

Approved

**Grafton Budget Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 11, 2018**

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

**Also present:** Cindy Kudlik (minute taker), Bob Bassett, Russell Poitras, Maureen O'Reilly and Steve Darrow

Meeting called to order by Ed Grinley at 12:12.

Ed noted two corrections to be made to the October 25<sup>th</sup> minutes under the Highway Department section: the calcium chloride figure should be \$2586, not \$5386; the mention of the block grant should be removed as that is not part of the budget. Catherine moved to accept the October 25, 2018 minutes as corrected; Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Budgets Reviewed**

Bob Bassett came before the board to discuss the Recycle Center and Highway Department budgets discussed by the committee on 10/25. He asked that the committee reconsider his proposed budgets and not level fund them.

He explained that dumping fees are up and over budget this year because there is more garbage to haul. After some discussion Catherine moved to set the Recycle Center budget at \$87,000; Jennie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Highway Department issues discussed were fuel, chloride, paving and patching, salt, sand, FEMA money, equipment and wages. He explained that he always gets Select Board approval for any major expenditure and that they are supportive of raising wages for new employees in order to be competitive with other towns and keep good workers. He asked the Selectmen for warrant articles to top off Orange Pond Road, do other paving and also for the Equipment Capital Reserve. There is one year left after March for the two vehicles on lease right now and he will need a new grader soon. There was no FEMA money encumbered from the previous year. He said he puts calcium chloride on the big hills as much as he can and also where it's requested. Catherine moved to set the Highway Department budget at \$430,000; Jennie seconded. Motion passed with 3 votes; Pam abstained.

Russell asked about moving money not spent by one department to another to pay off the equipment leases. He was told the Selectmen have the authority to do that and it was suggested he and Bobby make an appointment to talk to them about that at their next meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup>. The Budget Committee can readjust this budget after that meeting if needed.

Ed noted that the Supervisors of the Checklist did resubmit their budget on the proper form and everyone now has a copy.

*Police Dept:* Down \$49 from last year; from \$192,793 to \$192,744. There was a lengthy discussion in which the following topics were brought up:

- Dispatch fees in his budget went down 30% despite him taking the bulk of the Hanover Dispatch increases for Police, Fire and Ambulance. Of the \$22,473 being charged, he has budgeted for \$13,200 of that, leaving about \$4650 each for the other two departments to pay.
- A part time officer was just hired that may lead to full time before the end of the year.
- Ed asked what was included in the Capital Expenditures line item. Russell explained that it is for emergency expenses. This year he had a computer and a printer that needed replacing. There was also some dedicated equipment required to switch over to Hanover Dispatch. Next year he will need a portable radio and possibly some other equipment for the new officer.
- Uniforms went up because last year he expected to hire an officer that had most of what is needed.
- Catherine suggested that the Police Chief wages should also increase. Russell said the average part time Police Chief in towns similar to ours is over \$58,000.

Pam moved to accept the Police Department budget as submitted; Jennie seconded. Motion passed with 3 votes; Catherine abstained.

*Ambulance Dept:* Revisited due to a requested increase in Dispatch Fees of an additional \$3,450 added to the \$3,000 originally submitted for a total of \$6,450. Ed asked the 2 Select Board members in attendance how Dotti Ernst was receiving incentive stipends when she was not a member of the GVA. He said she was paid \$1646.05 in August but did not recertify until September. Steve Darrow stated that he agrees that the stipend numbers and billing need more oversight. He also asked why only 4 or 5 members were paid, but not any others and how also many EMTs are in the department. It was also suggested that it may be illegal to take money out of the revolving account to pay stipends or incentive pay when they are over budget. The Canaan FAST squad may be dissolving at the end of the year; Jennie will check on the contract. Jennie moved to increase the budget to include the additional dispatch fees for a total of \$47,450 with \$28,450 coming from the taxpayers and the remaining \$19,000 from the revolving account; Pam seconded. Motion passed with 3 votes; Catherine abstained.

*Fire Warden:* Requested \$1,000 which is the same as 2018. Catherine moved to accept the budget as requested; Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

*Emergency Management:* Up \$20 from last year, from \$100 to \$120. Ed noted they are \$14 over budget this year. Pam moved to approve the budget as submitted for \$120; Jennie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

*Volunteer Fire Department:* Up \$6834 from last year, from \$22,000 to \$28,834. Jennie moved to level fund them but add the dispatch fee increase to total \$25,450; Catherine seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Ed asked Cindy to send a letter to John Babiarz letting him know all three budgets he submitted need to be submitted on the form Sue gave him.

*Selectmen Budget:* Up \$20,680 from last year, from \$303,353 to \$324,033.

- Insurance is up from \$98,574 to \$102,727
- Legal is up from \$20,000 to \$25,000. The Peaceful Assembly Church case will be in court in February and Merle Kenyon is suing over the Doten Lane property he bought at Town Auction a few years back that the town already paid several thousand dollars to help clear the title.
- Reappraisal is up from \$16,320 to \$22,320.

Pam moved to accept the budget as submitted; Catherine seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

*Welfare:* Requested \$20,000 which is the same as last year. Maureen O'Reilly stated that she was given a redacted copy and feels the Welfare Director is overspending in many areas and questions what's been spent on fuel, gas and food. After little discussion Catherine moved to accept the budget as submitted; Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

*Library Budget:* Up \$5345 from last year, from \$14,814 (\$12,814 from taxes & \$2,000 gross basis) to \$17,159

From taxes & \$3,000 gross basis). Ed suggests deleting the \$200 laptop line item because the Library Trustees had said they would buy that with their funds, lowering the Media line item \$100 and Wages by \$2,700. Pam moved to change the budget as suggested for a total of \$17,159 (\$14,159 from taxes, \$3,000 gross basis); Catherine seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Next meeting will be December 20, 2018 at ~~noon~~ 6pm at the Town Office.**

Jennie moved to adjourned the meeting at 15:25; Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Kudlik