

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP
JANUARY 27, 2022 MINUTES**

The Board of Selectmen held a Budget Workshop on January 25, 2022 with First Selectman Pam Sawyer presiding. Also in attendance were Selectmen: Mike Eremita, Robert Morra, Bob DePietro, Adam Teller, Interim Officer Jim Rupert, Interim Recreation Director Stephanie Crane, Conservation Commission Vice Chair C. Peter VanDine, Planning & Zoning Commission Chair Thomas Manning, Registrar of Voters Bernice Dixon (R) and James Dwire (D).

1. Call to Order

Meeting begins at 7:03 p.m.

2. Discussion on FY23 Budget

Recreation:

Crane budgeted for payroll, line items for camp, basketball, after school programs, recess, spring-break, adult programs, Indian Notch Park and community programming. Two big changes are for Payroll and Indian Notch. Minimum wage is increasing to \$14/hour, so the "Other Payroll" sections & line items have increased a little bit, and will again in the 23-24 year, due to minimum wage rising to \$15/hour. Will start losing money at Indian Notch Park due to wage increases since season passes and gate fees have already been set. Passes and fees have been same for many years, and to avoid a loss, Crane presents a spreadsheet showing 2 different proposals to raise those fees: 1) increase fees for all, which raises revenue to \$32,275 or 2) increase fees for non-residents, which increases revenue to \$37,025.

Morra states we would have to use the first plan due to federal funds we accepted for the park, so we would be limited as to how much more we can charge a non-resident. The rate is a moderate increase. The current rate has been kept for 8, 9, 10 years.

Eremita is concerned with what we can actually charge because we took federal funds. Crane will look into it. Morra believes it cannot be greater than 3 times. Rupert states research will be done and information obtained on this prior to it being put on the Agenda for consideration.

Sawyer asked if supplies will increase significantly and Crane stated there are general increases; overall with inflation, all fees have increased a bit to continue to cover what is budgeted for supplies, and she did overestimate for supplies than what may actually be needed.

Review Board/Commissions

Van Dine stated things pretty much the same. There is a \$300 increase in professional and education services. They have been billing the bio-assessments of invertebrates – small animals that live in the brooks – for about 20 years and temperature monitoring of the brooks. They have seen a decrease in the health of French brook and initiated conversation with the Salmon River group regarding water that drains out of Bolton into their system, and would like their monitoring programs to coincide with each other. They would like to have an account with Phoenix Labs for chemical analysis – so it a program that might increase. Activities are financed through the activities fund which is through the creation and sale of their annual calendar.

Morra suggests that it may have to go under another town category rather than their professional & education services - maybe coordinated through the building department. Van Dine suggests the public works dept. as well.

Elections:

Dixon stated the district has been split into two districts which resulted in an increased budget.

Sawyer noted 2020 Professional training expenditures were \$590, in 2021 appropriated for \$5339, and this request is for \$2940.

Dixon stated there is a spring conference, fall conference, moderator training, and they may have some more depending on what other training required for deputies. In this past year, they had more expenses because there were 4 referendums, an audit, and the re-districting and training is involved with all of this.

Contracts have doubled \$700 to \$1500 as more machines are needed at polling places. Have some on loan but will have to return those. There is an increase of \$25 per machine for annual maintenance fees.

DePietro asked about the large rise in payroll. Dixon stated that is due to the need for twice as many poll workers, and substitute workers - due to the 2 districts, they will have 2 polling places.

Morra asked if the State will provide additional funds due to the split? Dixon is not aware of any additional funds.

Assessors:

Rupert stated the "Other Payroll" line item decreased to zero, and the Payroll line item has increased. Those funds moved from "Other" to "Payroll" in accordance with the Uniform Charter of Accounts. "Other" would be used for part-time employees. Helen believed because she is part time, in a sense, that she belonged in that particular line item but that is not the case. A revision date is noted on the budget document.

Planning & Zoning Commission:

Tom Manning stated the budget is driven by ongoing enforcement actions, an increase in training due to new legislation that requires training; and anticipated applications and the needs for mailing to abutters and advertisements for public hearings. There has been an increase in applications and they are anticipating more.

Teller stated P&Z has ability to assess fees onto applicants for engineering and other, so the revenue goes up with applications – it's self-regulating

Inland Wetlands Commission:

Sawyer states the request is for \$2235.

Rupert states it is the same as last year. The Commission feels it is appropriately funded with the same numbers as last year.

Adam assumes the "Other Payroll" line item is for board clerks, and asks if the number of hearings over the years has stayed flat or is it likely to go up?

Rupert foresees a couple applications that may require public hearings but the Commission does as much administratively as possible.

Future workshops sessions will look at 5 years of past history to build budget books for each Selectman so documentation can be referred to such as underfunded or overfunded line items, and what can be increased or decreased.

Morra: Motion to adjourn. Eremita seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Palazzini

Danielle Palazzini
Land Use Secretary

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO