



**Town of Milton
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
July 18, 2022**

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Claudine Burnham (Chair), Humphrey Williams, Matt Morrill

Staff: Chris Jacobs, Town Administrator, Police Chief Richard Krauss, Fire Chief Nick Marique, John Gagner-Town Clerk, Betsy Baker-Library, Karen Brown-Recreation, Pat Smith- Public Works

Public: Kym Libby, Nolan Woodcock

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 none.

3.) Announcements and Community Calendar:

None.

4.) NEW Business – Discussion and Possible Actions:

- a.) **Meeting with Department Heads and Committee Chairmen to discuss the process for the FY2023 budget and possible warrant articles, Capital Improvements that Department Heads and Committee Chairman desire to have proceed forward as warrant articles may be discussed:** Mr. Williams stated this will be a tough year moving forward to determine the budget especially with impact of inflation and rising costs. Moving forward need to focus on the employees first, address all contracts (addressing increases in fuel, heating and electric costs) and work together to find multiple ways to save the town. This means tightening the belt and determining which items that will not get worked on (this possibly includes some Warrant Articles that have been done in the past). We cannot afford increases of up to 10% which is what current projections are – this would cost the average household ~\$1,000. We will have to work together to figure out ways to save money.

Chief Krauss – Police Department: He had previously presented to the CIP. There are only two items they will be moving forward this year: Radio CIP which is for all public safety (police, fire and public works) – decreased to \$15,000 from \$30,000, and will leave the police cruiser line-

item in the budget until the BOS determines how exactly they would like to proceed: purchase a cruiser outright and return to the one-purchase/year for five-year cycle or remain with the lease cycle. His suggestion is to stay with the lease cycle which allows for three car purchase at this year's known product price and reduces the chance of the cruiser or equipment increasing in price each year. The lease can be extended out to five years which will decrease payments to smaller chunks. Other line-items he projects increases include fuel and electric. All lights within the police department have been converted to LED which will help with overall costs. Salary line-item is in flux as he will look to fill the 8 patrol officer positions – budget depends on who is hired – brand new vs. certified individuals (certified would be hired at a higher rate of pay). He does not anticipate any increase in retirement; Mr. Williams has heard there could possibly be additional monies from the state to help offset those costs. Chief Krauss will wait to hear if this will be an increase, decrease or stay the same; timeframe to hear will be closer to year end. Fuel costs – just signed at \$2.79/gallon for propane. This does depend on upcoming winter and if additional fuel is needed. He informed the BOS the Employee Testing line-item will be over-expended this year due to hiring 8 new employees, along with Training and Uniforms line-items. He has applied for the grant again to help offset those costs. Contracted Services – he has not aware of any large increases – message board licensing and virus protection software will expire in December 2022. Chief Krauss is not sure if there will be any increase from Strafford County for dispatching services or IMC services for the records management system – should know by late summer/early fall.

Chief Krauss requested to be added to future BOS calendar the topic of cruisers, especially when he is back to a full-staff.

Chief Marique – Fire Department: His CIP priority is the Ambulance. He provided an updated quote received in March - \$291,000 with trade and power load stretcher- \$30,000 (total \$320,000). In April he received notice of a 7% increase to the original quote – increase by ~\$20,000 to \$350,000 for ambulance. Letters of commitment in 2017 reflect purchase price of \$225,000 and 2011 at \$167,000. New quote is for 2024 ambulance. His priority is to order the ambulance to help offset inflation costs and because of length of time to receive vehicle. Mr. Jacobs expressed his concern about ability to hold cost to quoted price; he had recently heard of price increases above actual quoted price. Chief Marique – there are a couple of ways to pay for the purchase: Raise monies through re-purchase program, lease or purchase outright; the last two ambulances have been paid through the ambulance revolving fund. Currently in the Revolving account there is \$159,000 with an additional \$30,000 approved at recent town vote. This leaves \$160,000 to raise before taking delivery of an ambulance (if purchased outright). If we can find a way to cover the staffing expenses, there should be enough coming in to help cover purchases. Mr. Morrill questioned how much FD budget would increase if staffing were added directly in the budget? Mr. Williams projected ~\$106,000 for PT while Chief Marique projected ~\$200,000 (FT & PT). Chief Marique – there is talk of cutting the budget for next year – to follow the current staffing model – fully funded – and adding one full-time position, that is projected to be \$300,000. Mr. Williams – the other way of proceeding is to make that hard decision to delay purchase by another year as increasing taxes by ~\$1,000 will have impact on residents and could cause the town to lose residents. It's important to be realistic in all decisions. He also questioned how we are doing with collections and if rates need to be increased. Chief Marique – rates are already high – payments come through Medicaid, private

insurance or self-pay. Medicaid prices are contracted at a specific rate set by the government. Private insurance and self-pay are not enough to cover.

Pat Smith, Public Works: Mr. Smith reported he is finding difficulty getting companies to commit to prices, specifically around oils, greases (petroleum related items). There is good news related to heating oil – the 8,000 gallons has been combined with SAU – he anticipates having prices related to that within the month. Highway Budget – he is very concerned due to all the petroleum products are within this budget. He is anticipating significant increases in this line, along with electric, heating oil. He has not been able to get any commitments for materials like stone, sand and gravel. He will not have warranties on any of the trucks. They try to keep repairs in house as much as possible. He expects increases in towing primarily due to rising fuel costs. Government Buildings and Solid Waste budgets – does not anticipate large increases. Highway budget – anticipates increasing close to \$800,000 mark, again primarily due to increase fuel and oil costs. He will do all he can to keep his budgets as tight as possible. Capital Improvement items: he is still struggling to get numbers for these items and has discussed this with his BOS liaison along with the CIP committee. He would like to be able to offer options to help with their decision making. He stressed something must be done to address the dump trucks in the near future. He hopes the road construction money and overall support will continue; he does not want to fall behind as has been done in the past. Dawson Street: the BOS does have the plans and he requested continued support. Mr. Smith asked for direction regarding longevity pay – Mr. Smith said he does not see anything for longevity pay for this year and if a line-item needs to be added for this? Mr. Williams said this will be reviewed and discussed with each department chair. Mr. Jacobs clarified Mr. Smith is asking if there will be space for this included when the template is created. Mr. Smith asked if this would go into his budget, or would this be managed through some other budget? Mr. Williams said this would be managed in each of the department's budgets.

Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Williams will create the 2023 budget template for each department to use for budget planning. Mr. Williams – there are only a few places where savings could really occur – operating costs and supplies.

Bruce Woodruff – CIP/Planning Board: He explained he would entertain taking a small cut for the town. Important to remember the CIP committee sole job is put the plan together and provide to the BOS and Budget committees??? The Planning Board discussed putting out an RFP for two master plan chapters that needs updating – chapter Communities Facilities (last updated 2002) – this is a task that requires more than just his involvement. Also discussed was complete rewrite of the Land Use & Development chapter. He is going to suggest to the Planning Board that they delay this to hopefully find grant money to start this. The CIP Committee is going to look for guidance/ideas from BOS/Budget committees on how the unassigned fund balance might be used this year. Will some of the fund be used for the capital projects, to help reduce the tax rate, or not use the fund at all? Mr. Jacobs – there was lengthy discussion last year and comparisons to previous years. This is voter's money; one school of thought is to return back to the voters any money that remains. Another avenue is to apply it to needs of various departments. A town cannot do both. This decision is done via the town voter and this past year, everything requested to be used from the unassigned fund balance was approved at the town vote. Mr. Jacobs – on the CIP there is a 10-ton equipment trailer and 3-

ton equipment trailer – why is there just not one trailer? Pat Smith – the smaller trailer is used for Government Buildings and grounds crew and the 10-ton trailer is used for bigger grading projects and road construction – they are used for different purposes.

John Gagner- Town Clerk: He anticipates his budget requests will decrease. Example – this year’s budget included higher amount for training which probably will not be needed for next year. Improvements – he would like to add additional computers onto the warranty to cover repairs. His goal is to use mix of 2020 & 2021 budgets to help determine future. He will be meeting with finance to determine potential cuts. He wants to keep staffing and related salaries at the current level as those positions are vital to servicing the town. Mr. Williams would like John to focus specially on the part-time money as that line-item is currently way over budget. John explained that is over because by law his Deputy must be a resident of Milton, and the other part-time clerk has many years of experience and is very needed. He can look to possibly adjust work hours to help control those costs. Mr. Williams – currently this line-item is 93% expended at just the half-year mark. This line-item cannot stay at the same rate for next year without adjustments from other line-items.

Karen Brown – Recreation: Update – have had no response for two permits for the beach. No idea with when we could start moving forward with the project. Budget-wise, do not see any major increases.

Betsy Baker – Library: Asking for ½ of what she has previously asked for. If LCHIP grant is received at the end of the year that will take care of the majority of the building. If the grant is not received, they can still install the mansard roof. The budget has not really changed over the past 15 years – she plans to leave it as is – although it could be affected by electric and heating rates. She understands the need to hold the line as much as possible, eventually though down the road this leads to needing more capital improvements. Mr. Williams agreed and said it’s a balancing act. No one could anticipate the current inflation rates which has had huge impacts. It’s also not necessarily capital improvement items that need cut back – just need to figure out how to balance this all out whether it’s delaying a project for one year, or a lease instead of a purchase. Creativity will be needed to find savings. Mr. Jacobs – a concern from CIP perspective is the building itself in Milton Mills. While it’s a beautiful building and needs preserved, this needs to be balanced with a cost-effectiveness perspective. Example: ADA requirements – would it make more sense to build an extension to the building instead of having access to the 2nd floor. Ms. Libby – regarding CIP: now is not the time to be entertaining any future building projects. Mr. Jacobs – future projects do need to be discussed and planned far enough in advance to not spring everything at the last minute. Ms. Libby – the focus of the next few months should be on the next budget.

Chief Marique: While priority is on the ambulance, the tanker replacement is also important and has been pushed out another year. Should start putting money in capital reserve for this vehicle. Every time it’s pushed out, it’s even more expensive.

Mr. Smith: Frustrating to work so hard to put capital improvements plan together, but the plan is never funded. It might work better to focus getting the funding to carry out the plan. Mr. Jacobs – it’s a priorities issue.

Mr. Woodruff: Education and outreach to town residents is important about what the Capital

Improvements are for. Suggests each department wrap all their projects together under one Warrant Article for vote – compartmentalize by department, along with summary & explanation. Mr. Morrill cautioned against doing this as the voter will see is a huge chunk of money and by voting no, all projects will be voted down.

Ms. Libby: More residents need to understand what the unassigned fund balance is and can be used for. Ms. Burnham – we did a provide a thorough explanation of this at last deliberative and some of this is up to the voters. Ms. Libby: Explanation of line-items within a budget vs. a Warrant Article should be provided to voters.

Chief Marique: For all the past years the amount of money that has been voted on to put away for vehicle purchase has never amounted to enough for purchase. Right now, we cannot afford to put anything away. Leasing for larger equipment is probably the only way forward. Incremental amounts of money put away really won't help.

Ms. Burnham thanked everyone for attending and providing information.

Mr. Williams will send out information for review.

Mr. Jacobs – Next Monday will be regular BOS meeting. Lots of very good information tonight.

5.) OLD Business:

There

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

No old business.

7.) Approval of Minutes:

No minutes to approve.

8.) Public Comments Relative to Topics Previously Discussed:

There were no comments.

9.) Town Administrator:

- None.

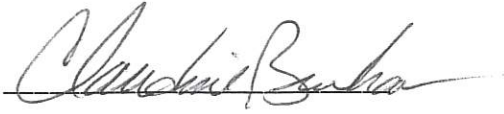
10.) Selectmen Comments:

There were no comments.

11.) Adjournment:

Mr. Williams made a motion to adjourn the public meeting. Mr. Morrill seconded the motion. All were in favor; the motion passed. The public meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Given under our hands this 25th day of July 2022.



Claudine Burnham – Chairman BOS

Matthew Morrill - Board Member



Humphrey Williams - Board Member

END OF MINUTES – BOS 2022 07 18