

Town of Milton
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
May 23, 2023

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Laura Turgeon (Chair), Bob Carrier, Renata Gamache, Brian Leclerc, Kim Wischnewski, Stephanie Mills, Claudine Burnham

Absent: Mike Beaulieu

Public: Chief Nick Marique- Milton Fire Department

Laura Turgeon, Chair, opened the session at 6:00PM.

1.) Pledge of Allegiance: Laura Turgeon, Chair, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.) Roll Call:

- a. Ms. Turgeon, Chair, led the roll call of members to determine if a quorum was present. Laura Turgeon (Chair), Stephanie Mills, Kimberly Wischnewski, Bob Carrier, Brian Leclerc, Renata Gamache, Claudine Burnham. A quorum was present.

3.) Discussion with Chief Marique regarding expenditures to date:

Ms. Turgeon welcomed and thanked Chief Marique for attending the meeting and to help clarify current expenditures and providing additional information to the committee.

Ms. Turgeon said the big item is the Part Time Salary line-item, currently at 85.6% expended from the YTD budget. Chief Marique explained historically the PT salary always came out of the ambulance revolving fund. Because last year the decision was made to specifically track the line-item separately. Chief Marique stated that 85% is a true cost of the part time staff. There will be an overage in this line-item until the end of the year when money will be transferred from the ambulance revolving fund into the line-item should the BOS approve it. As an example, last year the BOS transferred \$100,000 from the ambulance revolving account to address the \$200,000 overage. The money in the ambulance revolving fund comes directly from collections related to ambulance runs. Ms. Turgeon asked if the part time Salary line-item will decrease once a full-time officer is hired? According to Chief Marique, yes. On average, ~\$5,000 is the amount paid for a 4-week time period for the PT salary. Chief Marique also stated that the part-time salary line was up due to a full-time employee being out due to an injury. They had part-time people covering until that person returned.

Employee Testing is currently over. Chief Marique explained typically \$200 is the cost of testing new employee. However, with the plan to hire a Full-time employee, it will cost \$845 for a physical which is required for Full-time employees.

Heat – YTD spent \$11,000. Chief Marique said this is typical as last year they were at 100% spent. There should be enough in the budget for final fuel-ups for both Milton and Milton Mills.

Ms. Turgeon asked about the building maintenance line which YTD is at 92% expended. Chief Marique said this was due to the sprinkler system annual test, and unplanned repairs to generator and garage door. This is a relatively new line-item. He said previously Pat Smith has had additional monies in the governmental buildings line-item which can be used for all buildings. Chief Marique started to slowly build money in his budget so Mr. Smith would not have to use his budget. This line could be eliminated completely and put into government buildings line-item.

Ms. Gamache asked for clarification from information in the annual report. Wakefield FD provides a monthly total of responses to incidents and wondered if Milton could also provide that information to the public on the website.

She asked about the town's decision to have staff 24/7 at the Fire Department. Chief Marique explained they previously paid people to be on-call at their homes, which continues to decline over the years leading to an increase in the number of shifts with no coverage. In 2019 during COVID, they wanted to separate the crews from their households and had two people at the station for extended lengths. COVID monies helped pay for the coverage. After that they felt they could not go back to how it had been handled previously. Due to the lack of qualified people wanting to cover in that way. The current option is to either pay for people to be at the station or return to periods with no coverage. There are fewer volunteers and for the majority of people, Milton FD is a PT job for them. Ms. Turgeon said this means if there is no staff to respond to calls, Milton must look to other towns for response and get charged. She also does not believe that Middleton is currently paying enough when Milton responds to their emergency calls.

Ms. Gamache asked about mutual aid to other towns. Chief Marique said Middleton is the only surrounding town that is not able to provide mutual aid. He is currently looking at costs and the breakdowns to providing response to Middleton. He noted any increase will probably not be a lot as Middleton may not agree to an increase. He is working to justify the numbers. The Chief also noted the response times are much better by having 2-person staff 24.7. The current response time is 7 minutes which includes mutual aid calls.

Ms. Turgeon and the Budget Committee thanked Chief Marique for attending the meeting and providing information.

4.) Review/Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Mills motioned to approve the April 25, 2023, minutes with corrections. Ms. Wischnewski seconded the motion.

Laura Turgeon, Bob Carrier, Brian Leclerc, Renata Gamache, Kim Wischnewski, Stephanie Mills, Claudine Burnham voted Yes. Motion Carried – 7/0/0.

5.) Town Expenditure Reports:

Line-items discussed include:

Supervisor of the Checklist: 88% expended salary which is due to the recent election.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Professional Services – for the audit.

Insurance & Benefits: Worker's Comp is at 85% - many contracts are paid for in advance.

Police Department: only 16% of FT salary – the department just hired another officer; currently at

four.

Highway Department: Prime membership? The previous decision was to have just one Prime business account for use by all departments.

Solid Waste: April expense for hazardous waste removal - ~\$8,000 expense in \$1.00 line – this does need additional clarification. Maybe something to do with Lockhart? Ms. Burnham said she will look into this.

Highway Department: Equipment at 68% expended. Ms. Wischniewski said this might be due to the recent storms? It might be good to have Pat Smith attend a future meeting to help provide an overview.

Recreation Department: Ms. Mills asked how does the Rec Dept work? Ms. Turgeon explained the gate fees, boat ramp fees, etc., pay the salaries and materials for the department. Mr. Leclerc said in talking with Karen Brown all programs are self-supporting and not through taxes.

6.) School Expenditure Reports, Revenue and Grant Reports:

Ms. Turgeon said Mackenzie Campbell is now sending all the reports to the committee. Mr. Leclerc recommended to not rehash previous discussions, but to instead focus on changes or new overages, similar to what the previous School Board Rep. was doing.

Ms. Wischniewski said it looks like there are several large adjustment areas. Ms. Turgeon said it might be good to have Mackenzie come back in and provide explanation.

To date the school is 69% spent with 83% projection at year-end. It appears they will have a decent balance left at the end. Mr. Leclerc said he will be working with Mackenzie.

Grant reports: Ms. Turgeon said there is confusion about grants. Last year there was a lot of money that had been returned to the government. It is important to understand how the money is spent and where it is reported. Ms. Turgeon has confidence in Adam Houghton and Mackenzie Campbell. She asked with the \$11M school budget, it is important to know exactly where the money is going to.

Ms. Mills asked for clarification regarding the Food Service line-item; where is it tracked, is everyone paying their bills, etc. Mr. Leclerc reported that there are families with unpaid bills and Adam and Mackenzie are working to address this.

7.) Other business that may come before the board: There was no other business.

8.) Public Comments or Questions on Budget Committee Meeting Topics: There were no comments.

9.) Next Meetings: August 22, 2023

10.) Adjournment:

- a. Ms. Mills motioned to adjourn at 7:40PM; Seconded by Ms. Wischniewski. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Winslow-Weiss, Recording Secretary – Budget Committee