

APPROVED

TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 29, 2022

CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Bressette opened the meeting at approximately 6:41 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Bressette called attendance:

PRESENT: Meg Bressette
Jason Croteau
Philip Haberlen
Garret Abare
Greg Smith
Debbie Ryan
Paul Grant
Bob Sherman
Ellen Cormier
Ed Martony (joined after attendance was taken)

ABSENT: Megan Larson (excused)

MINUTES REVIEW:

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Ms. Ryan) To put the September 22, 2022 meeting minutes on file. Ms. Bressette asked if anyone had any edits. No one had any edits.

VOTE: (9-0-0) The minutes are approved.

BY-LAW REVIEW

Ms. Bressette said she spoke with Attorney Ratigan on Tuesday, and she made some minor changes and sent them to him to review one last time and she hasn't heard back from him yet. She said we will revisit that once she hears back from him.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Ms. Jenn Beauregard introduced herself as the Planning Director in the Planning Department. Ms. Bressette said the 2022 operating budget was \$641,402.00. The 2023 department request is \$574,715.00 and that is the same as the Selectmen approved and that is a decrease of 10.4%. Ms. Beauregard said there was a restructuring of the department once she moved into the director's position. With that she started at a lesser rate than the previous director. There's a decrease there of \$11,910.00 with the 2.5% cost of living added to that. The building/plumbing inspector is also showing the cost-of-living increase of 2.5%. The environmental specialist has renegotiated her contract with the Selectmen, and she has taken on a lot of additional duties in addition to that her responsibilities have been expanded beyond the MS4 project. She has registered for stormwater inspector training and with that her contract has gone up and the amount that the consultant was being paid for that has gone down.

The rest are union positions and they're showing some zeroed out because there was restructuring. The planning/zoning position was her old position and the office manager got moved up to the assistant and they started her at a different rate than she herself was making due to her experience. There is a decrease between those two numbers. Also, that is the same as her old position, which was office manager, when that person was hired from the outside, they started her as a planning clerk so that position was zeroed out. The electrical inspector's salary did not change because they had not implemented the 20-hour part-time position, but they are planning to do that as of January 1st.

The code officer also renegotiated his contract and that had an increase to even match other code enforcers' positions in surrounding towns. His hours also increased from 20 to 24 hours a week due to a heavier workload and that's an increase of \$10,400.00. Ms. Bressette asked about the possible slowing down of buildings due to the increase rate increase, is it possible to decrease his hours in the future? Ms. Beauregard said now it would stay at 24, because his workload is very heavy, and he had been averaging about 26 hours per week now.

Supplies: increased the cost of paper for a \$358.00 increase. Cell phone/telephone stipends are contractual. There was a decrease in the inspector's cell phone was due to the plumbing and building inspector having his cell phone reimbursed as part of his contract. That was decreased by half but will probably have to amend that once the electrical inspector starts with his new position on a monthly basis instead of the stipend he gets now.

Gas and Oil: Increased that and they are inheriting 2 vehicles from the police department by the end of this year. They were paying for one vehicle before and will be paying for two now, so that went from \$400.00 to \$800.00.

Repairs: They had \$500.00 budgeted for one vehicle, so they increased that to \$1000.00 for the two.

Rentals: Stayed the same.

Expenses: The only increase was mileage reimbursements. Once they receive the repurposed vehicles, the inspector will have use of one of the vehicles, so that should decrease. The electrical inspector will still use his own vehicle and submit his mileage, rather than now where he gets a stipend.

NRPC's contract for local dues had decreased by \$204.00. The expense budget as a whole was increased by \$192.00.

Specials: last year there was a line item for the Master Plan update for \$80,000.00 and that has been removed. NRPC's cost for the CIP report is unchanged and has been \$2000.00 every year.

MS4 budget: Original contract was \$60,000.00. In 2021 it was decreased to \$45,000.00 and we kept an additional \$10,000.00 in the budget for training and expenses. Since then, we got a new 2023 contract and that is \$20,500.00. This has decreased by \$34,500.00 and a lot of that is due to what Dena has taken on herself. She said they separated a line item and added expenses so they could see the difference and they're not sure how much of that they will need because they are going to use Dena a lot more with the Planning Board and conservation commission with aquifer protection and wetlands and well protections. Dena will need to take extra courses for this. Dena also needs testing supplies and equipment for a makeshift lab she's going to have to do in-house testing. Overall, the budget has a decrease of \$104,687.00.

Ms. Bressette asked about the new civic government permitting software?

Ms. Beauregard said they currently use Civic Plus now for our town website and they are a one-stop shop. They have a program called civic gov and they are looking at it for the planning, coding, code enforcement and permitting software. She said that has a first-year investment of \$38,000.00 and that includes integrating our software, the date import, integrating the payment software. After that, the cost would be about 21,000.00 per year. This software would replace the system they are using now, which is iWork's. iWork's does what they need it to do, but they have to do a lot of work around's and it doesn't seem as intuitive as civic gov. Civic Gov seems to be geared towards municipalities better than iWork's. Right now, the budget for iWork's is in the IT budget and that is 4500.00, so she thought that would come out of the IT budget if they did this. A few months ago, they did a demo of the code enforcement software for Planning with iWork's, and it wasn't able to integrate with our payment software meaning if there was an online portal, residents wouldn't be able to pay online, and they would still have to come into the town hall. She said that wouldn't be convenient for people. She found in researching Civic Gov, they seem to have

more experience with municipalities, allow unlimited users, other departments could use this including the highway department and that is what started this. The highway department was looking into a stormwater management software to track all their stormwater structures. They got a quote for \$14,500.00 to do that. She said they found in the permitting software we would get anyways; they have asset management that could handle all that within it. It also has GIS capabilities. There is a model for planning and zoning also and it could handle conditions all in one spot. The Fire department could issue permits from this software, and it would be used by multiple departments. She said citizens could log in to see where someone is at in the permitting process and only what we want to allow them to see. She thinks it's a great product and they also have civic clerk which is an agenda and meeting minute software for local governments. That deals with agendas, distribution, online codes and ordinances, integrated websites and meeting managers, personal board portals for agenda packets. This seems to have a lot of great programs as well.

Ms. Bressette asked if that would be used for the Planning Board and their packets? Ms. Beauregard said Planning Board, Zoning Board, and conservation commission. Ms. Bressette asked if there was a 5% increase annual increase beginning in year 2 and was that 5% on the \$21,000.00 or on the ICC code integration on \$2,100.00? Ms. Beauregard didn't know, but she can find out.

Ms. Bressette asked if she reached out to any other towns that use this? Ms. Beauregard said she did and that Sue Snide in assessing strongly supports this too, as this would help her with assessing. Sue's daughter uses this and highly recommends this software. She also went through all of the reviews on their website. She said the cons were very minor issues and she didn't find any valid cons. Ms. Bressette asked if that \$38,000.00 included training? Ms. Beauregard said yes, and it is unlimited training.

Mr. Sherman said Planning committee will go to the Selectmen and want a capital improvement established and that would probably come out as a warrant article there going forward. Ms. Beauregard said yes, talking about the warrant article the Planning board wants to put together? Mr. Sherman said yes.

Mr. Sherman said that is the reason why he printed and handed sheets out on the different types of warrant articles out there and the process by which the community needs to or not approve these. He said they have one revolving fund with the Parks and Recreation. Ms. Bressette said reserve funds? Mr. Sherman said yes.

Mr. Haberlen asked if that is a one-time or a recurring fee for the Civic Gov software?

Ms. Beauregard said the one-time fee would be \$38,000.00 upfront and then after that it would be \$21,000.00 and she will find out about the 5% that Ms. Bressette asked about. She said it would be a recurring contract and Brian and herself can talk to them about removing that from the agreement.

Mr. Haberlen asked if it was \$38,000.00 this year, then \$21,000.00 and then it may go up? Ms. Beauregard said yes and now we are paying \$4500.00. She said when they looked into the online permitting through their current system that was \$7500.00. They can't take payments over the phone or online currently and people are really looking for those options. When highway looked into that it was \$14,500.00. for a system they aren't happy with anyway, they would've been paying almost the same as this new system would be, and it's not as good of a service.

Mr. Smith said he liked the overall decrease. He said the Civic Plus website and he was impressed and said it seemed like they are targeting small towns and the fact that other departments can use this is good. He would like to see a presentation from the other departments to show us the big picture. Ms. Beauregard said she can do that and what they would be using right away are the permitting, code enforcement and planning. She said in the permitting module would be stormwater management and fire department for the permitting they do with planning. She said this could service the entire town.

Mr. Smith said if there were more modules maybe we could get a better deal. He said he liked the resiliency perspective. He asked if the planning department had their own separate phone contract or is the \$4134.00 request, is that shared? Ms. Beauregard said that is their portion of the town's contract. Mr. Demers said yes, that is for phones and fax lines.

Mr. Abare asked if they had to buy the state regulation handbook? Ms. Beauregard asked if he meant for land use? Ms. Beauregard said they have to pay for the statute books every year. Mr. Abare asked where they get their laser printer cartridges? Ms. Beauregard said from Cartridge World.

Mr. Martony said if we change this and then change 5 years from now, can we get our data back? Ms. Beauregard said she would have to ask that. Mr. Demers said they mentioned that our data is ours and there would be no fee for us to get it back. Mr. Demers said we can check into that further. Ms. Beauregard said it also can go onto the inspector's iPads when they are on the road. Mr. Smith asked how many permits do they typically process in a year? Ms. Beauregard said they issue building, electrical, gas, plumbing and typically over 1,000. She can get the exact number.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 operating budget was \$297,796.00. The 2023 is \$360,334.00 with a 21% increase.

Mr. Demers introduced himself as the IT administrator for the town.

Supplies: Are level funded.

Telephone/Internet: Comcast increased by \$153.00. that is the standard yearly increase.

Equipment/Tech Plan: The one-time Library chrome books has been removed for \$80,000.00.

There was a new phone system and IT backup for \$50,000.00 and \$15,000.00.

Software licensing website: Overall increase of \$5,384.00.

Mr. Demers said the phone system is about 10 years old and he said he feels like it's time for a new system. That phone system cost for 1 year with licensing is \$47,762.00. 5-years of licensing would be \$59,067.00. He would like to request a \$5000.00 contingency if some phones were missed or licensing mismatching. If that were approved the 1-year cost would be \$52,672.00 and the 5-year would be \$64,067.00.

Mr. Abare asked if that was per year? Mr. Demers said the first numbers is with 1-year licensing. The 1-year licensing is \$5,957.00. If they went with the 5-year licensing it would be \$17,352.00 so it's getting a better deal to go with the 5-year. Mr. Abare asked what the difference was between pelhamweb.com and pelham-nh? Mr. Demers said those are domain names and the pelham-nh, we own. Pelham fire is also a domain name and same with their email. Every 3-5 years we have to repurchase those names, or we lose them. Mr. Abare asked why we don't redirect from one to the other instead of keeping both?

Mr. Demers said it's not just the website, it's also their email addresses.

Mr. Abare asked who has pelham-nh? Mr. Demers said we own that name. Mr. Abare asked if we used that? Mr. Demers doesn't currently know if that points to the Pelhamweb, but he will check on that. If we ever want to switch over to that, it is there. Mr. Croteau confirmed that it does direct over.

Mr. Martony asked if the service for the phones is included with the licensing? Mr. Demers said the phone service is through another company, which we are already in contract with now.

Mr. Abare asked about the phone and internet service plan, 1-year versus 5 and which one is reflected in the budget? Mr. Demers said the one in the budget is the 1-year. Mr. Abare asked for the 5-year to be reflected, because it is a super deal? Ms. Bressette said we talked about this in the non-public session, and she also sent that information in an email.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Jim Midgley introduced himself as the fire chief and Mr. John Ignatowicz as the deputy fire chief.

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 operating budget was \$2,883,761.00. The 2023 department request is \$2,918,972.00 and that is the same as the Selectmen approved with an increase of 1.22%.

Chief Midgley said the way they present their budget is by employee and if an employee leaves or is removed, they remove that line or zero it out and the new employee is brought in, and you see a plus on that side. He said they recently lost their deputy chief so there is a zero there. We brought a new deputy chief in so there is a new number. The rest of the numbers are contractual based on the collective bargaining agreement with the fire union. He said they lost some employees and hired some so there will be changes mid-cycle this year.

Mr. Haberlen asked if they had one deputy chief that left and one that came in on lines 15 and 16? Chief said correct. Mr. Haberlen said the salary is higher, are they more experienced? Chief said no, they position was a part-time position, a 3/5 of a full-timer and this new chief accounts for the other 2/5 of that position.

Chief said overtime for roll-call are contractual increases. Disability coverage has an increase. He said for a historical point, in 2018 it was \$61,000.00. In 2019 it was \$66,000.00 and 2020 it was \$98,000.00. In 2021 it was \$128,000.00 and in 2022 up to July 18th it was \$97,000.00. he said the number they ask for historically is low. He said they keep hoping it gets better, but it doesn't.

Fire Education: Slight increase of \$1,921.00 and that is contractual.

Medical Education: The paramedics are on one year for recertification and the EMT and are on another year. Instead of having drastic highs and lows, by offsetting one a year and another group the next year it levels itself out a bit. There is a decrease of \$7,000.00.

Mandatory compensation: It's all contractual, there was a change, FLSA went down \$7000.00 based on the new town's calculations to pay this out.

The call fire department because they've lost a number of members, there is a \$10,000.00 decrease there.

Mr. Smith asked about any issues with recruitment or retention? Chief said it is so bad in NH because of what the legislative did 10-12 years ago, and nobody wants to work in NH. He said it is doubly worse because we are a border community. Why would someone want to work in NH at a 2% accelerator based on your retirement, when in MA you can get 2.5% and they also get free health insurance. He said people are all going to work in MA and until that gets fixed, it will continue to be a problem.

He swore in three new employees and will be doing three more over the next week. He said the state of NH has hired at the academy, a recruitment and retention officer to figure out how to get people to work in NH.

Ms. Bressette asked him to get the difference in salary, benefits, insurance and retirement for the part-time to full-time deputy's position? Chief said it will be under \$100,000.00.

Chief said ambulance supplies and medications we do well on. The hospital assists us, and we get those rates for our medications and that is flat-lined.

Fire supplies: for the turnout gear there was a \$6,000.00 increase. He said they purchase from Globe, and it was \$1200.00 about 12 years ago. Now a set is \$3,250.00. the components that go into making them are very expensive.

Office supplies: they do well there, and they fixed that number, as they never go over it.

Calibration gas: slight increase due to inflation.

Telephone: decreases from Consolidated Communications. They eliminated their Sprint phones and converted them to Verizon for a better deal and a better system. Verizon access increase fee of \$3,492.00. Verizon wi-fi increase of \$816.00 with the offsets, it's a \$2,600.00 increase.

Mr. Smith asked if the Verizon access fees are tied to the cell phones? Chief said yes.

Ms. Bressette asked if that is a yearly fee? Chief said its monthly and it's not a one-time.

Ms. Smith said there is a \$601.00 a month fee for access? Chief said yes. Mr. Smith said there is a 30.00 fee per phone? Chief said yes and the \$30.00 a month fee is contractual for firefighters in their contract. He said all firefighters must answer their phones and for that, they get a \$30.00 per month stipend.

Chief said the bottom two numbers is the department and there are 21 cell phones at \$30.00 each is the contractual item.

Fuel: The fuel costs are set by the town.

Increases that are passed on: diesel vehicles are required to have DEF fluid and that has a cost to it.

Mr. Ignatowicz said:

Vehicle maintenance and repairs: have slight increases due to the economy today. Tires increased \$500.00 that's for the bigger truck tires too.

Chief said they've seen cost increases in their repairs, but because some old vehicles were replaced, it was offset. That line was able to be held, with the exception of tires.

Mr. Sherman said for the CIP and in a few years, they will need a new fire engine and explain how this will happen? Chief said he was at a conference and had discussions with NHMA attorneys about taking some of the ambulance revenue and putting it into a non-lapsing revolving account. He asked if it would have to be voted on every year or would it be a one-time vote and the budget would be removed from the ambulance account. He said they believed there was a way that the statute is written, there could be a one-time vote and thousands of dollars would be removed from the ambulance revenues and put it in one account. He

said over the last 15 years our vehicles have been purchased outright from the fund balance. There have been lease purchases and it depends on what the board thinks is the most appropriate thing to do at that time. Mr. Sherman said that is something to look at and whether we put money aside now is something the Selectmen need to consider. Chief said Greg Ferris brought up many years ago, at that time the statute did not allow that to occur, it had to be in every year appropriation. He said the attorney's said there was a way to do it.

Mr. Ignatowicz said:

Equipment maintenance and repairs: these are annual things to keep the equipment running and that had a zero increase.

Chief said for radio maintenance there were increases for cost of batteries. He said they can't even get batteries right now. He said he's had an order in for 3 months and they are not due until spring of 2023. He said these batteries are chip set batteries and there is a shortage of these. He said the police have the same problem with this and they are more expensive.

SCBA's: maintenance and certification are done annually required by NFPA; these are the tanks worn on the firefighter's backs. Those are all zero except in the DOT cylinder testing as those are on a 5-year cycle and they have 2 sets.

Chief said:

The computer system is Alpine red alert. This system runs the mobile data systems and controls all of the communications between dispatch in Londonderry. This relays information with the trucks. He said we are treated as an annex to Londonderry and if we have to purchase this it would be \$120,000.00 or more and then we would have revolving fees of \$25,000.00. Being treated as an annex is very advantageous for us.

Photocopier maintenance had a slight increase.

Defibrillator maintenance: one of the machines went out of contract when they kept a third ambulance. They had to equip this, and they paid \$25,000.00 for the monitor and it came with a 3-year maintenance contract. That has gone away so now they have to add that defibrillator to the contract and that is the increase.

Mr. Ignatowicz:

Equipment: Oxygen refilling within the ambulances. Hydrant fees and they go up every year and they don't ever know when or how much that will be. He said it increased just under \$4,000.00.

Ms. Bressette asked who sets that? Chief said Pennichuck sets the rates and whenever they do a request for an increase, they have to go to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). He said the problem with the rates they get are; anytime a new development puts lines into the ground the fire department has to pay for it, and it's called an inch foot fee. The developer pays for the install of the lines, paid the taxes, it gets turned over to Pennichuck and because that line is over 4 inches, they have to pay every year, per foot by inch size of line. every time a developer does that, our fees go up. Every year their Pennichuck costs go up. He said they've got additions and renovations to lines; Vassar will be coming up and then the PUC goes up and the rates go up. He said this is out of our control.

Mr. Smith asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the fire hydrants? Chief said Pennichuck is responsible through our fees for maintenance and clearing of the hydrants. He said we are responsible for clearing yearly of our cisterns.

Mr. Abare asked him to go over the 4-inch line? Chief said for every inch foot line, so a 4-inch line doesn't get charged. He said a 6 inch and above gets charged. For every inch size of line, 6, 8, 10, 12 inch there is a different charge per foot and Pennichuck knows exactly what is in the ground so they can charge us. He said they calculate by the size of the line and how many feet of line are in the ground. There is also 119.00 hydrant fee and that all gets included in the fee from Pennichuck monthly.

Mr. Abare said if there's a 6-inch line put in, who dictates the size of the line? Chief said Pennichuck engineers do, and we have no say on that. Mr. Abare asked if it could be arbitrary? Chief said it is by design and the further you get away from the pressurized source, the size differs. If you start out with a big line and then as your capacity is decreased on the end, the size of the line can decrease.

Mr. Sherman asked if there is a proposal that water go down Marsh Road at some point?

Chief said they picked up the schools, but the line ends at the school and they put a hydrant on each side of the high school. He said he has not had any discussions with Pennichuck about moving the line down any further.

Mr. Smith said nobody wants to pay for water lines, but ultimately this would help homeowner's insurance rates? Chief said that's a good and true statement. He said our ISO insurance rating is based on hydrant and non-hydrant district. He said we are a 4/4Y. He explained that if you are in a hydrant district, you are a 4, if you are in a non-hydrant district you are a Y. he said it doesn't matter how many fire fighters are on staff or how much water he can bring to a call, we are a 4Y outside of the hydrant district. We are required to maintain our 4 status to flow 250 gallons a minute for 2 hours. That is the minimum requirement for the ISO rating of a 4. He said having a rating of a 4 is our current. He said when he started as Chief, we were at a 9 and that is a horrible rating and the worst you can get. He is hoping to get to a 3 on our next ISO assessment. He said if someone has a hydrant outside their home within 1000 feet, you should check with your insurance company to see what the rating is because you are an ISO 4 in Pelham near a hydrant.

The dispatch contract had an increase, as we moved our dispatch to Londonderry many years ago and they have been using a 2.5% accelerator and the contract expired this year. They went to a 3% accelerator, and he is in the process with the Londonderry Chief to finalize the next 5-year segment of the contract.

Mr. Ignatowicz said:

Ambulance new equipment: monitors, leads, cables and all of the cardiac monitors and that had a zero increase.

New equipment on the fire side had a zero increase. Those are new equipment consumables, such as fire hoses that have to be replaced often. There were increases, but they were able to keep a zero increase.

Chief said uniforms are contractual and there was a \$75.00 increase.

Ms. Bressette asked why there are two lines for the deputy chief? Chief said the deputy chief clothing allowance and the deputy chief cleaning allowance.

Chief said there were increases in our hazardous materials mutual aid district for the new members. We are a part of a hazmat district, if we did our own, we'd be looking at \$75,000.00 more. There are very tight requirements for this hazmat training. We don't do enough of these incidents, so by collaborating with 18 towns, it is better. Our increase was \$625.00 and it was supposed to be more, but we picked up another town. That cost along with their entrance fee offset a lot of their projected increases.

Fire training supplies: we are required by ISO to do 2 live burn trainings per year to maintain our ISO. That will get us to our 3. He said his fire training officer has done a great job and they've gone to Nashua to their live fire grounds, and they do all day fire training twice per year. Hopefully that will get us to ISO 3 and decrease our insurance rates.

Mr. Smith said if they can retain their people. Chief said it is a big problem and he can remember days when he had 30 people apply for one position. He said 36 people passed the CPAT test and Nashua is going to hire 26 of them in the next year. He said there is nothing left for the rest of us.

Brush Permits: increase for this. He said this is how the state pays him to be the forest warden in Pelham. He said they write brush permits, track the number, then send the bill to the State of NH and they cut a check back to the town.

Miscellaneous: tuition reimbursement and there was a gentleman that requested this. This is a contractual item, and they are required by March to let them know if they will use it and then it's incorporated into the budget. He said this year it is \$1,600.00.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Chief Midgley said emergency management is an area that was heavily used during COVID. This was used to flow money in and out. Anything dealing with COVID was pulled out of this and then ran it into the red. They then got the money back and put the money back into the accounts. This was a great way to control where the money was going. It had an increase of \$1,500.00.

Chief said cistern maintenance is for the 80 cisterns in town. He said we have two 8-foot plows, but if there's a bad winter the snow can only be pushed back so far. What happens is this money is used to hire

a contractor and they do heavy snow pushbacks into the woods so they can continue with their maintenance. He said he's had to do this twice since he's been Chief.

He said there was a warrant article passed by the town of pelham eight years ago and there is \$20,000.00 in a non-lapsing account for repairing cisterns if they fail and that is for 'maintenance'. He said they've had three that have failed.

Ms. Bressette said for the Emergency Management 2022 operating budget was \$9,041.00. 2023 is \$10,673.00 and that's the same as the Selectmen approved.

TOWN BUILDINGS

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 operating budget was \$1,036,624.00. The budget for 2023 is \$773,310.00 and that is the same as the Selectmen approved. That's a decrease of 25.4%.

Mr. Roark introduced himself as the town administrator. He said there are mostly no changes to this budget.

Salaries: Ed Frasca is the handyman and he's an hourly, part-time employee as needed.

Supplies: remain the same.

Electricity: He said they factored in a 10% increase for the \$19,008.00. Right now, the August electric bill was around \$16,537.00. September was around \$15,763.00. he said there is a monthly average in there of \$17,418.00. He thought this will need to be looked at closer during reconsideration because the rates have gone beyond the 10%. He said he's working with the bookkeeper, Susan Landry to try and see how much we will use.

Telephone: remains the same.

Ms. Bressette said last year at reconsideration for town buildings for electricity, we had \$147,505.00 and then at reconsideration, it came back at \$190,000.00 (electric supply rates increased by 51%).

Mr. Roark said he was glad that was put in and when he last checked there was 16% of that budget left for 2022. He said that will be close for 3 more months left and we might be short on that.

Water: Pennichuck is part of the buildings as some are on their water supply. Monadnock Spring is for the employee drinking water coolers.

Heat and Oil: These are numbers to be adjusted. He said for home heating oil they are budgeted at \$2.40 a gallon. He said we are locked into a contract right now until June 2023 at \$2.99 a gallon. He said the NH department of energy's current price is at \$4.72 a gallon and it will probably go up this winter. He said this might have to be adjusted because it might not be enough. For natural gas, we are at \$1.20 and that goes by thermal unit. The NH department of energy current average price is \$1.99. For propane, we are locked in until April 2, 2023, we are locked in at 'up to' \$3.99 a gallon. The current average price is \$3.77 per gallon.

The budgeted amount is 3 gallons. When we locked in at \$3.99, it's up to \$3.99 and that's as high as they can go, he believes they go market average. He said we are budgeting at \$3.00 a gallon and we're low on that.

These budgets get started at the beginning of summer. He said at reconsideration we can change some of the per unit numbers. Ms. Bressette said at reconsideration, he will know more of how much we're looking at. She said especially for insurance numbers and for gas and oil. She said she would rather see the higher rates in the budget instead of being surprised. Mr. Roark said the current average price for oil is \$4.72 a gallon. He asked if that was a comfortable number for people?

Mr. Smith said that is a good price. He said he would rather have something more on the not to exceed and we may get a discount then maybe.

Mr. Roark said we are locked in at \$2.99 until June 31, 2023. Ms. Bressette asked when he goes into negotiations start for the next? Mr. Roark said June to June. Ms. Bressette said he knows that the \$2.40 will be \$2.99? Mr. Roark said \$2.99 until the end of June 2023. Mr. Smith said at the very least, we need \$2.99 in there. Mr. Smith said we shouldn't solve this here and thinks that Mr. Roark should come back with a number and some data that works for the whole town (gas, diesel, oil, propane).

Ms. Bressette said the same as far as the insurance goes. She would rather have those increases from last year put in from this year and then at reconsideration have the real numbers. She wants us to have the best numbers we can have.

Ms. Ryan said in the school district budget there is a line item for a person/entity that determines what those rates will be. Ms. Cormier said it's an actuary, who does that for insurance rates. Ms. Ryan thought maybe it's worthwhile to look into. Mr. Roark said okay and he can look into that and reach out to NHMA to see if they have any predictors. For clarification, when does the committee want these numbers? Ms. Bressette said for next week because the following week they will vote.

Mr. Roark said going back to Chief Midgley's budget and his gas number was at \$4.25, NHDOE current average price is \$3.82. Current average diesel price is \$5.07 and the budget amount is \$5.00.

Ms. Bressette said she doesn't mind having the higher numbers in there and adjusting them down at reconsideration.

Projects/Repairs: \$325,000.00 decrease for the money that was marked for the Planning department's remodel and renovation. That was supposed to be started earlier this summer. The Selectmen decided not to use that contractor to do the work. He said they will put a new request for a bid out, but they will hold those numbers and money over until 2023 for that project.

Mr. Sherman asked about the library being on hold and could those two projects be done together? Mr. Roark said it's not, because the contractor the library was looking at was the one that was let go.

Mr. Roark said some added numbers were on the site walk the \$20,200.00 for the slate roof at the historical society. This is a very technical repair, and this was the only bid they got.

\$14,365.00 for the Lyon's Park meetinghouse and this is for installing and drill a pump and additional irrigation in the park. He said they have only 2 wells from the town hall to Lyon's Park, so there is not enough water to cover all of the zones. He said there isn't enough water to keep the grass good in certain spots. He said Mr. Johnson and Mr. Boyden approached him about putting another well in to get the park in good condition. Each year the Flag football league puts money into the park to try and get the fields good. Mr. Johnson would like to grow better grass between the basketball court and the skatepark. Currently there is no grass there and it is a dirt bowl. That money includes the well, the pump and the additional required irrigation.

Mr. Sherman said there are more repairs that are needed at the Historical society, such as the windows. Mr. Roark said Ed Frasca is making good progress working there. He has replaced all the lower windows and he is now going to move up to reglaze some of the upper windows. He will be moving inside during the winter for indoor repairs.

Landscaping: The contract has gone up \$13,250.00. Ms. Bressette asked if it was the same contractor? Mr. Roark said yes, Boyden's. He said we get a lot for \$126,000.00. This includes the mowing, fertilizing, some irrigation maintenance (winterizing, start up, clock adjustments). The highway department does our snow plowing, but Boyden's takes care of the sidewalks at town hall and the salting. The police and fire departments do their own plowing. Mr. Roark said in 2021 we were within about 2.5% expenditure on that. Mr. Abare asked if we would be the same this year? Mr. Roark said hopefully.

Mr. Smith asked if Boyden's have offered up the same contract for \$126,900.00? Mr. Roark said they've not signed that, that was the last one and it was a 3-year contract. The board has had some discussions that some things may have to be added or deleted in there and that's what they are working with now.

SELECTMEN

Ms. Bressette said the operating budget for 2022 was \$630,532.00. The 2023 department request is \$670,604.00 and that is the same as Selectmen approved. That is a 6.4% increase.

Mr. Roark said:

Salaries: are contractual increases and personnel changes.

Supplies: remains steady.

Cell phone/landline: steady.

Copier service contract: contractual obligation and it goes up every year.

Expenses: NHMA dues and this is dictated to us and it's a helpful organization and is worth the money.

Town Report: That went up significantly. The funding that was placed in was not enough and for the voter's guides. There's an \$11,071.00 increase. The town report expenses is handled by Case Printing. The voter's guide they do 5,810 of these and they get mailed out. The mailing costs \$2,812.00. The 5,597

reply cards are \$850.00 to print. There are 450 annual report books printed for a cost of \$4,865.00. the printing expenses are \$8,527.00. The postal fee is \$1,054.00, the reply cards is \$1,054.00. the report books are \$457.00 and those are very limited. The permit is \$265.00. That's \$2,830.00 in postage. The total expense is \$11,357.76. He said this is very critical information to be sent out.

Ms. Bressette said the library keeps copies of these annual report books and Mr. Roark said they are available digitally as well. Mr. Demers said they are on the website.

TOWN CELEBRATIONS

The 2022 approved budget was \$9,260.00. The 2023 request is \$24,960.00 and that is the same as Selectmen approved with a 169.55% increase. Ms. Bressette asked if the increase was for the holiday lights? Mr. Roark said yes. He said the fireworks each year are coordinated by volunteers. The \$1,500.00 is from the fireworks company, this is due to rising costs. The temporary bathrooms increased.

He said the holiday lights are \$14,000.00. He said during COVID, because they couldn't do the festival of trees, they wanted to light up the Village green for a nice display. The celebration committee purchased the lights from a contractor and included is the hanging of the lights, taking down the light and the storage of the lights. He said there are a lot of lights and this is needed, because we don't have the room to storage. Ms. Bressette said the cost was for town spirit? Mr. Roark said it wasn't budgeted when it was put through and then along the line it is now budgeted.

Ms. Bressette asked if people sponsored the lights before? Mr. Roark said he wasn't sure on the Festival of Trees. Ms. Bressette said people do love the lights.

Mr. Smith said are we contractually obligated to do this or are we just doing it? Mr. Roark said he has not seen the agreement or contract but does think we own the lights.

Mr. Croteau said this year we are locked into a contract, but next year we will look at this before signing anything.

Mr. Smith said we are on the hook to do this, and he asked for this to be looked into? Mr. Croteau said he would, and he also said there is a 20-foot Christmas tree there too. Mr. Sherman said to thank the Pelham Garden club for the decorations around the roundabout and in front of the library, as they provide all of that volunteer only at no cost.

DEBT SERVICE/PRINCIPAL

Ms. Bressette said for 2022 it was \$705,845.00. The 2023 is \$487,416.00 same for selectmen approved with a decrease of 30.95%.

Ms. Penny, finance director said this is all contractual based of amortization schedules of debt that was issued and voted by the taxpayers.

Ms. Bressette asked if this building is all done for the 20-year bond? Ms. Penny said yes, and the newest addition was the conservation bond that was passed last March 2022.

Mr. Abare asked what the percentage is on the bond? Ms. Penny didn't know what he meant. Ms. Bressette said they would each be different. Ms. Penny said there are several there so they would be different.

Ms. Bressette the interest was 1.75% for the Memorial school bond.

Mr. Haberlen asked about lines 155, 158 and 159, are those principal only, no interest? Ms. Bressette said yes. Mr. Haberlen asked why those principals are going up? Ms. Penny said it's the way the debt was structured and based on historical amortization schedules. Mr. Haberlen asked if we always borrow a set amount and pay it continuously? Ms. Penny said there are different certificates that go with debt issuance, and she isn't sure what manner Pelham has issued debt in the past. She said sometimes the principal payment can be the same with the life of the debt or it can go up or down and it depends how the schedule is structured. Mr. Haberlen said it's not always a fixed payment per month? Ms. Penny said exactly, not like that.

DEBT INTEREST

The 2022 operating budget was \$78,740.00. The 2023 budget is \$68,881.00 same as Selectmen approved with a decrease of 12.52%

Ms. Penny said these are contractual based on debt and amortization schedules. She said the most recent debt issuances has an extra principal payment in there that is due twice a year. That is the highest change outside of the principal that fell off with the bond that was recently paid off.

LEGAL

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 operating budget was \$96,000.00 and it is the same for 2023 and same as the Selectmen approved.

Ms. Bressette asked if it is for the same attorney? Mr. Roark said yes, it is DTC out of Exeter, Attorney John Ratigan. This is a retainer, and he answers daily questions for the town. Also built-in is land use appeals and court cases. If it goes above that, we have to pay. He said some years we overspend this by 20-30%. He said they are usually land use protracted events. He said if it involves the police department, that gets handled by the insurance company's attorneys. DTC handles the day-to-day operations of the town.

Ms. Bressette asked who handles employment law issues? Mr. Roark said DTC handles those, Attorney Maher up until arbitration. If it went to court, we may have to pay on that. This is on a case-by-case basis.

TREASURER

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 budget was \$15,249.00. The 2023 proposed budget is \$15,224.00 same as Selectmen approved, with a difference of \$25.00.

Mr. Roark said we saved some money on the treasurer's stamp because it's no longer required.

TRUST FUNDS

Ms. Bressette said the 2022 operating budget was \$335.00 and same with 2023 budget and same as Selectmen approved.

Mr. Roark said the treasurer oversees the trust funds. Mr. Roark said there are trustees of the trust funds. In terms of the actual mechanisms, it's the treasurer and the trustees oversee the trust funds.

Ms. Bressette said next week will be the review of the town budgets. She asked any questions to be emailed to her by Monday evening at the latest.

Mr. Smith said he would encourage the town to assume on the high side with the fuel prices. He doesn't think that these will be better deals next year.

ADJOURN

MOTION: (Ms. Ryan/Mr. Croteau) 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