

BUDGET COMMITTEE

April 18, 2023 in the Selectmen's Meeting Room

Draft Version

Chairwoman Harake called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Harake led the pledge of allegiance.

Introduction of Members (Roll Call)

Katherine Harake, Chairwoman

Larry Quinn

Mike Plouffe

Matt Saunders

Anne Marie Galanis

Bob Ladd, Village District Representative

Richie Sawyer, Selectmen's Representative

Ginny Russell-Bridle, School Board Representative

Absent: Brian Warburton

I. Acceptance of 3/21/23 Minutes

Mr. Ladd MOTIONED to accept the March 21, 2023 minutes. SECONDED by Ms. Galanis. Vote: 6-0-2. Motion Passes.

In-Favor: Harake, Quinn, Plouffe, Saunders, Galanis, Ladd.

Abstained: Sawyer and Bridle.

II. New Business

- **Selectmen's Update - Presented by Mr. Sawyer**
 - The Board of Selectmen are managing the budget closely. Expenditures will depend heavily on safety and sanitation costs.
- **School Board Update - Presented by Ms. Russell Bridle**
 - The improvements from the warrant article that was passed will be in June.
 - The school district is still looking for a custodian. Anyone interested can contact Keith Lessard.
 - The 2022-2023 school year is coming to an end. The books will be closing soon.
- **Village District Update - Presented by Mr. Ladd**
 - Activities will start at the end of May.
 - There will be a concert on Memorial Day weekend.
 - There will be fireworks on Memorial Day weekend.
 - The high school Jazz band will appear at the half shell again this summer.
 - Regular activities will begin mid-June.
- **Update on Warrant Articles, capital outlays, and project completion schedules by Town Manager Jamie Sullivan and Finance Director Kristi Pulliam.**
 - Mr. Sullivan gave a brief overview of outstanding warrant articles:
 - Project #2010 - An article passed in 2020 for the Master Plan

- Project has been completed and is moving onto the next phase
- Project #2018 - An article passed in 2020 for the Winnacunnet/High Street engineering work continues to be done.
 - Project #2024 - An article passed in 2020 for Flood Control Design will receive math funding for a bank stabilization grant.
 - Project #2031 - An article passed in 2020 for building modifications to the Public Works building is still in-progress. The Public Works Director proposed a plan to the Board of Selectmen which will add additional funding to finish the project.
 - Ms. Harake suggested planning a trip to visit the Public Works Building. The committee agreed.
 - Project #2034 - An article passed in 2020 for Transfer Station improvements. The RFP will be published in May of 2023.
 - Project # 2216 - An article passed in 2022 for turnout gear. The gear is on order.
 - Project #2219 - An article passed in 2022 for the purchase of a Fire Engine. The engine is on order. There is a very long lead time.
 - The Highway Block grant article passed in 2022. The Board of Selectmen authorized a funding source to update our paving order lists.
 - Project #2222 - An article passed in 2022 to purchase two DPW vehicles. One has been received. Delivery is expected in June 2023.
 - The recreation Infrastructure article that passed in 2022 has a few remaining items on the checklist. Noted soundproofing and tree-work.
 - Project #2228 - An article passed in 2022 for upgrading the police station security. This project is ongoing.
 - Project #2230 - An article passed in 2022 for rehabilitation of the cemetery. A new fence will be installed this year along the front of the cemetery. There will also be some additional stone restoration.
 - Project #2311 - An article passed in 2023 for the purchase of a new fire engine. The Board of Selectmen have authorized that purchase. The lead time for delivery is very long.
 - Project #2312 - An article passed in 2023 to address the King's Highway flooding. Contracts are pending. Work is anticipated to start in 2024.
 - The Road CRF project expects to expend one million dollars in the current year.
 - Project #2314 - The Highway Block Grant passed in 2023. Paving of topcoats for various roads in-town will take place this year.
 - Project #2315 - In 2023 an article passed for the purchase of two vehicles for the Department of Public Works. The 6-wheel mac truck has an anticipated delivery in 2024. The Sledge truck pricing is being reviewed. The order will be placed by April for a 2024 delivery.
 - Town Hall HVAC project - There is currently a lot of working going on. This project is expected to be bust until the first few weeks of May 2023.

- The Recreation Infrastructure project passed in 2023.
- The Health Agency Articles will be expended in the current year.
- The Hampton Hub project - an RFP is currently being created.
- The Ice Pond and Grist Mill studies - The Conservation Commission is currently putting together an RFP.
- Project #2323 - The Debris Pile at the Transfer Station will be completed in the Fall of 2023.
- Project # 2324 - Manhole Rehabilitation - The final grant documents are being completed. The work should be finished sometime in 2024.
- Project #2326 - The Compactor Replacement - Pricing is being obtained for 2023 expenditure.
- Cemetery dump and plow. This project is in-process. They are currently trying to identify the vehicle.
- Pedestrian Safety Project - Money will be expended this year.
- Conservation Land Trusts - Money will be expended this year.
- Fire Turnout Gear - Money will be expended this year.
- Holiday Parade - Money will be expended this year.
- Gather - Money will be expended this year.
- WasteWater Treatment Plant, Phase One - Complete - Loan payments begin this year.
- High Street Bonded Project - Pipe purchase is out to bid with the project in May. Awaiting final approvals from the state and coordinating with land owners.
- Wastewater Treatment Phase two - Under design. Anticipated bid in December 2023 or January 2024. Anticipated construction in 2024.
- Seawall - January 2024 will be the bond sale. Project should start in early spring and finish by the summer of 2024.
- Questions and Comments
 - Mr. Ladd
 - Commented that the public has continued to pass all articles that have proposed to use the Undesignated Fund Balance (UFB).
 - Mr. Plouffe
 - Asked if deposits have been made on the fire trucks. Mr. Sullivan said yes.
 - Ms. Harake
 - Suggested that they revisit these projects in the fall for updates on progress. Mr. Sullivan stated that he can update the committee in the Fall.
 - Mr. Sawyer
 - Asked about the health of the UFB after expenses recently passed. Mr. Sullivan stated that the UFB now lands around 7-9%, which is a good spot.
 - Mr. Sawyer noted the language on the proposed warrant articles that propose to use funds from the UFB. He stated that sometimes people are bothered by that. He asked Mr. Sullivan to expand on why “No Tax Impact” has to be used. Mr. Sullivan explained the legal and bureaucratic reasons for that language.

- Ms. Harake
 - Asked about access to information on how the UFB works. Mr. Sullivan confirmed that they provide informational links online.
- Ms. Galanis
 - Asked about the work on the High Street Bonded Project. Mr. Sullivan noted that it did slow down due to conflicts with the state regarding piping placement. The project will go out to bid next week and will start.
- **Questions and Comments on Jan-March Financials**
 - The March Financials are not available yet.
 - Ms. Pulliam presented Slides
 - Revenues in February were lower than in 2022. This was due to the timing of leases.
 - In 2023, \$5,586,888 has been spent. This is over target by 17.09%. Over expenditure is not normal when proposed budgets are passed, but it has happened in other years where the default budget has been adopted.
 - Expected deficits:
 - Gasoline and Diesel: \$141,888
 - Electric: \$342,367
 - Police Department Staffing/Outside Agencies: \$323,915
 - Questions and Comments
 - Mr. Ladd
 - Asked about the cost of out-side agencies versus the cost of hiring the needed staffing. Mr. Sullivan stated that it would be better for us financially if we were able to find full staffing. Ms. Pulliam noted that the part-time and full-time numbers were adjusted in the proposed budget.
 - Ms. Harake
 - Asked about reviewing the March, April, and May financials in June. Mr. Sullivan stated that they will continue to give the Budget Committee all of the numbers. He emphasized that until we get through the 4th of July, the numbers won't really reflect the summer yet.
 - Mr. Saunders
 - Asked for more details on expected budget fluctuations throughout the year. Mr. Sullivan stated that it really depends on how the summer goes. He noted that weather is a major contributor.
 - Mr. Ladd
 - Asked if a bond can be amortized. Kristina explained the options for repayment for bonds and stated that the town has historically chosen level principal payments.
 - The committee discussed voter turnout.
 - Ms. Harake:
 - Noted that any updates on roads and road development would make constituents very happy.
 - Mr. Sullivan
 - Gave kudos to The Department of Public Works for their work despite being short staffed.

- **Proposed Deliberative Schedule for 2023/2024**
 - The committee discussed meeting in June to review financials again.
 - The committee will wait until May to make a decision about meeting in June.
 - Mr. Quinn noted that December 7th is listed twice on the proposed schedule.
- **Discussion: Budget Process Improvements**
 - Mr Saunders
 - Discussed ways to make information more standardized.
 - Ms. Harake
 - Discussed ways to soften the feeling of pressure due to the time sensitivity of the budget review process.
 - Noted that the updates and support from the Selectmen's Representative is helpful.
 - Ms. Galanis
 - Asked if there is a way to educate the population on the use of the UFB.
 - Mr. Sawyer suggested the finance could set up an interview that is educational. He suggested getting students from Winnacunnet High School involved.
 - Discussion about the importance of giving Ms. Pulliam and the Board of Selectmen ample notice of what is needed.
 - Asked if there are reports that the Budget Committee has asked for before that have been helpful in the process.
 - Mr. Saunders noted that information that shows past and present has been helpful.
 - Ms. Harake noted that she liked the benchmarks.
 - Mr. Sawyer suggested reviewing Board of Selectmen meetings for information.
 - Ms. Bridle-Russell emphasized that it is important that the Budget Committee do not cross a line into policy making.
 - Mr. Ladd
 - Suggested that the committee should spend some time addressing its own conflicts. There should be a base standard that we can agree upon to improve the process and the tone of the meetings.
 - Any request made of the Board of Selectmen and the Town should also include how much time was taken to fulfill that request.
 - Suggested that voters be made more aware of what they will lose by voting for the default budget.
 - Asked if the assessing department could give an idea of what the increase of revenue may be over the course of the year, it would be helpful.
 - Would like more details on the Cable Fund and how that money can be used.
 - Mr. Quinn
 - Discussed the use of the UFB and voter resistance to the use of the UFB.
 - Mr. Sawyer noted that every single article that proposed the use of the UFB passed.
 - Plouffe noted that Warrant Articles bind the money to the

projects, which means that the voters know that the money will go where they vote for it to go.

- Noted that the Hampton Police Department is hosting informational meetings.
- Noted that he attended a CHAT meeting.

III. Adjournment

Mr. Sawyer MOTIONED to adjourn the meeting. SECONDED by Mr. Ladd.
Vote: Unanimous.