

**Board of Selectmen
Special Virtual Meeting
March 13, 2023**

Present (Virtually): First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Laura Garay, Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward

Others Present (Virtually): Member of the Public: Elizabeth Domas

First Selectman Jerram called the virtual meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Budget:

Mr. Jerram stated that the purpose of this meeting was to have a brief update of where things stand with the budget and make any adjustments necessary before the Board of Finance presentation. He reviewed several line items with the Board.

Town Hall operations – Union contracts have been approved at 3.75% for Town Hall union; Public works settled for the same and it is historical practice to grant all employees the same percentage.

Adjustments have been made some to town hall oil (increased slightly) as well as to electricity. Jerram noted that this year is the end of a three year contract with locked in prices. He is anticipating an increase in costs with a new contract.

Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance costs have no changes due to low claims. Workers comp was scheduled to be increased by 3%, but the insurance carrier CIRMA said they would not pass on an increase due to low claims from the town.

There is an increase in Data Processing costs in the assessor line item. The Assessor line is picking up the full cost of “lexis nexis” a data gathering service used by both departments. They have shared this expense in the past, but the Assessor will pick up the full cost in her budget.

Selectman Kennerson questioned why there was an increase in the tax collector budget if it was being reduced by taking out the data company fees. Jerram replied that the collection line item expense increased due to the need to include additional fees for collections as costs increase.

The First Selectman explained that the fee for the annual audit is still uncertain, but there will be an increase due to the need for a Federal Single Audit because of the amount of grant funding (ARPA and ESSR) received by the Town and the Board of Education.

Mr. Jerram said he cannot put a firm number in for the New Hartford Schools budget because Superintendent Sousa is not done with his budget yet. There are some concerns regarding an increase in kindergarten enrollment and there may be a need to increase staff.

Region 7 has reduced their budget slightly – there is one retirement and that staff member may not be replaced.

The Public Safety line item includes an estimate for a second resident trooper. If a second trooper comes on, it appears that there may be a reduction in the percentage paid toward the cost of the additional trooper. Mr. Jerram has a call into the Department of Emergency Services for an estimate of costs. That information will be added when received.

The Libraries are funded at their requests.

The Debt Service line includes payment of the annual USDA payment for the loan for the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade. Since the timeframe for the approval of the water and sewer sale is uncertain, Jerram recommends that the payment remain in the budget.

The Senior Director line item has been reduced because the position is being funded in the Recreation Department line item. There is some funding remaining in the line item to pay for a part time assistant to help in the Senior Center; especially during the summer months when the director may be off site at camp.

West Hill Lake Association wants to continue their weed removal program in the lake. They are adding additional weed removal and the costs are continuing to increase. Jerram spoke with the Association President to ask him if there could be any correlation between increased development and water quality. This is something that should be looked into.

At this point of budget preparation, there is a 2.63% tax increase which equals a 0.81 increase in the mill rate (without a completed proposed budget from the Board of Education). Jerram reminded the Selectmen that there are still a few line items that need to be finalized such as Regional Refuse Disposal District assessment and the costs for Paramedic Intercept.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the draft budget dated 3- 13 -2023 as presented; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

MINUTES

Selectman Kennerson noted that there was a typo in the section that addressed longevity pay; Administrative Hayward replied that the minutes had not yet been submitted and she would make the correction prior to submittal of the minutes to the Town Clerk.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the February 28, 2023 minutes, with the understanding that the typo would be corrected, as presented; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 7:20 PM; seconded by Garay.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

No Attachments filed with these minutes – budget document still in draft form