

APPROVED

TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 8, 2022

CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Bressette opened the meeting at approximately 6:45 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Bressette called attendance:

PRESENT: Meg Bressette
Jason Croteau
Philip Haberlen
Eduardo Martony
Garret Abare
Greg Smith
Debbie Ryan
Megan Larson
Paul Grant
Bob Sherman
Ellen Cormier

ABSENT: (None)

MINUTES REVIEW:

Ms. Bressette requested one change to the minutes and that was for Megan Larson’s absence be marked as ‘excused’ for the April 21, 2022 meeting. No one else had any changes.

MOTION: (Mr. Croteau/Mr. Martony) To place the April 21, 2022, meeting minutes on file, as amended.

VOTE: (8-0-2) Motion passes. Mr. Sherman and Ms. Larson abstained.

Ms. Bressette said we have one applicant for a one-year term and that is Ellen Cormier. This position replaces Mr. Croteau’s seat, as he has now taken a Selectman’s seat on the committee.

Mr. Sherman asked Ms. Cormier to give the committee some background of herself and her interest in this committee. Ms. Cormier said she has no town office experience; however, she is interested in learning how the town works. Mr. Sherman asked how long she has lived in Pelham and if she had any children in the schools. Ms. Cormier said she has been in Pelham for 12 years and has children in college. Ms. Bressette thanked her for stepping up.

MOTION: (Mr. Sherman/Ms. Bressette) Mr. Sherman nominated Ms. Cormier for a one-year term to this committee.

VOTE: (10-0-0) The motion carried. Ms. Cormier was officially sworn in by Ms. Newcomb.

Ms. Bressette said she will review the by-laws at the end of the meeting.

REVIEW OF BUDGETS

ELECTIONS

Ms. Linda Newcomb introduced herself as the town clerk/tax collector. Ms. Bressette said last year's operating budget was \$31,187.00. The department request for this year is \$18,143.00 and the Selectman approved was \$18,143.00.

Ms. Newcomb said under salaries, everything remains the same for the supervisors of the checklist and the moderator and the assistant moderator. There are decreases in the ballot clerks and the overtime for the staff because next year there is only one election and this year there are three.

Postage: Went down because we won't be sending out as many absentee ballots.

Miscellaneous: Increased because the postage increased this year.

Office supplies: Paper went up because of the increase.

Ballot coding and ballots: The general coding went down by \$3,000.00 and the state primary went down by \$1,800.00 because there is only the town election next year.

Expenses: Election workers meals went down because of the only one election next year.

Ms. Bressette asked about the ballots and coding and on line 32, the \$3,000.00 in the default budget is for what election?

Ms. Newcomb said the general coding is for the November election.

Ms. Bressette asked what election is next year? Ms. Newcomb said that would be the town election.

Ms. Bressette asked if we could take out the general election? Ms. Newcomb said yes.

Ms. Bressette asked if the primary state coding could come out of the default? Ms. Newcomb said yes.

TOWN CLERK

Ms. Bressette read off the following:

The 2022 Operating budget was \$306,089.00. Department requests for 2023 is \$319,683.00 and the Selectman approved is \$319,683.00.

Ms. Newcomb said salaries are all contractual. They did go down because they have one new employee.

Supplies: Increased for postage for tax bills and motor vehicle notices.

Tax bills: Increased a small amount for increases of envelopes and supplies.

Telephone: Remains the same.

Postage meter: Remains the same.

Expenses: The only one that increased was the mileage reimbursement.

Mr. Sherman asked if the postage rates will remain the same? Ms. Newcomb said she didn't know. Ms. Bressette said they just increased to .57. Mr. Sherman asked if we should put in some cushion there?

Ms. Newcomb said she thought we would be okay, and the increases are usually only a few cents and using the postage meter also saves some money. Mr. Sherman asked when the town employees contracts end?

Ms. Newcomb said they are part of the union, and it ends in 2024.

ASSESSOR

Ms. Susan Snide introduced herself as the assessing assistant.

Ms. Bressette said for 2022 the operating budget last year was \$225,413.00. The 2023 request is \$229,193.00. The Selectman approved \$229,193.00.

Ms. Snide said most of the increases are contractual, as she is part of the union, and her salary increase is contractual.

Supplies: Paper has gone up from \$25.00 a case to almost \$50.00 a case.

Postage: Has gone up and she has it budgeted at .57 and she said she doesn't have a large mailing going out this year compared to last year. She said it seems to increase every July, so she thinks she will be fine. She said the mileage wasn't put in by her, but it is fine.

Vision maintenance, web hosting and the cloud back up are all contractual.

Cochran Consulting is doing the field work and that has remained level funded.

Ms. Bressette asked if she needed mileage. Ms. Snide said she typically did not budget for mileage and does most meetings virtually. Ms. Bressette said they could take out the mileage. Mr. Sherman said he would keep a dollar.

Mr. Abare asked where the paper comes from. Ms. Snide said it is WB Mason. Mr. Abare asked if she has ever called them and asked for a discount? Ms. Snide said she has not, but she typically waits for a sale and budgets for the high end. Ms. Snide said she shares the paper responsibility with the Town Clerk/Tax Collector, and they always shop for sales. Ms. Bressette said that WB Mason will typically price match. Mr. Abare said he uses them and does a subscription. Ms. Snide asked what he pays for his paper. Mr. Abare didn't know but would find out.

Mr. Smith asked if she was able to catch up with the home assessments after COVID? Ms. Snide said during COVID (2020-2021) all interior assessments were suspended. Ms. Snide said now they are continuing to wear masks when going into homes.

Mr. Sherman asked if the town was still divided into five sections and over the course of five years and he asked if we are still on that program? Ms. Snide said we are on a cyclical inspection process and now the town is divided into four sections. Ms. Snide said they do each quadrant every four years and then the fifth year is the reevaluation year where they come up with new values. Mr. Sherman asked when year five is? Ms. Snide said 2026.

Ms. Larson asked if the values increased before the inspections happened? Ms. Snide said not necessarily. Ms. Larson said hers did. Ms. Snide asked if she did any construction. Ms. Larson said no, just that the man was out recently at her house. Ms. Snide said she would look into that.

Ms. Bressette asked what our assessed value for the town was? Ms. Snide said 2.6 billion and change. Ms. Bressette said for 2.6 million increase in the budget is \$1.00 increase per thousand on the tax rate.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Ms. Bressette said we have placeholders for our committee and our budget is \$2.00 with a placeholder for a recording secretary and binders.

CONSERVATION

Mr. Al Steward introduced himself. Ms. Bressette said the operating budget for 2022 was \$5,989.00. The department request this year is \$10,489.00 and the Selectman approved is \$10,489.00, with an increase of \$4,500.00.

Mr. Steward said they've done natural resource inventory in the last few years and it was done last year. He said that is the baseline for a conservation study. He said they have a quote for that from Nashua Regional for \$3,800.00. That is a major component of the extra money they asked for this year. He said they added \$700.00 to the accounts, which are 130 and 225, which are salaries and supplies. The 625 accounts are expenses with two items in there and they are a continued study on the wetlands that was completed a year ago. He said he found documentation from 1987 there were 47 potential wetland areas and the best way to protect wetlands and the water sheds is to designate them as such. If they are determined to be prime wetlands, then the state helps us with remediation in case they become invaded. He said on Currier Road there was a one-acre invasion into the buffer zone. He said the state now uses a 10:1 mediation for wetland buffers. He said now they have some conservation off of Tower Hill Road and the landowner has agreed to attach an easement and that would compensate for the one acre settling pond on Currier Road. He said that ended up being a 15:1 and it is being evaluated by the State. He said it's important to identify all wetlands. He said the \$3,800.00 is for the conservation study and plan. In 2009 there was money from a development on 93 and that money was provided by the State. He said now that they have the natural resource inventory then now, they will have a current plan to develop more open space. Those are the reasons for the increases (the two studies).

Mr. Smith asked about the \$3,800.00 for a wetland study. Mr. Steward said the \$3,800.00 is for a conservation study. Mr. Steward said the \$2,700.00 is for the wetland study and since it is going to be more comprehensive, he added another \$700.00 to make it \$3,400.00. Mr. Smith asked if that is the one that we

haven't done for 13 years? Mr. Steward said no, the \$3,800.00 for the conservation plan is the one we haven't done for 13 years.

Mr. Abare asked what he is looking for in the wetlands study? Mr. Steward said they've identified 13 of the identified wetland areas and there are many areas in Pelham that may qualify as such, and we need to protect those. Mr. Smith asked if this would be a one off or would it be repeated next year? Mr. Steward said no, it would be typically every ten years. Mr. Sherman asked if this study would be done before the Master Plan is released or afterwards? Mr. Steward said with permission and the ability to schedule it, it should be completed before the Master Plan is completed. Mr. Sherman said that would be good. Mr. Steward said the conservation plan would not be, but the wetland study would be. Mr. Steward said he can get it done in six months. Ms. Bressette asked who we would get that done with? Mr. Steward said we would work with Nashua Regional Planning, as they did the natural resources inventory, which is the guideline around the conservation plan.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Mr. Brian Johnson introduced himself as the Parks and Recreation director. Ms. Bressette said the 2022 operating budget was \$276,330.00. The department request for 2023 is \$290,264.00 and the Selectman approved is \$290,264.00 with a 5% increase.

Mr. Johnson stated:

Salaries: Are all contractual with the exception of maintenance. He said they were approved to bring their maintenance people from \$13.00 to \$15.00 an hour, with an increase of \$2,400.00 a year.

Supplies: Small \$300.00 increase for paints and paint rolls.

Telephone: Level funded.

Gas & Oil: Increase in gas price of \$175.00.

Repairs and projects: Level funded at \$4,000.00

Rentals: Increase of \$1,095.00 for the portable toilets. He said he has shopped around, and this current vendor is the cheapest. Ms. Bressette asked if that was just for one and Mr. Johnson said they have six units.

Expenses: He asked for a \$1,000.00 increase the irrigation park repairs due to the last few years.

He asked for a \$1,400.00 increase for tree cutting and pruning. Ms. Bressette asked if he hires someone to do that and Mr. Johnson said yes. Ms. Bressette asked if that was separate from the highway department?

Mr. Johnson said they also sub that out. He said there was a \$3,300.00 increase for the trash removal due to the new contract they just signed. He said mileage increased \$74.00 because the rate went up.

Expenses: There was a total \$5,774.00 increase.

Ms. Bressette asked if they are adding new irrigation to the new baseball fields? Mr. Johnson said no, that is just for repairs, not any new irrigation. Ms. Bressette asked if they found lifeguards easily? Mr. Johnson said yes, they had four people return and had two new ones.

Mr. Sherman asked about restrooms at the Raymond Park? Mr. Johnson said he is working with the Redhawk's soccer program, and they are hoping to apply for the Recreational Trails Grant next year. He said the state said they would qualify, and it is an 80-20. We would only have to come up with 20% and he plans on applying for that grant in the spring.

Ms. Bressette said Muldoon Park playground is on the wish list and she asked about the shade structure.

Mr. Johnson said he will revisit that next year and that is only for improvement, as there are no safety issues there. Ms. Bressette asked if that is for shade and swings only? Mr. Johnson said yes.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Mr. Jim Hoffman introduced himself as the interim road agent and Ms. Rhonda Martin.

Ms. Bressette said for the 2022 operating budget was \$1,863,582.00. Budget request for 2023 is \$2,158,522.00 and the Selectman approved is \$2,158,522.00 and that is a 15.83% increase from last year. She believed the gas rate was set by the Selectman to be \$4.25 for the town. Mr. Roark said that's subject to change. Ms. Bressette asked what diesel is set at? Mr. Hoffman didn't know off hand. Mr. Demers said diesel is set for \$5.00.

Mr. Hoffman said:

Salaries: Are lower because most of the hires are new and they are at the bottom of the scale.

He said he is not permanent yet, so he's not sure of his pay and having someone to replace him now.

Supplies: Have gone up mostly due to salt. He said that was due to the shortage of drivers. Ms. Bressette asked if that was for an increase of \$115,800.00? Mr. Hoffman said they came up with that number after talking with Deb before she left. He said he's tried contacting the salt company and hasn't gotten an answer. Ms. Bressette asked when they usually set that price? Mr. Hoffman said October 1. Ms. Bressette asked if we would need more reconsideration before voting on this? Mr. Roark said he is almost certain it is going up. Ms. Bressette said it would just be a placeholder for now. Mr. Roark said that is one of the supply chain commodities being impacted right now.

Repairs: Due to the cost of parts and labor going up, that has been increased.

Rentals: Gone up because they had to raise the price for their contract plower's. He said unless they were getting paid more, they said they were not coming back. He said an abutting town has already matched Pelham and gone up even more with surcharges.

Mr. Roark said it's worth noting that those prices were set in the neighboring town after we published ours.

Mr. Abare asked about the salt company not answering. Mr. Hoffman said he has tried calling and emailing and they are not responding, and they usually stay quiet until October. Mr. Abare asked who the company is? Mr. Hoffman said it is Eastern Salt Company. Mr. Abare asked if they are the only ones we can go to? Mr. Hoffman said they have a location in Portsmouth and in Cambridge. Mr. Sherman asked if we go in with the State of NH for salt bids? Mr. Hoffman said the salt company sets the prices and that is it. Mr. Sherman asked if the State deals with the same company? Mr. Hoffman said yes.

Expenses: Due to inflation they have gone up and they are planning to have the floor in the garage and offices sealed every year due to the corrosion from the salt. Ms. Bressette asked if they were washing the vehicles outside before bringing them in? Mr. Hoffman said yes, they do, but some still have ice on them after storms.

Specials: Same every year for the paving.

Wish list: He talked about getting a catch basin cleaner. He said currently they use a company that just wants to get in and out quickly. He said they use two trucks and do 80-100 basins a day and they rush through them. He said there are 1672 basins now in town. He said at the end of last year the cleaners cleaned 1510 and left 162 not being cleaned. He said he would really like to take this over on their own.

Ms. Bressette asked what happens to the deposits being taken out of these basins? Mr. Hoffman said they are stored in our yard for a season and then they have it tested and then trucked out. He said they usually bring it to the gun club as they like the sand. Ms. Bressette asked if they had room for a new vehicle? Mr. Hoffman said yes. Ms. Bressette asked if we had people that knew how to use it? Mr. Hoffman said no, and that would take training, but they all know hydraulics. Ms. Bressette asked if he knew what the upkeep of this vehicle was? Mr. Hoffman said it's the same as a plow truck but would not use it for plowing.

Ms. Bressette asked how much they allocated for maintenance of a plow truck, and would that be the same amount for each year? Mr. Hoffman said yes, and the equipment will last longer now that we have a garage.

Ms. Bressette asked if there was only one company that did this work? Mr. Hoffman said they put it out to bid and that company was the only one to bid for the last 10 years. He said they had a company before, but they took too long. Ms. Ryan asked if the budget was \$32,000.00 per year to clean the 1672 catch basins?

Mr. Roark said yes. Ms. Ryan asked if the request was for a catch basin cleaner truck for \$318,000.00?

Mr. Hoffman said yes and confirmed he has room for it and operators for it. Ms. Ryan asked what the longevity of this truck would be? Mr. Hoffman said he hoped it would last 15 years. Ms. Ryan asked if the paving rate hasn't changed, then are we doing less paving of roads? Mr. Hoffman said they usually use the specials for the paving and if there is extra, they take it out of block grant money.

Ms. Ryan asked what specials meant? Mr. Hoffman said they get the 305 and that goes towards paving, and they take some out of block grant money. Ms. Ryan asked if that money is returned funds from when we vote on that every year, and is that what the block grant is? Mr. Hoffman said every year the government grants block grant money and it used for anything to improve roads.

Ms. Ryan asked if we have to show that anywhere here? Ms. Penny said that highway block grant money is to be used for highway class 4 & 5 roads or any

equipment that assists with that and she noticed that Pelham has a special article for that every year to make sure that is used for that purpose. Ms. Ryan asked if our roads were considered class 4 & 5? Mr. Hoffman said yes.

Ms. Bressette asked if the highway block fund can be used towards the purchase of this vehicle? Mr. Hoffman said they have used it in the past towards buying vehicles. Ms. Ryan asked if they thought of that for this year? Mr. Hoffman said he hasn't considered it yet because there are a lot of road projects before them this year. He said the town is redoing the bridge and he's asked them to help out with drainage there. Some of the block grant money will be used for that. He said there is always a puddle by Bridge Street there and there is a basin there that goes to nowhere. He said the state will help out when they are doing the bridge to help that basin have somewhere to go. He said Kosik Terrace needs to be fixed and he would use block grant money for that. He said he has guard rails being built and repaired now and that is coming out of that fund. Ms. Ryan asked where the block grant funding is shown? The new finance director (Ms. Tammy Penny) said she has been here for two weeks and said she has seen that funding in the capital reserve funds. Ms. Ryan asked if less roads were being paved and she wanted to know if every year they do what they've set out to do? Mr. Hoffman said he is also new to this. Mr. Roark said the highway agents will plan ahead of time and address such streets every year that need work. Mr. Roark said they try to keep the miles the same from year to year to be consistent and when they bid it out, if it doesn't come in near the specials number then they take some out of the highway block money. Mr. Roark said there will be a schedule each year for which roads need work and they will try and stick to that. Mr. Abare asked how much the catch basin cleaner was? Mr. Roark said it's scheduled for \$32,000.00 this year. Mr. Abare said it is a 12-13-year payback. Mr. Roark said yes, and they would purchase it through a finance agreement, and it would be a 12-13-year payback. Mr. Hoffman said he is looking for quality and doing it right. Mr. Hoffman said they just cleaned one by the police station and during the cleaning the pavement collapsed in due to a sinkhole. He said they did fix it, but he wants to be able to inspect the basins correctly and repair them if needed. He said the people they use do not do a thorough job, they do it too quickly. Ms. Martin said they come from Rhode Island, so they are traveling far. Mr. Hoffman said it used to be \$6.00 per basin and now it is \$18.00 per basin. Ms. Larson said a note says, 'waiting on grant money' and asked them to explain that? Mr. Hoffman said that was a mistake and they were looking to get a low interest loan, but they were denied for that. Ms. Larson asked if they have 1672 basins then why do they only budget for 1600? Mr. Hoffman said the number is hard to nail down exactly. He is working with the Planning department, and they are trying to GPS all of these basins. Mr. Hoffman said some basins are hidden and are not even discovered yet. He also said the numbers fluctuate because they are hard to keep track of them. He said there has been a lot of turnover with people cleaning them and there is a lot of training involved and the new people need to learn where they are all located. He said new developments also add more basins, so the number is always changing. Ms. Larson said the cleaning company goes out and our employees go out with them? Mr. Hoffman said yes. Mr. Roark said the MS4 program for federal mandating, mandates that we clean these catch basins on a regular basis. This is mandated by the Federal Government. Mr. Abare asked if adjacent towns own a catch basin cleaner truck? Mr. Hoffman said Hudson has one, a vac truck that costs around 1 million dollars and he doesn't know how they dump that out because it also sucks up the water.

Mr. Grant thanked him for what his department does. He asked if this truck is used year-round or seasonal? Mr. Hoffman said as long as the weather is good, they can use it. Mr. Grant asked if he could rent this to other towns? Mr. Hoffman said he hasn't heard of such a thing. Mr. Sherman said according to the CIP, this catch basin cleaner truck was rated as desirable and he thinks it's something that should be obtained. Mr. Sherman asked about the catch basin replacement on Bush Hill Road for \$128,000.00 and were they applying for a grant? Mr. Hoffman said they were denied that application. Mr. Sherman said that should be put into this year's budget. Mr. Hoffman said that is a failing culvert and he wants to get that done as soon as possible. Mr. Sherman said they need to take care of that. Mr. Roark said at the end of the budget committee cycle they will look at warrant articles and he can work with Mr. Hoffman to put together a warrant article for that. Mr. Roark thought that would be the appropriate place for that, as it is over \$100,000.00. He also said they have had catch basin and culvert repairs in the past that have passed. Ms.

Bressette asked if he was referring to the cleaner or the culvert? Mr. Roark said he was referring to the \$128,000.00 Bush Hill culvert, but also the catch basin cleaning truck would also have to be on a warrant article.

Mr. Smith asked about the digital mapping they are doing for the catch basins? Mr. Hoffman said they are working with Planning and their environmental compliance specialist (Dena Hoffman) for the MS4 to map out all of the basins. She inspects basins a couple times per week with them and fills out all of the EPA paperwork. Mr. Smith asked what MS4 is? Mr. Hoffman said it is all the stormwater mapping within the Planning department. Ms. Bressette asked about the paint truck for safety lines going up \$9,748.00 and is that for the cost of materials going up or is that for more lines? Mr. Hoffman said it is for both and it is due to fuel and paint costs going up.

Ms. Bressette asked if we have a truck that does that? Mr. Hoffman said we put that out to bid. Ms. Bressette asked why street lighting went up? Ms. Martin said that is through Liberty Utilities and that is for Marsh Road and Old Gage Hill. She said they always paid that bill since 2018 but doesn't know why. Mr. Hoffman said it is for street lighting and the flashing lights. Mr. Grant asked why there is a difference between summer and winter lighting prices? Ms. Martin said that is the way it is. Mr. Roark said it is based on the light and length of the day. Ms. Bressette asked if their only special was the catch basin cleaner? Mr. Hoffman said yes.

TRANSFER STATION

Mr. Bob Long introduced himself as the interim transfer station director. Ms. Bressette said the 2022 operating budget was \$980,973.00. The department request for 2023 is \$1,226,845.00 and the Selectman approved is \$1,226,845.00.

Salaries: Are contractual and they've gone up on their part-time pay by almost \$3.00.

Supplies: They've gone up and they've had to pay \$3,800.00 for an exterminator for rodents. Gloves, eye protection has also gone up.

Telephone: Has gone up. Ms. Bressette asked if they added more phones for the \$900.00 increase? Mr. Long said they haven't added any new phones. Ms. Bressette said she saw a director's phone. Ms. Martin said there are two phones, the director's and the foreman's and Comcast. Mr. Abare said it is about \$60.00 a month for each phone. Ms. Martin said that one is \$45.00, and one is \$75.00. Ms. Martin said it is about \$180.00 for Comcast.

Gas and Oil: The prices have gone up. Mr. Smith said that these are tough to predict and asked if they are trying to put in a buffer or how are they handling the prices as far as a year from now? Ms. Martin said that was just a buffer and they use a truck to do recycling for the towns and they also use a skid steer, backhoe and a bobcat for diesel and those are buffers. Ms. Martin said those are just buffers in case they go high but will most likely will not. Mr. Smith asked if they felt good about those numbers? Mr. Long said yes. Mr. Smith asked if all departments would use the same numbers? Mr. Roark said they are and as they get closer to the deliberative session, they will try and get a closer number. Mr. Roark said there will be a buffer and they can't cut that too thin and doesn't want that to cut into services. Mr. Roark said he is comfortable now with the \$4.25. Ms. Bressette said last year they were at \$3.75.

Mr. Martony asked if the town has a contract with the phone company? Mr. Roark said each department works out their own deals. He said they've tried in the past to get a global contract, but that proves to be more challenging, but he can look into that. He said there are certain packages for first responders that aren't available for other groups.

Repairs and Projects: There are two trailers that are over 20 years old, and they just had to have one rebuilt. The prices are very high and these trailers have to be maintained. The other one will have to be rebuilt as well. Ms. Bressette asked if that was for four trailers? Mr. Long said for regular maintenance, and one is in dire need of work. Mr. Roark said these trailers are the life of that operation. The large trailers that are pushed up against the transfer station and then compacted in and then trucked to the land fill and those are rotated. Mr. Roark said they can't have two trailers go down at the same time because then the trash would back up. Mr. Roark said those are the trailers we are speaking about. Mr. Long said these trailers are being moved five times per week.

Mr. Sherman said seeing these trailers are 20 years old, have they thought of getting new ones? Mr. Long said one was rebuilt and may be good for 10 years. Mr. Long said he is either looking into getting the other one rebuilt or the lead time for getting a new one and the pricing on both. Mr. Long said he's looking into that now. Mr. Sherman said he could come back at reconsideration. Mr. Long said if that trailer is not road worthy, then we will have to do something. Mr. Sherman said we should think ahead and come back at reconsideration.

Ms. Bressette asked how much the other one costs to be refurbished? Mr. Long said around \$65,000.00 and he said with metal going up so it might be an additional \$10,000.00. Ms. Martin said they added a new trailer for \$120,000.00 last year.

Mr. Grant said he appreciates all the work they do there and thanked them. Mr. Grant asked about the truck not being picked up with the metals and he asked if that was the item for \$89,000.00 and the company wasn't making regular pickups? Ms. Martin said that was for the MSW and the single stream trash and recycling. Mr. Grant asked if there were other companies they could look into? Ms. Martin said we are entering into a new contract October 1st with Waste Management instead of Republic. Ms. Martin said they are hoping to have better service with Waste Management.

Rentals: Mr. Long said they just purchased the trailer for an office, and they are considering putting a rubber roof on there to replace the metal roof. He said that was around \$10-18,000.00 as a buffer. He said he's been told a rubber roof is better. Ms. Bressette asked if that trailer was bought used? Mr. Long said they've been renting it for years. Mr. Sherman said that should not be under rentals and should be under town buildings and repairs. Ms. Martin said she would change that to expenses. Mr. Sherman said because we now own the trailer. Ms. Bressette asked if the \$18,000.00 was just for the roof? Mr. Long said yes, because it will eventually leak, and they want to be on top of that.

Equipment Tech. Plan: Mr. Long said they have a new can machine that separates metal and aluminum and they just sent out their first shipment and should be getting a credit of \$600-800, depending on the price of aluminum. He said that is a plus on their side, as they were paying to get rid of them, but now are separating them and will get good money in about one a month. Ms. Bressette asked if people were getting used to separating these? Mr. Long said yes, it is coming along. Mr. Long said hopefully they will start doing glass next.

Mr. Abare asked if he has to sort aluminum and metal in his recycling? Mr. Long said yes, aluminum and tin cans go into a machine that separates them. Mr. Abare asked if he could put plastic in there? Mr. Long said no. Mr. Abare asked what happens if someone puts plastic in there? Mr. Long said they have to take that out. Mr. Long said if there is a lot of plastic in there, then it is a pain, but it isn't happening that often. Mr. Abare said he appreciates all the work they do there and said they have a good crew.

Expenses: Mr. Long said they've been with Allied Waste or Republic for over 9 years, and they had a great deal with them. He said they didn't even bid on the new contract. He said all fees are going up and they really had a good deal with them. Ms. Bressette asked if the new contract with Waste Management has been signed yet? Mr. Roark said the Board of Selectmen are in the process of signing that. Mr. Roark said with the help of Mr. Long and Ms. Martin they went through the process of trying to figure out the best and cheapest way to move the trash and went through three bid processes. Mr. Roark said they are separating out the totes and dumpsters; one company is getting that, and one company is getting the hauling of single stream recycling and the trash and that is Waste Management. Mr. Roark said Waste Management ended up being the cheapest company. Mr. Roark said we had Republic for seven years and things were different in 2017. He said the service began to slip towards the end of the contract and it made things difficult. Mr. Roark said this will be a big increase, but to remember we've been ahead of the curve for the last few years with that contract. Mr. Roark said the Waste Management contract is a five-year contract and he thinks it will be a good deal. Ms. Bressette said we've known this has been coming for the last few years.

Ms. Bressette asked them to go through those expenses and asked if most of them were contractual? Mr. Long said yes. Ms. Martin said the household hazardous waste is with NRPC and that is our yearly fee and they voted to have a 5% instead of a 7% raise on the yearly fee, which was \$10,500.00. Pelham does the household hazardous waste every other year and that is flipped with Milford. She said the year we do the event; we get a discount. She said next year is our year to have that. Ms. Martin said NRRA is another

dues that is \$1,200.00 and that is Northeast Resources, and they help us with our light iron revenue and tires. Mr. Long said they outsource a lot for us. Ms. Martin said we use Interstate, from Rhode Island for our freon and they've been good and dependable. She said if we think someone has a better price, we can eliminate the company we're using and go through NRRRA. She said the company they've been using is in Atkinson and they are not charging us too much in fuel. She said they charge \$180.00 for a haul, which is very inexpensive. She said that money is what we get for revenue, so it is a wash. She said they will be also helping us with our glass, but if not, then NRRRA will help with that, or Waste Management will. Mr. Long said we're still working on that to see who has the best price. Mr. Abare asked what the marketing earth day was? Ms. Martin said that has to do with Dena Hoffman and she said they've never used that. Mr. Long said a previous director used to do an Earth Day. Mr. Abare said if it was his company, he wouldn't do that. Ms. Martin said that would be under Dena Hoffman and MSW. Ms. Martin said she was thinking of doing something with the schools, which is called Trash on the Lawn, which goes through NRRRA. She said in the future she will look into that to see if that would fall under that, but right now they don't use that. Mr. Roark said in the past they have done community outreach to try and encourage recycling. Mr. Roark said Dena Hoffman, who is the MS4 Environmental engineer, has done contests for this type of thing. He said if it's removed, Ms. Martin can find it somewhere else. Ms. Martin said she can add something else.

Mr. Sherman talked about the CIP for this year, and he said there is a 6.5-yard stationary compactor marked as urgent for \$88,500.00 and we should fund that? Mr. Long said yes, they have a compactor down there again that was bought at the same time as the trailers. Mr. Long said when we went from an incineration station to a transfer station. Mr. Long said that is 21 years old and he doesn't know how long it will last. He said if that goes then they would be loading roll offs not into a compactor. He said to buy that, it would be six months out. Mr. Sherman said that needs to be added and there is also an ATG tractor on the CIP for next year, which is marked as urgent. Mr. Long said that is for 2024. Mr. Roark said the tractor got put in when an option was buying our own truck to haul the trash. Mr. Roark said that won't be for the next five years and to take that out of the CIP. He said CIP was created prior to this contract. Mr. Sherman said that is still needed, but not for this coming year? Mr. Roark said no, potentially the earliest that would be needed would be six years out. Mr. Roark said as far as the MSW compactor is listed as a wish list item for a potential warrant article. Mr. Sherman said there is another item that is for the dump with a plow and a yard sander. Mr. Long said they took the sander off after talking with the highway department. He said they are going to take care of the sanding for us, and he said they will get longevity out of that truck without having a sander on it. Mr. Long said they use it to plow the yard and that truck will make the town money. He said they are going to start driving it there ourselves with no haul fee. Mr. Sherman said they are taking the sander off and are they getting a truck with a plow from the highway department? Mr. Long said no, that will have a plow on it, but not a sander. Ms. Bressette asked if this is the first year that request is on the CIP? Mr. Long said yes. Mr. Long said their current truck was inherited from Animal Control. He said he would like to give that to Parks and Recreation, as they borrow the truck a lot and they could use it. Mr. Sherman said that is not this board. Ms. Bressette asked if they are having problems with the compactor at the moment? Mr. Long said not that one, no, but the other one has different problems, but it is working now. Ms. Bressette asked how long those usually last? Ms. Martin said the one they are asking to be replaced is since 2001. Mr. Long said he would say 10-15 years. Ms. Martin said they have to keep up the maintenance with them, by oiling them and greasing them. Mr. Long said they get PM'd (preventative maintenance) once a year.

Ms. Bressette asked if they are looking to do warrant articles for the compactor? Mr. Long asked if they have to because it's a replacement, even though it's more than \$75,000.00? Ms. Bressette asked if they would add that into the budget? Mr. Sherman said if it's a replacement, it can be added in the budget. Mr. Long wasn't sure how to put that in there. Ms. Bressette asked if he got a quote for that? Mr. Long said yes, he got that for the truck and the compactor. Ms. Bressette asked if he can email that to her and then she can send that out to the board? Mr. Long said yes, he would.

Ms. Larson asked what the underspend on the budget was for last year? Mr. Roark said for the total budget, he did not have that with him. Ms. Larson asked him if he can bring that next week? Mr. Roark asked if she meant for all of 2021 or just up until September 1? Ms. Larson said they are on a calendar year, so 12/31.

Mr. Roark said they can bring a spreadsheet with expenses. Ms. Larson just asked for the underspend of the total budget for last year. Mr. Roark said yes, he will get that. Ms. Larson asked if he knew what the balance of the unassigned fund that was held? Ms. Penny said she did not bring that, but she thought it was 5.5 or 5.7 million. Mr. Sherman said that sounded right. Mr. Roark said he will bring that number next week too. Ms. Larson asked if the police are up for contract on the warrant in March? Mr. Roark said they are, and they negotiated a tentative agreement that would be on the warrant and that will be a five-year contract with the police union. Ms. Larson said she didn't see any increases for the second half of the year. Mr. Roark said that one will land on the warrant. Mr. Roark said the board is looking for a way to try and fund the police radio project.

Ms. Bressette said the town walk is on Saturday at 9AM and will start at the library. Mr. Roark said they will look at a project at the library and then go to the historical society, the senior center and finish up at the Animal Control shelter. Mr. Sherman asked about the transfer station and mentioned we have a lot of new people on this committee that should see that. Mr. Roark said that is the chair's choice to add that stop. Ms. Bressette said we can add that stop in. Mr. Roark said the transfer station will be the last stop.

REVIEW OF BY-LAWS

Ms. Bressette said they will not vote on these tonight, it will just be a review of the proposed changes. Ms. Bressette said there are mostly small changes. She said they edited the chairman to chairperson, vice chairman to chairperson, keeping the secretary as is. Ms. Bressette said the secretary on page 3, Section 3C, changed as far as the secretary roles. She said they shall act in the absence of the recording secretary as needed. She said she has never known them not having a recording secretary on hand. She said she removed 'to be the custodian of the official minutes and shall keep in a bound volume submitted to the town clerk annually'. She said the town clerk already keeps the minutes on file and also the minutes can be requested from the Selectman's office. Ms. Bressette said on page 5, role of recording secretary, she made it clear that the board doesn't set how much this position gets paid. She said that is set by the town administrator.

Mr. Sherman said this is an independent committee and he thought to reestablish our independence we should ask the Selectmen or the administrator to see if we are able to approve or nominate a person, but he thinks this board should approve who that recording secretary is. He said this would preserve our independence as an independent board. He also said as written, it says 'shall employ the recording secretary'. Ms. Bressette asked how he would like to change that? Mr. Sherman said he will think about it. Ms. Bressette said we do not budget for it. Ms. Bressette said she has never known us to appoint or budget for the recording secretary.

Ms. Bressette said on page 8, under procedures for review, (B) capital expenditures. She said she's never known us to set a warrant article 'shall be any item useful greater than three years and the dollar amount to the current bid price of a police cruiser and replacing capital expenditure whose dollar amount exceeds the lowest current state bid price of a police cruiser by no more than twice may be inserted into the operational vote by the budget committee'. She said she hasn't recalled us ever using this and asked if anyone else has? Ms. Ryan said she believed it was used in the past way back. Ms. Larson said maybe in 2011 she saw that. Ms. Bressette said in recent years she couldn't say what that would be. Ms. Bressette asked if anyone wanted to replace that language or take it out? Mr. Sherman said he would not take it out, talking about the capital expenditures. Ms. Bressette said regarding the bid price of a police cruiser.

Mr. Sherman said that ties in with the CIP and that is \$75,000.00, he said a lot of those have to be bonded. He said anything that is to be bonded over a period of time, we want to make it clear it should be submitted as a warrant article. He said he took that as the objective of having this in here. He said if they wanted to change the time span from 3 to 5 years, but he wants to make sure any major projects particularly for bonding purposes go to the voters. Ms. Bressette asked if they want it to be more in line with language

taken from the CIP? She thought it has to be clearer than the bid price of a police cruiser. She asked if that was in the RSA about it being over \$75,000.00 or \$100,000.00? Mr. Sherman said no, that is in the CIP rules. Ms. Bressette said we could look at the CIP rules and use that language. Mr. Martony asked if the town had anything that explained what capital expenditure means?

Mr. Sherman said being an independent committee, it used to be anyone that wanted a position (a new full-time position) had to be placed on the ballot. He said we wanted to make it easier for lesser paid positions could be put into a budget as opposed to having to go before the voters. He said last year by using that personnel formula, it was just over \$100,000.00.

Ms. Larson said no matter what the school or town puts in the budget, this committee can vote it down. She said she didn't like that restriction and it was restrictive back in the day. She said we are so far behind the eight-ball as far as other towns and it is hard for us to attract people to work here. She said we are behind and from all the 'No' votes way back, we are playing catch up from 20 years ago and it is difficult. She said this committee has the ability to say no. She said the Selectmen can move things to warrant articles or postpone them until next year, but she wants to see us make progress. She thought the last five years we have been good about being conscientious and conservative. She doesn't want to see the town restricted; she wants to see the town move forward. Ms. Bressette asked if she was speaking to personnel or capital expenditures? Ms. Larson said both. Ms. Larson said things have to be within reason. Mr. Martony said last year they had \$325,000.00 on expenditure for remodeling of the Planning department. Ms. Larson said the remodel of the Memorial School was on a warrant article. Mr. Martony said it is capital and last year it went into the budget, but didn't fit in. Ms. Larson said for buying a truck that we need.

Ms. Cormier asked if we look at the whole picture before voting on these? Ms. Larson said we will vote at the end, after all departments get reviewed. Ms. Bressette said we will have a full night of reviewing all budgets for the town and then a separate night of voting on the proposed changes to the budgets and then we go into the school budgets after that.

Mr. Sherman said we are dealing with two different financial years. He said the town is January 1 to Dec 31. He said the first quarter of the year is the town has to watch what they are spending. At the March meeting, the budget could be denied. He said the school budget year is July 1 to June 30 and therefore when we are looking at the budget, the school is trying to plan for a year and a half in advance. He said when we talk about funding a position, which financial year are we talking about? He said that will be a difficult thing to cope with when we rewrite these sections.

Ms. Larson said that was the issue with last year, on the town budget it was only April. Ms. Bressette said it was only 9 months. Ms. Larson said it wasn't a full 12 months. Ms. Bressette said if anyone has ideas on what to put in the capital expenditure section, to email her those ideas.

Ms. Bressette said there are two options in the personnel section. She said last year the problem was they found out when the town presented theirs, we wouldn't see a full year as compensation. She said we want to know how much total compensation there is. She said the school was showing the full year.

Mr. Sherman said we should add life insurance. Ms. Bressette said yes, all benefits should be shown.

Ms. Bressette said also in that language from last year, it had it that it was telling the school and the town they had to put a position over the total compensation threshold on a warrant article, but as a budget committee we don't have the authority to demand a warrant article. She said we can vote no, but it is up to the town or school to put forth a warrant article.

Ms. Bressette said the first option would be to still have a compensation threshold, but that would be equal to the general schedule base pay of a grade to be determined. That is taken from the United States office of personnel management current year. She said you would have them put in any benefits and that would put them to a certain salary like they had last year. She said the second option would be to make it clear when presenting a budget for a 12-month period compensation, but only budgeting for the months you think you are getting the new hire hired by. So, the total salary, estimated town portion, plus benefits and retirement contributions. For transparency for both options, the chair shall present to the budget impact incurred by the addition of new staff, part time or full-time staff at the time of deliberative session. So, the first option, say the total compensation threshold if over \$100,000.00 for a new employee (or going from

part time to full time) the committee would have to vote no? Then it would be up to the town or school to put forth a warrant article. Second option does not set it to a salary or threshold.

She said her own opinion would be option 2, because she doesn't want to tie the hands of the elected budget committee officials to not go forward with a position if we feel a need for it. She said the original intent of the total compensation threshold when it was in place was because a position wasn't going through on a warrant article. It kept getting voted down over and over again. That is why they had this so they could put in certain positions under a certain amount.

Ms. Larson said if we go with number 2, can it be rewritten because it's written from a town perspective and not the school because it needs to encompass both? Ms. Bressette said yes.

Mr. Martony said option 1 was more in line with what we had before, but instead of having the TCT coming up with a number that changes, it is clear of what it is every year. He said option 1 makes more sense now.

Ms. Larson asked if option 1 included benefits or just salary? Mr. Martony said it was whatever we have in the general grade level, plus benefits is what we have. Ms. Cormier asked if we could add that to option 1? Ms. Bressette said she thinks it has that. Mr. Croteau said you would have to add family benefits to option 1. Ms. Larson asked if the grade table was only salary? Ms. Bressette said yes. Ms. Larson said benefits are a big portion of compensation and it could be \$30,000.00 or more. She said when they budget, they have to assume someone will elect a family plan. Ms. Bressette said they can't discriminate. Ms. Cormier said it seems more transparent if you go with option 1 and add your benefit plan. Ms. Larson said yes because that does fluctuate too. Mr. Sherman said the problem with option 1 and the grade is, who is to determine given a new position, what grade that is? Ms. Cormier said our committee would choose 1 to go on. Mr. Martony said one grade. Mr. Sherman said we will just pick one grade out of this list? Ms. Bressette said yes if we went with option 1. Mr. Martony said it is good to have freedom, but if this goes to a warrant article and the voters vote it down, isn't that what it should be?

Ms. Larson said sometimes people don't take the time to educate themselves on the need and impact of the children (from the school side). She said once someone says no to a warrant article, you have to then wait another full year. She said an example is that we have problems getting OT's and we end up paying contracted services and it is more cost beneficial to have our own employee. She said even if it's voted down on a warrant article, we have to provide OT services per the Special Ed Law, so we will pay more. She said why isn't it more beneficial as a town to put that on the budget instead of a warrant article? She said she thinks the school does a good job of promoting their warrant articles. She said as a school board member, they are elected officials and she thinks it's best for the children and for the budget.

Mr. Sherman said we have to remember we are dealing with union contracts and therefore if they are looking for someone with experience and making this threshold then that could eliminate some well qualified people. Ms. Bressette said we always have the option of voting no without a threshold. Ms. Bressette said she isn't sure, but she doesn't believe there are any new positions being added to the town this year? Mr. Croteau said he believes there is a part-time deputy fire chief. He believes this is the only one.

Ms. Larson said she isn't that far into her budget process yet, so she can't answer to that.

Ms. Bressette said we are not voting on these tonight. She said if anyone has any proposed language for these changes, to email them to her. She also said they would review them again next week and then vote on them the following week. Ms. Larson said the town is done their budgeting and we're going with what they've been doing the last few years.

Ms. Larson mentioned she was perplexed when Ms. Castles had to call roll-call at the end of each meeting when adjourning and she thought that was in the by-laws. Ms. Bressette said it is in the by-laws as having the choice for roll-call and we don't have to. Ms. Larson asked if roll-call will be done for everything? Ms. Bressette said no, only budget changes, but not for everything. Ms. Larson said if there was a question of a vote, then we could. Mr. Martony said it looks to be up to the chair. Ms. Bressette agreed. Mr. Sherman said last year at some meetings, when a member wasn't there, we would have to call roll-call by state law. Ms. Larson said yes if someone was remotely on the meeting.

Ms. Bressette asked for everyone to get her changes and next week and we would review these again.

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING/Thursday, September 8, 2022

Mr. Smith asked if there is a date for the school walk? Ms. Bressette said that is October 15th, from 9AM-12:00.

ADJOURN

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Castles
Recording Secretary