

*Town of Grafton, New Hampshire
Budget Committee
Minutes of November 1, 2017
(approved)*

Present: Ed Grinley, Chair; Pam Curran, Catherine Mulholland, Jennie Joyce (Select Board ex officio), and Sandi Pierson (clerical).

Others present: Maureen O'Reilly, Adam Franz, Roseanne Kramer, John Babiarz, and Tina Pope.

Meeting opened at 6:00 PM.

Minutes: The minutes of October 18, 2017 were unanimously approved as submitted.

Highway Department: Pam brought a number of concerns and questions before the Committee regarding the Highway Department budget of \$394,011 which was approved on October 18 after meeting with the road agent.

- Pam said that the request from the Select Board was to submit a “zero-based’ budget which she did not feel the road agent did. Ed said that the budget was pretty much level funded from 2017 except for the retirement line item. Pam said she would prefer to see details for each line item as done in the library and ambulance budget requests. Jennie said the letter sent to the department heads was a standard form that has been sent out by the Administrative Assistant for a number of years and she (Jennie) did not realize it requested a zero-based budget. Catherine said she felt the road agent has always been conscientious and responsible with his budget as a whole and she felt confident that approving his request as submitted was acceptable.
- Pam said she would like clarification that three years ago it was stated the town had eleven miles of paved road now it is said to have fourteen.
- Pam questioned why sand and gravel was going up by \$5000. Jennie said the price of sand has increased.
- Pam questioned what the amount of time is that the highway department is working at the recycling center. Ed recapped that Bob Bassett said the metal management was about ½ hour twice a week and that the highway department continues to do chores that have been historically done by them. He said that they cannot go back and forth getting paid between budgets due to the retirement being only in the highway budget.
- Pam questioned why there is money in the budget and a warrant article for paving considering the road agent said there were no projects planned for 2018. Jennie said that an amount of annual paving is a customary procedure and that the road agent meant there were no 2018 projects on the highway agenda such as the ones recently done on Height of Land and the Grafton Pond area.
- After discussion, Ed said he would invite the road agent to another Budget Committee for clarifications on Pam’s questions.

Ambulance: EMT John Babiarz came before the Committee on behalf of the Grafton Ambulance to discuss their budget request of \$44,000. The gross budgeting formula is \$25,000 coming from the town and \$19,000 from the ambulance revolving account. John said he was optimistic that they were getting two new members and explained the incentive protocols and training expenditure agreement. The prospective EMT pays for their training up front and gets reimbursed as they demonstrate their willingness to respond to calls. John clarified that “incentives” do not mean cash stipends but, instead, benefits such as a new department shirt or med bag. John felt that if they had a minimum of eight members who responded on a regular basis, the ambulance department could proceed without the contract with Canaan and basically go back to the system of mutual aid. John went through the line items with the Committee and clarified their objectives. Ed asked why they were requesting \$25,000 for Canaan call coverage when the contract signed by the Select Board was for \$24,000. John said he was unsure and will check it out.

Answering a question from Ed, John said the department has not requested funds from the Auxiliary since the purchase of the \$20,000 cardiac monitor. He said they will be asking them to pay for an upgrade to the monitor and possible for an electronic BP cuff if the present one cannot be repaired. John said that equipment from the Auxiliary is not needed every year.

On behalf of the Committee, Ed thanked John, Dottie Ernst, and Kathy Lund for their continuing service on the department and wished them the best in 2018.

Jennie motioned to approve the budget request of \$44,000 with \$25,000 coming from the municipal budget and \$19,000 from the ambulance revolving account. Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.

Town Clerk: The Committee revisited the budget request for the Town Clerk for \$37,250 submitted by Bonnie Haubrich. After discussion, Jennie motioned to accept the budget as submitted. Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.

Tax Collector: The Committee revisited the budget request for the Tax Collector for \$18,400. Ed explained that the 2017 expenditure for lien processing fees was zero dollars to date because the expense has not yet been submitted by the Tax Collector. After discussion, Jennie motioned to accept the budget as submitted. Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.

Library: Library Trustees Adam Franz, Tina Pope, and Roseanne Kramer came before the Committee to discuss their budget request of \$20,818, an increase of \$6,704 over the 2017 appropriation of \$14,114. The gross budgeting basis for 2018 was requested as \$18,818 from the town and \$2000 from library funds. The Select Board had approved the budget at \$14,819 which is an across-the-board 5% increase.

Adam explained the requested increases in media and programs. He said that they did not spend the full 2017 amounts in those line items because the money needed to be shifted into other categories. Ed and Adam disagreed on the increase of the line item that included the porta-potty clean-out. Adam maintained that it should be cleaned out monthly; Ed disagreed. Adam gave an

overview of the community outreach programs and the attendance of professional development conferences.

Adam itemized the wage line item which incorporated the new wage scales and included three additional hours which is slated to be used for Grafton enrolling in the State-wide inter-library loan program. Adam said that the present wage scales are \$15 an hour for the Library Director and \$12 an hour for the assistant. Ed asked Adam why the Trustees increased the wage scales to those rates after the townspeople voted the down the warrant article that requested them. (The Select Board and Budget Committee had recommended an overall municipal budget that included a 5% raised for all non-elected employees.) Adam said that wage scales were only a portion of the warrant article and that the vote may have been skewed by the snowstorm on the day of voting. He said that the Trustees did what they felt was right and had the jurisdiction to do so. Roseanne said that when the Trustees were discussing wages, they did not take into account that the warrant article was voted down. Adam maintained that having the library employees work without pay (as volunteers) is against DOL labor rules. Adam said that the current 2017 figures on wage payments are lower because the raised did not go into effect until late March and the figure does not include October, November, or December.

After discussion, Pam said that the Committee needs more time to think about the budget. Ed agreed. Adam encouraged the Committee to call him if they have further questions.

Meeting adjourned 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandi Pierson