

APPROVED

**TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 23, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER – Amber Capone opened the meeting at approximately 7:09 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT:

Amber Capone (Chair)
Meg Bressette (Vice Chair)
Philip Haberlen
Bob Sherman
Darlene Greenwood
Jason Croteau
Brian McCarthy
Eduardo Martony
Deb Padykula
Jennifer Castles

ABSENT:

Kannan Sasi
Jas Moorjani
Paul Grant
Megan Larson

MINUTES REVIEW:

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Mr. Martony) To put the meeting minutes on file.

Ms. Capone had one change to line 34 – to add Mr. Martony to the second for that motion.

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Mr. Martony) To approve and place on file the meeting minutes as written for September 16, 2021.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Jason Croteau – yes
Edwardo Martony - yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Bob Haverty - abstain
Darlene Greenwood – yes
Amber Capone - yes
(7-0-1) The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Capone and Ms. Bressette are continuing to review the by-laws and work on them regarding the wording. If anyone has concerns, please let them know so they can update them. While reviewing the by-laws they read that all votes during the budget committee meetings should be done via roll call votes. So going forward, this is how this committee will vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

REVIEW OF TOWN BUDGET

Hobbs Community Senior Center (Sara Landry, Program Director)

2022 Board of Selectman approved budget is \$171,950.00, this is an increase of \$10,785.00, approximately 6.7%

Salaries: Increases for Administrative assistant's hours were increased to 40 hours as she started full-time in April. The others were incremental for merit increases.

Supplies: Keeping it status quo.

Telephone: Increase due to Comcast pricing.

Gas: Will be set.

Repairs: Increase for bus, due to its age. The bus is 6 years old, a 2016 and has about 47,000 miles on it.

Rentals: dumpster and copy machine have small increases.

Expenses: No increases (status quo).

Mr. Sherman asked about membership. Ms. Landry said there is no membership for Pelham members, however they work with the Pelham Counsel on Aging, and they have memberships. They provide us with support, funding, subsidized programming and newsletters. The Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 9-3 and they offer programs such as bone builders, fitness, pottery, educational programs, meal programs, travel programs and health clinics. Ms. Bressette asked about a flyer to raise money. Ms. Landry said it's for a shade pavilion in the back of the center. The back area is very sunny, so a shaded area is really needed. The Counsel on Aging has raised a little of \$70,000.00 in a short amount of time for this. They are also planning for all the site work and the landscaping. The Center is also used by the Parks and Recreation Departments and other groups in town.

Planning Department (Jenn Beauregard, Interim Planning Director)

2022 Board of Selectmen approved budget is \$640,282.00 increase of \$104,641.00, approximately 19.5%

Salaries: Most of the items are contractual increases. In March they were approved a full-time building/plumbing inspector and the electrical inspector went from a stipend position to a 20-hour position. All others were contractual and remained the same.

Supplies: Increase for postage. During COVID they had to mail a lot of permits and due to the increase in postage. They are going to implement tablets to save on paper.

Telephone: Remained the same other than the code enforcement office, who had an increase in his contract.

Gas and Oil: Remained the same.

Mr. McCarthy mentioned the additional vehicle. The police department is going to transition to police cars when Chief Roark updates his fleet. They are going to give them the current code enforcement car and they are going to give them Explorers, so they just dumped the gas for the vehicles. So now the Planning department will have two cars, one for the Building Inspector and one for the code enforcer. Therefore, there is an increase for the gas.

Repairs: Slight increase for the vehicle.

Rentals: Postage meter stayed the same.

Expenses: NRP fees went up slightly and that is contractual.

Specials: They are now able to advertise public hearings for zoning on the website, so they no longer have to pay the newspapers, so this was decreased by \$500.00. The Master Plan update hasn't been updated since 2002 and this should be updated every 5-10 years, so the Board decided to put out a RFQ and re-do

the Master Plan. They decided to go with a company called Resilience and their contract came in at \$80,000.00. Ms. Capone asked for explanation on a Master Plan. Ms. Beauregard explained that is something every town needs to have in order to have any type of land use regulations, zoning and boards all relating to land use. It is an outlook for the town of Pelham. Last year they were going to update it, however decided it was best to start from scratch and create a whole new plan. Ms. Capone asked what the benefits are in spending that amount of money. Ms. Beauregard said the amount of work that will need to be done piece by piece will be expensive and thinks that doing it all at once will produce a better product and using an outside company will give a fresh look for the town of Pelham. Mr. Thomas was very involved and will be chairing this and can speak to this Board next week on this topic. Ms. Capone asked Mr. McCarthy about the mileage reimbursement going down (\$64.00), but with getting another car should they expect the mileage to go down more (Line 191). Mr. McCarthy said next year will be a test year and he should expect it to go down. Ms. Beauregard talked about the MS4 update and that will stay the same. They have a contract for the next year and the numbers are the same. Dena Hoffman has been working on the MS4 annual permit, which is due next Tuesday, and she is on tract with getting that submitted. She has been going out with the Highway department doing culvert inspections and sampling waters in town.

Police Department (Chief Joseph Roark, Pelham Police Department)

2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$3,616,398.00, an increase of \$182,862.00, approximately 5.3%.

Salaries: Contractual obligations, all employees are either union or salary contracted, so those raises are included as such. One position went down significantly due to a new office in the academy. This position replaced a sergeant, which was a higher pay scale. The overtime increases aren't hourly increases, the increase is the hourly rate of pay. The earned time minimum mandatory staffing, dropped \$11,000.00 in anticipation of hiring one officer. This would reduce some of the backfill overtime. During the presentation with the Board of Selectman it was determined that they may want to hire two officers. This will lead to additional overtime reductions. If they hire two officers in April and have them ready for the June academy, field train in the fall and then be ready for full shifts in early 2023. So, the first year there won't be a reduction in overtime, not until 2023 would they see a decrease. So total overtime decreases in 2023 would be at least \$22,000.00, with two new officers (\$11,000.00 cut per officer). Minimum mandatory staffing means that there are times when the officers have time-off built into their contract and they have to fill these spots with overtime. If they have an additional officer, at least four shifts during that week would be filled with the new officer. That's where that overtime gets cut back, when new officers are added. The overtime is similar to past year's budgets, with an overtime rate of \$53.42 for most of the patrol officers. Much of this is mandatory overtime, such as qualifications and certifications. Mandatory based on police certification and training, meaning every officer must take certain classes to qualify (such as firearm training). Ms. Capone asked why they have to use overtime officers to be at an election. Chief Roark explained that if there are 3-4 officers at the election, and if they took them off of patrol, there would be no officers to cover the town. A new item is the Roll Call overtime, which is the 15 minutes prior to the officer's shift, this was always paid at straight time. The recent FLSA recalculations mandates this must be paid at an overtime rate and this is a federal mandate. Mr. Sherman asked about a detective overtime drug. Chief Roark said this is discretionary and not mandatory, but they need that for some investigations. Detectives are entitled to roll call too. The overtime rate is based on the average of the salaries, and this changes every year. The discussions with the Board of Selectman were very thorough regarding the number of new officers and Mr. Roark wanted to explain how they reached this decision. Mr. Roark said currently there are 23 police officers, 13 are assigned to patrol on the street in uniform. The FBI surveys all departments in the country and noted the average police department in the US is 2.4 officers per 1,000 inhabitants. So, if we use the 13,500 inhabitants in Pelham, multiplied by 2.4, then we'd have 32 police officers. Pelham is below the average, and we accomplish this by paying overtime to our officers. Some towns do this, but they have to consider the benefit packages full time officers receive and how this affects the budget. At this point, Pelham can no longer fill the overtime we're presenting. Another thing to consider when adding officers is stacking calls and there are not enough officers to take all calls. Every

week there are pages asking for officers to assist with road coverage. With every motor vehicle accident there needs to be multiple officers there, some directing road traffic, medical support, impaired motorists and there just not enough officers. Officers need to stay during an untimely death, and they need to call in for an extra person. Or if a person needs to be moved (they can't stay for more than 4 hours in this facility) and this sometimes may take one or two officers, depending on how cooperative the person is. Other times our officers may have to pick up people from out of town on a warrant. If an officer is injured or exposed, there needs to be someone to fill in. There also needs to be supervisions during shifts in this type of environment. There are new mandates in training as well, such as duty to intervene and deescalate and this can't be done with only one officer at the scene. In many situations, two officers are required and is very important. The calls coming in are more complex in nature at this time; such as identity theft, cell phone crimes, social media crimes, all of which require much more paperwork. They are looking for a minimum of three to four officers per shift and with the two new hires they can come very close to this. Mr. Sherman asked when the union contract is up. Chief Roark said in April of 2023, and that it was a five-year contract. Mr. Haberlen asked about if the ratio is adjusted for the crime rate in town. Chief Roark said it's a national average by the Uniform Crime Report for 2019 by the FBI. Mr. Roark said the crime rate goes up typically in the Northeast states. Mr. Haberlen asked if Pelham is represented by that number. Mr. Roark said he thinks we do a good job but are more challenged due to us being a border community and the types of business that are here in Pelham. Ms. Bressette asked about the salary set for \$39,889.00, if that is for the new patrolman's salary. Mr. Roark said that would be a 9-month salary for 2023 (April 1 to December 1). A full year's salary would be about \$59,000.00 base pay for a first step patrolman. For a new hire there are additional expenses, such as holiday, education expenses, equipment, weapon, armor, uniforms), these are one-time expenses per hire. \$53,185.00 is the number they came up with for a base contract rate, plus some built-in kicks. Benefits are about \$30,000.00 for a family plan; single plans are typically less. Ms. Capone asked about retirement and its effect. Mr. McCarthy said about \$15,000.00 for 9 months. Mr. Haverty noted that the Chief came to the Board of Selectmen asking for one officer and after conversations and evaluations they all collaborated on two officers, due to the safety of our public and the officers, this would be very important. Pelham is a very safe town and really need to support and thank our police force. Mr. Sherman asked when the last time the crossing guards received a raise. Mr. Roark said last year they received a pay raise to \$15.00, which is slightly above the area average.

Supplies: Small increase, weapons are up \$500.00, mostly for ammunition. They use this mostly for training and practices. Taser program is up \$282.00 and they have a five-year life expectancy, which they have to replace eight each year. These tend to go up in cost as well as the ammunition.

Telephone: Contractual with Verizon and one smart phone was purchased. They changed to smartphones and Mya the second SRO went to a smartphone because during school hours she needed the smart phone.

Gas and Oil: Did not increase the amount and they've been steady with the 18,500 gallons. The per gallon price is the number that drives this. There was small increase for tires.

Repairs and Projects: Computer repairs went up \$2,200.00 for CJIS requirements for terminals and they now have FOBs. IMC support contract went up \$3,400.00, it's a contractual increase and this is for record's management software and dispatch software.

Rentals: The 560 equipment and tech plan went up \$500.00, this is the server where all videos are stored. The \$90,000.00 decrease was part of the equipment purchases from last year.

Expenses: Decrease on the dues. Increase on seminars and tuitions that are mandated. These can be done now online through Police One online training. This is more effective and up to date, especially as case laws change, the officers can access the training immediately. Ms. Capone asked for explanation for CALEA. Mr. Roark said it is Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement. It's a national agency that does accreditation for police departments. They give standards that needs to be incorporated into the policies. We need to provide proof we are following these procedures. Annually the department is remotely checked by them by going into the documents and proofs. Every four years they come to the station and go through everything and interview the officers. If they pass, they receive a national accreditation, and this proves that they are following best practices and doing things properly. Our police department was

actually doing these practices already. This has been of great benefit to us and has been very helpful in the success of our department. Pelham is one out of the 14 in NH that are currently accredited.

Mr. Roark stated again that the need for two officers is very evident. We are close to Windham's numbers, and they have a similar number of officers. Pelham also has two dedicated officers assigned to our school system, which does take away from our patrolmen numbers. Mr. Sherman asked about the training facilities and the animal shelter. Mr. Roark said they have rough numbers currently in the CIP process. He's not sure how they will be prioritized with them. The long-term capital projects are to improve the animal shelter, which is currently very dilapidated. The second plan is to take some back storage area in the station and expand the training facilities into a large room to conduct better hands-on training and expanded fitness areas. Mr. Sherman asked about the radio infrastructure. Chief Roark said this came in late for them and they are still waiting for a number. The radio is very technical, and they've been working with 2-Way to come up with a number. The current equipment is nearing the end of its life and they really need to update this radio system, which unfortunately will be very expensive. Ms. Bressette asked about Bola wraps. Chief Roark stated the department wants to try and avoid at all costs hands to hand force. They do deploy tasers, but they don't always work as they should. Bola wraps are a new technology, and they have a laser sighting that shoots out a Kevlar rope and wraps the person to contain them. They plan on purchasing four this year and test them and will begin to deploy them as needed. This will avoid hand to hand use of force when taking people into custody. Videos and demonstrations show these to be very effective and impressive.

Insurance (Mr. McCarthy)

2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$2,683,974.00, an increase of \$46,159.00, approximately 1.8%

The insurance number is still a placeholder. He won't get that number in for another month, by the end of October or November.

Ms. Capone asked if the \$46,159.00 is what we anticipate. Mr. McCarthy said that was the increase from the previous year to this year. That also includes the two additional police officers, should that come to fruition.

Retirement (Mr. McCarthy)

Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$2,438,083.00, an increase of \$344,750.00, approximately 6.5%. Numbers have gone up significantly, as there are three additional full time staff members now so that is part of the increase. Retirement rates have gone up and there's not a lot we can do about it.

Town Celebrations (Mr. McCarthy)

Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$9,260.00. This is level funded.

Expenses: Holiday flags, wreaths, cemetery flags and the Independence Day celebration. This past year was a great success having the Independence celebration at the Village Green and will have it there going forward.

Ms. Capone stated that one member of this committee has had approximately four consecutive, non-excused absences and pursuant with RSA 32:15 VI, she is opening the floor up for any motions.

MOTION: (Mr. Haverty/Mr. Martony) Subsequent to RSA 32:15 VI "A member at large shall cease to hold office immediately upon four consecutively scheduled or announced meetings of which that member received reasonable notice without being excused by the chair." Mr. Haverty would recommend putting this member on notice as an official call to duty. If this member does not respond, then be removed from office.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Jason Croteau – yes
Edwardo Martony – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Darlene Greenwood – yes
Amber Capone – yes
(8-0-0) The motion carried.

REQUEST FOR A NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION: (Ms. Capone) Request for a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II-J

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Jason Croteau – yes
Edwardo Martony – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Darlene Greenwood – yes
Amber Capone – yes

(8-0-0) The motion carried.

It was noted that when the Board returned, after the non-public session, the Board would not take any other action publicly, except to possibly seal the minutes of the non-public session and to adjourn the meeting. The Board entered into a non-public session at approximately 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Castles
Recording Secretary