicated they have three main projects, electrical line to the podium, Center Cemetery bridge repair, front fence. Labor spent this year was \$3,500, they would like to increase the labor rate.

Welfare Budget Review:

Carrie noted there were 3 homeless this week alone. Some are staying on, others get on their feet and move on. It's hard to determine what might change next year. Board determined to leave the budget as it is.

Treasurer Budget Review:

Carlene was here for the Treasurer budget review and there was some discussion regarding a part time deputy to assist in Carlene's absence. John V suggested maybe someone at the bank might be a good fit. Also post something on the web, this would have a \$1K stipend.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Budget Review:

Debbie and Jessica were here to discuss the budget for Town Clerk and Tax Collector. There was discussion on extending the hours going forward. Dave suggested just have the hours to cover busy times. Deb and Jess noted that sometimes it can be anticipated such as end of the month, but other times it comes out of the blue. Also, the work is not just public facing, there are tasks that need to be completed in the back office. Dave proposed increase in Deputy Clerk hours from 14 to 21. There was further discussion on why the hours are necessary and Dave made motion to raise to \$55K. John Veerer Seconded, all agreed. No need to be open Friday, 1 Saturday a month, and Thursday evening hours. Margie is the assistant working part time varied hours, we need a deputy to fill in as needed.

Also discussed was the education line of the budget. This covers 2 conferences that are required per year, plus others that are required or needed like Registry of Deeds, computer training. Also travel to the training as needed.

- Dave to send Deb an updated copy of the budget based on this evenings discussion

Fire Budget Review:

Meredith was here to discuss the budget. Stipends reflect increase in stipend salary. She did not increase Chiefs salary as she felt that was not her place to do so. Training was the next item, and this includes RIT training that came out of this years training, RIT packs that were purchased this year. 24 CPR cards, 3 EMTs need recertification, health and fitness. There was discussion on who should be covering the COVID tests, Meredith said the state used to pay but no longer does. John V says HHS.gov indicates there are places they can go to for the testing.

- Meredith to call and confirm and if covered she will take the line item off if it is covered elsewhere.

Hydrant testing was discussed next, and she mentioned having a company do the hydrant testing was overall cheaper and easier than having the department do it. Vehicle maintenance went down. However, they will need a new printer this coming year. Regarding the communications line item, there appears to be two bills for the same services, she has tried to get it figured out along with Debbie and Roger. Next item up was the US Cellular Data for the iPads and cell phones. They are looking to change the service to another provider, not sure what the savings might be there. The Selectmen asked about the Souhegan Mutual Aid membership, this is to cover a multitude of services, Haz Mat situations, water rescues and this makes it worth the cost. She has looked into Keene to provide these services but they could potentially charge more and we might not be able to get back into the Souhegan membership once we leave. They also chase grants and this helps us get free equipment like the air monitors. Another line item was the medical supplies, due to COVID the CARES covers \$400 of it and the rest is normal consumables like the batteries for the thermal cameras. David said with a 10% increase something must give, and suggested the COVID testing and getting Comcast issue figured out might bring that down to a better number.

- Meredith to follow-up and email the information

10:00 the budget portion of the agenda finished up

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

John MOTIONED to accept the fire truck bid as discussed. Selectman Talbot SECONDED the motion. All in agreement

Discussion regarding the energy audit proposal from Sustainable Energy. \$2,580 would be the towns portion, the vendor pays other half.

Dave asked where are we with the tax deeding, Scott noted not much progress was made, also discussion about selling properties.

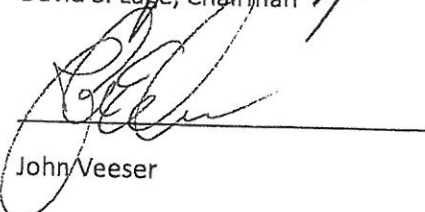
Tax Bills/Rates This will be wrapped up this week, it appears the rate will go from \$21.73 last year to \$21.24 for this year.

There was also discussion regarding healthcare for the full time employees for 2021. Two companies are looking for the answer. John recommended the 2nd or 3rd option on the list. The current insured population is 8 single, 1 family, and 2 employee plus 1 plans. Assuming that will stay steady for next year. John made a MOTION to go with Anthem 3000, Dave SECONDED the motion. Two AYES and one NAY vote

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Mallett, Land Admin

Minutes approved by:
BOARD OF SELECTMEN



David S. Lage, Chairman

John Veaser

Shawn Talbot