

APPROVED

TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 14, 2021

CALL TO ORDER – Amber Capone opened the meeting at approximately 7:00 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENT: Amber Capone (Chair)
Meg Bressette (Vice Chair)
Philip Haberlen
Thomas Gellar
Bob Sherman
Brian Demers
Brian McCarthy
Eduardo Martony
Bob Haverty
Jason Croteau
Deb Padykula
Jennifer Castles

ABSENT: Kannan Sasi
Paul Grant

MINUTES REVIEW:

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Mr. Haverty) To place the October 7, 2021, meeting minutes on file with one correction to the word piecemeal on Line 244.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Thomas Gellar – abstain
Edwardo Martony – yes
Bob Sherman - yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Amber Capone - yes

(6-0-1) Motion passes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Capone said she is continuing to review the by-laws.

NEW BUSINESS:

VOTING ON THE TOWN BUDGET

Ms. Capone will run this year's vote by opening the floor to any motions for discussion; go through each department budget and they will only vote again if there is a change to the Board of Selectmen amount and they will not approve that amount. In the end they will vote on any changes and then vote on the total amount of the budget as a whole.

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Mr. Haverty) To open the Board of Selectmen amount up for discussion.

ASSESSOR DEPARTMENT: The default budget for the Assessor is \$232,755.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$225,563.00.

MOTION: (Ms. Capone/Mr. Sherman) To decrease postage by \$150.00. The was discussed previously during the review and this is a result of the postage amount change.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – abstain
Edwardo Martony – yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Amber Capone – yes

(6-0-1) Motion passes.
The Assessor has been decreased by \$150.00.

Ms. Capone stated that Mr. Croteau has joined the meeting.

BUDGET COMMITTEE: The default budget is \$2.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$2.00.

CABLE DEPARTMENT: The default budget for the cable department is \$153,731.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$153,731.00.

CEMETERY: The default budget for the cemetery is \$166,343.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$172,983.00.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE: The default budget for the Conservation Committee is \$5,989.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$5,989.00.

DEBT SERVICE INTEREST: The default budget is \$46,767.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$46,767.00

DEBT SERVICE PRINCIPAL: The default budget is \$640,095.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$640,095.00.

ELECTIONS: The default budget for elections is \$25,047.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$31,147.00.

MOTION: (Ms. Capone/Ms. Bressette) Increase of postage in the amount of \$40.00.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – abstain

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

(7-0-1) The motion passed. The postage has increased for a total of \$31,187.00. For the record, the Assessor will be \$225,413.00.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: The default budget for emergency management is \$9,041.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$9,041.00.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: The default budget is \$2,801,937.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved Amount is \$2,875,451.00.

HEALTH OFFICER

The 2022 default budget is \$45,916.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$87,956.00.

HEALTH SERVICES

The 2022 default budget is \$73,700.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$73,700.00.

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

The 2022 default budget is \$1,836,090.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved is \$1,844,946.00. Mr. Sherman asked about the two trucks on the CIP that were supposed to be bought or will they be leased. Mr. McCarthy said if he goes in that direction he will come back with those numbers. Mr. Haverty said the board will evaluate and get back to them. This will be at reconsideration.

HUMAN SERVICES

The 2022 default budget is \$73,820.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$73,820.00.

INSURANCE

Mr. McCarthy said these numbers are placeholders at this time and Ms. Capone said she will skip this for now pending some changes.

LEGAL

The 2022 default budget is \$96,000.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$106,000.00.

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Ms. Bressette) To reduce this amount by \$10,000.00.

Mr. Sherman said that both boards can seek advice from the town counsel, and our town counsel represents the whole town. Ms. Capone wanted to reiterate that during review, it was said that we can hire a separate attorney and it doesn't take away from that ability.

VOTE:

Thomas Gellar – abstain
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Jason Croteau - yes
Bob Haverty – no

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Amber Capone – yes

(6-1-1) Motion passes. The Budget Committee approved amount is \$96,000.00.

LIBRARY: The default budget for the library is \$566,795.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$564,051.00.

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Mr. Haverty) To increase the library noise abatement to the CIP amount from \$52,746.00 to \$72,669.00.

Mr. Haverty asked if the library has asked for more. Mr. Sherman said the CIP number is the one that the library asked for at this committee. Mr. Croteau asked if the 15% was for the increase in the cost of goods. Mr. Sherman said that's correct and if it's not used it will go back into the general fund. Ms. Capone clarified that the 15% is based on the total amount of the project.

VOTE:
Thomas Gellar – abstain
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Jason Croteau - yes
Bob Haverty – no
Amber Capone - yes

(6-1-1) Motion passes. The new amount for the library is \$584,374.00.

PARKS AND RECREATION: The default budget for the Parks and Recreation is \$269,189.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$275,840.00.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT: The Planning department default budget is \$591,067.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$640,282.00.00.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: The Police Department default budget is \$3,505,409.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$3,616,398.00.

MOTION: (Ms. Capone/Mr. Haverty) The two officers being requested are outside of the TCT approval.

Mr. Haverty said our approved TCT amount for this year (2021) is \$93,440.07 and for 2022 is \$95,729.36.00. Ms. Capone said for one position, the TCT total would be \$115,467.32 and this is outside our approval amount. With that being said, it needs to move to a warrant article as stated in the by-laws. Between both the police budget, retirement, and insurance we would look at a decrease for each officer of \$89,780.16 for a total decrease of \$179,560.32. Mr. Haverty said she is using a 52-week figure and that our budget committee by-laws do not require a 52-week figure. He said we're relying on a policy that doesn't exist in our by-laws and we're going against historical practice of using a 39-week figure. He said a TCT is an arbitrary number that doesn't hold water and that it's a salary plus benefits and retirement. He said it's assuming a family plan, however some officers are single and don't require this, so the cost will be lower. He said to look at overtime and the numbers. He said they've historically used the 39-week number, not the 52 and to change it this year makes zero sense. The town desperately needs these two officers. Ms. Capone reminded the board of what the by-laws state and that staff and changes shall be managed by the departments through normal budget process where the total compensation (salary plus estimated town portion of family benefits and retirement exceeds the TCT (total compensation threshold). TCT set forth in these by-laws and reviewed at the budget committee each year. In cases where total

compensation exceeds TCT, the addition of new staff shall be set forth in a warrant article. Mr. Haverty said in no place is it indicated we need to use year two as the total cost. He said a TCT always changes after the person is hired and their salary gets managed through contractual obligations. He said we can't use next year, as we don't know what that is even going to look like, to evaluate something on this year. Ms. Capone said they will be there for 52 weeks next year. Mr. Haverty agreed, and they will do more than the threshold. He said the by-laws do not state 52 weeks, but why this year are we deciding to use 52 weeks. Ms. Bressette asked if this was done with the schools, to use 52 weeks. Mr. Haverty said last year when they discussed the school, there was no talk of the TCT. Ms. Bressette said they've had them on warrant articles before. Mr. Gellar said the school year is not based on a calendar year, so they vote July through June. Mr. Haverty said last year a building inspector was hired and there was no talk of TCT, and he was hired at \$85,000.00 and if you had a family plan on top of that, that exceeds the threshold. Mr. Haverty said this year it's been decided through an outside, casual conversation of it being based on 52 weeks. The by-law was put in place to be able to hire needed positions like fire and police staff without having to go to a warrant article. We need to remember why this by-law was put in place. Ms. Bressette said we also can put it to a warrant article. Mr. Haverty mentioned that this board has no jurisdiction to require a warrant article. Ms. Capone said they have the jurisdiction to either remove the amount or have it remain in the budget. Mr. Sherman said historically this wording was to allow some leeway so they wouldn't have to go to a warrant article to hire people. He said before the by-laws were changed, they used to always have to go to a warrant article. He would suggest they recommend to the chair to suggest doing this for any full-time position. Mr. Haverty said that's not his jurisdiction, and he would look to the members at large and the leadership of the board to make those by-law recommendations. He would fall on historical practices and would go with the 39 weeks. Mr. Sherman said that wasn't the case. Mr. Haverty said this wasn't the case when the building inspector was hired last year. Mr. Sherman said the building inspector went from part-time to full-time. Mr. Haverty said it was a stipend position. The by-laws say when moving from part time to full time, if it exceeds the TCT, the board may pull it out of the budget and trigger a warrant article. Last year when this board approved the building inspector, he said TCT was never a question. Ms. Capone said we need to pull the minutes from when the TCT by law was introduced and decide what the original interpretation was, whether it was a 52- or 39-week year. Ms. Capone said her interpretation when it comes to total compensation, is a 52-week year, especially when in year two, they will be working 52 weeks. Mr. Haverty said back in 2016, there was not one mention of 39 or 52. He thinks that people will be wondering why this change has been made this year. Ms. Capone reminded the board there is reconsideration and thinks that everyone should go back and look back at the historical data and by-laws. She said a preliminary vote should be taken now and it can be revisited. Ms. Capone restated the motion on the table is to decrease the police, insurance, and retirement \$179,560.32. This is the total insurance, retirement and salary including education, equipment, and uniforms for the two police officers. Mr. Haverty stated this is to remove.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – no
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – no
Jason Croteau – yes (to discuss at reconsideration)
Bob Haverty – no
Amber Capone - yes

(5-3-0) Motion passes.

Ms. Capone said this will be discussed at reconsideration once everyone can review the historical data and discuss with legal counsel. Mr. Haverty asked Mr. McCarthy if we take this up a reconsideration, does this then puts us in a corner if we want to do a warrant article. Mr. McCarthy said that we would generate a

warrant article and if needs to be changed, it can be pulled out. He asked Mr. Croteau if he voted to remove or leave the positions in until reconsideration. Mr. Croteau said he was voting to remove it at this point based on the chair's discussion. Mr. Croteau said there could be a special meeting for this and wants to educate himself more on historical data. Ms. Capone wants the record to reflect that it's not that they don't want this but she wants to be comfortable based on the by-laws and need to research further into this before deciding. Mr. Croteau said that they can contact legal as well. Mr. Haverty offered that himself and Mr. Capone have a teleconference with legal to discuss and asked Mr. McCarthy to coordinate this.

MOTION: (Ms. Bressette/Mr. Sherman) Increase of overtime by \$11,101.00 that was taken out from last year.

Mr. Haverty and Mr. McCarthy corrected it to \$22,000.00, for the two officers to be put back in. Ms. Bressette said only \$11,000.00 was taken out from last year. Ms. Capone said \$11,101.00 on Line 103, earned time.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – abstain
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Jason Croteau - yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Amber Capone - yes

(7-0-1) Motion passes.

Mr. Demers will update those numbers. Ms. Capone will skip retirement for now.

SELECTMEN: The default budget is \$627,275.00. The 2022 approved amount is \$598,742.00.

MOTION: (Ms. Capone/Ms. Bressette) To increase the assistant pay by \$31,790.00. This was a discussion item because it was determined they hadn't allocated enough weeks for the assistant, so they corrected it and it increased the amount.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – abstain
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Jason Croteau - yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Amber Capone - yes

(7-0-1) Motion passes. For the record, the Budget committee amount opened is \$630,532.00.

SENIOR CENTER: The default budget for the senior center is \$170,148.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$171,950.00.

TECHNOLOGY: The default budget for technology is \$286,116.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$297,796.00.

TOWN BUILDINGS: The town building's default budget is \$640,864.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved is \$994,121.00.

TOWN CELEBRATIONS

The 2022 default budget is \$9,260.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved is \$9,260.00.

TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR

The default budget is \$286,848.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved is \$305,449.00.

MOTION: (Ms. Capone/Ms. Bressette) Increase postage by \$640.00.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – abstain
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Jason Croteau - yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Amber Capone - yes

(7-0-1) Motion passes. The amount approved is \$306,089.00

TRANSFER STATION

The default budget is \$977,629.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$979,437.00.

TREASURER

The default budget is \$15,249.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$15,249.00.

TRUST FUND

The default budget is \$150.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$335.00.

Ms. Capone updated the police department, insurance, and retirement numbers.

POLICE DEPARMENT: Amount is \$3,524,147.00.

INSURANCE: Placeholder, per Mr. McCarthy. The default budget is \$2,637,814.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$2,683,974.00. The amount on the table for budget committee review is \$2,637,814.00, as a result of the motion for the police officers.

RETIREMENT: The retirement default budget is \$2,413,447.00. The 2022 Board of Selectmen approved amount is \$2,438,082.00. The amount on the table for budget committee review is \$2,413,447.00, as a result of the motion for the police officers.

Ms. Capone said the total amount for budget committee consideration is \$19,817,755.00.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – yes
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Jason Croteau - yes

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Bob Haverty – yes
Amber Capone - yes

(8-0-0) Motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS:

The school walk will be on Oct. 16, 2021, at the Pelham Memorial School at 9AM. This is a mandatory meeting, if anyone cannot attend, they need to inform Ms. Capone for an excused absence. Ms. Capone was notified that the deliberative sessions have changed and the new dates are February 8th for the town and February 9th for the school. Ms. Capone will send out a revised schedule. There is still a vacancy on this committee. Mr. Haverty mentioned the member, Paul Grant, who was elected this past year. He stated he has many more than four unexcused absences and he hasn't been at any meetings.

MOTION: (Mr. Haverty/Mr. Sherman) Under RSA 32.15: to serve a notification to Mr. Grant to either show up or be removed from this committee.

Ms. Capone said she spoke with Mr. Grant this past week on the phone and discussed the missed meetings. Mr. Grant had prior obligations and that he is graduating from the police academy on November 19, 2021. He indicated he will be committed to serving out the rest of his time to this board. He also confirmed that with his new job, he will still be able to make the meetings.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – abstain
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Jason Croteau - yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Amber Capone - yes

(7-0-1) Motion passes.

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Mr. Haverty) To adjourn meeting.

VOTE: Thomas Gellar – yes
Edwardo Martony - yes
Bob Sherman – yes
Meg Bressette – yes
Philip Haberlen – yes
Jason Croteau - yes
Bob Haverty – yes
Amber Capone - yes

(8-0-0) Motion passes.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Castles
Recording Secretary