

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
Wednesday, January 18, 2017**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Daniel Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Laura Garay; Member of the Press Kathryn Boughton (Republican-American); Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

2017-2018 Budget Preparation:

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 6:17 PM. Dan Jerram stated that he had the rolling averages for the line items available for the Board to reference. He noted that revenues will be the issue this year, in light of anticipated State funding cuts. He also cautioned that the revenue line item of taxes, fees and fines will be reduced due to the recent sale of one of the properties that had been on the list for unpaid taxes. The property was sold and back taxes as well as fees and fines have been collected, and therefore can no longer be considered as possible receivables.

The Board reviewed the budget line by line to see where expenses are to date and what the averages have been for the past few years. Their goal is to make the line items representative of true costs or as close as possible, noting that there are some line items where estimates must be used due to variables that are uncontrollable.

The Selectmen discussed the salary line items, with the First Selectman commenting that many are contractual and negotiations are currently underway. Therefore, the exact percentage of increase can only be a "guesstimate" at this point.

Review of some of the line items revealed that true expenses may be higher than what has been budgeted. Some changes were made to some of the line items, but it was noted that this is "first look" and is, by no means, a "hard" number. Minor increases were suggested to the Office Equipment, Telephone and Town Hall Utilities lines; with consideration being given to increase Computer Maintenance to \$35,000 (up from \$28,000 currently). It was noted that the use of various types of technology has increased over the years and the IT specialist is being used and called upon more frequently.

It was suggested to increase the Health Insurance line item slightly. Town attorney, Town engineer, and Streetlights are all averaging what is currently budgeted, therefore the Selectmen felt that those lines should stay as is.

The Highway department line items were discussed. Mr. Jerram stated that the new mechanic does a lot of work in-house and there are still some older vehicles and aging equipment that justify an increase in the equipment maintenance line item. The paving expenses were reviewed and the Selectmen

agreed that there should be an increase in the funding for paving projects.

The Building Inspector position was discussed again by the Selectmen, with the First Selectman noting that there has been an increase in activity in that office. The individual currently employed as the Building Inspector is doing a great job, is respected and is one that Mr. Jerram would like to see stay on board. The Selectmen discussed that this position may need to be increased to more than the 20 hours currently allocated in the budget. This will need further consideration.

The Selectmen agreed that the Zoning legal and professional line item could be reduced. Although, it is hard to know in advance if there may be potential legal action; the past few years have not seen any contentious issues. Using this data as a guide, the Selectmen made a decision to adjust that line item downward.

The Selectmen will continue their review of the budget at their next meeting.

Mr. Jerram noted that the budget is a yearly process and if there are organizations that are seeking funding from the Town, it behooves them to come forward and present a good case. Those that choose to come by "whether or not they are invited to present have a better opportunity for funding." The Selectmen agreed.

MOTION: by Garay to adjourn at 8:38 PM; seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

No attachments to be filed with these minutes