

**JOINT SESSION  
BOARD OF SELECTMAN AND BUDGET COMMITTEES  
2023 BUDGET REVIEW  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2022**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Board of Selectman Committee:** Claudine Burnham (Chair), Humphrey Williams, Matt Morrill

**Budget Committee:** Laura Turgeon (Chair), Lisa Gautreau, Bob Carrier, Mike Beaulieu, Peg Hurd, Humphrey Williams, Kimberly Ward, Stephanie Mills

**Staff:** Chris Jacobs, Betsy Baker, Karen Brown, Fire Chief Nick Marique, Police Chief Richard Krauss, Pat Smith

Board of Selectman: Chair Claudine Burnham motioned to open the meeting at 5:00PM to begin discussions and review of the 2023 fiscal year.

The Budget Committee had already opened their meeting prior to the start of the joint meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Meeting with department heads to review their submissions for the FY2023 budget:**

**1. Police Department, Chief Richard Krauss:(Refer to presentation handouts)**

2022 Budget	2023 Request	Change
\$994,868.00	\$1,006,737.99	Increase \$11,869.99
Comments: This 1.2% increase is primarily due to increases in Administrative Assistant Salary and Electricity. There is a thought of looking to add solar panels to the building which would help decrease electric costs. Chief Krauss noted all town buildings were converted to LED three years ago. Ms. Gautreau thanked Chief Krauss for all his does, all the extra hours – it is very much appreciated.		

**2. Parks/Recreation, Karen Brown:(Refer to presentation handouts)**

2022 Budget	2023 Request	Change
\$74,039.00	\$80,049.00	Increase \$6,010.00
Comments: Increases are due to FT/PT salaries – 2% step increase (and related FICA, Medicare), Longevity and Mileage & Travel. As the recreation department currently has no town vehicle for their use, the recreation director is reimbursed for the use of her personal vehicle for travel associated with department business. Mr. Beaulieu questioned if one of the retired cruisers could possibly be used in the future? Mr. Williams said they are being utilized by the code enforcement officers and others. If available, this could be an option for the recreation director.		

**3. Supervisors of the Checklist, Karen Brown:**(Refer to presentation handouts)

2022 Budget	2023 Request	Change
\$3,678.00	\$2,214.00	Decrease \$1,464.00
Comments: This decrease is due to less elections in 2023 (1) as compared to 2022 (3) with a possibility of a special election in 2023.		

**4. Trustees of the Trust Fund, Karen Brown:**(Refer to presentation handouts)

2022 Budget	2023 Request	Change
\$3,287.00	\$3,287.00	There is no change.
Comments: This is for the bookkeeper's salary on the Trustee's Board.		

**5. Town Clerk, John Gagner:**

Mr. Gagner reported most of the line-items should remain the same as 2022 budget. Currently he has two part-time employees and would like to retain them. He explained he missed out on an important conference this year which would help with his certification because the FT person was scheduled to be out of the office. He plans on attending next year. Training line-item - He is proposing to decrease from \$1720 (2022) down to \$1500 in 2023 which is a 33% decrease. As he has only been on the job for ~6 months it is difficult to project additional trainings for the year. He is not proposing a salary increase for his position as he indicated during the election process. Mr. Williams – the FT salary line has been approved for next year's budget according to the step plan.

**6. Library, Betsy Baker:** (Refer to presentation handouts)

2022 Budget	2023 Request	Change
\$76,422.00	\$78,154.29	Increase \$1732.39 (2.3%)
Comments: The increase is primarily due to library contracted services request, electricity and heat (an increase of \$5,000)		

**7. Highway Department, Pat Smith:** (Refer to presentation handouts)

**Governmental Buildings** will increase from \$190,178 in 2022 to \$200,201 in 2023. This is a 47% increase of \$9,023. This is primarily due to heating and electric. There should be no changes in supplies, vehicle fuel, building maintenance and equipment purchases. Equipment maintenance is proposed to increase by \$500.

**Highway Department:** He is proposing to increase by 11.66% from \$731,424 (2022) to \$816,769 (2023). Decrease in full-time salary, from \$3326,847 in 2022 down to \$323,721 in 2023, primarily due to decrease in OT hours. This does include the step increase. Administrative assistant salary will increase to \$35,325 (42.6% increase or \$10,560). This is because of increased hours to assist with Cemetery Department. He does not anticipate changes in training, employee testing, uniforms, professional services, postage, or diesel fuels. Electric will increase 75% from \$4000 last year to ~\$7000. Heating is also projected to increase by 147% from \$2800 in 2022 to \$6918 in 2023. Additional increases include supplies - \$34,520 (41% increase over 2022), operating supplies (gravel, hot top, cold patch, winter sand)- \$71,500

(90% increase above 2022) and equipment maintenance - \$75,000 (increase \$25,000 over 2022).

**Solid Waste:** This is proposed to decrease by 1.37% over 2022 to \$219,720. No changes are suggested for training, uniform, disposal, phone, operating supplies, and diesel fuel. Contracted Services should decrease, while electric and heat will increase.

**8. Fire Department, Chief Nick Marique:**

Chief Marique is projecting to increase the FT Salary from \$147,978 to \$163,353 (10.39%), the PT Salary to increase from \$106,000 to \$335,000 (216%), and the Elected Salary to increase from \$40,148 to \$41,140 (2.47%). As a result of the salary line increases the FICA would increase from \$9,061 to \$23,321 (157.4%) and Medicare would increase from \$4,265 to \$7,823 (83.4%).

Training increase by \$1800 to \$6800. This line hasn't been used too much due to COVID.

Uniforms – increase by \$5,150 from \$20,350 (2022) to \$25,500 in 2023. PPE has increased 70% over the past five years. There is also an increase and need of duty uniforms.

Electric - \$14,000 (2022) to \$25,000 (2023). Increase of \$11,000 for both stations.

Heating - \$12,000 (2022) to \$15,000 (2023). Increase of \$3,000 primarily due to increase propane prices.

Supplies - \$6,550 (2022) decrease to \$4,000.

Vehicle Fuel - \$2500 (2022) increase to \$5000 (2023). Increase by \$2500 primarily due to increase in fuel prices.

Equipment purchase - \$16,500 (2022) increase to \$20,000 (2023). Increase of \$3,500.

In 2022, the budget was \$498,364. Chief Marique is requesting to increase to \$792,720 (an increase of \$294,356).

Chief Marique is requesting to increase the overall budget from \$498,364 to \$795,073, a 59.4% increase. Chief Marique explained the Milton FD is now working with Farmington with an automatic mutual aid agreement. Chief Marique asked for direction from the boards.

**9. Town Administrator, Chris Jacobs:**

TA and Finance Manager salaries will increase 2%. All other line-items are proposed for no changes.

Overall, the requested budgets from department heads stand at ~7% increase (the increase should be 2% or less because of the tax cap). Thorough review of budgets will need to happen with discussions around how to trim the budget. Both committees will need to work together to get to the 2%. Ms. Turgeon said with the cost of heating and electric, this is going to be difficult. There is not much room to find monies to trim. Ms. Gautreau agreed this will not be an easy budgeting year. Mr. Williams suggested pushing some contracts out. Mr. Jacobs said it may be possible to shave 2023 by buying in 2022. Ms. Turgeon – it's important to figure out where we to cut responsibly so as to not hurt department heads. Mr. Williams said the Budget Committee will work with department heads to find areas where cuts can be made. Chief Krauss said there is some revenue that will be coming to the town from the state. Unsure where those monies can be spent.

Ms. Turgeon appreciated all the department heads working so hard to keep costs to a minimum and

acknowledged again there are very little places to cut. There are just some things as a town we cannot cut such as ambulance, lights, other services, etc. Mr. Beaulieu reminded everyone that in the end, ultimately the town will get to decide.

Mr. Williams – the default budget is \$4.7M, while the operating budget is proposed at \$5.1M. Collectively the committees and department heads will have to be very creative to find \$400,000 to get the operating budget at or below the default.

As there were no additional questions, Ms. Burnham, Chair BOS, asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Williams motioned to adjourn the BOS, seconded by Mr. Morrill. All were in favor.

Budget Committee, Mr. Williams also motioned to adjourn the meeting for the Budget Committee. Ms. Gautreau seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.