

**Members present:** Ed Grinley (Chair), Catherine Mulholland, and Jennie Joyce (Select Board ex-officio)

**Members absent:** Pam Curran

**Also present:** Cindy Kudlik (minute taker), Tina Pope, RoseAnne Kramer, Natalie Kocurec, Steve Kudlik, Steve Darrow

Meeting called to order by Ed Grinley at 18:15.

Catherine moved to accept the December 20, 2018 minutes; Jennie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Money warrant articles were reviewed for recommendation.

**Article #3** - \$119,628 non-lapsing 5 year appropriation – Catherine moved to recommend, Jennie seconded; motion passed. **Budget Committee recommends**

**Article #4** - \$40,000 for paving - Catherine moved to recommend, Jennie seconded; motion passed. **Budget Committee recommends**

**Article #5** - \$35,000 for Highway Department Capital Reserve - Catherine moved to recommend, Jennie seconded; motion passed. **Budget Committee recommends**

**Article #6** - \$25,000 for Library Capital Reserve – Jennie moved to recommend, Ed seconded; motion passed with 2 for, 1 opposed. **Budget Committee recommends 2-1**

**Article #7** - \$20,000 for Bridge Capital Reserve Fund - Wild Meadow will be done in 2020, Prescott Hill next. Catherine moved to recommend, Jennie seconded; motion passed. **Budget Committee recommends**

**Article #8** - \$20,000 for Roll-Off Truck Capital Reserve – The current one is expected to last maybe 3 more years, a new one runs about \$225,000. There is a deal in the works right now with Reed Trucking to purchase a used one just traded in from Charlestown for \$85,000. Jennie moved to recommend, Catherine seconded; motion passed. **Budget Committee recommends**

**Article #9** - \$20,000 for Fire Department Apparatus Capital Reserve - Catherine moved to recommend, Jennie seconded; motion passed. **Budget Committee recommends**

**Article #10** - \$9,000 for New Police Cruiser Capital Reserve - Catherine moved to recommend, Jennie seconded; motion passed. **Budget Committee recommends**

**Article #11** - \$5,000 for Town Hall Repairs Capital Reserve - Catherine moved to recommend, Jennie seconded; motion passed. **Budget Committee recommends**

**Article #12** - \$4,200 for computer system with CAD/GIS software – Concerns expressed as to where the computer would reside, how much John Babiarz expects to be paid per hour to input data for FEMA, why FEMA money isn't being used to purchase, and whether or not this had been part of the original hazard mitigation plan proposal. Jennie moved to recommend, there was no second; motion failed. **Budget Committee does NOT recommend.**

**Article #13** - \$3,000 for restoration of Town historical records – Jennie moved to recommend, Ed seconded; motion passed with 2 for, 1 opposed. **Budget Committee recommends 2-1**

**Article #14** – to increase Selectmen stipends from \$2,000 to \$3,500 – The Selectmen stipend has been the same since 1989. After much discussion, Catherine reluctantly moved to recommend; vote was tied at 1 for, 1 opposed and 1 abstained. After further discussion Jennie changed her vote from abstain to yes; motion passed with 2 for, 1 opposed. **Budget Committee recommends 2-1**

**Article #15** – to place \$75 in perpetual care trust funds for all lots sold in Pine Grove Cemetery – Currently \$50 goes for perpetual care and \$25 is kept in the general fund. Jennie moved to recommend, Ed seconded; motion passed with 2 for, 1 opposed. **Budget Committee recommends 2-1**

**Article #16** – to change the purpose of the Recreation Field Shelter Capital Reserve Fund to become the Municipal Complex Capital Reserve Fund – there is about \$40,000 in this fund right now, but it's not needed for the original intent. Selectmen would be agents to expend, which Steve Darrow suggested it might be better to remove so there must be a plan before money can be spent. Catherine moved to recommend, Jennie seconded. motion passed with 2 for, 1 opposed. **Budget Committee recommends 2-1**

Meeting suspended from 19:15 to 21:10 for a public hearing.

### **Budgets Public Hearing**

Ed opened the hearing at 19:15 with an explanation of some of the budget increases for 2019. In the Selectmen's budget FICA is up because wages are higher, legal is because of current lawsuits the town is involved in and reappraisal is up because of the utility lawsuit costs. Fire and Ambulance are up \$3,450 each due to increased dispatch fees. Highway is up because the Selectmen felt hourly pay needed to increase to get and keep good employees. Ed then opened the floor to questions from the public.

Steve Kudlik commented that he sees FEMA expenses in several different department budgets and wonders why we are spending so much and are we getting any of it back? Ed responded that the budget committee didn't recommend article 12 because when an emergency is declared, Bobby applies for FEMA money and when it's approved he has to take care of whatever projects were applied for and any remaining money can be spent however he likes. Steve stated that at the last GVFD meeting there was some discussion about the town being denied some FEMA money because we'd hit some kind of threshold. Ed replied that again, this is why they don't recommend article 12 because there should be extra FEMA money to cover that computer. There was also some discussion about John Babiarz expecting to be paid \$15 per hour to do FEMA projects and that coming from FEMA money, not the taxpayers.

Catherine Mulholland asked if the Selectmen considered offering better insurance for town employees, such as a family plan instead of just single coverage. Steve Darrow stated it is quite expensive and they did talk to the insurance company but the cost would nearly double for +1 and would be even more to include kids. RosaAnne Kramer asked what other towns give their employees and Steve replied that he wasn't sure but thinks maybe Canaan does offer family plans. Ed stated that at this time employees in town aren't interested in paying extra for family plans. The Select Board doesn't feel it's prudent right now.

Steve Kudlik asked if the first warrant article discussed this evening (article 3) is about the insurance settlement for the fire department heating system that was allegedly going to cease functioning a few years ago. Ed affirmed that it is.

There was a very lengthy discussion then about the library budget and what had transpired since the trustees last met with the budget committee. The trustees had met and decided to make purchases to spend the rest of the 2018 budget, some items they hadn't intended to purchase yet. One bill for \$129 was turned in after the books were closed for the year so it will be applied to the 2019 budget. Ed

stated that someone from the library had previously stated they don't see utility costs but Sue does give them that printout every month. Tina Pope stated that they do get it, but December is still just a guesstimate for what those bills are as they're not out before budgets are done. Ed explained that if a bill comes due in late December but that department doesn't have money left in the budget to cover it she will apply it to the following year. Tina Pope stated that the last time they met with the budget committee they were told to spend their 2018 budget and they did. She asked if the committee could now see that they do need that much money. Ed responded that they are required to spend the budgeted amount, but they spent money on things they didn't need until 2019. Natalie Kocurec said they bought things that had been on the wishlist for a long time. Jennie explained that when you raise and appropriate funds, that is what you are expected to spend. She also stated that regarding the adjusted gross basis amount, if they got a \$1,000 donation for the roof, they need to spend \$1,000 to fix the roof. Now they are saying they want to save it for future use, but if it was donated for a specific purpose it needs to be spent on what it was understood to be needed for. She asked if the roof was going to be repaired now or not. Tina Pope responded that the materials have been purchased and that the library trustees had understood in the past that the gross was a buffer in case the overspent the town portion. Now that they understand they have to spend it, they don't want to spend what they can't afford. Catherine asked why the library trustees aren't taking the income from the trust funds each year as they are supposed to and also where they are taking the \$1000 or \$3000 for gross basis from. She went on to say that if it's just arbitrary it needs to be defined; there is about \$200 in trust fund income that was intended to be used to purchase books every year. The media line item should be offset by income from that. Ed pointed out that Cindy had given them the form at the last meeting to fill out and turn in to the trustees of the trust funds to get those earnings. The library trustees asked if they could fill out the form and just ask for the interest without knowing the exact amount and also if they could still submit for last year and if it should be added to the gross basis amount. Catherine responded that they could submit the form at any time without an exact amount, just asking for all interest available, and it would be remitted to them. Roseanne responded that they would begin doing that annually now. Ed asked how the roof was going to be done since they want to change the gross basis from \$3,000 to \$1,000. Tina Pope responded again that they do have the materials and are lining up volunteers to do the work. Knowing the budget committee was reconsidering the budget they wanted to hold the \$1,000 donation to hopefully double it for future use. Ed asked what happened to the other \$2,000 originally proposed to be part of the gross basis. Tina responded that \$1,000 was set aside and another \$1,000 they just decided not to include. Catherine asked again where the money comes from. Is it interest? Ed responded that it is their account that gets income from different sources like book sales. He asked the library trustees how much money they had in that account right now and Natalie replied that there is about \$4,120 in checking plus CD's. Steve Kudlik said, "You want the taxpayers to foot the bill for a 33% increase but you're hanging on to money in savings. How is the library budget increases so much every year when highway, fire, etc. don't need that much more money every year?" Tina responded that \$700 additional last year was for books, \$500 of this year's increase if for shoveling they hadn't previously been responsible for. As for the media increase, they hadn't been buying much in the past and there's also an increase in wages for staff meetings. Catherine asked if the wages increase is due to higher pay or more hours worked. Tina responded that it was more hours. Ed pointed out that at their last meeting they discussed higher wages after March and the town voted against increasing wages in the past. The trustees clarified that Deb Clough is being paid \$13 per hour during the transition to a new director. Roseanne stated that she had expressed displeasure with the rate for the new director but the other trustees didn't agree with her. It might be revisited in March, but it's still 2 against 1. The new director won't get paid as much as Deb did because she lacks experience. Ed asked if the new director is being paid less why the wages line item isn't lower. Jennie asked when it was the librarian became a director. Roseanne responded that a librarian would just sit and take care of the books and different things in the library but a director is expected to do everything. Cindy Kudlik asked what it is the library trustees are expected to do if the director is doing everything. Tina replied that there is some back and forth, some shared duties. Jennie stated that there are more people working at the library now than there ever was before. Steve Kudlik asked if there are any volunteers at the library any more and how they need 3 employees when the library is only open 12 hours a week. Tina replied that there are volunteers but the state requires a paid librarian. Steve asked why they couldn't pay them minimum

wage. Roseanne pointed out that recycle center employees get \$12 an hour. Steve responded that they don't need to pay them that much over minimum. Tina stated that they don't have people interested in working for that kind of money. Roseann asked if that isn't just the library trustees business to which Steve replied that if they want the taxpayers to fund it, it is our business. Ed stated that Steve's right, every year the library trustees come in asking for another 3 or 4 thousand dollars and Ed keeps telling them to give the people a break; every year it's more, more, more. Steve Kudlik stated that he loves the concept of a new library and he donates to them all the time, but this constant increase every single year is ridiculous. There are guys up all night plowing the roads and you're handing out books for 12 hours a week. Tina stated that it's hard to know what's right when they take their budget to the Selectmen and they say it's good and pass it on to the budget committee. Jennie replied that they don't ok it, they pass it on because there's nothing much they can say about it and it's not their job to tear it apart; that's what the budget committee does. Ed stated that there are many in town that put in more hours than the library without getting paid. He said that line by line there are items in the budget they don't spend the whole amount on but they keep asking for more. Catherine stated that if they really wanted a larger budget they should spend what they have. She asked what was spent last year. Ed responded that they spent right up to the full amount since they last met with them and some of that could have been spent next year. Tina pointed out that in the media line item there are many recurring costs. Jennie pointed out that we all have homes, mortgages, lights, things we have to budget for and that's what you have to do is live within your budget. Roseanne asked if they could adjust their budget proposal again by reducing media by \$500 to \$1,400 and professional development from \$500 to \$135 which brings the bottom line to \$15,959. Ed replied that the committee could not make decisions during the public hearing, but could when it's over and the meeting reconvenes. He also stated that although they hadn't discussed it in previous meetings, there is money in a capital reserve account that could cover the roof repair. Rosaenne stated that they ask for that money every year but the trustees of the trust fund won't give it to them for the new library. Catherine responded that they did approve paying for the new ramp. Ed told them there had been 2 capital reserve accounts but they were combined and repurposed so the money could be used for both repairs and needs for the current library. Steve Kudlik pointed out that even with the \$1,000 decrease Roseanne suggested it is still a 26% increase over last year and no one is getting that kind of raises.

Seeing no more questions, Ed closed the public hearing at 21:10 and resumed the meeting.

## **Budgets Reviewed**

*Supervisor's of the Checklist* – Ed made some adjustments due to math errors and to reduced the number of anticipated hours for deliberative session from 12 to 5, lowering the wages line item from \$1,685 to \$1,099. Jennie moved to approve the budget at \$1,582.65, Catherine seconded; motion passed unanimously.

*Library Trustees* – A revised proposed budget had been submitted by the trustees via email for \$17,959, with \$16,959 coming from taxes and \$1,000 being gross basis from the revolving account. After much discussion with Tina Pope, RoseAnne Kramer and Natalie Kocurec during the public hearing, Jennie moved to approve the budget at \$14,814. The motion did not receive a second. Jennie stated that with all the money spent at the end of 2018 for media, there was no need for that line item to increase over last year. Catherine moved to approve the budget at \$15,314; Jennie seconded. Ed stated that he spoke to the attorney and the budget committee can set the gross basis at the \$3,000 as originally proposed. Catherine suggested \$1,500 for gross basis would be appropriate with the interest they've not used from trust funds. Her figures allow for the same bottom line budget approved last year with the additional \$500 for shoveling added in, with \$500 less coming from the revolving account. \$13,814 from taxes, \$1,500 gross basis, for a total of \$15,314. Motion passed unanimously.

The Budget Committee will not meet again before the deliberative session on February 9<sup>th</sup> at Mill Brook Church.

Jennie moved to adjourn at 21:23; Catherine seconded. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Kudlik