

**APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN–MEETING MINUTES
July 19, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER – Chairwoman Corbett called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30pm

PRESENT: Jaie Bergeron, Heather Corbett, Kevin Cote, Jason Croteau, Charlene Takesian, Interim Town Administrator Joseph Roark

ABSENT: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES REVIEW

The meeting minutes from July 12, 2022, will be reviewed in the next meeting.

OPEN FORUM

No one from the public came forward in open forum.

APPOINTMENTS

Sara Landry, COA: Permission to serve alcohol at “Lobster Lunch”, August 19, 2022

Ms. Landry started by explaining that the Council on Aging had purchased alcohol for their recent ribbon cutting ceremony but had some left over that they did not want to go to waste. She said that they were hoping to get permission to serve the alcohol at their Lobster Lunch on August 19.

She also informed that if given permission they would have a licensed and insured bartender to open and serve the alcohol.

Chairwoman Corbett asked if it would just be beer and wine, and Ms. Landry confirmed. Chairwoman Corbett also asked if it was a ticketed event and if they would have the ticket sale list to know who is to attend the event, and Ms. Landry confirmed this as well. Ms. Landry also informed that there will only be 60 people at the event.

MOTION: (Takesian/Cote) To approve the service of alcohol by a licensed bartender at the Council on Aging's Lobster Lunch on August 19, 2022.

VOTE: (5-0-0) The motion carried.

2023 BOS BUDGET REVIEW

Elections

Ms. Newcomb started off by informing the Board that there is only one election next year, which is the Town's election. Because of this, the supervisors and moderators' budget will go down. She also explained that the postage will go down due to them not needing as many absentee ballots next year, however, she also stated that postage rates have increased. Ms. Newcomb also informed that office supplies are staying almost the same, and that coding will go down since they are not having the primary or general coding. The election workers meals will also go down since there is only one election next year.

Chairwoman Corbett informed that the 2022 Elections operating budget was \$31,187.00. She also stated that the default budget for 2023 was \$24,728.00 and that the requested budget for 2023 was \$18,143. She noted that this was a \$13,044.00 decrease since there is only one election this year.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Ms. Newcomb started off by stating that the first item of the budget is salaries, which are all contractual. However, one salary and longevity decreased since there is a new clerk in the office. The postage budget increased minimally due to higher postage rates as of July 10, 2022. The Civil Forfeiture Dog Notices budget went down since not as many certified notices are being sent out. The Motor Vehicle Renewal Notices budget increased due to a higher rate of renewal notices needing to be sent out since the Town has had a lot of new residents move in. The dog tags budget is staying the same. The tax bills budget slightly increased because of the pricing increase this year. The telephone budget is staying the same. The postage meter rental fee is staying the same. The mileage reimbursement budget has increased due to the mileage increase through the federal government.

Ms. Newcomb noted that there was a total budget increase of \$13,594.00.

Chairwoman Corbett informed that this would bring the 2023 requested budget up to \$319,683.00. She also noted that the 2022 budget was \$306,089.00.

Mr. Cote noted that this was only a 4% increase from last year's budget.

87
88 **Assessor**
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90 Town Assessor Sue Snide was not able to be at the Board of Selectmen meeting on July 19,
91 2022. The Board went through the budget without her.

92
93 Interim Town Administrator Roark informed that majority of any budget increases are
94 contractual obligations. He noted that there were not any increases due to hours per week or
95 overtime hours.

96
97 Mr. Cote noted that there was about a 1.5% increase from last year's budget overall.
98

99 Interim Town Administrator Roark explained that there was also a postage increase, and a Vision
100 Software contractual increase.
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102 **Parks and Recreation**
103

104 Mr. Johnson explained that the salary budget was all contractual, and there was a \$4,190.00
105 increase in salaries.
106

107 He also stated there was one item that was not in the budget that was on his wish-list. He
108 explained that he would like to bring the maintenance staffs hourly pay from \$13.00 to \$15.00 an
109 hour.
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111 Chairwoman Corbett asked how many maintenance employees there were. Mr. Johnson informed
112 that he had 4 part time employees – 1 employee that is year-round, and 3 that work only in the
113 summer.
114

115 Mr. Johnson explained there was a \$300.00 increase in the supplies budget due to the cost of
116 paint increasing. The telephone budget will remain the same. He also stated that there was a
117 \$175.00 gas increase due to the rise in gas prices. The repairs and projects budget will remain at
118 \$4,000.00. The rental budget increased by \$1,095.00 for the portable toilets throughout the parks
119 due the vendor raising their rates. Mr. Johnson noted he did inquire about other vendors, but that
120 they are still the lowest priced. There was also a \$2,472.00 increase in the expenses budget. Due
121 to the addition of new parks and fields, and the aging of the irrigation system, Mr. Johnson
122 requested the irrigation budget be brought up to \$2,500.00. He also asked for an extra \$1,400.00
123 for the tree cutting and pruning budget. He also noted that mileage has gone up \$74.00.
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125 Mr. Johnson informed that the requested 2023 budget has an increase of \$8,234.00.
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127 Mr. Johnson also had a few other wish-list items to discuss with the Board, in addition to
128 increasing the hourly pay for the maintenance staff. He explained that they would like to add a
129 shade structure and replace and update the swings at Muldoon Park. The price of the shade

structure would be \$17,993.00. To purchase and install the new swings would be \$22,975.59. The total Muldoon Park playground renovation would be \$40,968.59.

Mr. Cote asked where the shade structure would go in the park. Mr. Johnson stated that it would go next to the swings, and that it is a 20x20 shade structure. He also noted that multiple parents have mentioned it would be nice if the park had some shade.

Ms. Takesian asked when the last time any work was done on the swings or equipment there and when the park was built. Mr. Johnson said it had been at least 14 years and that the playground was built in the 1990's. Ms. Takesian asked if the current swing structure posed any danger. Mr. Johnson explained that the inspector did not say they were a danger, but that it may be a good idea to start updating some of the older equipment, like the swings.

Mr. Johnson explained that they would like to get 4 traditional swings, a tandem swing and a swing where a parent can swing with their child.

Ms. Takesian asked if there were any grants available to replace the current swing set structure. Mr. Johnson explained that he has not seen any that would be a viable option.

Interim Town Administrator Roark noted that there would be a \$2,400.00 increase for the park maintenance budget if there is \$2.00 an hour increases in the maintenance staff's pay.

Chairwoman Corbett informed that the 2023 requested budget was \$284,564.00.

Senior Center

Ms. Landry started off by informing that there would be no change in the supplies budget. The telephone budget had a small contractual increase. The gas and oil budget will be left as is until reconsideration. The repair line budget will stay the same. The rentals budget has a minor increase due to the dumpster contractual agreement. The expense line budget increased due to mileage. There was also a \$700.00 increase for live music events under the new pavilion during the summer months. There were also other increases in costs for other functions, and for a mobile check-in scanner. Regarding the salary budget, Ms. Landry explained that, historically, the salaries at the Senior Center have been very low. Ms. Landry explained that the administrative assistant salary is extremely low compared to other administrative assistants in the Town. She also stated that the bus driver's salary was low, and that a CDL license is required to drive the bus, and that these licenses are currently in high demand.

Mr. Cote asked if the current administrative assistant was receiving full benefits. Ms. Landry confirmed that she is. Mr. Cote asked if she pays for the benefits she is receiving. Ms. Landry stated that she does. Mr. Cote asked for a cost analysis before they proceed with any decisions.

Chairwoman Corbett asked if there was language in the salary contract that covers a cost-of-living adjustment annually. Mr. Cote noted that this would be 2.5%. Ms. Landry confirmed she does get the 2.5% adjustment.

Ms. Landry explained that based on how the Board would like to proceed, the salary increases can go on her wish-list.

Mr. Cote stated that Ms. Landry only provided them with salary comparisons from cities, not comparable towns. Chairwoman Corbett asked what would be considered a comparable town.

Mr. Cote informed that towns like Amherst and Hollis would be acceptable. Ms. Landry explained that she provided salary comparisons from similar positions in Town.

Ms. Takesian asked for clarification regarding what should be under the default budget. Chairwoman Corbett explained that the default budget should only include contractual increases, and that anything else needs to go in the requested budget.

Chairwoman Corbett asked for copies off the contracts regarding the salary increases. She also asked if Ms. Landry had checked into any grants to help cover the cost of the functions the Council on Aging holds. Ms. Landry explained that she has, but there is not much available.

Ms. Landry also explained that the scope of her job has greatly changed over the past few years, and that she has a lot more responsibility now.

Mr. Cronin informed that several members from the Council on Aging have been looking into any available grants, and that they cannot find any available.

Ms. Landry stated that her final wish list item is a request for a social worker. She informed that almost one-third of the population in Pelham are over the age of 55. She explained that staffing levels at the senior center are not keeping pace with the rate increase of the aging population in Town. She also explained that social service tasks are taking up a lot of her time, and that having a social worker would be beneficial. Ms. Landry also informed the Board of all the ways a social worker can assist seniors.

Chairwoman Corbett asked if the Senior Center or Council on Aging attempted to utilize the current resources the Town has to offer. Ms. Landry stated that she has worked closely with the Welfare Officer regarding financial assistance, but that there is a lot more a social worker can do to help. She also explained how there has been many times seniors need extreme help, and how a social worker can provide them with resources before their situation worsens.

Mr. Cote agreed that having a social worker for the Town, not just the Senior Center, would be helpful. He also explained that in order to add a new position, whether only for the Senior Center or the whole Town, it would have to be voted on by the Town.

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216 Mr. Bergeron asked how much it would cost to add in a social worker position in the Town. Ms.
217 Landry informed that the average salary with benefits would be around \$77,891.00 for the first
218 year.
219
220 Mr. Bergeron asked if they would need a licensed social worker for the position. Ms. Landry
221 confirmed that it would be necessary. Mr. Bergeron then asked how many active members are
222 currently in the Senior Center. Ms. Landry stated there are about 700. Mr. Bergeron asked about
223 the process Ms. Landry currently takes when dealing with cases. Ms. Landry explained that often
224 the State cannot provide any assistance, and she must tend to the case on her own.
225
226 Chairwoman Corbett asked what neighboring towns do regarding a social worker. Ms. Landry
227 explained that some towns like Nashua and Salem have some sort of social services.
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229 Mr. Bergeron stated that since the social worker would be for the entire Town, that it would not
230 go into the Senior Center's budget. Chairwoman Corbett agreed and noted that it would have to
231 go through the voters. She explained that the best next steps would be to work with other
232 departments in town to develop this job position.
233
234 Ms. Landry explained that more than likely the social worker will be doing most of their work
235 with seniors, and that this position should focus on adults not children. Ms. Landry stated that
236 she thinks it would be best if the social worker has an office in the Town Hall and the Senior
237 Center.
238
239 Mr. Cote stated that the school does not have social workers currently, and the position would
240 best be suited to help vulnerable populations like children and the elderly. Ms. Landry explained
241 that it may be difficult for one social worker to deal with both populations.
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243 Chairwoman Corbett advised that Ms. Landry develop the job description to bring to the Town
244 so it can be voted on.
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246 Mr. Cronin asked if the social worker position did not exceed the Budget Committee's total
247 compensation threshold, would it still have to go to a vote? Chairwoman Corbett explained that
248 her concern would be about the salary going over budget if someone had a lot of experience. Mr.
249 Croteau explained that in previous years they have tried this, but the budget ended up going over
250 the total compensation threshold, so now everything must go to a vote.
251
252 Ms. Takesian noted that she believes the Town will be supportive of the position, and that if
253 everyone works together to develop the position, they can put it to a vote.
254
255 Mr. Cote stated he believes that it would have to go to CIP since it is over \$75,000.00. The
256 Board was unsure if this was accurate. Interim Town Administrator Roark stated he does not
257 believe it would have to go to the CIP.

Mr. Croteau asked if Ms. Landry could bring in documentation about other Towns social worker position descriptions. Ms. Landry confirmed she will.

Budget Committee

No one from the Budget Committee attending the meeting, so the Board went through their budget.

Chairwoman Corbett stated that the 2022 operating budget for the Budget Committee was \$2.00. The 2023 request was also \$2.00.

Human Services

Chairwoman Corbett asked why there were no contractual salary increase for the Human Services department. Interim Town Administrator Roark explained that their salary is not contractual.

Chairwoman Corbett informed that the 2022 operating budget for Human Services was \$73,820.00. She stated that the 2023 default budget was the same, and the 2023 requested budget was also the same.

Town Insurance

The Board agreed to skip over the budget for Town Insurance since the numbers are not ready yet.

Retirement

The Board agreed to skip over the budget for Retirement since the numbers are not ready yet and may change.

Legal

Interim Town Administrator Roark stated that the \$96,000.00 budget is still being discussed.

Chairwoman Corbett asked how many court appearances this budget covers. Interim Town Administrator Roark explained that this covers up to six court appearances. Mr. Cote noted that the contract lays out more specifically the types of court cases that are included in this budget.

DISCUSSION

Interim Town Administrator Roark brought up the discussion of starting the meetings at 7:00pm instead of 6:30pm, once budget season is over.

Mr. Cote suggested that they could make the time change effective at the first meeting in October.

The Board all agreed to the 7:00 pm start time effective at the first meeting in October.

SELECTMEN AND TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

Mr. Croteau had nothing to report.

Ms. Takesian had nothing to report. However, she asked if the Town was now separating cans from trash at the Transfer Station. Interim Town Administrator Roark explained that they are beginning to separate trash and that there is an announcement out on social media regarding the changes.

Mr. Bergeron had nothing to report.

Mr. Cote explained that he met with residents from the Gumpas Pond Association and that since New Hampshire changed their regulations regarding how dams are supposed to operate, this is what put the dam into a red-flag situation. He stated that they discussed a few viable options on how the Town can help to improve the dam. He also explained that a survey of the dam is being completed, and it costs \$30,000.00. He stated that the residents have raised about half the money and are looking for ways to raise the rest of the funds.

Interim Town Administrator Roark had nothing to report.

Chairwoman Corbett stated she wanted to make sure residents were aware that since school is out, there are more children riding bicycles on the street. She stated it is important to slow down and not hug the side of the road when there are a lot of kids outside. She also advised parents to have a talk with their children about the importance of wearing a helmet.

There was no request for non-public session on July 19, 2022. The meeting ended at approximately 8:14 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,
Makayla Clougherty
Recording Secretary

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