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APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 8, 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 via Zoom
Philip Haberlen – Present in person
Jason Croteau – Present in person
Kannan Sasi – Present via Zoom
Jas Moorjani – Present via Zoom
School Board Representative Deb Ryan – Present
Board of Selectmen Representative Bob Haverty – Present

ABSENT: None

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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES REVIEW:

October 1, 2020:

MOTION: (Sherman/Capone) To approve the October 1, 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
Kannan Sasi – Yes
Jas Moorjani – Inaudible
Deb Ryan – Yes
Bob Haverty - abstained

(9-0-1) The motion carried.

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2021 BUDGET REVIEW

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

Mr. Sherman made a motion to put the Selectmen approved budget figure of \$18,189,616 on the table. He explained with that figure on the table the Committee could then (procedurally) be up for discussion, modification etc. Mr. Haverty seconded the motion.

With the (total) Town budget of \$18,189,616 being considered, the Committee began their final review of each department's requested budget. The following indicates adjustments that were considered and voted.

Chairman Cronin stepped down as Chair to propose a motion for consideration. Vice Chair Capone stated she would accept any motions. Mr. Cronin made a motion to decrease the fuel (gas) price of \$2.75 per gallon throughout the budget and reduce it to \$2.35 per gallon. Mr. Sherman seconded the motion. Mr. Cronin explained the reason for his motion was based on his observance of gas prices currently being approximately \$2.00 per gallon and felt if the price was lowered there would be a cost savings of approximately \$10,000. He provided the Committee with a spread sheet showing the various departments that would make up that cost savings.

Mr. McCarthy inquired if any changes were being proposed for the diesel gas price. Mr. Cronin answered no, not at this time. Mr. Sherman pointed out any department could come back in January (during reconsideration) and request an adjustment if gas prices increase.

MOTION: (Cronin/Sherman) To decrease the fuel (gas) price of \$2.75 per gallon throughout the budget and reduce it to \$2.35 per gallon.

ROLL CALL David Cronin – Yes
VOTE: Amber Capone - Yes
Bob Sherman – Yes
Meg Bressette – Yes
Eduardo Martony – Yes
Philip Haberlen – Yes
Jason Croteau – Yes
Kannan Sasi – Yes
Jas Moorjani – Inaudible
Deb Ryan – Yes
Bob Haverty - Yes

(10-0-0) The motion carried.

Mr. Capone turned the Chair back to Mr. Cronin.

The Committee began their final review of each department's budget.

Elections:

2020 Operating Budget: \$30,779
2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$16,283

58 There were no adjustments made.

59

60

61 *Town Clerk / Tax Collector:*

62 2020 Operating Budget: \$266,846

63 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$274,441

64

65 There were no adjustments made.

66

67

68 *Assessing:*

69 2020 Operating Budget: \$206,640

70 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$228,722

71

72 There were no adjustments made.

73

74

75 *Budget Committee:*

76 2020 Operating Budget: \$1

77 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$1

78

79 Mr. Sherman offered a motion to add \$1 as a placeholder under salaries. Mr. Croteau seconded.

80

MOTION: (Cronin/Sherman) To add \$1 as a placeholder under salaries.

ROLL CALL David Cronin – Yes

VOTE: Amber Capone - Yes

Bob Sherman – Yes

Meg Bressette – Yes

Eduardo Martony – Yes

Philip Haberlen – Yes

Jason Croteau – Yes

Kannan Sasi – Yes

Jas Moorjani – Inaudible

Deb Ryan – Yes

Bob Haverty - Yes

(10-0-0) The motion carried.

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84 *Cable Television:*

85 2020 Operating Budget: \$148,873

86 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$150,603

87

88 There were no adjustments made.

89

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91 *Cemetery:*

92 2020 Operating Budget: \$152,793

93 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$161,966

94

95 Figure reflects the reduction for gas. There were no further adjustments made.

96

97

98 *Conservation Commission:*

99 2020 Operating Budget: \$5,989

100 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$5,989

101

102 There were no adjustments made.

103

104

105 *Debt Service Interest:*

106 2020 Operating Budget: \$96,999

107 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$70,982

108

109 There were no adjustments made.

110

111

112 *Debt Service Principal:*

113 2020 Operating Budget: \$649,037

114 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$540,642

115

116 There were no adjustments made.

117

118

119 *Emergency Management:*

120 2020 Operating Budget: \$8,644

121 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$8,913

122

123 Mr. Cronin noted there was \$1 placeholder shown within the budget that would remain \$1 and
124 not be adjusted at this time.

125

126 There were no adjustments made.

127

128

129 *Fire Department:*

130 2020 Operating Budget: \$2,491,529

131 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$2,646,310

132

133 Figure reflects the reduction for gas. There were no further adjustments made.

134

135

136 *Health Officer:*

137 2020 Operating Budget: 45,776

138 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$45,916

139

140 There were no further adjustments made.

141

142

143 *Health Services:*
144 2020 Operating Budget: \$73,500
145 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$73,700

146
147 There were no further adjustments made.
148

149
150 *Highway Department:*
151 2020 Operating Budget: \$1,810,268
152 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$1,814,694

153
154 Figure reflects the reduction for gas. There were no further adjustments made.
155

156
157 *Human Services:*
158 2020 Operating Budget: \$73,290
159 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$73,820

160
161 There were no further adjustments made.
162

163
164 *Insurance:*
165 2020 Operating Budget: \$2,637,815
166 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$2,637,815 (placeholder)

167
168 Mr. McCarthy informed the Committee the Town would be receiving a \$95,000 credit which will
169 be taken off the December bill.

170
171 There were no further adjustments made.
172

173
174 *Legal:*
175 2020 Operating Budget: \$96,000
176 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$96,000

177
178 There were no further adjustments made.
179

180
181 *Library:*
182 2020 Operating Budget: \$527,953
183 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$543,000

184
185 There were no further adjustments made.
186

187
188 *Parks and Recreation:*
189 2020 Operating Budget: \$263,261
190 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$265,676

191
192 Figure reflects the reduction for gas. There were no further adjustments made.

193

194

195 *Planning Department:*

196 2020 Operating Budget: \$507,131

197 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$535,644

198

199 Figure reflects the reduction for gas. There were no further adjustments made.

200

201

202 *Police Department:*

203 2020 Operating Budget: \$3,373,951

204 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$3,433,536

205

206 Figure reflects the reduction for gas. There were no further adjustments made.

207

208

209 *Retirement:*

210 2020 Operating Budget: \$1,917,125

211 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$2,093,332

212

213 There were no further adjustments made.

214

215

216 *Selectmen:*

217 2020 Operating Budget: \$525,214

218 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$530,324

219

220 There were no further adjustments made.

221

222

223 *Senior Center:*

224 2020 Operating Budget: \$146,643

225 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$161,165

226

227 Figure reflects the reduction for gas.

228

229 Ms. Capone made a motion to decrease the hours for the administrative assistant position to 28
230 (hours per week). She explained this would put the position under the benefit minimum (of 29
231 hours). It wasn't clear what the additional 20 hours would be attributed to. She did a comparison
232 of Windham and Hudson (and provided the Committee with the documentation via email) to
233 Pelham and its population. She summarized the information. She would like the opportunity to
234 explore other options during the next year to possibly combine roles of existing positions and see
235 how other towns structure their facilities. Mr. Martony seconded the motion for discussion.

236

237 Senior Center Director Sara Landry came forward. She went through statistics regarding the
238 State and the general area in comparison to Pelham. The Senior Center services people age 50-
239 104. In Pelham 17% of citizens are in their 50's, 11.2% in their 60's and 10% are age 70 and
240 older. It was noted 17.9% of the Town's population are between 40 and 50 years old; this
241 population will be serviced by the center within the next ten years. Currently the center services
242 and assists seniors and families who have seniors (middle generation) living in their home; they

243 do not have to be members of the center. She described the services and programs provided. She
244 believed it was important for the community to give back to the seniors. Ms. Landry pointed out
245 the center had its own free-standing building with full-time programs. She stated she needed to
246 have full-time support. She noted the Parks and Recreation department had three staff people but
247 did not have their own building. The Senior Center was a separate building with on-site activities
248 that had to manage people coming in, people from the community, phone calls, internet
249 communication, etc. Within the confines of her hours, Ms. Landry was currently handling duties
250 of an outreach coordinator, activities coordinator, administrator, and facilities manager. She
251 reiterated her need to have a full-time staff member in the building with her to assist with the
252 duties as well as for the safety of everyone in the building.

253

254 Ms. Ryan inquired what currently happened when Ms. Landry had vacation. Ms. Landry replied
255 when she takes a day off the center is closed. Right now, she has no one to cover for her. Part of
256 the work for the assistant is to be on-site when she is away. She told the Committee they had the
257 ability (and space) to offer more programs without adding money into their program budget;
258 however, she couldn't do more than she was already doing without having additional staff. Ms.
259 Ryan understood a portion of her job was to be an outreach worker. She understood this type of
260 position (as she does it herself) and suggested Ms. Landry describe what it entails. Ms. Landry
261 explained there were certain senior populations that needed more attention than others, especially
262 those who couldn't drive/homebound. She spoke about the concerns/issues that she currently
263 helps people navigate; with additional staff at the center she would be able to do more outreach.
264 She stated it could be very overwhelming to be in the middle of helping a person and at the same
265 answer phone calls, meet people coming into the building, run programs, etc. She needed the
266 additional person to help her coordinate the services. Down the road (in the future) she saw they
267 would need a designated part-time outreach worker.

268

269 Ms. Bressette believed the Town already had an outreach person. Ms. Landry replied she
270 currently works with the welfare officer. Ms. Bressette wanted to know if seniors could be
271 referred to the officer to assist them. Ms. Landry answered yes if the need was welfare specific.
272 She said people needing assistance with home care services, hospice, etc. would not be referred.
273 The welfare officer helps people with financial assistance. Ms. Bressette inquired about the
274 duties of the travel coordinator. Ms. Landry replied they coordinate all travel (day, overnight,
275 distance travel). She described the various trips they've had in the past, with the furthest being
276 Ireland. The coordinator is currently planning/scheduling next year's tours, the activities have
277 been interspersed with 'stay-cation' programs for social distancing. Ms. Bressette heard Ms.
278 Landry indicate when she is out of the center it closes down. She inquired why the assistant
279 couldn't cover for part of the time. Ms. Landry spoke about how the center had adjusted due to
280 Covid and changed their programs and operations. She told the Committee she had to plan (the
281 2021 budget) for how the programs normally run. She explained that the assistant currently
282 works 20 hours per week for the Senior Center and 20 hours per week for St. Joseph's
283 Community Service (while in the center). The hours are separated during the week with full
284 eight-hour day on Monday and the remaining hours are broken up during the week.

285

286 Ms. Capone heard everything that was said and didn't devalue what the center did for the Town
287 or the programs that were offered. She suggested compromising for the next year to allow for
288 exploration of what the Town's obligation was as a senior center. Ms. Landry described the types
289 of outreach and assistance she provides people. Ms. Capone asked if it was appropriate for the
290 Town to be doing so. Ms. Landry believed it was. Ms. Capone felt the Selectmen should be
291 asked the question what the Town's role is. Ms. Landry stated it was very hard to go through the
292 system in New Hampshire when a family member is ill. She said in Massachusetts it is easy to
293 find services specific to helping the elderly. She felt with the rising senior population of Southern

294 New Hampshire, specifically in Pelham. She said the Town offers wonderful programs but felt
295 they should make sure they are servicing the seniors. She pointed out the budget put forth was
296 small in comparison to other services within the Town (i.e. Parks and Recreation, Library). She
297 felt they should look at those other budgets and then review the Senior Center's budget to see
298 how many people they are servicing. She said it was unfortunate that seniors don't have someone
299 advocating for them; a lot cannot advocate for themselves because of chronic illness or they can't
300 leave their house, or they don't understand technology etc. She did not feel seniors received the
301 services they need or should have from communities because there was no one there advocating
302 for them. As a department head she believed it was her job to advocate for services she felt were
303 appropriate for the people that live in the community.

304
305 Mr. Sherman fully supported the Senior Center having a full-time assistant to the Director. He
306 wanted the Town to be ahead of the curve going forward rather than behind it.

307
308 Ms. Ryan pointed out the Town approved a lot of 55+ developments and with that came a
309 responsibility to service those residents who move into Pelham. She was familiar with outreach
310 in Massachusetts and said even with amazing resources, it was still difficult for people to access
311 them.

312
313 Mr. Cronin inquired if Ms. Landry would be amenable to 'phasing in' the position by increasing
314 the current (20 hours per week) by 40% in 2021 and coming back in next year if it doesn't work.
315 Ms. Landry replied she really needed to have the staff person and increasing the time by 10 hours
316 may not be enough for that person to give up her other job (St. Joseph's Community Service).
317 The assistant currently works two 20-hour positions at the senior center. She said they might be
318 able to keep the assistant if they increased the position to 32 hours. She explained the assistant
319 has worked for the Town for nine years and extremely competent and knew the job. She didn't
320 want to lose that employee. Because she was in need of the assistant, she couldn't have someone
321 in the position that didn't know the job. She was advocating for the existing position to have the
322 hours increased. Mr. Cronin wanted to know if Ms. Landry would still be looking for a full-time
323 person if the existing employee left their position. Ms. Landry answered yes; she needed a full-
324 time person at the facility. She reiterated the facility was its own building and she was there by
325 herself; when she is not there, there was no one else. She added it had been an extreme
326 challenge; the volunteers were elderly and not always available especially during these times
327 (with Covid).

328
329 Ms. Ryan wanted to know if the position had to be opened up (for applications) if it were to be
330 changed (from 20 hours per week) to 40 hours per week. Ms. Landry replied they had looked
331 into the requirements and understood they would not have to open it up because the (increased
332 hours) position would be offered to the existing employee.

333
334 Mr. Haverty explained the job description would not materially change; the hours and
335 responsibilities would increase based on need. They were not creating a new position. He added
336 that the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously in favor of the position because they recognized
337 the need for such.

338
339 Mr. Croteau understood the senior center would close if Ms. Landry were on vacation. Ms.
340 Landry answered yes. She said before Covid they had people fill in; however, it was not a good
341 situation. She stated it was not safe to keep the building open with volunteers trying to run a
342 Town building. She did not advocate for it and did not feel it was a good thing to do. She said
343 currently (during Covid) the bus driver was able to spend some time in the building; however,
344 during normal operations they were out on the road and not in the building.

345
346 Ms. Capone asked if they would be able to work when Ms. Landry had the day off (tomorrow).
347 Ms. Landry answered no; the driver would be doing errands and runs. Ms. Capone questioned if
348 they had explored combining the travel coordinator and administrative assistant position. Ms.
349 Landry replied did not recommend doing so. The travel coordinator worked fifteen hours per
350 week (\$11 hour). At this point she did not feel they would gain anything by eliminating the
351 position because it would put the additional work onto the work she already had. She commented
352 she had a lot of work to do at the center and didn't feel it made sense to eliminate the travel
353 position.

354
355 Mr. Sherman questioned if the travel coordinator goes on the trips. Ms. Landry answered yes.
356

MOTION: (Capone/Martony) To decrease the hours of the administrative assistant to 28 hours
per week (part-time position).

ROLL CALL David Cronin – Yes
VOTE: Amber Capone - Yes
Bob Sherman – No
Meg Bressette – Yes
Eduardo Martony – No
Philip Haberlen – No
Jason Croteau – No
Kannan Sasi – No
Jas Moorjani – Inaudible
Deb Ryan – No
Bob Haverty - No

(3-7-0) The motion failed.

357
358 There were no adjustments made other than for gas already incorporated.
359

360
361 *Technology:*
362 2020 Operating Budget: \$161,728
363 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$171,368
364

365 There were no further adjustments made.
366

367
368 *Town Buildings:*
369 2020 Operating Budget: \$668,118
370 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$625,337
371

372 There were no further adjustments made.
373

374
375 *Town Celebrations:*
376 2020 Operating Budget: \$9,260
377 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$9,260
378

379 There were no further adjustments made.

380

381

382 *Transfer Station:*

383 2020 Operating Budget: \$861,154

384 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$922,050

385

386 Figure reflects the reduction for gas. There were no further adjustments made.

387

388

389 *Treasurer:*

390 2020 Operating Budget: \$15,249

391 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$15,249

392

393 There were no further adjustments made.

394

395

396 *Trust Funds:*

397 2020 Operating Budget: \$150

398 2021 budget on the floor for consideration: \$150

399

400 There were no further adjustments made.

401

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403

404 **TOTAL TOWN BUDGET:**

405 **2020 Operating Budget: \$17,768,706**

406

MOTION: (Sherman/Haverty) To approve \$18,152,889 as the 2021 Town Budget (based on 'figure on the table' motion with adjustments made during 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

Kannan Sasi – Yes

Jas Moorjani – Inaudible

Deb Ryan - Yes

Bob Haverty - Yes

(10-0-0) The motion carried.

407

408 **2021 Budget Committee approved: \$18,152,889**

409

410 **NEW BUSINESS**

411

412 Mr. Cronin stated the Committee has now concluded their work on the Town budget and would
413 begin working on the School budget. School Budgets will be ready for review October 16th.
414 Committee members are invited to walk through Memorial School Friday, October 16th beginning
415 at 3pm; a majority of members indicated by show of hand they will be available to tour the
416 building.

417
418 The next Committee meeting will be held October 22, 2020.

419

420 **ADJOURNMENT**

421

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

Kannan Sasi – Yes

Jas Moorjani – Inaudible

Deb Ryan - Yes

Bob Haverty - Yes

(10-0-0) The motion carried.

422

423 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:23pm.

424

425

Respectfully submitted,

426

Charity Landry

427

Recording Secretary