

**JOINT SESSION  
BOARD OF SELECTMAN AND BUDGET COMMITTEES  
2022 BUDGET REVIEW  
NOVEMBER 18, 2021**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Board of Selectman Committee:** Claudine Burnham (Chair), Andrew Rawson, Matt Morrill

**Budget Committee:** Humphrey Williams (Chair), Claudine Burnham, Peg Hurd, Larry Brown, Bob Carrier, Mike Beaulieu, Laura Turgeon, Lisa Gautreau

**Staff:** Chris Jacobs, Town Administrator

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Claudine Burnham welcomed everyone to the November 18<sup>th</sup> BOS / Budget Joint Meeting.

**Budget Committee Roll Call to open the meeting:** Larry Brown – Yes, Claudine Burnham – Yes, Bob Carrier – Yes, Mike Beaulieu – Yes, Laura Turgeon – Yes, Lisa Gautreau – Yes, Peg Hurd – Yes, Humphrey Williams – Yes.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Williams explained the purpose of the meeting was to continue the review of the proposed 2022 Town Operating Budget. Mr. Williams had met previously with the Town Administrator to make preliminary budget adjustments. He wanted to assure the department heads regarding the salary. He understands during the preliminary discussions department heads might feel restricted if not all the positions are filled; for budgeting, it's important to look at hiring timelines. He stressed the importance of presenting a sound fiscal budget that will be good for the taxpayers and not cripple the town nor the departments. While it's important to look at the history it's more important to have the right budget. Mr. Jacobs explained the charge from the board was to bring forth a budget at, or below, last year's budget. He found several contracts / services that had been double entered. He believes he has developed a very good budget that does not tie department head's hands but is fiscally responsible.

**Continued Review 2022 Town Operating Budget:**

**1.) Town Administrator:** Mr. Jacobs had prepared a document which outlined adjustments he had made to the 2022 Budget and indicated areas which could provide additional savings including the contracted services line (\$80,000 decrease). Mr. Williams opened the discussion and asked if anyone had additional recommendations or adjustments to add. Mr. Carrier questioned the training line-item. He had reviewed the history and said since the average yearly expenditure was ~\$531, he recommended dropping the amount to \$600. Mr. Jacobs disagreed with the recommendation since there are new employees in the positions that may require additional training, especially around welfare. Mr. Beaulieu agreed the number of new employees is higher than previous. Mr. Williams said there may be potential savings with other areas including maintenance line-item (equipment) which possibly could be reduced. He recommended reducing this line-item to \$1,000 (from \$2,000). Ms.

**SCANNED**

Turgeon agreed with the recommendation. Ms. Hurd questioned the overall bottom line of the budget. The 2022 proposed budget is \$4,725,754 vs. \$4,766,722 (default) which is ~\$41,000 under the default.

Mr. Carrier also questioned the postage line-item. Historically this line-item has been very complex with the average expended ~\$988 – the proposed budget is \$2064 (Mr. Carrier recommended \$800). Mr. Williams explained last year the postage had been re-adjusted. Mr. Jacobs requested this be held until the end of the budget discussions as this line-item could be combined from all other department lines and combined into one line. This could also be applied to the supplies line-item. He also explained all the postage lines for the 2021 budget was ~\$11,200. To date (for ten months) the postage expenditure is \$6,830 and projected for the year is ~\$8,500. Overall postage proposed is \$11,310. It was recommended to drop this to \$10,046.

Mr. Carrier questioned the equipment purchase line-item under TA. Historically the average expenditure was ~\$545 and he recommended this line be reduced to \$1500 (from \$1900). Ms. Turgeon stated the cost of goods has really increased which could impact this line. Mr. Jacobs questioned what the board is really looking for regarding the budget. Mr. Williams said they are not nit-picking all the items just looking to the history to help determine what has typically been expended with the lines. Mr. Carrier explained he is trying to accurately reflect what has happened. Mr. Williams explained any recommendations to reduce line-items is not personal. Mr. Jacobs indicated he has great respect for Mr. Carrier and the amount of time he has taken to review the budget; however, he (Mr. Jacobs) has spent a large amount of time to put this budget together. He also indicated with the bigger picture; they will be meeting soon with the state to set the tax rate. The unassigned fund balance which typically is made up of the 10-15% not spent is used to help keep the tax rate down. He believes he has met the goal of bringing in a budget which is less than last year's. He has already done this by reviewing the budget and cutting the \$50 and \$100's from the various line-items. Mr. Williams explained their overall purpose is not to "nickel and dime". However, Budget committee members believe there are still potential savings to be found. Mr. Jacobs indicated with the postage line; he will still buy postage in order to provide certain necessary functions.

**Town Clerk / Tax Collector:** From Mr. Jacob's memorandum provided, he explained there were two adjustments he had made to the salary line-items. (??)

Mr. Williams recommended a proposed change to the training line-item; the proposed budget \$1,720. Mr. Rawson reminded everyone the current Tax Collector will be ending their employment in early 2022 and they should anticipate the new hire will need training. Mr. Williams recommended keeping the line at \$500 (historically the average expended is \$350). Both Ms. Gautreau and Ms. Hurd believed the \$1700 to be a reasonable amount. While Mr. Beaulieu recommended \$900, the majority of the committee members agreed to keep the amount at \$1700.

**Treasurer:** The Budget Committee recommended the amount for travel be reduced to \$1800 (from proposed \$2200).

**Supervisors of the Checklist:** No changes recommended.

**Moderator:** There was one change recommended to decrease the election official's line-item from \$4,086 to \$3,000. Mr. Jacobs stated the reason for the increase is to have an extra election added to the budget in case it be scheduled.

**Budget Committee:** Based on 20 scheduled meetings, decrease from \$1650 to \$1500.

**Trustees of the Trust Fund:** There were no recommended changes.

**Assessing:** There are potential savings of \$40,000 in this area due to the contract assessor line-item. As Mr. Jacob's memorandum explained, the town will encumber existing funds to pay for the contract assessor for FY2022, the contract amount has dropped from \$42K annually to less than \$20K, the remaining funds are due to match contracted services previously carried in line 393.

**Government Buildings:** Salary line-item is based on 3 FT positions. It was noted the department head typically figures OT into the salary line (going forward, have straight salary for FT/PT using the pay plan and have an OT line for those departments who use OT). A question was asked concerning the \$6,500 for ball field maintenance? Is this under contract services? Mr. Williams is not suggesting this be cut, he is requesting additional information. Mr. Jacobs will get further information. Mr. Jacobs indicated that some Highway items currently under the contract maintenance should probably be put under a different line-item.

**Cemetery:** Mr. Williams explained last year's budget was increased due to a request. Based on history the requested increases do not align with the history of expenditures. It's also projected that expenditures from this year's budget will be approximately \$5,000. Mr. Jacobs explained Mr. Katwick will be attending the BOS meeting in December to provide further clarifications. Mr. Rawson also reminded everyone that Mr. Katwick will be retiring at the end of 2023, so a replacement will need to be found to fill that position.

**Police:** Adjustments in the salary line-items were made.

**Fire:** Adjustments have been added. Mr. Williams suggested a potential savings in training due to historically this line-item has typically not been fully expended. Mr. Rawson reminded committee members with new hires, they will need training and recommended keeping the training at the proposed amount. Regarding electric, decreasing the amount to \$14,000 will still cover the costs. Ms. Hurd stated the Fire Chief always provides a very conservative budget and recommended keeping it as is. Mr. Rawson indicated he is OK with decreasing the electric, however encouraged all else to remain the same. Ms. Gautreau said she just would like to see accuracy in the budgets.

**Planning and Code:** The salary line-item was adjusted to match the new hire. The GIS software had been listed at \$4,000; the actual number should be \$2,400. The Professional Services line indicates a large increase; Mr. Jacobs explained this is primarily due to rejoining the Strafford Regional Planning. While it appears, this may be expensive to join, it's very important to the town and provides many benefits.

**Planning Board:** Mr. Jacobs explained the adjustments to this area including a reduction in the training line-item.

**Zoning Board of Adjustment:** There were no changes recommended.

**Conservation Commission:** Mr. Jacobs explained the proposed \$1000 to the legal defense fund which would be used for professional services for defense against any legal action taken.

**Emergency Management:** Mr. Morrill questioned the electric line-item. Mr. Williams is not sure about this and can ask for additional information.

**Highway Department:** This department is not currently fully staffed with one position still open. Historically the salary lines have included OT (going forward, the OT should be separate from the salary lines). The committee would like additional information regarding the department's plan for OT. Mr. Beaulieu explained the budget is based on the potential of 18 events per year. It was also questioned why the maintenance line was doubled. As explained, the trucks are at the end of the warranty and going forward will cost more to maintain. The department head is working on a plan to incrementally replace the trucks and by 2023, have 4 new trucks. If this is to happen in 2023, it will need to be a

warrant article in 2022. Mr. Morrill said the increase in the maintenance line is in case the warrant article would not pass. Ms. Gautreau does not believe the \$50,000 to be unreasonable; Ms. Turgeon agreed to keep it at the proposed amount. Mr. Jacobs explained he has created a separate line-item for salt which will track the road salt.

**Solid Waste:** The salary line and default can match. There were no other recommended changes.

**Outside Appropriations:** Mr. Rawson has talked with the We Care Food Pantry. Currently there are nearly 175 residents in Milton receiving regular services. He is requesting additional monies (\$1,000 to \$5,000) to increase to We Care.

Mr. Morrill made a motion to raise the amount allotted to We Care Food Pantry from \$4,000 to \$5,000. Mr. Rawson seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

**Welfare:** The welfare salary line-item was adjusted to match the new hire. He also recommended a \$750 adjustment to the final expenses line-item. He explained one has been provided this year.

**Recreation:** There is \$600 in the professional services line-item.

**Library:** Ms. Turgeon recommended the library could apply for E-Rate to help with the monthly invoices for high-speed internet.

**Sewer:** The adjustments have been made to the overall budget with recommendations from Dale Sprague. It was noted the overall average expense in the miscellaneous line-item is high and should be itemized to accurately track expenses. The permits & testing line-item increased because of the new monitoring well. Mr. Rawson stressed the expenses, including increases, are offset by the usage fees. Mr. Morrill asked for clarification on whether they pay public works for property maintenance. Mr. Williams said historically this department averages \$83,000 in expenditures, always spending more than their budget (~118% of overall budget spent). Everyone agreed they would like more accurate breakdowns to understand the department expenditures.

Mr. Williams said this year's budget is based on more information than in previous years.

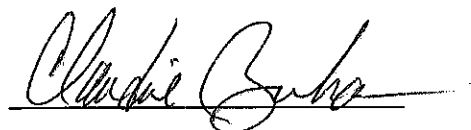
As there were no additional questions nor items for discussion, Mr. Williams, Chair of the Budget Committee, asked for a motion adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hurd motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Mr. Morrill motioned to adjourn. Andrew Rawson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Winslow-Weiss – Budget Committee / BOS Recording Secretary

Given under our hands this 6th day of December, 2021.



Claudine Burnham – Chairman BOS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CB', written over a horizontal line.

Matthew Morrill - Board Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M', written over a horizontal line.

Andy Rawson - Board Member

**END OF MINUTES**

