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APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 10, 2020

CALL TO ORDER – at approximately 7:00pm

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

Mr. Cronin asked Committee members, when their name is called, to please confirm their presence and to please identify as the right to know law requires, who, if anyone, was in the room.

Mr. Cronin called roll.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

PRESENT: David Cronin – Present in person
Amber Capone – Present in person
Bob Sherman – Present in person
Meg Bressette – Present in person
Kannan Sasi – Present via Zoom
Eduardo Martony – Present via Zoom
Philip Haberlen – Present in person
Jas Moorjani – Present via Zoom
Jason Croteau – Present in person
Board of Selectmen Representative Bob Haverty – Present in person

ABSENT: School Board Representative Deb Ryan – excused absence

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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES REVIEW:

September 3, 2020:

MOTION: (Sherman/Capone) To approve the September 3, 2020 meeting minutes as written.

ROLL CALL VOTE: David Cronin – Yes
Amber Capone – Yes
Bob Sherman – Yes
Meg Bressette – Yes
Kannan Sasi – Yes
Eduardo Martony – Yes
Philip Haberlen – Yes
Jas Moorjani – abstained
Jason Croteau - Yes
Board of Selectmen Representative Bob Haverty – Yes
(9-0-1) The motion carried.

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OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Cronin spoke about the upcoming conference (New Hampshire Municipal Association announcing the 2020 Budget and Financial Virtual Workshop). There are three committee members who will attend: Mr. Haberlen, Mr. Sherman and Mr. Moorjani.

2021 BUDGET REVIEW

Town Finance Director Jean Olson and IT Administrator Brian Demers were present for budget presentation.

Cable – Cable Coordinator James Greenwood presenting.
2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$146,688

Mr. Greenwood provided the Committee with a summary overview of the proposed budget. There are contractual increases under salaries.

Ms. Bressette questioned the amount used last year in the emergency equipment replacement fund. Mr. Greenwood replied they used all of it. He spoke about the items that would be replaced this year (with an approximate cost of \$9,900); he’s held purchases off because of the pandemic. He hoped to purchase a third playback unit next year to bring the department up to date with all units; all repair and equipment money will be exhausted to do so.

Ms. Capone questioned if the emergency money was used to purchase the playback equipment. Ms. Bressette saw there were budget lines called ‘emergency equipment repair/replacement’ (budgeted for \$8,000) and there was also a line ‘new equipment’ budgeted for \$9,000. Mr. Greenwood stated both lines would be used this year to replace the units. He said money from both lines would be exhausted to replace equipment. Ms. Capone inquired if the line was supposed to be emergency equipment repair or if it is emergency equipment repair/replacements. She didn’t know if a planned purchase would fall under an emergency. Mr. Greenwood believed it should just be equipment repairs; he uses that money to replace failed equipment. He said they can’t be sure what will break each year; he follows an equipment replacement plan and replaces items that break. The lines are used for both replacements and emergencies.

Mr. Sherman asked where the Forestry Committee and Board of Adjustment were covered in the budget. Mr. Greenwood replied he didn’t add everything in the budget because he felt they would be covered. He noted they had also not done as much theater this year. He believed they would be covered at the beginning of next year as well. If he sees something, he needs to add for 2022, he’ll work on doing so next year.

Ms. Bressette asked about the projected revenue of \$259,000. Mr. Greenwood replied the revenues were currently pretty much level. He said they were supposed to continue to receive revenues through the end of 2021. At that point they would need to renew the franchise agreement. Mr. McCarthy stated legal was in the process of negotiating the next franchise agreement with Comcast.

Mr. Cronin saw the equipment grant was less than \$2,000 and asked how long they had it. Mr. Greenwood replied they used some of the funds last year to purchase equipment and hoped through negotiations they could get an equipment grant for the next ten years.

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Ms. Capone inquired if the salary increase (priority list – wish list) was on base pay or performance. Mr. Greenwood replied it would be a base salary increase and he would continue to receive 2.5% going forward. Mr. Haverty explained it was brought up at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting; however, they didn’t have all the figures, so they approved the Cable budget ‘as is’ and bring the number to the Budget Committee for a decision. He stated the salary shown in the budget was not inclusive of the priority list items. Ms. Capone didn’t want the Budget Committee to speak for the Board of Selectmen. She felt it was hard for the committee to make a decision on that priority item without the Selectmen’s final vote because it would put them in a position of deciding personnel without knowing all the facts. Mr. Haverty reiterated the Selectmen didn’t have final numbers at the time they were voting; therefore, they couldn’t react to the proposed budget and decided to take no action. He offered to take the budget back to the Selectmen for discussion. Mr. McCarthy will schedule Mr. Greenwood to attend the next Selectmen’s meeting for a budget discussion.

Library – Library Director Greg McClay and President Library Trustees Rose Cares presenting. 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$543,000

Mr. Cronin inquired if the Library was on a different fiscal schedule from the Town. Mr. McClay answered yes; they conduct their reviews and raises take place in June.

Mr. McClay reviewed the proposed budget. Salaries showed contractual/planned increases. He noted there was an increase in supplies due to Covid and in terms of a change in their services and cleaning the building and stacks. The remainder of the budget is level funded.

Mr. McClay spoke about the priority list (wish list) items which included a variety of items they were currently working on and exploring: 1) website redesign, 2) painting of interior, 3) re-carpeting, 4) irrigation/sprinkler system, and 5) staff laptops. Mr. Cronin asked for the items to be prioritized. Ms. Cares noted some of the items would be through the Town’s budget; this was the first year they were asked to do a priority list. She said the list was to highlight items that needed attention. She said if they had to prioritize, the carpets would be number one. Mr. Cronin confirmed none of the items were included in the budget line of \$56,000. Ms. Cares answered no; that line captured work they started last year to do soundproofing and enclose the children’s area from the main floor. The additional money in the budget was so they could continue the project.

Mr. Sherman asked if the soundproofing was on the priority list or if the proposed \$56,000 (in the budget) would be put aside to start enclosing the area. Ms. Cares replied the \$56,000 was included in the budget as part of their 3-year plan. She noted some of the items on the priority list would fall under the Town’s budget; they aren’t responsible for the exterior portion of the building. She noted they would have conversations with Mr. McCarthy regarding painting the interior.

Mr. McCarthy stated the Library had a lot of (personnel) change, so the consistency, communications and expectations of the building get lost in the transitions. He stated the interior and exterior of the building were the Town’s responsibility. He said any IT requests (i.e. laptops) would be handled through Mr. Demers. He noted they didn’t have the capacity to add another system to the existing well and they would have to dig an entirely new well to expand the irrigation system. Mr. McCarthy described the typical process for having items included in the budget. He noted he didn’t have a project budget this year and stated they work hard to update and maintain Town properties and described the things done since he became Town

127 Administrator. He told the committee he would work with Mr. McClay to possibly populate the
128 Town project budget between now and the budget vote.

129

130 Ms. Capone suggested considering a 4-year plan versus a 3-year plan. She believed it might
131 make more sense to do the construction work and painting prior to installing new carpeting. Mr.
132 McCarthy said they could accommodate many things through the budget process. Ms. Capone
133 wanted to address the concerns in the right order.

134

135 Ms. Bressette saw the Library had been added/included in the Capital Improvement Plan ('CIP')
136 last year (\$56,148). In reviewing this year's plan, she saw the proposal was \$52,346 and noted
137 next year also showed \$52,346. Ms. Cares replied they haven't seen the CIP and couldn't
138 comment regarding the information. When speaking to the CIP committee last year the
139 suggestion was to disburse the funding as was currently mentioned. Mr. Sherman spoke about
140 the CIP and noted the figures in the plan were discussed last year for the whole project. Ms.
141 Cares reiterated they haven't seen the current CIP and had their proposed budget reflect the
142 amounts they were told the previous year. From what she recalled the figure should be the same
143 for all three years. Mr. McClay noted the figure contained in the budget had not been changed
144 from last year's budget.

145

146 Mr. Cronin asked Mr. Sherman if the Library should go back and review the number to determine
147 what the figure should be. Mr. Sherman noted the Planning Board had already taken the initial
148 CIP and voted. Ms. Capone questioned if increasing the number to \$56,000 would need to go
149 back in front of the CIP. Mr. Sherman didn't think so but said they would need to speak to legal
150 counsel. He was assuming if updated figures were determined they could be automatically
151 adjusted.

152

153 Ms. Bressette questioned if they planned to use carpet squares within the building to make areas
154 easier to replace. Mr. McClay answered yes.

155

156 Cemetery – Town Administrator Brian McCarthy presenting for Cemetery Trustee Edmund
157 Gleason

158 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$162,266

159

160 Increase to the salary lines were contractual obligations. Ms. Bressette asked if the non-union
161 positions were contractual. Mr. McCarthy read aloud notes submitted by Mr. Gleason. The
162 budget has been structurally amended to show categories and expenses. Previous budgets did not
163 properly reflect salaries because the part-time employee was covered under other categories. It
164 was also noted the Sexton's phone and internet expense have now been assigned into the proper
165 categories. Overall, the 2021 budget reflects zero growth; the increases are all contractual. Mr.
166 McCarthy believed in the past the budget kept the same format; however, when Mr. Gleason
167 became Chair, he worked with the Finance Director to break the budget down and make it more
168 transparent and accurate.

169

170 Mr. Cronin asked if there was a reason the part-time laborer position was broken down as 35/17.
171 Mr. McCarthy replied seventeen weeks starts from January 1st going to April. He said the split
172 typically represented from the beginning the year to April (after Town Meeting), then from April
173 through the end of the year. He will follow up with Mr. Gleason to confirm the split.

174

175 Mr. McCarthy reviewed the remainder of the budget. Mr. Sherman asked about the status for the
176 find a grave on-line program. Mr. Demers didn't have an update because the Cemetery Trustees
177 had taken the project up on their own. Mr. McCarthy will get information for the committee.

178

179 Ms. Bressette inquired if they contracted with anyone for lime, fertilizer, and grass seed. Mr.
180 McCarthy believed they did all their own work and obtained their supplies from Tractor Supply
181 or somewhere similar.

182

183 Mr. Haberlen wanted to know what specific heavy equipment (rentals) they had and what the
184 compressor was used for. Mr. McCarthy replied they had back hoes and other construction
185 equipment (ie 550 dump truck) to move dirt. It was his guess that the compressor was for air
186 tools. He also believed they used it to blow the water lines out prior to winter.

187

188 Health Services – Town Administrator Brian McCarthy presenting.

189 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$73,700

190

191 Mr. McCarthy reviewed the proposed budget. He noted the Child Advocacy Center requested an
192 additional \$200 and stated the Selectmen felt the increase was appropriate. They are an
193 investigative center that works with the Police Department when dealing with crimes against
194 children. He read the list of organizations included within the budget who provide services to the
195 community. He said each year they request support.

196

197 Ms. Bressette wanted to know if the organizations had provided information regarding how many
198 Pelham residents had been helped. Mr. McCarthy will provide the committee with the request
199 letters submitted by the organizations.

200

201 Health Officer – Town Administrator Brian McCarthy presenting.

202 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$45,916

203

204 Mr. McCarthy summarized the proposed budget. Ms. Bressette questioned if the Town did its
205 own mosquito control. Mr. McCarthy answered no; they have used Swamp Incorporated since he
206 has been Town Administrator.

207

208 Human Services – Town Administrator Brian McCarthy presenting.

209 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$73,820

210

211 Mr. McCarthy explained the increase was for the administrator's salary; they had missed it last
212 year and incorporated it in the proposed budget. The remainder of the budget is level funded.

213

214 Mr. Cronin inquired if there were more clients this year due to Covid. Mr. McCarthy replied he
215 would find out the numbers and provide the committee with a comparison from the previous year.
216 Mr. Cronin asked Mr. McCarthy to provide the new committee members with a brief explanation
217 of the services. Mr. McCarthy explained it was called general assistance, but commonly known
218 as the welfare office to help citizens who are in financial distress get funding from the Town. He
219 said it wasn't free, the money was paid back to the Town in time. People are helped through
220 difficult situations and put on a pathway for financial recovery. To receive assistance people,
221 have to go through an application process to qualify.

222

223 Mr. Croteau wanted to know if people had to pay the monies back that they receive from the
224 Town. Mr. McCarthy answered yes. Mr. Croteau asked for the default rate. Mr. McCarthy
225 replied the Town received the money back; they typically assigned liens.

226

227 Information Technology – IT Administrator Brian Demers presenting.

228 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$171,368

229

230 Mr. Demers went through the budget and spoke to the lines that had changed from the previous
231 year.

232

233 Ms. Capone questioned if the administrator's salary should be included in the budget. Mr.
234 McCarthy replied he operated out of the Selectmen's office. Ms. Capone wanted to know if the
235 \$10,997 for internet would be the yearly cost. Mr. Demers replied it was the yearly cost for
236 synchronous internet, which allowed the same amount of band width to be pushed to the internet
237 as well as being pulled from the internet. He said this service was instrumental due to the new
238 body cameras in the Police Department. He noted Comcast (old provider) capped the limits and
239 added if the Town needed more band width from the new connection all they had to do was call
240 and get it. Mr. McCarthy added they didn't realize the band width issue at the time the body
241 cameras were purchased; the new provider solves the issues.

242

243 Mr. Haverty spoke regarding the Splashtop Desktop Software, which related to the Town's
244 business continuity capability. He said in the event employees had to work remotely the software
245 would support that ability. Ms. Capone asked if there was a user maximum. Mr. Demers
246 answered yes; the licensing was per user. They currently have approximately thirteen and could
247 purchase more at a fairly inexpensive cost. They can also adjust the plan as it was month to
248 month. Ms. Capone inquired how many employees the Town had. Mr. McCarthy replied there
249 were approximately seventy-five; however, not everyone would need to operate from home.

250

251 **NEW BUSINESS**

252

253 Mr. Cronin pointed out the committee had scheduled the Town walk for the coming Saturday;
254 however, it appears there is really not many new things to see. He said it may not be a good idea
255 given the small bus that would transport members. He asked the committee if they should go
256 forward with a Town walk or postpone the walk.

257

258 Ms. Capone made a motion to postpone the Town walk. Ms. Bressette seconded for discussion.
259 Mr. Haverty questioned if there was a date they wanted to postpone until. There was a brief
260 discussion regarding a potential timeframe prior to reconsideration. Mr. McCarthy noted the only
261 new thing would be the new Highway Department building; he just signed the building permit.
262 Foundation and construction will begin shortly. They expect the building to arrive by October
263 with a guarantee the building will be sealed/enclosed before snow flies.

264

265 Ms. Bressette asked about the status of the animal shelter. Mr. McCarthy understood it was
266 included on the Capital Improvement Plan with a loose estimate. He believed the committee
267 would see something next year. Ms. Bressette asked if there were still plans to move the
268 Planning Department. Mr. McCarthy replied the latest iteration was to leave the department in
269 place. He noted they could convert three classrooms into a meeting space to move them out of
270 Sherburne Hall. There have been discussions but nothing final. Mr. Sherman inquired how the
271 remaining space (classrooms) would be used. Mr. McCarthy replied one room was storage for
272 Parks and Recreation and the other room was in the process of being converted into a small
273 workout facility for Town employees.

274

275 Ms. Capone asked if anyone had a proposed date to conduct the Town walk through. Mr.
276 McCarthy noted he would make sure everyone was invited to the building opening ceremony in
277 the Spring. Ms. Capone withdrew her motion. Ms. Bressette withdrew her second.

278

279 A new motion to postpone the Town walk until the first of the year was discussed.

280

MOTION: (Croteau/Haverty) To postpone the Town walk – date to be determined.

ROLL CALL David Cronin – Yes

VOTE: Amber Capone – Yes

Bob Sherman – Yes

Meg Bressette – Yes

Kannan Sasi – Yes

Eduardo Martony – Yes

Philip Haberlen – Yes

Jas Moorjani – answer not audible (still connected via Zoom)

Jason Croteau - Yes

Board of Selectmen Representative Bob Haverty – Yes

(9-0-0) The motion carried.

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ADJOURNMENT

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MOTION: (Capone/Bressette) To adjourn the meeting.

ROLL CALL David Cronin – Yes

VOTE: Amber Capone – Yes

Bob Sherman – Yes

Meg Bressette – Yes

Kannan Sasi – Yes

Eduardo Martony – Yes

Philip Haberlen – Yes

Jas Moorjani – answer not audible (still connected via Zoom)

Jason Croteau - Yes

Board of Selectmen Representative Bob Haverty – Yes

(10-0-0) The motion carried.

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286 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30pm.

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Respectfully submitted,
Charity Landry
Recording Secretary