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APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 17, 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.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

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

ABSENT: Kannan Sasi

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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES REVIEW:

September 10, 2020:

MOTION: (Sherman/Capone) To approve the September 10, 2020 meeting minutes as written.

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

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24

25 **OLD BUSINESS**

26
27 Mr. Cronin reviewed answers to questions that came up during the last meeting within the
28 budgets for Cemetery, Human Services and Assessing.

29
30 Cemetery – clarification lines 550 & 690 the funds were reallocated to salary line items to show
31 the cost of the employee. Previously the employee was not listed under salary because the salary
32 was paid out under two different budget items.

33
34 Human Services – They have handled less clients this year than the previous year. They have not
35 dealt with any Covid issues.

36
37 Assessing - the 2020 Residential value as of September 17, 2020 is \$1,827,945,007 minus
38 the exemptions of \$5,208,900 = \$1,822,736,107 and commercial only = \$75,468,561. The initial
39 value I gave you on Thursday is commercial & industrial combined- \$119,951,261.

40
41
42 **2021 BUDGET REVIEW**

43
44 Town Finance Director Jean Olson and IT Administrator Brian Demers were present for budget
45 presentation.

46
47 Senior Center – Senior Center Director Sara Landry presenting
48 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$148,336

49
50 Ms. Landry stated there were not a lot of increases except for some contractual items.

51
52 Mr. Sherman questioned if the Selectmen had gone over the priority list items and given approval
53 for them. Ms. Landry replied they had reviewed the items and approved an increase to the
54 administrative assistant position from 20 to 40 hours per week (beginning April 1st). For fiscal
55 year 2021 the overall increase (Senior Center and Town budgets) will be \$41,020 to include
56 benefits, retirement, and all taxes; the following year will show the increase of approximately
57 \$60,500.

58
59 Mr. Haverty stated the Selectmen heard all the priority list items being proposed by Ms. Landry.
60 They were amenable to the increase for the administrative assistant; however, at the time of
61 budget review/vote the Selectmen didn't have the exact numbers at that time. They Selectmen
62 voted on the base budget until they could see the final figures. Mr. Haverty told the committee
63 they could either act on the priority item or send the budget back the Selectmen for a vote. Ms.
64 Capone mentioned they could keep it open for reconsideration. Mr. Haverty reiterated the Board
65 of Selectmen were amenable to the increase in hours for the administrative assistant position.
66 Ms. Capone inquired if there was enough work to support 40 hours per week. Ms. Landry
67 answered yes. She explained her position had changed at the center and went on to discuss the
68 current programs and was hopeful they would be able to have more as it got closer to the end of
69 the year. They are working on creating Zoom programs and social hours. She spoke about the
70 importance of having the additional hours

71
72 Mr. Cronin inquired about status of the kitchen appliances. Ms. Landry replied they weren't
73 doing in-house meals at this time (from St. Joseph's Community Services), they converted to
74 Meals on Wheels when the center shut down (due to Covid). There has been an increase to the
75 number of meals being delivered. Seniors needing assistance can call 603-635-3800 x1 or reach

76 out through the website or Facebook page. Ms. Landry noted they recently started a You Tube
77 channel to show recorded programs and educational classes.

78
79 Ms. Landry hoped the committee would favorably view the administrative position. She spoke
80 about the other priority list items that were requested.

81
82 Mr. Sherman understood the budget request was \$41,208 to cover the additional administrative
83 hours (for fiscal year 2021). Ms. Landry replied her budget would only increase by \$13,525,
84 the other increase of \$29,061 would show in the Town's line items.

85
86 Mr. Martony wanted to know the age of the bus. Ms. Landry replied their bus was a 2016 and
87 beginning to show some wear/rust. She said at some point they may want to discuss the
88 possibility of a lease, which may be a more efficient option. Mr. Martony didn't see a bus
89 (replacement) in the Capital Improvement Plan. Ms. Landry believed the threshold was \$75,000;
90 the bus wouldn't meet that dollar figure threshold.

91
92 Ms. Ryan questioned the process of reviewing the priority list items. Mr. Haverly stated the
93 Selectmen looked at the priority items from each department and acted on those they felt were a
94 priority. With regard to the Senior Center, he said (at the time of budget vote) the Selectmen
95 supported a full-time (40 hour) administrative position but they didn't have the numbers. The
96 Selectmen sent their support along with the budget for the position; the committee could add the
97 number in during reconsideration. Mr. McCarthy explained during the final vote the committee
98 could either add or remove things from the budget. He said typically a department submits a
99 zero-increase budget to the Board of Selectmen minus contractual obligations. When reviewing
100 budgets, the Selectmen always entertains 'departmental needs' that aren't budgeted for (wish
101 list/priority items). During review/vote the Selectmen then decide if they will approve priority
102 items to be added to a budget; after which the budget is submitted to the Budget Committee.
103 However, this year there were a couple 'priority items' that didn't have final numbers at the time
104 of the Selectmen's vote, therefore they voted in concept by approving the request but couldn't
105 add the number because they didn't have it. He said some of those departments now have the
106 numbers and are asking the Budget Committee to consider the priority items (already approved
107 by the Selectmen). He pointed out this had never happened in the past, so the Selectmen had
108 voted on the base line budget and sent their approval of the items to the committee.

109
110 Ms. Capone didn't want to lose the role/purpose of the Budget Committee and believed it was the
111 Selectmen to make personnel decisions. Mr. Haverly agreed. He stated at the time the Selectmen
112 voted on the budgets they didn't have the numbers. He said there were approved items included
113 in the budget; however, there were a couple items they didn't previously have the numbers for.
114 He suggested they take the Senior budget back to the Selectmen to re-vote and bring it back at the
115 time of the committee's vote. Mr. McCarthy stated the Budget Committee had the ultimate vote
116 regarding the Town's budget; they are a higher authority than the Board of Selectmen. Mr.
117 Haverly reiterated now that the final numbers were determined, he would like the opportunity to
118 bring the Senior Center budget back to the Selectmen. He said they would also be going back
119 over the Cable Television budget.

120
121 **PRESENTATION – Capital Improvement Plan ('CIP')**

122
123 Planning Director Jeff Gowan and CIP Chair Samuel Thomas came forward. Mr. Thomas told
124 the committee the Planning Board and Selectmen have already approved the plan and highlighted
125 a few of the items.

126

127 Mr. Sherman believed there was a discrepancy regarding the Library renovation that was
128 supposed to be over three years; however, the plan showed four years. He also saw that the
129 figures didn't add up as they should. Mr. Thomas took note and will correct the information.
130 Mr. Gowan stated once they make the revision the plan will be re-submitted to the committee.

131

132 Mr. Martony asked if there were opportunities to refinance debt, given interest rates were low at
133 this time. Mr. Gowan explained financing wasn't the role of the CIP. He noted the CIP was an
134 advisory document.

135

136 Ms. Bressette referenced two Highway Department entries that were listed under 2022 and
137 questioned why one of the items wasn't pushed to the following year. Mr. Gowan replied the
138 Road Agent had pushed a few things that were requested last year. He said equipment is
139 requested for the times that it is really needed. Mr. Thomas believed the committee had
140 addressed the requests and recalled the life cycle of the equipment fell within that time period.
141 Mr. Sherman added the trucks might possibly be leased so there may only be one truck remaining
142 on the plan.

143

144 Mr. Cronin thanked Mr. Thomas and Mr. Gowan for the presentation.

145

146

147 Planning Department – Planning Director Jeff Gowan and Planning/Zoning Administrator
148 Jennifer Beauregard presenting.

149 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$557,804

150

151 Mr. Gowan noted most of the increases under salaries were contractual. An audit was done
152 earlier in the year to review how the department handled their inspection services. The report
153 came back supportive of the individuals (currently employed), the primary recommendation was
154 to move away from the stipend structure used to pay the inspectors. He said another
155 recommendation was for the inspectors to hold additional certifications and for the building
156 inspector to spend more time reviewing plans. Mr. Gowan stated the proposal was to have a full-
157 time (40/hour per week) building inspector and half-time (20/hour per week) electrical inspector.
158 The idea behind this was to retain the senior levels of expertise held by the current inspectors. He
159 had done an exhaustive salary comparison for the positions. He pointed out there were
160 approximately 200+ new units that would be coming forward in the next 2-3 years; several
161 projects had been approved and more would be coming forward. He said there were also some
162 commercial buildings coming forward, a new Town highway building and potentially a new
163 middle school. Mr. Gowan stated the proposal would have a total salary increase of \$52,823
164 bringing the building inspector from a stipend to full-time and the electric inspector from stipend
165 to part-time. He noted last year the plumbing inspector position had been absorbed into the
166 building inspector position. The Selectmen have given support to the increase. Benefits have not
167 been calculated into the proposed salary increase figure. Mr. Gowan hoped the committee would
168 support the evolution of the positions without separating them out on the warrant. He said the
169 Town spent a fair amount of money on the audit and felt they should live up to the
170 recommendations that came from it.

171

172 Mr. Cronin asked the Selectmen's position regarding the audit recommendations discussed by
173 Mr. Gowan (building inspector moving to full time 40/hours/week and electric inspector moving
174 to part-time 20/hours/week). Mr. Haverty replied the Selectmen unanimously supported it.

175

176 Ms. Capone asked for clarification of the proposed budget given the increase would begin April
177 1st; she saw there was amount listed for the building inspector on line 30 (from January 1st to

178 March 31st). She also saw there was an amount listed for the plumbing inspector (line 28)
179 although there wasn't anyone in that position. Mr. Gowan said the budget lines will be adjusted.
180 Ms. Capone asked if the plumbing inspector had to be licensed. Mr. Gowan replied they
181 (inspectors) all had to be licensed. The building inspector will be doing the plumbing inspections
182 and will be getting all appropriate certifications/licensing; some isn't available because of Covid.
183 He noted the budget included a 'not to exceed' salary number until all certifications are achieved.
184 Ms. Capone wanted to know the minimum licensure the building inspector was expected to have.
185 She said if they were going to inspect plumbing, she wanted to know if they knew plumbing. Mr.
186 Gowan replied both inspectors were experienced to do that work. He pointed out the audit
187 specified the appropriate certifications; the inspector would need to meet those recommendations.
188

189 Ms. Ryan saw a note that there would be a backup inspector and asked for more information
190 regarding such. Mr. Gowan replied each of the two inspectors could back each other up if there
191 was a schedule conflict.
192

193 Ms. Bressette inquired if the proposed employment change needed to be included on the warrant.
194 Mr. Sherman reviewed the committee's bylaws which indicated it was at the committee's
195 discretion whether or not to have it included on the warrant. Mr. Cronin asked the salary
196 threshold figure for 2021. Mr. Sherman replied \$93,440.07 (including salary and benefits). Mr.
197 Gowan noted the position currently had a budget line; it was not a new position being added to
198 the department.
199

200 Ms. Capone asked for a breakdown of cost for benefits. Mr. McCarthy replied they would submit
201 the information.
202

203 Mr. Croteau wanted to know the building permit revenue for the Town. Mr. Gowan didn't have
204 the figure with him and will forward to the committee. He added all money goes into the General
205 Fund.
206

207 Mr. Gowan continued to review the proposed budget. Ms. Capone questioned if any thought was
208 given to on-line permitting. Mr. Gowan replied they currently had some aspects on-line;
209 however, there were other areas that would be difficult to do so. He said they are exploring ways
210 of cost savings for the Town. Ms. Capone said as office supplies increase, she wanted to know
211 when those costs would be included with permits. Mr. Gowan said they could explore increasing
212 permit fees and bring a proposal to the Selectmen.
213

214 Mr. Gowan noted the telephone line had increased in anticipation of an employee as part of the
215 storm water management. If the employee has their own cell phone, the line will be reduced to
216 stipend. He said a conditional offer had been made to an individual and the department was
217 anxious to get them on board. If accepted, the individual will come on board in late October. He
218 noted the line for training was increased due to new members on various boards.
219

220 Mr. Cronin asked what NRPC stood for. Mr. Gowan replied the Nashua Regional Planning
221 Commission ('NRPC') worked with a total of thirteen communities. The budget line was the
222 annual assessment figure. One member of the Selectmen was on the governance board and one
223 Zoning Board member was also involved. They also assist with transportation, CIP assistance
224 and economic development issues. Mr. Gowan went on to discuss the MS4 process and status.
225

226 Mr. Croteau questioned if the inspectors will have a Town vehicle if they transition to full-time,
227 or if they would continue to receive a stipend for using their own vehicle. Mr. Gowan replied he
228 didn't submit for a Town vehicle; the inspectors would continue to be compensated for mileage

229 until such time as there was a vehicle for them. Mr. McCarthy stated one option was to take a
230 Police SUV at the time it would be traded in. The Police would need to be compensated the
231 amount they would have received at the time of trade in.

232

233 Ms. Capone asked that the committee receive figures for how many permits have been issued.
234 Mr. Gowan replied he would provide a complete report showing the revenue breakdown for the
235 whole department.

236

237 Mr. Haverly commented the Selectmen would take the inspector positions back and vote on the
238 total figure since they would also be revisiting other department budgets.

239

240

241 Police Department – Police Chief Joseph Roark presenting. Also present were Captain Stephen
242 Toom and Lieutenant Anne Perriello.

243 2021 Selectmen approved budget - \$3,467,666

244

245 Chief Roark provided the committee with a summary of the items within the budget that had
246 increased and decreased. He noted the salary increases were contractual; also, salaries in 2020
247 were based on a 53-week cycle, but in 2021 they are based on a 52-week cycle.

248

249 He gave a brief description of CALEA and the associated items for national accreditation, which
250 occurs every four years. He noted the placeholder amount (\$50,000) for FLSA and told the
251 committee he was comfortable lowering it down to \$20,000 based on information they had
252 received. Chief Roark noted they had included 150 man hours for (2020) elections; however, that
253 figure was a carry over and corrected to show 52 hours (for 2021).

254

255 Mr. Cronin inquired about the status of the police fleet vehicles. Chief Roark replied they
256 typically run a three-year lease cycle, buying nine cruisers at a time based on mileage. Due to the
257 existing mileage they felt comfortable extending one year out. He noted the cost for the lease was
258 under Debt Service. He said by extending the lease they are saving approximately \$100,000 on
259 the fleet.

260

261 Chief Roark stated they had submitted priority list items: 1) replace the mobile data terminals
262 contained inside the cruisers (10 years old and over life span), and 2) eleven new light bars (to
263 lower fleet expense in the next year). Estimate for mobile data terminals \$66,000 (installation,
264 mounting hardware, software etc.). The eleven light bars will total \$24,200. Information and
265 breakdown will be forwarded to the committee. Chief Roark stated the terminals were very
266 important to get in place. They vastly improve officer efficiency in field.

267

268 Ms. Capone asked for an update regarding the body cameras (policy and morale) that were
269 approved last year. Chief Roark informed they were ahead of the curve when ordering the body
270 camera program. He spoke about the policy for wearing the cameras.

271

272 Mr. Sherman inquired if the department was fully staffed and when the contract ended. Chief
273 Roark answered yes, they are fully staffed. He believed the contract had two years remaining. In
274 terms of staffing, he stated they have posted a video evidence clerk position as a result of having
275 the body-worn camera program. They've had a lot of interested candidates; however, they were
276 looking for someone very specific and wanted to make sure they hire the right person who is
277 skilled in video, software, and editing. Mr. Sherman understood the Police and Fire Chiefs were
278 working together regarding a Capital Improvement Plan item toward communications. He was
279 concerned it wouldn't be completed until 2024. Chief Roark explained they currently had

280 functioning communications that were better than a lot of departments. He said they were ‘falling
281 apart’ in the area that most of the equipment was end of life and they couldn’t get it repaired. He
282 said there were still a couple geographic spots that were difficult to send/receive radio
283 transmissions and cellular transmissions. He said they weren’t at a crisis level and in agreement
284 with the Fire Chief to try and pace the cost out and not do it in one bite. Mr. Sherman questioned
285 if the costs should be further spaced out. Chief Roark suggested Fire Chief Midgley may want to
286 speak on the topic. He said there may be warrantees remaining in place and they wouldn’t want
287 to replace equipment that weren’t yet at their end of life or out of warranty.

288
289 Ms. Bressette asked if the new mobile data terminals were able to be easily installed into next
290 year’s new fleet. Chief Roark answered yes; the mounting brackets would be compatible with the
291 new fleet.

292
293 Town Insurance – Town Administrator Brian McCarthy
294 2021 Selectmen approved budget – (placeholder) \$2,637,815
295

296 Mr. McCarthy stated they had not yet received the new numbers; they were expected near the end
297 of October to early November. He spoke about the two medical plans offered to employees and
298 the dental plan with a breakdown of the number of employees who participate. He then provided
299 information regarding the number of employees who do not participate and instead receive a
300 stipend.

301
302 Retirement - Town Administrator Brian McCarthy
303 2021 Selectmen approved budget – (placeholder) \$1,917,125
304

305 Mr. McCarthy stated the retirement budget shows new numbers from the placeholder approved
306 by the Selectmen. He pointed out the areas of increases and his understanding of the figures. Ms.
307 Bressette asked if all municipalities had a standard percentage. Mr. McCarthy replied yes; there
308 was a standard throughout the State, although the specific rates within the budget were for
309 Pelham.

310
311 **NEW BUSINESS**

312
313 Nothing was brought forward.

314
315 **ADJOURNMENT**

316
MOTION: (Sherman/Capone) To adjourn the meeting.

ROLL CALL David Cronin – Yes
VOTE: Amber Capone – Yes
Bob Sherman – Yes
Meg Bressette – Yes
Eduardo Martony – Yes
Philip Haberlen – Yes
Jason Croteau – Yes
Jas Moorjani - Yes
School Board Representative Deb Ryan - Yes
Board of Selectmen Representative Bob Haverty – Yes
(10-0-0) The motion carried.

317

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING Thursday, September 17, 2020

318 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:49pm.

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322

Respectfully submitted,
Charity Landry
Recording Secretary