

Town of Milton
BOARD OF SELECTMAN MEETING
October 18, 2021

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Claudine Burnham (Chair), Andrew Rawson, Matt Morrill

Staff: Chris Jacobs, Town Administrator

Public: Humphrey Williams, Karen Brown, Chief Nick Marique

Claudine Burnham, Chair, opened the public session at 6:00PM.

1.) Pledge of Allegiance: Claudine Burnham, Chair, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.) Public Comment: There were no public comments.

3.) Announcements and Community Calendar:

a.) **Milton Recreation Annual Trunk or Treat Spooktacular is going to be held at the Milton Town Beach on October 23, 2021 from 4-6:00PM.** The announcement and request for volunteers was posted on facebook. Mr. Rawson said this is a fun time for all the kids. They are really looking for volunteers. Volunteers can decorate their trunks. Last year there were ~23 trunkers and are looking to beat that number. Volunteers can contact Mr. Rawson or Ms. Brown, Recreation Director. If you can't be there in person, they are also looking for donations of bags of candy.

4.) NEW Business – Discussion and Possible Actions:

a.) **Appointment of Deb McCormack to the Conversation Commission:**

Ms. McCormack is currently an Alternate on the Conservation Commission. There is now a vacancy due to Ms. Cynthia Wyatt's resignation from the committee. Mr. Rawson stated Ms. McCormack has been a huge asset to the commission and fully supports this appointment.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to accept Ms. Deb McCormack as member of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was accepted.

b.) **Approve a contract to purchase road salt for FY2021 and FY2022:**

Mr. Jacobs explained the process is for the state to bid out road salt usually mid to late September. There is a base tonnage and depending on distance to the town from the shipping point (Portsmouth) determines the actual tonnage amount. There are two quotes: Eastern Materials at \$67/ton and Morton at \$64.13/ton. The road agent is recommending going with Eastern Materials as he feels it is a better product and works better. Mr. Jacobs agreed with his assessment and recommends going with Eastern Materials at a slightly higher cost. Based on last year's approximate usage of 1,200 tons, the cost would be ~\$80,400. Mr. Rawson stated he is fine with using Eastern Materials.

Mr. Rawson made a motion to use Eastern Materials at \$67/ton. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was accepted.

c.) **Report of the Department Heads:**

Recreation Department – Karen Brown: Ms. Brown reported the town will be closing Saturday night until the ice freezes and is safe to be on the ice. Boats continue to be picked up. As mentioned earlier, the Spooktacular is this upcoming weekend. Door-to-door Trick or Treating is Saturday, October 31st from 4-7:00PM. The rain date would be the following night. Fall soccer – there were more than 70 participants. Banquets are scheduled. Overall it was a great turnout. The Senior Luncheon is tomorrow. There were more than 45 people at the bingo days. Senior Thanksgiving is upcoming, and they will begin to accept applications for folks who may need some help.

Fire Department – Chief Nick Marique: During the month of September, they responded to 74 service calls. YTD there have been 707 calls; 66% of those are medically related. October is National Fire Prevention Month. This year's theme is "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety." Captain Behrens was at the elementary school last week and spent about 30 minutes with each class reviewing fire safety tips and seeing the department's ladder truck. Each student was given an activity packet.

They have recently started a new initiative to help with ensuring patient and customer satisfaction. At month end, the department will mail satisfaction surveys to each patient who was transported via a Milton ambulance. The overall goal is to ensure community expectations are met. So far they have received several surveys with all positive reviews and remarks. Since they are only just starting with this new initiative, they are encouraging and welcome all questions and suggestions about the survey.

Last month, the FD was able to fill several vacant leadership positions; Chief Marique is pleased to announce the following:

Captain Jeff Roub to Deputy Chief

Lt Jason Behrens to Captain

Firefighter/Paramedic Alexander Wood to Lieutenant

Paramedic Geoff Greenlaw to EMS Coordinator

Staffing challenges continue not only at Milton but also regionally which are following national trends with shortages of fire and EMS staff. Chief Marique believes Milton is fortunate to have a dedicated core group of part-time employees. However, he stressed there are consequences to this, as part-time employees typically have full-time jobs and availability is sometimes limited. While he has been able to fill the shifts, this has included use of increased overtime or placing additional reliance on a small pool of part-time employees. The overall goal going forward is to incrementally increase the full-time staff which will ensure 24/7 coverage with at least two firefighters & EMTs.

Town Clerk: Michelle Beauchamp – Ms. Burnham read the report submitted.

Ms. Beauchamp thanked Melissa Viel, Deputy Town Clerk & Tax Collector, for the work in her office. She will be greatly missed as she moves on to new her new adventure.

Motor vehicle registrations have increased ~15% over September 2019 and ~10% over September, 2020. We have seen significant increase in the vital record request for the month as well as marriage licenses. Have sold 1,663 transfer station decals to date and issued 1,012 dog licenses with a remaining 343 unlicensed dogs in town. The overall revenue has increased by \$100,000.

Tax Collector: Once the Department of Revenue has set the town's tax rate with the BOS, the second installment of the 2021 Property & Sewer Taxes will be processes & mailed out at least 30 days prior to the due date in December. Tax-payers need to remember it is their responsibility to make sure the Assessing Department has a correct mailing address and their current assessment is correct. As of September 30, 2021, the outstanding 2021 property tax balance was \$292,119 and outstanding 2021 sewer rent balance was \$8,984. The outstanding balance for prior years, 2002-2020, is \$446,265.

5.) OLD Business:

a.) FY2022 Budget Review:

Mr. Humphrey Williams, Chair of the Budget Committee, presented a handout to the BOS. He explained the Budget Committee has begun the review of the 2022 Budget. He thanked the departments for submitting their information and stressed he thinks the department heads, as they work through this process, are doing what they believe to be the right things for their budgets. He also noted that a lot of times, both fear and finance can go hand in hand when determining the yearly budgets. Questions may arise like "Will I have enough to cover all expenses? What happens if I cut the budget and a need arises? What if I don't have enough salary and I get my hires? If I cut the budget, will I get it back again?"

Mr. Williams stressed the Budget Committee can set a budget; it does not, however, set nor control the spending. This done by the BOS. Going forward, the BOS will have to determine what are the needs and what are the wants; determine the encumbered funds; and determine the hires and when those occur.

Looking at recent default budgets vs. expended for some comparisons:

2019 default of \$4,567,383 vs. expended budget of \$4,180,212 (91.5% expended)

2020 default of \$4,527,369 vs. expended budget of \$3,987,530 (88.1% expended)

2021 default of \$4,604,618 vs. approved budget of \$4,600,519 with projected expenditures of \$3,768,874 (projected 81.9% expended which is slightly lower than last year)

Current default budget of \$4,732,916 vs. currently proposed budget of \$4,713,571 (2.5% increase over 2021 approved budget)

If proposed budget is increased 1% vs. 2.5% it would be \$4,646,525 (difference of \$67,046).

There as more than \$67,000 in potential savings.

A key item Mr. Williams pointed out has to do with the \$40,000 Assessing Contract that is not needed because of encumbered dollars from last year's budget. That money was not spent and could be encumbered for next year.

Mr. Williams questioned why the budget would need to be increased this year. By looking through the financial history and trends, and reviewing key items, there are savings that could be utilized to keep the proposed budget the same. Mr. Williams asked the BOS to go through and look at the key items that will ensure savings with minimal impact. He also stressed to the department heads, they are not cutting the number of their existing employees; however, they may have to defer some hirings.

The Budget Committee has already been able to cut ~\$2,300 from some of the smaller budgets by finding areas of saving and keeping any increases to a minimum (this includes from the Budget Committee's budget).

Mr. Rawson questioned if there would be another meeting between the BOS and the Budget Committee for further budget review and discussions. Mr. Williams said they will plan on scheduling a meeting in November.

The BOS began their review of the 2022 budget. Mr. Jacobs explained he approached this by working against the default line using the 2% to run figures to start it shows the budget at ~\$4,713,000 which would be ~\$9,000 below the default. Mr. Jacobs concerned if he would trim the default budget so low, what exactly is too low? At year end, if we only expend 85-90% of the budget, there are still items to be purchased with any savings so as not to burden tax payers in future years. Mr. Jacobs is looking for guidance from the BOS on proceeding and how low to go. Mr. Rawson acknowledge in past years the default budget has not always been accurate. Moving forward, he is hopeful the accuracies increase, and budgets become tighter. Mr. Jacobs agreed and believes this will happen and will be important to work with both the BOS and Budget Committees for discussions. Chief Marique expressed his main concern has to do with staffing issues since a large chunk of money is needed to fill positions. If the budget does not include funding for vacancies and those vacancies are filled, will have to increase in next year's budget as opposed to keeping it level. Historically the town has run into this issue, and he cautioned against this.

The BOS began with the Fire Department Budget since Chief Marique was in attendance. He indicated many line-items have remained the same. In 2020, FD spent \$448,973 against the default budget of \$448,920. In 2021 the approved budget was only ~\$20,000 higher and about the same for this year. The Chief said some of the issues when putting money in the budget for staffing include 1.) converting PT to FT; and, 2.) the burden on the revolving fund. He can add to the PT line incrementally each year till becomes FT as an option. He wants to work with the BOS to make this work for all involved. Chief Marique also indicated there is an increase in the maintenance line-item primarily due to the equipment aging and associated repairs. Mr. Jacobs said other than ~\$16,000 increase in the FT line, all other lines are quite similar compared to previous years. He thinks the Police Department budget will probably be similar.

Mr. Rawson questioned the overall budgeting process and why does this seem different from previous years where meetings with department heads occurred which allowed for review and questions. Mr. Jacobs said he could ask specific department heads to attend the next BOS meeting if requested to do so. Ms. Burnham said with how Mr. Williams has structured the

process, everyone can see the history of expenditures. Mr. Jacobs predicts to achieve the 2%, he will need to look at the history to see what the actual expenditures were and what can be decreased in the line-items.

Ms. Burnham presented questions/changes from a recent Budget Committee meeting:

- 1.) Moderator – Mr. Jacobs had already received this from Mr. Williams.
- 2.) Planning Board: Public notices line-item – is there a way to indicate when the expense will be offset by revenue?
- 3.) ZBA: Postage – Mr. Jacobs agreed it's OK to decrease to \$1.00.
- 4.) Cemetery: Discussion what to do with the budget.
- 5.) Recreation: Question to Mr. Rawson – are there continued meetings with the Rec Commission? Not for a few months however he does meet with Ms. Brown and the Chair.
- 6.) Police Department: Printing – Mr. Jacobs indicated there are separate and different contracts with different vendors for the photo copier/printer for the PD/FD/Town. He is in contact with Seacoast Machine to secure one contract for all three and will get proposal. The Budget Committee recommended decreasing the budget from \$600 down to \$500. Mileage Line-item: Recommended from the Budget Committee is to decrease from \$1,100 to \$900. Ed. Incentive: Recommendation decrease from \$5,000 to \$4,500.

Ms. Burnham indicated the Budget Committee still needs to review other department budgets and recommends the BOS & Budget Committees meet in November for further discussion.

Mr. Morrill questioned diesel fuel and why the town of Milton currently does not have its own fuel tank? It's an added expense of paying someone to drive the truck for refueling, along with the wear and tear on the trucks. While there would be an upfront cost, this move would ultimately save monies over the long run. Mr. Rawson agreed this would make sense. Mr. Jacobs will start looking into this possibility.

6.) Other Business That May Come Before the Board:

There was no other business.

7.) Approval of Minutes:

Non-Public Minutes:

Oct. 4, 2021 – Mr. Rawson made a **motion to accept the 10/4/2021 Non-Public meeting minutes as written**. Ms. Burnham seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was accepted.

Public Minutes:

Oct. 4, 2021 – Mr. Rawson made a **motion to accept the 10/4/2021 Public meeting minutes as written**. Ms. Burnham seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was accepted.

8.) Public Comments Relative to Current Meeting Topics: There were no public comments.

9.) Expenditure Reports: There were no expenditure reports.

10.) Town Administrator:

- a.) The next BOS meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2021.
- b.) I will be on vacation from Nov 2 to Nov 14 and back in the office on Nov 15th.
- c.) Mr. Jacobs stated he was in Rochester District Court on 10/18/2021 due to a current welfare case's attempted eviction procedure. The court did agree with the tenant to not be evicted. The tenant and the landlord, with Mr. Jacobs support, did work through and come to an agreement which will now take the tenant through to the end of the year.
- d.) Underwood Engineers – contract for project. This item was carried forward from the October 4th meeting due to Mr. Jacobs absence from the BOS meeting. Mr. Jacobs has reviewed the information. Mr. Jacobs did state if Mr. Smith were fully back, this would not be necessary.

Mr. Rawson made a motion giving authority for Mr. Jacobs to sign the contract. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion was approved.

- e.) Sue Sorino began her position as Assessing Director with the town on Monday, October 18th. As she was the trainer with the state, she brings vast experience and knowledge to the position and has already jumped full-steam into the position.

11.) Selectmen Comments:

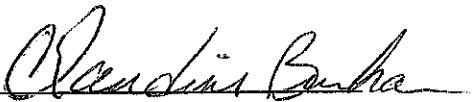
Mr. Rawson wanted to specifically thank Melissa and Julius for their work to the town. They were both a huge asset and will be missed. Mr. Rawson is very proud of Julius and his accomplishments and wish him the best. He also thanked Cynthia Wyatt for her years of service to the town. He thanked Virginia Long for her hard work. He attended the recent Casey Road celebration; it was a great turnout with lots of involvement.

Ms. Burnham also thanked both Julius and Melissa – they were very dedicated.

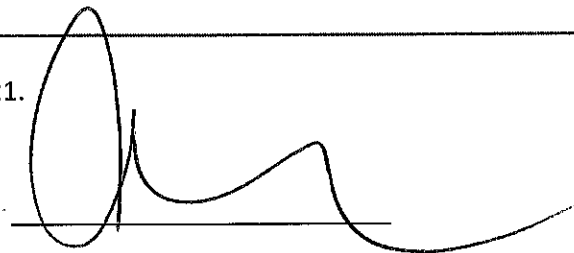
12.) Adjournment:

Ms. Burnham made a motion to adjourn the public meeting and to enter into the non-public meeting. Mr. Rawson seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed. The public meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.

Given under our hands this 1st day of November, 2021.



Claudine Burnham – Chairman BOS



Andy Rawson - Board Member



Matthew Morrill - Board Member

END OF DOCUMENT