

Weare Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday January 5, 2022, 6:30 pm

Opening

The Meeting of the Weare Finance Committee was called to order at 6:32 pm on January 5, 2022, by Tom Downing, Committee Chair.

Present

Eileen Meaney – Town Moderator

Naomi Bolton – Town Administrator

Tom Downing

Megan Thellen

Leah Borla

Tom Clow

Neal Kurk

Bill Anderson

Gary Evans - Absent

James Drury

Liz Evans

Jeff Spring

Chief Vizena – Fire Chief

Clay Kriese – Library

Chief Chris Moore – PD

Janeen Lentsch – Parks and Recreation

Approval of Minutes

Tabled

Department Presentation

Fire Chief Vizena – Past 3 years converting per diem to full time. There are 6 full time positions and they are fully staffed. It has been a benefit to have town employees overusing surrounding town staff. Proposed and default number is the same as has been in the past few years. Budget in two sections – below the line and wages. There are about 10K increases below the line. There was about a 10k reduction in salary due to wages being less than expected. Line 304 and above are related to wages, below refers to contracts and services. Decreases in health insurance due to lesser policies being opted into by the employees. Decrease in the amount anticipated for costs associated with retirement. Neal Kurk-why did that decrease? Chief - Less employees moving into group two. Increase in

fuel costs and vehicle maintenance. Neal Kurk – Are there any costs being paid for out the special fund? Chief – Nothing out of the budget? Jeff Spring – Will Communications be a warrant? Chief – Yes. Megan Thellen – why is there a clothing decrease? Chief – Warrant article included some one-time expenses that get added into the approved budget number.

Fire –

Ambulance for \$350k to be paid for from the fund. There is 0 cost to the taxpayer.

Last 2 full time firefighters

This year they were able to pay for the first year from an offset from the operating budget.

Neal Kurk– If items are not necessary, can they be cut from budget? Chief – money is still being spent by hiring full time employees.

Communications – issue with the radio system within the town due to signal in rural areas. The cost for fire alone is \$400k approximately. Goffstown dispatches multiple surrounding towns and may get to the point where they reach capacity. Weare pays approx. \$25k but it may not be cost effective in the future. The next closest dispatch would be Capital Area Communications. Goffstown is less expensive, but the radio system is the towns. Capital Area is more but they provide more services. They have a more robust tower system and staff. Currently about 40k, Souhegan Mutual Aid -15-17 to maintain the radio system. The cost is double to move to Capital Area. Neal Kurk – Capital area, do they add a surcharge at the time of equipment upgrade or changes? Chief – The use a formula based on population and divide the cost between the communities. This cost fluctuates annually. Due to being regional, they have a better opportunity to retain grant money to offset costs. Neal Kurk- can we get a historical background of payments by other towns to review cost increases? Chief – yes. Tom C – there will be an additional warrant article regarding communications for PD, would that cost be less if moved to Capital? Chief – yes there would be a reduction in the cost. The details are not set yet. They anticipate a less than 2% increase. Neal Kurk– where would the money come from – the special revenue fund? Chief – Not at this time. Naomi Bolton -The town has not completed that article just yet so there will be additional details forthcoming. Clarification – Town stays with Goffstown with the \$25k and invest \$400k in communications that would be obsolete if Goffstown decided not to continue with a contract with Weare OR make the changes to Capital Area for additional money annually but Capital Area is responsible for all of the communication equipment so no additional money would be necessary.

Library –

Line 572 s/b \$4650. Change 574 to \$263,859. Operations will be slightly less than last year and the wages are increased due to the warrant article from last year. Total 2021 budget was \$259,626 and proposed 2022 is \$263,859. Warrant Article \$6047 and proceeding year \$8060 is a \$1 per hour increase for the staff. Bill Anderson - will the town article be affected? Clay – that will be in addition to the town wage article

Parks and Recreation –

Outside services increase would be for porta potty usage. They would like to switch to Henniker Septic due to service issues with American Guardian. Also looking to add one additional to the fields due to more usage. The Warrant Article is for wages not for outside services. Rubbish removal will be an increase – checking to see if larger dumpsters or additional service pick-up would be best. Repairs on the slide at Bolton which is cracked and damaged. Warrant Article is for \$2500 to assist with retaining the existing staff. They would like to offer an additional \$1 per hour.

PD -

Decrease in prior budget due to cutting the Prosecutor. Increase in budget is necessary for officer safety. The majority of the budget is wages. Child Advocacy input of \$1000 to assist with investigation of crimes against children in Weare. Prosecutor Services increase for attorney on retainer and a stipend to the officer in charge of prosecutor duties. Change from \$78,000 to \$13,250. Police Recruitment – reduction due to being fully staffed. Not anticipating losing any officer this year. Evidence Recovery/Storage - \$3120 annually. Taser Equipment new line item to the budget. Life cycle for tasers is 5 years. Body Worn Cameras – contractual for storage of video new item to budget. Equipment purchase is a new line item, at \$3900 which will be 3 new cameras. Portable radios are good behind on car radio replacements and upgrades. Ballistic equipment increases – life cycle of 5 years. Average 3 vests a year, trauma plates, vehicle shields and 3 helmets per year. Tom D. – is the current equipment outdated? Chief – no trauma plates, everyone has a current vest, 8 helmets and currently only have 2 shields. Neal Kurk– line 238, police storage – can offset by not reducing the amount paid to New England storage Chief - this is NE Storage. This increase is to store additional items that there is no room to keep at the building.

Animal Control - Currently no ACO Officer. Budget remains stable.

Warrant Article – One vehicle, with computer included and an external antenna and hotspot to increase service. It is just under \$72,000 full purchase. Bill A - clarification – new vehicle will go in service, and one will change to an administrative vehicle. What has been the impact? Chief – minimal this year because they have not been fully staffed.

DPW-

HWY - Naomi Bolton present for Benji Knapp who is ill. Large increase in vehicle fuel due to the increase in fuel costs. Rates set at \$3.25 for unleaded and diesel. Guardrails are needed throughout the town. One time purchase for pallet of paint for paint striping machine. Gravel Road maintenance large increase \$12,200. Salt and sand large increase in cost. Knotweed Control service cost moved to individual line item. Tom D – Salary increase given to Benji Knapp? Naomi – he did receive an increase from other funds.

Transfer Station – Contract set to expire are indicated by asterisks. BOS entered in contracted but voters haven't approved. Increase in trash tonage \$27,251. Fuel surcharge increase of \$4849. Overall increase in budget of \$50,538

Warrant Articles – special revenue fund for Transfer Station to be expended on additional vehicles. At least a year out to obtain new vehicles. Select Board meeting on Monday night to finalize funding. DPW is in dire need of 2 vehicles, but one will be on the ballot. Road Recon increase to - \$575,00. \$290 anticipated from the state. Liz – Are we recovering some of the lost recycling funds lost during covid? Naomi – recycling is back with the exception of plastic. The revenue is back up to \$84,000.

Town – In 2022 filled full time assessor, part time building inspector, part time zoning enforcement, split building dept and land use asst. Three elections this year. Bulk of the increases across the board are salary related. Government building increase due to lawn care contract costs. It included additional services. Decrease in insurance due to less liabilities. Increase in overall budget \$197,110 and a 2.73% increase over default.

Warrant Articles – Nonunion raises 3% \$62,377. CIP \$20,00 for master plan update. Current is from 2005. Forrester \$30,00

Only article not heard is how the communications will be drafted.

Committee Discussion - Bill Anderson has some questions to send to the SAU to clarify and answer prior to meeting with the school. Members can add questions and send to Bill so he can forward on to the SAU so they can be prepared to answer these at our meeting on the 19th. Liz asked where the number on the 85 vs the 100 kids was populated. Bill answered that the enrollment level with an average of the past 5 years and averaged the student count.

Old Business –

Review prior meeting minutes. Tabled

New Business:

Calendar Schedule

WSB January 12th

JSRHS January 14th

Town is January 17th

Finance Committee January 19th

Finance Committee Meeting January 20th

Finance Committee January 27th

Finance Committee February 2nd (if needed)

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19 pm by Tom Downing, Committee Chair. The next general meeting will be at 7:00 pm on on January 19, 2022.

Minutes submitted by: Leah Borla, Secretary

Approved by: