

APPROVED

TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 6, 2022

CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Haberlen opened the meeting at approximately 6:38 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Haberlen called attendance:

PRESENT: Jason Croteau
Philip Haberlen
Eduardo Martony
Garret Abare
Debbie Ryan
Megan Larson
Paul Grant
Bob Sherman
Ellen Cormier
Jennifer Castles

ABSENT: Meg Bressette (Excused)
Greg Smith (Excused)

MINUTES REVIEW:

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Mr. Haberlen) To place the September 29, 2022, meeting minutes on file.

Mr. Haberlen asked if anyone had any changes or edits to the minutes. No one had any edits.

VOTE: (7-0-1) Ms. Larson abstained. The motion carried.

BY-LAW REVIEW

Mr. Haberlen said the by-laws are still being reviewed by legal, so we will review those at a future meeting.

REVIEW OF BUDGETS

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Midgley and Mr. Ignatowicz were the presenters. Mr. Haberlen mentioned the benefits for converting from a part-time to a full-time for the deputy chief. The other item was using the CivicGov software. Chief said when Ms. Beauregard presented this to them, he asked if there was some commonality with this software. He said Planning has an inspection division and the Fire department has an inspection division also. Sometimes the communications become difficult throughout the process of construction. He said this would allow them to merge everything, with one permit system that would allow them to see what everyone has done. Such as the electrical inspection, life safety inspection, etc. He said having this on one common platform would be good and improve communication. He said there is also a mobile platform, so they

could go paperless. It will all be online, and this will help with retention. They will be able to look up permits online rather than going through paper files.

Ms. Ryan asked about the old files and would archiving be done? Chief said it will only be from this point forward. He said redoing the old permit system would require too many manhours.

Chief said this will help homeowners in the future.

Mr. Sherman said that Meg Bressette wanted to ask why the deputy chief position has to be made to full-time now and could this wait another year?

Chief said the deputy chief's position was instituted 7 years ago and at that time they stated this was a steppingstone to full-time. He said if someone says to 'wait until next year' he said, nobody will take this job. He said that position would maintain a vacancy. That position will take 4-6 months to get up to speed on the processes. He said nobody would take a position where they are told they are trying to get rid of this position next year. He said that would be impossible. He said if there is no one in that seat for the duration, there is going to be no management here at certain times during the nights and the weekends. He said he can't work 24/7/365 for the next three years. He said the big thing is that being an administrator in a public safety agency means you are tied to the town and that is why the police department has on-call officers. He said currently he alternates every other weekend with the deputy chief and one of them is always on-call. He said they get no compensation or comp time for that, they just do it because it's the right thing to do for the community for us to have a safe, effective working environment to protect our community. He said if that option is taken away from him, he can not do it all, it is physically impossible.

Mr. Haberlen said the benefits that were emailed are as follows: \$21,775.08 for 2-persons medical. \$502.32 for 2-persons dental. \$132.00 for life. \$30,878.64 for NH retirement system for a total of \$53,288.04.

Chief said those numbers look high, but he said in comparison to a firefighter EMT, who's been there for 3.5 years, is that benefit package is only \$6,500.00 more. He said that benefit package is relative to the employee they are hiring. Those numbers are high, but it is like that for every employee.

Ms. Laron said it is like that for all employees they hire also in the school. She said the benefits are expensive.

Mr. Croteau asked if the Chief was incapacitated and could not come to work, he asked if the deputy chief would run the department? Chief said that was a good question, because we don't have a rank structure and they are a department of 24. He said it goes from 4-line lieutenants responsible for daily operations, running calls and administrative. He said then it's the chief and there is nothing in between except the deputy chief. He explained last year he was out due to surgeries and the deputy chief took over for him during those times. He said if that option was taken away, he is not sure who would run the department.

Mr. Haberlen said regarding the CivicGov software info he sent, there were no numbers on there. He asked if there would be any impact to the Fire Department's budget for that or was he just endorsing that? Chief said yes and CivicGov does have a life safety module that he looked into it. He said the benefits that would give to his department versus the cost, the cost benefit wasn't there so he won't go down that road. He said they currently use other databases, such as the burn permit one, and those are free and work well.

Mr. Abare asked what would happen if this committee turned this down this year, he asked what the prospects would be to attract a deputy chief down the road if we said no this year?

Chief said attracting a part-time deputy chief probably won't happen. He said the problem with pushing things off to later is that you risk losing people who are qualified. Chief said Mr. Ignatowicz has his Master's degree, is a Fire 3, and has every certification you can imagine, and do you want to risk losing him?

Mr. Croteau said a Selectmen's representative to this board, public and life safety is extremely important for our residents. He said for our Chief to say now, if there is no deputy fire chief and if he can't do this job, and there is no one in charge, then that is a problem.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Mr. Haberlen said the first item is the catch basin cleaning truck and that is on the CIP for \$318,522.00 and he was told that is now going to be funded in a highway block grant and would be removed from the budget?

Mr. Jay Hoffman said yes, and he went with a smaller truck and the total cost is \$253,417.00 and will be

funded by the block grant. Mr. Haberlen confirmed it won't have any effect on the budget. Mr. Hoffman said correct.

Ms. Ryan asked what the difference was between the two trucks? Mr. Hoffman said the G.V.W. and this is a smaller truck, non-CDL, but it is big enough to haul and there is no concern, because once it's full they will empty it at their yard. He said the boom outreach on the bigger truck was 15 feet and this one has 14 feet. It will still go 35 feet deep, which is plenty for the basins. He said the difference was the cost. This truck is an international truck, a CV, smaller unit with a Duramax diesel. He said the company Stetco builds them and presented this to him. Mr. Haberlen said this was still on the wish list tab and could they get rid of it? Mr. Hoffman said yes.

Ms. Larson said the truck wasn't in the approved Selectmen's budget, correct? Mr. Roark said no. Ms. Larson said this board should be looking to cut that cost in the budget for what they pay someone to do it now. Mr. Roark said that was correct and there's \$35,000.00 and would Mr. Hoffman be comfortable deleting that from the budget? Mr. Hoffman said yes. Ms. Larson said we can talk about that next week. She wanted to clarify that it was made to look like it was in the budget, but it's not, so we're not taking it out, but members of the committee may want to take out what we would usually pay for the associated costs.

Mr. Abare asked if there was any lead time on that truck? Mr. Hoffman said it's been ordered. He said the other truck he was looking at was a year lead time. He said this smaller truck is at the Stetco plant and they are building it. He said it will be ready for next year. Mr. Roark said the chassis is purchased and they are upfitting the dump body and crane onto it. Mr. Roark said the catch basin cleaning gets done in the spring and summer. Mr. Hoffman said the catch basin cleaners will be coming in a few weeks for this year's cleaning because this new truck won't be ready by winter. Mr. Abare asked if the training was free? Mr. Hoffman said that won't be a problem and there's no difference between this and a plow truck. Mr. Abare asked if a special license was needed? Mr. Hoffman said no.

Mr. Haberlen said this is on the CIP, so if it needs to be removed, is it sufficient to say it needs to be pulled off the plan here or does he need to email Ms. Beauregard to request that?

Ms. Larson said it would probably be taken off next year when they do the CIP review again.

Mr. Croteau asked Mr. Sherman his opinion on that catch basin truck being on the CIP?

Mr. Sherman said bottom line, we can remove it. Mr. Croteau said Mr. Demers removed the \$35,000.00 from the budget. Ms. Larson said she would not remove that until somebody next week makes a motion to take that out. Mr. Sherman said tonight is only discussion and next week is when we can formally take it back to the Selectmen to make sure the Selectmen go along with that. Mr. Sherman said all we do is express opinions, and we don't remove anything tonight. Mr. Croteau said understood. Ms. Larson said she wouldn't remove anything tonight, not until next week when next week people make motions to remove things. Ms. Larson said because we're going to adjust whatever the Selectmen approve. Mr. Haberlen said there was also a request for \$128,000.00 which is also on the CIP to replace a failing culvert on Bush Hill Road? Mr. Hoffman said yes.

Mr. Martony asked what the impact would be if that was pushed off to next year? Mr. Hoffman said it could fail at any time and then we'd have a problem. The pipes are twisted and bent and there is a beaver dam that holds back water and if that dam goes, the road will go. He said this would take care of that problem and make it able to handle the water.

Mr. Sherman asked if the highway grant would cover that cost? Mr. Hoffman said he has a lot of projects that people want done, different roads to be rebuilt, so he's trying to save that money for that.

Ms. Ryan asked where that was in the budget? Mr. Haberlen said it's in the CIP. Ms. Larson asked if it was in the budget? Mr. Haberlen said no. Ms. Larson said unless someone adds that next week or at reconsideration, it's not on the table. Mr. Haberlen said he was discussing it, because it was on an email.

Ms. Larson said there is a lot of confusion, because we are talking about wish list items, and they are not in the budget. She said we are not going to be voting to remove them, because they are not in the budget. Mr. Haberlen said that was noted.

Mr. Roark said at the board level there was confusion about whether an item like that should be a warrant article or should be in the budget, so he thinks the board was waiting to see the budget committee's thoughts

on whether they should be on a warrant article or in the operating budget. He said we should think about that. Mr. Sherman said that culvert already exists and that is a needed repair for public safety and should be in this budget. Ms. Larson said she thinks the Selectmen should talk about that and bring it back at reconsideration. Mr. Croteau said that's the plan.

Ms. Larson said it's difficult for the committee to vote on a budget when they are going to bring back other things, including an insurance increase. She said it affects what this committee's job is to look at a full budget and depending on what the overall budget is, some decisions next week may be different. She said we talked about this before and last year the insurance increase was \$200,000.00 and we had no choice, but out to put that in January. She said next week when they take the \$500,000.00 out for the police radio, it looks like you're at a 2% increase and then at reconsideration there is \$500,000.00 more added.

Mr. Roark said they are going to try tonight to give insurance and fuel estimates. He said he and Ms. Penny spent time getting information on those prices.

Ms. Ryan asked if reconsideration was for new information? She said if we have information now, shouldn't it be in the budget now? She said insurance would have to come back, but like the catch basins, we have that information, so shouldn't it be in the budget now and not brought back because the Selectmen want to make a different decision?

Mr. Croteau asked Mr. Hoffman when this culvert issue came up? Mr. Hoffman said it's been there for a few years, and they've been watching the road sink. He said when there are heavy rains, it looks like the pipe is clogged, but it's not, it's just because it's not flowing through smoothly.

Mr. Croteau asked if they were aware of this at budget season or we were aware, but now it's degraded so much it needs repair? Mr. Hoffman said he is new to this and when he was presented with this, he was asked if he had a 'wish list'. He said this was one of the things he added to this. Mr. Croteau said it still is a wish list and we are discussing it and if it doesn't get approved by this committee and it fails, what is the recourse? Mr. Hoffman said he would have to use the block grant money and push other things back and do this repair. Mr. Croteau said the Selectmen will discuss that and get back to this committee.

Mr. Haberlen said on the highway A tab, there's nothing in the wish list items back, then maybe that needs to be populated?

Ms. Cormier said some things will get pushed back and are you affecting 1000 people by pushing other things back or a small number for the failing culvert? Mr. Hoffman said there are two roads in town that people want rebuilt and they have been pushed off for a long time. He was trying to resolve those and then the culvert was brought up. He said he is new to this, and he was asked what he would like to fix, so he put the culvert on there. He said he can't give an exact number of houses on those roads, but those people are very vocal about getting them done. He said he tried to get a grant to replace this, and they did not get it. He said once he got an estimate from Keach, he brought it here.

Mr. Martony asked what he thought was the highest priority? Mr. Hoffman said this culvert is. He said there is no danger with the road, it's just people are unhappy with their road.

Ms. Ryan said regardless of the number of people, if people can't get to their homes or if police and fire can't get there, it affects them. She asked if this was similar to Bowley Road a few years ago? Mr. Hoffman said yes, exactly.

Mr. Abare asked how much is it to fix the culvert? Mr. Hoffman said the estimate from Keach is \$128,156.00.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Perriello said they received a verbal trade-in offer for the Harley motorcycle and that was \$4,500.00. Mr. Haberlen said when they receive that written, we can do something in the budget with that.

Mr. Sherman said a question from Ms. Bressette was that the police have underspent their budget by \$100,000.00, which is great. With the motorcycle being the price that it is, is it possible to buy the motorcycle out of the current year's budget if there are funds left over at the end of the fiscal year? Ms. Bressette said she is likely to cut the motorcycle from the budget given the historical information and their ability to buy it if there are funds left over. Chief said historically there have been some funds left over. She said there can't be a zero on a line because they can't predict policing, crime or weather events. She

said she believes there may be money left over but can't guarantee that. Mr. Sherman asked if that would be enough to buy the motorcycle? Chief said she is hoping so and hopes that we have no severe events. She said as long as we stay on course, we should have that money to do that.

Mr. Haberlen asked if that \$4,500.00 would appear on the spreadsheet as a credit? Ms. Penny said the proper accounting for a trade-in is recorded as revenue. The appropriation is the actual cost of the motorcycle, so no it wouldn't be a credit. It wouldn't cost the taxpayers and the \$4,500.00 would be recognized as revenue. Mr. Haberlen asked if we would not see it on the spreadsheet? Ms. Penny said correct.

Chief said they had spoken last time and the reason they wanted to keep the bike regarding the wear, tear, miles and training. She said Captain Toom is with her tonight, as he is in charge of the motorcycle. Chief said if they do take the old bike out of the equation, then the new bike is what goes through the training. She said the training has to continue yearly and you have to train. She said he can explain why they want to keep the bike and the ins and outs of the bike if anyone wanted to know.

Mr. Sherman remembered when they first presented the budget, he said they had zeroed out some gun or officer and he suggested they put \$1.00 in, and he couldn't find it. Chief said she was going to ask to propose two things there. One would be to put the \$1.00 line item into the firearms instructor line. She said the second is, and this has been approved already that the Selectmen, to have approved funding for the radio infrastructure, so she is proposing that be removed from the police budget.

Ms. Larson said they can't just go in and add it all, we have to do that next week. Mr. Sherman said it was in their original presentation and that's another issue that needs to be addressed. Ms. Larson said they need to make sure what we are seeing reconciles with what has been approved before we got to this budget committee, and nothing has been removed.

Chief said it should be what the board had approved for the radio cost, but then we would look for approval for the \$1.00 item to be put in.

Ms. Larson said next week Mr. Croteau can make a motion to take the \$500,000.00 out of the budget and then if the board approves it, we will remove it. She wants to make sure we stick to the right process.

Mr. Haberlen wanted to confirm we were talking about row 332 on police tab B for \$511,588.00? The members said yes.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Mr. Haberlen said they wanted an increase of \$4,500.00 for an increase in trash disposal? Mr. Johnson said that was correct. Mr. Haberlen asked if that was for the operating budget? Mr. Johnson said yes. Mr. Johnson said when we got the invoicing we went back and looked at the contract and the number that was put in wasn't the correct number. Mr. Roark said for clarification, we're talking about line #184, trash removal and dumpsters. He said the parks have 57 wheeled totes around town and that is the expense. We have a new trash contract, and the number came in higher than expected. The previous trash contract was a 5-year contract, and we are seeing a gain of 5-years all at once. He said the number Mr. Johnson will be looking for a motion to change that would be to \$13,450.00. Mr. Johnson said correct. Mr. Roark said that's a difference of \$4,150.00.

Mr. Abare asked if the \$9,300.00 was off the previous 5-year contract? Mr. Johnson said the new contract started October 1 and the previous number was \$6,000.00 and there was \$9,100.00 put in there and he wasn't sure why. Mr. Roark said there were additional rentals put in that caused the number to change. Mr. Roark said there were previous bin rentals and when they looked into it, those numbers changed.

Mr. Abare asked if this will be like this for how long? Mr. Roark said this is a 3-year contract. Mr. Roark said there's a potential of a 2.5% increase, but it will be in that ballpark. Mr. Abare asked if there was a longer contract available? Mr. Roark said no, and we were fortunately able to get the trash hauling contract for 5-years. Mr. Roark said they did the best they could, as some companies were hesitant to go into 5-year contracts at this time.

Mr. Sherman asked the police department in regard to the CIP, was the \$82,628.00 still there for the remodel? Chief said that was presented to CIP for future planning expansion. Mr. Sherman said it's on

for this budget year and are they postponing that? Chief said that was at your or the Selectmen's discretion in regard to the CIP with the expansion project. Mr. Croteau said there hasn't been much discussion on that and he was inclined to say they will push that off. Ms. Larson said if it's something then they can always decide to bring it back at reconsideration if they have the time to discuss that. Mr. Croteau said they would discuss that with the Chief.

PLANNING

Mr. Haberlen said Ms. Bressette asked if the 5% increase on CivicGov software was on \$21,000.00 or \$2,100.00 on page 14 of the CivicGov. He believed the answer was \$21,000.00, is that accurate? Ms. Beauregard said it would be on the entire cost of the system at the time. She said she emailed a current proposal from CivicGov, and they were able to waive the 5% increases (technology uplift) until year 5. They'd commit to that, even though we'd still be on a yearly contract with them with an exit clause if we needed it. The current proposal is attached to the email she sent to this committee. The person from CivicGov did say the 5% annual uplift is the technology fee that is charged yearly so they don't have any big increases every year if they have major upgrades. They provided a new proposal, and the prices are in Attachment 1. Mr. Haberlen said it's on page 2. He said the total investment for year 1 is \$29,500. Year 2, 3 and 4 is \$17,000.00. Year 5 \$17,850.00. Ms. Beauregard said yes and that was down from \$21,000.00 each year prior. Mr. Haberlen said the spreadsheet needs to be updated to reflect those numbers. Ms. Larson said no, if someone wants to make a motion next week to adjust that, then that can happen. Mr. Haberlen said he was just planning ahead.

Ms. Beauregard said the original request for year 1 investment was \$38,000.00 and now they're starting at \$29,500.00. If possible, we'd like to keep an additional \$5,000.00 in there for any contingency costs or other modules they may have missed. She said the module implementation seems to be around \$5,000.00 total for year 1.

Mr. Haberlen asked about the \$4,500.00 needing to remain in the budget for the iWork's? Ms. Beauregard said that is unchanged and when she talked to Brian, they realized they need that \$4,500.00 for this year as there would be an overlap of systems if they make this change.

Mr. Haberlen said there was another question about the code enforcer having his hours reduced due to the possible slowing down of building? Ms. Beauregard said the code enforcement officer's role is mostly zoning compliance, complaints, site plan, zoning violations and neighbor disputes. She said building is a small part of what he does, so if building were to slow down, there would still be a need for the 24 hours.

TOWN BUILDINGS

Mr. Haberlen said there was a request for an increase in landscaping from \$126,900.00 to \$134,025.00 and Ms. Bressette asked if this was a contractual increase or not? Mr. Roark said they are negotiating the 2023 contract and they had that original number, but over the last week he has contacted the contractor and talked about additional work that is needed to be done. Mr. Roark said that is what drove the cost up on Line #193.

Mr. Roark said on lines 85-88 (fuels). He said he and Ms. Penny looked into this. He said there is an administration that tries to predict these things it's called the US Energy Information Administration. He said they don't think it will trend at the rate we are fearing, but the predictions are going up. He recommends for the propane: \$3.00 a gallon, we have a cap on that and a signed contract for \$2.99 for the first 6 months of the year, he is comfortable leaving that number in. For natural gas: we are in there at \$1.20, the projection cost is \$2.19. For oil: we are locked in at \$2.40 per gallon and the predicted is \$4.11. He would ask if next week, the motion could be made to increase the oil expense on Line #86 to \$4.11 a gallon. The gas expense to \$2.19 (per thermal unit).

Ms. Ryan said that is a number they can bring back at reconsideration.

Mr. Sherman assumed they are sticking with gas and diesel for the budget. Mr. Roark said he thinks those are the number we would stay throughout. He said the numbers from the US Energy Information Administration for gas is \$4.25 is about 18% over what their projection was. He said fuel is something

they can't come up short on and he is comfortable with that number. For diesel the \$5.00 is 17% over the projected number. He said he is comfortable keeping those numbers the same throughout the budget.

Mr. Roark said Line #46 for electricity.

Ms. Larson suggested the Selectmen might want to wait to bring these numbers back at reconsideration so we can have the numbers at that time. Mr. Croteau said that's the normal practice to wait for reconsideration, but we don't want to be caught with our jaws dropped. He said he's under the opinion, if we put it in now then we know what our budget is (1% or 2%) and then at reconsideration if it's higher or lower we can fix it at that point. He said at least we have the worst-case scenario now.

Ms. Larson said that's what they do for the school. Mr. Croteau said it's whatever the board's pleasure is.

Ms. Larson said he was right and they can adjust at reconsideration. Mr. Abare said to Mr. Roark that these are the government's guesses and it's not a worst-case scenario. Mr. Roark said it's someone's educated guess and it could be worse or better or overly optimistic, but he had to start somewhere.

Mr. Haberlen pointed out that electricity is a much larger part of the budget than the heat is. He said that would be more critical to get right. Mr. Roark said for the electricity that he and Ms. Penny were looking at all different things such as kilowatts, companies, distributions, costs, and it looks like we will need a 25% increase on that to cover where we are going. Mr. Roark said in a trade publication, New England had the highest increase rates in the nation over the last 60 days.

Ms. Larson said the school had a 30% increase in their electricity rates that they are budgeting for. Mr. Roark said to bear in mind, whether it's next week or at reconsideration, we've absorbed that just like everyone in this room has over the last two months.

TOWN CELEBRATIONS

Mr. Haberlen said Ms. Bressette asked if there was a contract with more information that could be provided regarding the \$14,000.00 town holiday lights? Mr. Haberlen said there was an invoice found for 50% as a deposit on the lights and was that accurate? Mr. Roark said correct, and this program began before him and Mr. Croteau started here. Mr. Roark said it looks to be that there isn't a signed contract. He said speaking to Charlene there is an agreement that this service, which includes putting up the lights, taking them down and storage. Mr. Roark said there is no contract, but that is the cost.

Mr. Haberlen said that number should remain unchanged? Mr. Roark said no.

Mr. Sherman asked if we owned these lights? Mr. Roark said his understanding is that we own the lights. Mr. Croteau agreed that was correct.

Mr. Abare asked how much longer the agreement was for? Mr. Roark said he thought it was year to year and again he wasn't able to locate a signed contract.

Mr. Sherman said given the tree that is set up in front of the library and he asked who owns that tree? Mr. Roark believes we own that tree. Mr. Roark said there is a town common tree, which is a 22-foot tower tree and the trees outlining the common, two trees in the middle of the common and the small spruce tree adjacent to the library all will be done in multicolored lights. The town hall building has three trees out front will be trunked and canopied wrapped in multicolored lights (LED's). the street side of the town hall building, 4 small trees will be inner wrapped with multicolored mini's, 6 bushes will be wrapped in multicolored mini's, 2 large trees will be done in C7 multicolored bulbs, and all lighting will be LED's and on digital timers to ensure they are activated at the same time daily. He said that's as close to anything in writing he could find.

Mr. Sherman asked if this could be handled in a landscaper's contract? Mr. Roark couldn't say. Mr. Croteau said this is a sensitive subject for the board and it just came to them, and they will be looking into it. He believes there are 17 trees they light up, a 22-foot tree and then some trees out front. He said the Selectmen will look at this and come back next year with a different proposal.

TRANSFER STATION

Mr. Haberlen said they asked for a closed-top ejector model compactor for \$112,000.00? Mr. Long said yes. Mr. Haberlen said that is not on the CIP now, as that is a new request? Mr. Long said yes that is. Mr. Long said the current trailer is 20 years old and is in disrepair. They just had another one rebuilt for

\$60,000.00. He said this one will be more due to increased prices. He said this has a better lead time and the longevity will be double than what a rebuild would.

Mr. Haberlen said they asked for a compactor for \$88,000.00 and that is on the CIP? Mr. Long said yes. Mr. Haberlen said the CIP lists the price at \$88,500.00 and an email said \$88,000.00, so which is correct? Mr. Roark said for the MSW compactor was a wish list item for \$83,665.00. Mr. Long said that sounded right.

Mr. Sherman said that's not in this budget, so that's another item they need to bring back to us. Mr. Croteau said yes. Mr. Haberlen said that is in the CIP. Mr. Sherman said it's not in the budget. Mr. Long said it is a replacement, so should it be a ballot item? Ms. Larson said it should be in the budget. Mr. Long agreed. Mr. Haberlen asked if he wanted to move it from the CIP to the operating budget? Mr. Long said yes.

Mr. Haberlen said for the F550 truck for \$110,000.00 is in the CIP. He said that is also replacing older equipment and does this need to go in the operating budget too? Mr. Long said yes to replace what they have.

Mr. Sherman asked about the ATG tractor is on the CIP, but is that being postponed? Mr. Long said yes. Mr. Haberlen said that was for \$185,000.00. Mr. Long said yes. Mr. Haberlen said that was classified as urgent, is it urgent? Mr. Long said they were thinking about hauling own our trash, but entered into this 5-year contract, so they may not need that.

Mr. Sherman asked about manpower there and asked how many full-time workers they have? Mr. Long said they have 4 total including himself. Mr. Sherman said they have to bring this to the Selectmen, if they put two part-time people and replaced them with full-time, would they be better off? Mr. Long said yes definitely. Mr. Sherman said that would be something the Selectmen and Mr. Roark would have to handle.

Mr. Sherman asked Mr. Long to explain the situation. Mr. Long said he's been there since 2002 and there have been 4 full-time people working there and not one full-time position has been added since that time. He said they are using 2 part-time guys right now to do a full-time job and he said they would get better quality work out of a full-time person. Mr. Sherman said it's not our ruling to put something like that in but would be the Selectmen and Town administrator.

Mr. Roark said two of those part-time administrators have been combined into a full-time position recently, correct? Mr. Long said yes. MR. Sherman asked if that was reflected in this budget? Mr. Roark said no, that was a change made recently as there has been turnover there, but the funding is available in the budget. Mr. Sherman asked if adjustments need to be made? Mr. Roark said no because they haven't made the hire yet and they are working towards what Mr. Sherman is speaking of and the department will be reorganized.

ASSESSOR

Mr. Haberlen said the previous budget was \$225,413.00. Selectmen approved \$229,193.00 for 2023.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

There is a current placeholder for \$2.00.

CABLE

2023 Selectmen approved is \$165,647.00.

CEMETERY

2023 Selectmen approved is \$177,573.00.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

2023 Selectmen approved \$10,489.00.

Ms. Ryan asked about the wish list item for \$3,800.00 to align the conservation plan to the master plan, is that another item in the budget? She said yes, it is on line #126.

ELECTIONS

2023 Selectmen approved is \$18,143.00.

TOWN CLERK and TAX COLLECTOR

2023 Selectmen approved is \$6,426.00.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2023 Selectmen approved budget is \$10,673.00.

LIBRARY

2023 Selectmen approved budget is \$566,655.00.

SENIOR CENTER

2023 Selectmen approved budget is \$191,688.00.

TECHNOLOGY

2023 Selectmen approved budget is \$360,334.00. Mr. Sherman said Ms. Bressette asked if this is a 1 or 5-year deal for the contract? Mr. Demers said in the current budget it is a 1-year contract and he hasn't heard back. Mr. Sherman said if he got a better deal, would he come back at reconsideration for a longer term? Mr. Demers said he brought a 5-year deal last week to the committee. Mr. Sherman asked if he would stick with the 1-year? Mr. Demers said he proposed the 5-year contract last week at this meeting. Mr. Sherman said we have to take what the Selectmen are giving us.

Mr. Croteau said he has a meeting next Tuesday and he said they have a lot to discuss, and this would be part of it. Mr. Croteau said they saw the 5-year contract was cheaper and they would move forward with that.

DEBT SERVICE / INTEREST

2023 Selectmen approved budget is \$68,881.00.

DEBT SERVICE / PRINCIPAL

2023 Selectmen approved budget is \$487,460.00.

HEALTH OFFICER

2023 proposed budget \$87,956.00.00.

HEALTH SERVICES

2023 proposed budget is \$73,700.00.

HUMAN SERVICES

2023 proposed budget is \$75,640.00.

INSURANCE

2023 proposed budget is \$301,2542.00.

Ms. Penny, Finance director said Ms. Bressette asked last week if they could increase these number so there weren't any surprises. She looked into rates and had some proposals for voting next week. She said she won't have actual rates from worker's compensation, property liability and unemployment until October 17, but the town has a cap agreement for property liability and worker's compensation, and she thinks we should consider increasing by those cap amounts as she's done a three-year lookback and thinks that's where we will land. She said for property liability coverage she's hoping this committee will propose an increase of 7% of \$5,295.00 to bring that total to \$156,591.00. For worker's compensation an increase of 8%, from \$14,164.00 to \$368,264.00 and the final line we should increase is health insurance by 5.5%. She said she won't have these numbers until late October as HealthTrust meets and adjusts their rates next week. She said the average change in the past few years was 4.5% and she thinks we should increase the line by \$129,214.00 bringing it to \$2,478,564.00. She said it's a good thing we have the cap agreement because

the claims are running high. She said when we have the actual rates, we can address those later on, but shouldn't be any huge surprises. She said she would have the numbers for the worker's compensation, property insurance and unemployment 'around' October 17, and would have the numbers for health insurance the week after that.

Mr. Sherman asked what the employee waivers and the wish list employees were? Ms. Penny said the wish list would be for insurance for new employees. She said the waivers are for employees that don't want to take the insurance then they would have a monthly buy-out. Mr. Sherman asked if they were hiring or upgrading a part-time person to full-time? Mr. Roark said correct and that would fall under that wish list, but they've also had some attrition and they don't have that exact number now. Mr. Roark said they've lost some employees also. Mr. Sherman asked if there should be \$1.00 on that line or would they fall under general insurance? Ms. Penny said insurance is tricky to pin with people coming and going and with a few employees, you probably wouldn't need that in the budget. Mr. Sherman asked if that line should remain? Ms. Penny said it is zeroed out. Mr. Roark said he is comfortable with the actual health insurance number they have because there are some that are on stipends.

LEGAL

2023 Selectmen approved budget is \$96,000.00, which is level funded from last year.

RETIREMENT

2023 Selectmen and budget approved proposal is \$242,0921.00.

SELECTMEN

2023 Budget and Selectmen approved is \$670,604.00

TREASURER

2023 proposed Selectmen and budget approved is \$15,224.00.

TRUST FUNDS

2023 Selectmen and budget approved is \$335.00.

Ms. Ryan asked to go back to the Selectmen. She asked about the non-union wage increase Line #32, who would that apply for and what it is? Mr. Haberlen said it looks like it's budgeted for \$10,000.00. Mr. Roark said that is for part-time employees in town hall, planning and that's if any of them were given a raise. He said those are reviewed at different times in the year or if a part-time employee needed to be hired and they have to raise the wage. Ms. Ryan asked if that could be applied to administrative assistants or town administrators? Mr. Roark said people like the recording secretaries on the boards, the people who cover the front desk and fill in the gaps and that would be for those people. Mr. Roark said they had difficulty hiring recording secretaries, so they had to raise the per-hour pay rate.

Ms. Cormier asked if the increases were all contractual? Mr. Roark said every full-time employee in the Selectmen's office has a contract. Some of them have specified increases and some are available for reviews and those are typically 2.5%. Ms. Cormier asked if those were union? Mr. Roark said those are non-union salaried employees.

Ms. Cormier asked who oversees Human Services? Mr. Roark said they have a welfare administrator. Ms. Cormier asked him to elaborate on that. Mr. Roark said she is paid a certain amount of money per hour and as the requests come in, she meets with the people and navigates the options for them. Ms. Cormier asked if that was her salary? Mr. Roark said she gets paid \$30.00 per hour as needed. Ms. Cormier asked about Line #128, the general assistance fund, and was that overseen by somebody? Ms. Penny said the welfare administrator is determining need for people based on policies and procedures and she allows this assistance to flow through that line of \$60,000.00 (general assistance). Ms. Cormier asked if anyone on this board

oversees that money? Mr. Roark said yes, that's within the Acufund part, but, no, not that he's aware of. He said a lot of the assistance that is put out is attempted to be recovered through liens, etc.

Mr. Croteau said if the person requesting owns a hard asset in town, like a home, we put a lien on their house. After 12 months, it incurs 6% interest annually until that is paid back and that stays with the house until it's paid back. He said he would have to go to the HR department to see where the money is going. He said he is involved with some non-profits and there are privacy issues there. He said they help people and may not even know who those people are. He said we can get the answer. He said the \$60,000.00 is not just given away and they hold people accountable for what we help them with.

Ms. Cormier said someone in the Selectmen's office oversees it then? Mr. Roark said yes and it's within the AccuFund software as an account. He said people are not just handed money, he said we take the invoice and pay it directly, so we have a record of everything that gets paid. Ms. Cormier asked if someone had a mortgage payment made for them and they get a lien on their house, what happens when that person gets the money paid back, where does the money go? Mr. Roark said it goes into the general fund. Mr. Roark said often people will refinance their home, the lien shows up, the mortgage company pays the lien and we deposit that into the general account with the interest.

Mr. Sherman asked if we would get an updated budget with all the new figures after next Tuesday, but before next Thursday? Mr. Croteau said the Selectmen will talk about putting some wish list items into the budget. Mr. Haberlen said he is asking that question because if we vote next week, we will need to have the actual numbers? Mr. Sherman said yes.

Ms. Larson asked if we will be given an amended budget the day we will vote? Mr. Croteau said he's not saying that, but they will discuss that. Ms. Larson said he should bring Ms. Bressette into that discussion as this is her board. Mr. Haberlen said that Ms. Bressette is anticipating voting next Thursday and if that's not realistic then she needs to know.

Mr. Roark said next Thursday if the board were to discuss which items need to be in the operating budget or a warrant article, would Mr. Croteau be able to make that motion next week to add those to the budget or not? Mr. Sherman said yes. Ms. Larson said to make sure that is on record at their board meeting. Ms. Larson said if it doesn't happen next week, there is still reconsideration.

ADJOURN

MOTION: (Ms. Ryan/Mr. Sherman) To adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: (10-0-0) The motion passes.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Castles
Recording Secretary