

Weare Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday December 2, 2020 7:07 pm

Opening

The Meeting of the Weare Finance Committee was called to order at 7:07 pm on December 2, 2020 at the Weare Town Hall Selectman's Conference Room by Tom Downing, Committee Chair.

Present

Eileen Meaney – Town Moderator, Naomi Bolton – Town Administrator

Tom Downing

Megan Thellen

Leah Borla

Tom Clow

James Drury

Tammi Hagman

Rachel Cisto (via Zoom)

Gary Evans

Neal Kurk (Via Zoom)

Bill Anderson

Nicole Herbst (via Zoom)

Dennis Aubin (via Zoom)

Christine Hague (via phone)

Chief Chris Moore – Police Chief

Chief Robert Vizena – Fire Chief

Benjamin Knapp – Director of DPW

Outstanding Actions

Distribution of names and contact for the committee members

None to discuss- **Notes for audio setup-Audio and microphone off on the laptop. Call in with external speaker and no internal microphone.

Review

Out of respect for the schedule of the guests who are present to review the budgets, Chairperson Downing motioned to call guests to the podium to speak first. Chief Robert

Vizena of the Weare Fire Department was called to the podium first to review the proposed 2021 operating budget.

Fire Department - Chief Vizena distributed a detailed packet outlining the Operating Budget Request for the 2021 Town budget. Two full time people were hired as planned mid-year. He reviewed Years of Service recognition awards. Some obtained Training certifications which will result in higher level of medical service. The calls for the prior year were mostly life support calls (50%). Goals at to continue to stay engaged with the community. Details are included in the distributed packet. There were also three gunshot wound calls (accidental discharge) and technical rescue or carry outs. Permits and prevention-248 issued approximately 446 inspectional trips- mechanical. Provided additional uniforms and the ability to wash uniforms at the station. No positive COVID cases in the Fire department thus far. There was a grant awarded and utilized for disposable PPE in the amount of \$2,824. First responders get rapid testing monthly and this began on 12/1/2020. Prior to that there was only patient screening to assist in prevention and preparation while on a call. This was followed by Contact tracing if alerted by the hospital that a transported patient tested positive. The 2020 Operating budget met or exceeded goals including hiring 2 new full-time employees. All capital budget items came in at or under budget. Revenue projections also were exceeded in all categories. The 2021 operating budget is to maintain the momentum moving forward to continue to meet the needs of the community. Increases that show are the result of prior voter approved spending. The proposed 2021 operating budget is equal to the default level of funding for the department. There were changes to the telephone system in 2019 that caused an increase in the cost. That was offset by using funds in other areas. There was also an app to assist with response times. EMS service contract increase is due to the expiration of contract and are going annual with contract. This was offset by moving call source funds to part time wages. Time has expanded from the call force per diem to cover weekends and provide a service schedule that benefits the community and the employees. Questions regarding money requested last year vs 2021 request were made by Dennis Aubin and Neal Kurk. If the warrant article is approved the budget will decrease by the 314-line item. In 2010 the surrounding communities demanded that Weare take care of the town independently. Warrant article is to hire full time worked for a time and then additional expansion was necessary. Daytime/early evening coverage was lacking. Per diem employees were used to cover hours. Call force wages and demands increased (training, coverage) and less volunteer participation were becoming an issue. The plan is to convert to less part time and move to more of a full time instead of per diem to ensure coverage of the shifts. Call volume has increased about 35% in the last 10 years or so. The four-year plan to hire 2 full time employees per year to complete full coverage of all shifts. The department needs to keep moving forward to be able to maintain the quality of the employees that are currently on the department and the quality of personnel that the department can attract. This is due to

what the department has to offer regarding building, equipment, vehicles, etc. The nature of the calls that are received in Weare requires a higher level of training. The goal is to continue to invest in current personnel. Part time staff are less reliable due to needs from their primary employer. The warrant article costs have changed due to changes in health care and retirement expenses at a \$182,000 annualized cost. Bill Anderson asked about the ambulance fund and the issues with communication technology.

Police Department – Chief Chris Moore Overview details 84% is salary proposed budget is \$1.75 million. There was a need to rent storage space for records, as there is no more space at station. The contracted prosecutor position eliminated. There is a dedicated officer handling the prosecution of cases. This is consistent with how other departments handle their cases. The money saved by this position elimination is to be used for personnel. Body cams were purchased in the amount of \$14,135 and need to be replaced every 5 years. This will be due again in 2024. See packet for details. Overall, the elimination of the prosecutor position allowed for that money to be used towards the needed items in the budget. **Vehicle expenses** – mileage reimbursement. Vehicle Management **Personnel Expenses**. **Animal Control** – professional services (ASPCA)

DPW – Benjamin Knapp discuss the proposed 2021 Budget – correction to the trash trailer replacing a 2006 TSTR1 –2016 TSTR 2 should be replaced. The trailer will be steel not aluminum. **Highway Department** – line 413 increase of \$40-line 415 oxygen cylinder - gasses for fabricating and cutting and welding. No spares parts of anything left to make necessary repairs. Line 420 inspection equipment – rented machine cost of internet. The machine is used to inspect all town owned vehicles. Line 426 – fuel additives – mandated by the state of the fuel station. Assists with prolonging the life of the diesel vehicles. Line 428 Oil -\$2000 based on increase and usage. Line 429 decrease (signs post rails) new line item made for guardrails. Line 431 paint striper increased to cover one pallet of paint which is less expensive than purchasing as needed. Line 431A individual line for guardrails. Two years had passed with no work and \$32,000 was spent in 2020 to make necessary repairs. Line 435 Hwy building maintenance added \$1000 to the budget for pest service and pump the floor drain tanks. Line 437 gravel road maintenance - 24 tons of calcium is necessary to properly maintain the dirt roads throughout town. Line 438 cold patch decrease due to the number of roads that were repaired in 2020. Vehicle maintenance was less due to having some newer equipment and a good mechanic. Line 440A new line being proposed – annual weather reporting contract. The amount of \$1695 provides weather reports to assist in preparation for weather events. **Transfer Station** – part time wages increase to cover vacation time and staying open late on occasion between May and September. Two people are required to be there when the transfer station is open. Line 464 building maintenance for the use at the transfer station to begin a preventative and ongoing maintenance program. Line 472 incinerator cost last year plus a 2% increase. All hauling is contract. Question

regarding plastic recycling – it costs more to get rid of plastic and only certain plastic is refundable. It is not cost effective at this time to recycle. Line 484A new line item – need to move away from burning and move towards a program chipping as an alternative. Household Hazardous Waste – has always been a warrant article in the past. Two days were offered for this service in 2019 and moved to one in 2020. The cost for this was over \$14,000 for one day. **Water/Sewer** – Water no changes. Sewer is billed to users only.

Sub Committee Reports

Town – No new updates

JSRHS – Meeting on 11/16/2020 – unable to attend Draft is on website proposed increase of 5.4%

Weare School – Bill Anderson attended the budget workshop 11/30/2020. An 8% increase is being suggested. The SAU dropped budget to \$16.7 million by using grant funds. Increase of 6.1% (\$967,000) and much of the increase comes from increase of the retirement and health care (\$406,000). The additional \$406,000 is accounted for in the budget but is covered by grants. The SAU wanted to show the “in and out” in the budget. 3.75% increase net. Currently 82 less students. SAU concerned about reduction of money received from the state. Teachers contract is expected to be on the ballot. The details of the are currently unknown. Next meeting 12/15/2020

New Business

Gary Evans – subcommittee role of the members – information gathering - Nicole motion to define roles of subcommittee members on all three committees. Gary Evans seconds this motion. Eileen provided Tom an overview of sub committees. Tom read section to the Finance Committee. Neal Kurk asked for clarification on the motion. Discussion regarding the roles of the committee and its members followed. Gary moves to table for further research. Second by Megan Thellen. Unanimously approved. Motion tabled.

Nicole inquired about a centralized location such as document sharing

Approval of Minutes

Review prior minutes of February 12, 2020. Neal Kurk move to approve the last minutes of the 2020 committee. Tom Clow issued a second. Unanimously approved. The minutes from the October 21, 2020 and November 18, 2020 meeting were reviewed. Tom Downing reviewed the 10/21/2020 minutes and made a motion to approve and Gary Evans issued second. Discussion Neal Kurk asked for some grammatical and clarification changes and most of those changes were made. Neal Kurk then asked for multiple lengthy additions to conversations that took place amongst the committee members. Chairperson Tom

Downing asked if any others had issues with the current wording and Gary Evans moved to vote on the minutes as edited. Tom Clow issues a second. Approvals were issued by Megan Thellen, Gary Evans, Tom Downing, Tom Clow, Rachel Cisto, Tammi Hagman, Leah Borla, Nicole Herbst. Christine Hague and James Drury abstained from voting. Neal Kurk, Bill Anderson and Dennis Aubin voted against approving the minutes. Motion to Approve the 10/21/2020 minutes were approved with a majority vote of 8 of the 13 members voting for approval.

Motion to approve the 11/18/2020 minutes was made by Tom Downing. Megan Thellen issued a second. Neal Kurk asked for a couple of clarifications as did Tom Clow. Those edits were made.

Another Motion to approve was issued by Tom Clow and Gary Evans issued a Second. The 11/18/2020 minutes were unanimously approved with edits.

Agenda for Next Meeting

Next meeting December 16, 2020 at 7:00 pm. The next meeting agenda will be distributed prior to the meeting but it is anticipated that the full budget including warrant articles and the Select Board will be present.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:50 pm by Tom Downing, Committee Chair. The next general meeting will be at 7:00 on on December 16th, 2020, at the Weare Town Offices.

Minutes submitted by: Leah Borla, Secretary

Approved by: