

## **Grafton Budget Committee Minutes November 9, 2023**

**Members present:** Ed Grinley (Chair), Catherine Mulholland, Bonnie Haubrich, Sandy Griffin, Jennie Joyce (*ex-officio*)

Others present: Jake Abuhav

The meeting was called to order by Ed at 6:02pm. Minutes from the October 24, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Bonnie made a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by Ed. All in favor.

Sandy presented information on the role of a chairperson to clarify a discussion from a previous meeting.

The purpose of this meeting was to review and propose final figures for all 2024 department budgets. Line items of concern were discussed and collectively agreed/disagreed upon. Discussions and decisions centered on current YTD expenditures, past historical data and the department managers' input presented at their budget proposal meeting. The remaining Select board budget and any line items of question are to be discussed at the Budget Committee's next meeting. The result for total budgets are listed below.

### Ambulance

Line items discussed for the Ambulance budget included call stipends, utilities/electric, vehicle fuel, and vehicle repairs & maintenance. Call stipends expended through October 2023 were at 60.8% of budget (amount reduced = \$3,000).

A new ambulance has been ordered for the department, therefore, less expenses on vehicle repairs & maintenance. While this line item was reduced in the budget to \$1,200, there is an appropriated amount of \$2,500 in the revolving account should there be further need for repairs & maintenance on the old ambulance. Minor reductions were made on the other two line items mentioned above.

Sandy made a motion to approve the Ambulance budget at \$39,175 (\$17,450 from taxation and \$21,725 from the Ambulance revolving account); seconded by Bonnie. All in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$6,000 from the requested budget.

### Cemetery

Expenditures for the Cemetery Department were 27.3% of the overall budget through October, consequently, the Budget Committee could not justify approving the requested amount for wages.

Bonnie made a motion to approve the Cemetery budget total at \$10,050 (\$11,050 from taxation minus \$1,000 gross basis); seconded by Sandy. Ed abstained from voting. Remaining members in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$1,200 from the requested budget.

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### Emergency Management

Sandy made a motion to approve the Emergency Management budget total at \$600; seconded by Bonnie. All in favor. The grand total was approved as requested.

### Fire Department

The majority of reduction in the Fire Department's budget was in equipment, and repairs. A firefighter's gear was included in the equipment line item creating an over budget situation. However, going forward a new line item for gear/clothing has been added to the budget (\$12,000) making it feasible to reduce the equipment line item. Similarly, a rare situation occurred with the garage bay door also creating overspending in repairs. Other minor adjustments were made in the following line items: fuel/vehicle, heating fuel, and utilities/electric.

Ed made a motion to approve the Fire Department budget total at \$46,850; seconded by Bonnie. All in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$5,800 from the requested budget.

### Fire Warden

Ed made a motion to approve the Fire Warden budget total at \$550; seconded by Bonnie. All in favor. The grand total was approved as requested.

### Highway

Multiple line items were reduced in this budget.

Sandy made a motion to approve the Highway Department budget total at \$473,800; seconded by Catherine. Jennie abstained from voting. Remaining members in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$82,700 from the requested budget.

### Library

Minor line item changes included a reduction of \$500 in heating fuel, and a reduction of \$200 in utilities/electric. YTD expenditures in each of these categories respectively reflected 44.4% and 28.2% of the budgeted amounts.

Catherine made a motion to approve the Library budget total at \$20,400 (\$21,400 from taxation minus \$1,000 gross basis); seconded by Sandy. All in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$700 from the requested budget.

### Parks & Recreation

Bonnie made a motion to approve the Parks & Recreation budget total at \$4,500; seconded by Sandy. Ed abstained from voting. Remaining members in favor. The grand total was approved as requested.

### Planning Board

Jennie made a motion to approve the Planning Board budget total at \$200; seconded by Bonnie. All in favor. The grand total was approved as requested.

### Police

Discussion on this budget revolved around fuel, retirement, and wages. The largest adjustment was in wages (-\$9,000). Other line items affected by reductions included fuel and retirement town paid.

Bonnie made a motion to approve the Police budget total at \$198,937; seconded by Jennie. Catherine opposed. Remaining members in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$16,194 from the requested budget.

### Recycle Center

A significant reduction in hauling fees/fuel is due to the reallocation of hauling fees to the wage line item. This did not impact the wage request amount. The department manager is currently studying for his CDL which will reduce hauling fees in the future. On the other hand, the repairs/supplies/miscellaneous line was increased.

Catherine made a motion to approve the Recycle Center budget total at \$116,400; seconded by Ed. All in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$1,700 from the requested budget.

### Supervisors of the Checklist

The reduction in the Supervisors' budget is based on computer support for their new computer being included with the purchase for the first year.

Sandy made a motion to approve the Supervisors of the Checklist budget total at \$2,714; seconded by Ed. All in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$1,150 from the requested budget.

### Tax Collector

Sandy made a motion to approve the Tax Collector budget total at \$19,000 (\$15,500 from taxation plus lien fees \$3,500); seconded by Jennie. Bonnie abstained from voting. Remaining members in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$300 from the requested budget.

### Town Clerk

Jennie made a motion to approve the Town Clerk budget total at \$45,640 (\$23,840 plus \$21,800 gross basis); seconded by Sandy. Bonnie abstained from voting. Remaining members in favor. The grand total was approved as requested.

### Welfare

Bonnie made a motion to approve the Welfare budget total at \$15,550; seconded by Jennie. All in favor. The grand total reflects an overall reduction of \$250 from the requested budget.

Department managers will have an opportunity to discuss changes to their budgets if they so choose at the Budget Committee Appeal Meeting (date to be determined).

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Sandy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25pm; seconded by Ed. All in favor.

**Notable Dates:**

Budget Appeal Meeting - TBD

Budget Hearing Notice – *must be posted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in January (January 9, 2024)*

Budget Hearing – *on or before the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in January for a March annual meeting (Tuesday, January 16, 2024 Deadline)*

Deliberative Session – *between the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday following the last Monday in January (Saturday, February 3, 2024 – Saturday, February 10, 2024)*

Election – Tuesday, March 12, 2024

**Next Meeting Date: Thursday, November 16, 2023 @ 6:30pm Town Office**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandy Griffin