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3 **APPROVED**
4 **TOWN OF PELHAM**
5 **BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES**
6 **Thursday, January 14, 2021**

7
8 **CALL TO ORDER** – at approximately 7:00 pm

9 Chairman David Cronin opened the meeting and read aloud “A Checklist to Ensure Meetings Are
10 Compliant With The Right-to-Know Law During The State Of Emergency” (*regarding access to the*
11 *meeting*).

12 Mr. Cronin asked Committee members, when their name is called, to please confirm their presence and to
13 please identify as the Right-to-Know Law requires, who, if anyone, was in the room.

14
15 **ROLL CALL:**

16 **PRESENT:** David Cronin – Present in person
17 Bob Sherman – Present in person
18 Meg Bressette – Present in person
19 Philip Haberlen – Present in person
20 School Board Representative Deb Ryan – Present in person
21 Board of Selectmen Representative Bob Haverty – Present in person
22 Eduardo Martony – Present via Zoom
23 Amber Capone – Arrived at approximately 7:30 pm.

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26 **ABSENT:** Jason Croteau – excused
27 Kannan Sasi – excused
28 Jas Moorjani

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32 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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35 **MINUTES REVIEW:**

36
37 **November 19, 2020:**

38 **MOTION:** (Sherman/Bressette) To approve the November 19, 2020 meeting minutes as
39 written.

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41 **ROLL CALL VOTE:** David Cronin – Yes
42 Bob Sherman – Yes
43 Meg Bressette – Yes
44 Philip Haberlen – Yes
45 Deb Ryan – Yes
46 Bob Haverty – Yes
47 Eduardo Martony – Yes
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49 (7-0-0) The motion carried.

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52 **OLD BUSINESS**

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54 Mr. Cronin stated that this meeting was a reconsideration meeting where any department could come
55 forward if they had additional information to change their figures.

56

57 **PELHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT**

58

59 Mr. Cronin stated that, to his knowledge, the school district did not have any additional information to
60 change their figures. However, they were coming forward to give a presentation on the renovations to the
61 Pelham Memorial School.

62

63 Superintendent Chip McGee came forward to represent the school district accompanied by the Business
64 Administrator Ms. Mahoney. He started by saying he is looking forward to having those who have chosen
65 in person schooling back in the classrooms. He thanked the whole community, including staff, parents, and
66 students, for all of the hard work they put in this fall.

67

68 He gave a presentation to the Committee on renovations for the Pelham Memorial School to inform those
69 when it comes time to vote. He informed that Pelham Memorial School was built in 1965 and is classified
70 as an Upper Elementary School and not a Middle School because it lacks specific programs that the school
71 cannot support with the current infrastructure. There are significant exterior damages, including wall
72 deterioration as well as no insulation in the building. Some of the building's main challenges include traffic
73 congestion, heating and cooling issues, lack of ventilation, acoustic challenges, limited library space,
74 limited safety, especially around modular classrooms, lack of natural lighting, exposed wires and pipes, as
75 well as aging building systems. Superintendent McGee stated that the septic field, boiler, and roof are all
76 set to be replaced within the next five years through the Town Capital Improvement Plan. These need to be
77 fixed whether the project passes or not, but if this project passes, these projects would be taken off the
78 capital improvement plan.

79

80 Mr. McGee stated that there is minimal accessibility for students and faculty with disabilities. There is no
81 elevator in the current building, only a stairlift that drastically interrupts traffic flow of the school as the
82 stairwell needs to be completely shut down. This also impedes instructional time and poses a safety concern
83 if there were to be an emergency. There is very limited accessibility to toilets and locker rooms as well.

84

85 There are no instructional team areas in the current school, a few classrooms are in old storage closets, the
86 science rooms are very small and inadequate, there is a lack of outlets across all classrooms, and there are
87 no instructional team areas. The school's current gymnasium is not regulation size and cannot fit the entire
88 school for assemblies. The PE teacher's office is a small, converted closet. The floor of the gymnasium
89 needs to be replaced as well. Superintended McGee informed that the kitchen and serving area lacks the
90 space for modern and efficient equipment. They have inadequate exhaust hoods and ventilation. There are
91 numerous code issues, and it is in need of electric and gas upgrades. He stated that the serving area is not
92 ADA compliant.

93

94 Superintendent McGee stated that this school was the most challenging to reopen and keep open for COVID
95 due to the issues mentioned above.

96

97 He informed that the project's guaranteed maximum price would be \$31,980,00.00, which is an increase
98 from last year as time has gone by and prices have increased. He stated that they had done a great deal of
99 negotiation to keep prices down. He noted that construction costs have increased by over 7% in the last
100 year, but this project's cost has only gone up 3.6%.

101

102 Superintendent McGee then explained the language that will be presented on the ballot regarding the school
103 renovation. He informed that in the first year taxes would increase \$0.40 for every \$1,000, and in year two,
104 it will increase to \$1.19 for every \$1,000.

105
106 Mr. Sherman commented that if they were to build a completely new building, it would create a larger issue.
107 He stated that there would be nowhere to put the kids during the renovation. Superintendent McGee noted
108 that if they were to rebuild, it would cost 45% more than utilizing the existing infrastructure. Mr. Sherman
109 stated that this would be the best time to get this project done. He informed that this should be the last major
110 building project for the Town for the next 20 years or so.

111
112 Mr. Cronin asked what the predicted percent would be from funds from the State to help with the cost for
113 the project. Superintendent McGee replied that hopefully, if they receive the program they applied for,
114 Pelham will qualify for 30% if the funds are available.

115
116 Ms. Bressette stated that she supports the project and thinks that the timing of this project is perfect,
117 especially with the bond rates being so low. She noted that this would help the Town save money if they
118 approve this project now.

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121 **PELHAM LIBRARY BUDGET**

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123 Mr. McCarthy, Mr. McClay, and Mr. Demers came forward to address the Committee about increasing the
124 Library Budget. The Library Budget is the only Town department that has any requests for change. Mr.
125 McClay stated that in 2019 the Library received about \$7,500.00 in program funds from the volunteer
126 organization Friends of the Library in Pelham (FLIP). This organization raised money through their annual
127 book sale and from their annual membership fees. Mr. McClay informed that due to the virus this past year,
128 they have not been able to host the annual book sale. The Library is asking for an increase of the Adult
129 Programs line item for \$4,000.00. He stated that they want to increase their programming as much as
130 possible as the virus starts to die down into the spring and summer of 2021.

131
132 Ms. Bressette asked if the \$4,000.00 is used for the museum passes. Mr. McClay replied that the \$4,000.00
133 would go into the Adult Programs budget, which would be managed by the Assistant Director. He informed
134 that some passes have already been renewed, and they have created a service where patrons can book them
135 online. They hope this money could help keep them open, though there are funds available for it right now.
136 Ms. Bressette asked if someone had to be a member to take advantage of that service. Mr. McClay replied
137 that they would need to be a member. He stated that this funding is not for museum passes.

138
139 Ms. Capone asked if the \$4,000.00 is money that was made from museum passes. Mr. McClay responded
140 that they do not collect money off of museum passes. He stated that this money comes from the funds that
141 FLIP makes off their annual book sale and membership drives, which have been drastically affected due to
142 the Pandemic. Some of the money raised from FLIP funds the museum passes. Ms. Capone asked if this
143 money is something that is anticipated every year. Mr. McClay responded that he hopes everything will be
144 back in action once the Pandemic dies down. He recognized that volunteering is always a challenge, and
145 most libraries are concerned about relying solely on volunteer organizations to supply the funding for their
146 programs. He stated that he does not want to make any promises but noted that the Library will always be
147 looking ahead whether they receive funding through the Town or volunteer organizations.

148
149 Mr. Haverty asked that he was concerned about this \$4,000.00 going into the Library base budget for the
150 next year if FLIP is able to raise this money again in the future. He stated he did not have a problem with
151 adding it to the budget but wanted the Committee to be aware of it for the next year. Mr. Sherman stated
152 that next year they could decide to take the \$4,000.00 out of the budget if fundraising proves to be sufficient.

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MOTION: (Sherman/Bressette) To increase the Adult Programs line item in the Library Budget by \$4,000.00, making the total Library Budget \$547,000.00.

ROLL CALL VOTE: David Cronin – Yes
Amber Capone – Yes
Bob Sherman – Yes, with the stipulation that this money may be taken out next year.
Meg Bressette – Yes
Philip Haberlen – Yes
Deb Ryan – Yes
Bob Haverty – Yes
Eduardo Martony – Yes

(8-0-0) The motion carried.

2021 RECONSIDERATION BUDGET

Mr. McCarthy stated that the new number for the Town Budget is \$18,156,889.00. Mr. Sherman asked if the fuel and heating accounts would be all set for the coming year. Mr. McCarthy stated that it might be tight, and if gas prices increase throughout the rest of the year, they will deal with it. Mr. Sherman also asked if the Pelham Community Spirit had enough funds for next year’s celebration. Mr. Haverty replied that the request for this past year’s celebration came in when they were not going to have another Board of Selectmen Meeting. He stated that he would not ask for more money without discussing it with the Board of Selectmen first. He noted that this year would happen the same as last year, where they spend the money and then account for it in the next year’s budget.

MOTION: (Capone/Haverty) To approve the bottom line of \$18,156,889.00 for the 2021 Town Budget.

ROLL CALL VOTE: David Cronin – Yes
Amber Capone – Yes
Bob Sherman – Yes
Meg Bressette – Yes
Philip Haberlen – Yes
Deb Ryan – Yes
Bob Haverty – Yes
Eduardo Martony – Yes

(8-0-0) The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Cronin stated that there would be two deliberative sessions in the first week of February. The Town Deliberative Session will be on February 2, 2021, and the School Deliberative Session will be on February 3, 2021. He encouraged everyone to attend those meetings. If someone could only attend one, then attend the School Deliberative meeting as they need a quorum. He stated that if citizens make any changes during

203 those meetings, the Committee would need to meet again after the School Deliberative Session on February
204 3.

205
206 He stated that most of the Committee was able to sign the School MS27, but it would be at the Police Station
207 for them to sign for those who had not. He stated that the Town Default Budget would be at the Police
208 Station beginning on January 23, 2021.

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210 Mr. Cronin informed that this would be one of his last meetings as the Chair of the Committee. He thanked
211 all the members for their hard work and dedication, especially this past year throughout COIVD. He stated
212 he has thoroughly enjoyed his time there for the last 12 years. Mr. Haverty thanked him for his time and
213 service.

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215 Mr. Sherman informed that there would be three vacant positions on the Committee.

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218 **ADJOURNMENT**

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220 **MOTION:** (Sherman/Capone) To adjourn the meeting.

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222 **ROLL CALL VOTE:** David Cronin – Yes
223 Amber Capone – Yes
224 Bob Sherman – Yes
225 Meg Bressette – Yes
226 Philip Haberlen – Yes
227 Deb Ryan – Yes
228 Bob Haverty – Yes
229 Eduardo Martony – Yes

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231 (8-0-0) The motion carried.

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233 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 pm.

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Respectfully submitted,
Jordyn M. Isabelle
Recording Secretary