

Town of Sullivan, NH
Budget Committee
Approved Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, December 21, 2021
Sullivan Town Hall

Board members present: Al Merrifield, Chairman; Dave Jakway, Gary Patnode, BJ Wahl

Representatives: Paul Bolduc, Selectmen

Others: Chris Pratt – Library;

Leslie Casey – Planning Board

Todd Smith – Highway Department

Staff: Kathleen Rowe, Secretary

1. Call to Order: Alfred Merrifield called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. On a motion by BJ Wahl, seconded by Gary Patnode the minutes of the December 14, 2021 Budget Committee meeting were unanimously accepted and approved as written.

3. BUDGET REVIEW

Library: \$22,969

Chris Pratt presented the 2022 Library budget:

Salary: \$15,239– The Library has recently filled the second librarian position; the budget reflects 2 people, 15 hours each weekly. Chris feels there will be additional time required to train the new librarian.

Fuel: \$2518 – Propane was estimated at 46% increase using federal projections; current pricing indicates increase of 35% over 2021 pricing. Budget will be amended to reflect a new projection of \$2250.

Technology: \$700 New cataloging system has been installed; % decrease reflects installation cost that will not be repeated. \$500 annual software charge; \$200 miscellaneous costs.

All other operating costs remain the same as 2021.

Dave Jakway asked if electric is predicted to go up? Chris feels that this cost will remain as in 2021. Gary Patnode asked if savings were being recognized from energy conservation efforts; Chris noted that all major changes for this effort have been made (lighting, ballasts, high efficiency furnace) and are generating savings.

Conservation: \$2170

Town Clean-up and Recycling: Budget request will be amended from \$950 est. to \$1098.71 to reflect actual cost rec'd 12/16/2021.

Community Education: \$125 (new): Conservation Commission would like to present programs regarding conservation efforts to the community; this expense would provide programming costs and refreshment.

Recreation: \$1000 – no change from 2021.

Planning Board: \$3785

Leslie Casey presented the 2022 Planning Board budget:

Postage: \$450: Current land sales and resulting subdivisions are driving increased postage costs for certified notification of abutters and easement holders. There are a number of large pieces still for sale that may result in additional costs in 2022. Note: These costs are reimbursed to the Town by the applicants.

Training: \$160 Available online training opportunities are less costly than in-person.

Books-Periodicals \$0 – Current library is adequate at this time.

Office Equipment: \$2000 - The Planning Board is requesting a computer for office use at the Town Hall (fixed, not laptop). This price is estimated for hardware, software and installation.

Cemetery \$6400

Stonework has been completed at the cemetery; budget reflects mowing, cemetery and patriotic.

Highway: Operating: \$308,584

Personnel: \$119,323 includes increase and overtime;

Contract Services: \$10,000; Todd noted that every 3- years the town roads need extensive mowing to clear full rights-of-way of brush; the Town leases larger mowing equipment for this. It take approximately two weeks, leasing cost will be approximately \$7000. Remaining funds will be used for tree work.

Propane/Wood: \$2977 was estimated using federal estimates of 46% increase; recent quote is at 34%, line will be adjusted to reflect this.

Building Maintenance: \$6000 included the replacement of the second propane heater; Todd is requesting this be changed to \$3000 as he feels the heating system as a whole (propane heaters, wood boiler, etc.) needs to be looked at prior to replacing individual components.

Diesel: \$7884 estimated using federal estimates of 46% in 2022. Diesel is bid on base cost/gal plus \$.15; wholesale base cost has increased 62% from Jan-Dec 2021. Line will not be adjusted at this time.

Vehicle Repair: \$20,000 is unchanged from 2021. Will include tires for the Terrastar and any major repairs that occur during 2022. There have been major repairs to the F550 and International 7400 in 2021 and there is the likelihood of future repair considering the age of our highway equipment (see Capital Reserve discussion).

Culverts: \$10,000 for culvert purchase in 2022. The Town used available stock for culvert repair/replacement in 2021 as prices have increased substantially. The Highway Department will need to buy culverts in 2022; current pricing for a 4' culvert is \$4-5000/piece. Dave Jakway asked if plastic culvert is feasible; Todd noted that plastic does have its uses, however plastic culvert requires greater protective cover, particularly on gravel roads that experience heavy use or where gravel may be washed away; in these cases steel is the better product.

Gravel: \$17,000 – Henniker Sand and Gravel is currently providing product at \$16.50/T; Todd is looking at pricing from two other vendors. As well, when he gets pricing for the requested 2022 Special Projects pricing may come down further.

Salt: \$30,000 – The State of NH bid pricing is at \$78/per ton delivered, a 40% increase over 2021 pricing (\$56/ton)

Sand: \$17,000 is unchanged from 2021.

New Equipment: \$4000 to include two purchases: 1) \$2000 - 12" bucket for the backhoe for ditching in confined areas – currently the larger bucket does not allow necessary maneuverability in ditching on several town roads; and 2) hydraulic saw boom for use on the Mahindra for trimming overhanging trees/branches not accessible using current equipment. Todd noted that Nelson has just acquired this equipment and he will talk with them to get their assessment.

Special Projects: \$130,000 to include 1) \$100,000 to add gravel to all gravel roads in town; Todd estimates that 300 loads of gravel will cover the 10 miles of dirt road; and 2) \$30,000 for the reclamation of Church Street, to include culverts and gravel base in anticipation of paving in the future. Dave Jakway commented that we have always been challenged by the gravel roads; in agreement, Todd noted that he has received permission to take trees, add gravel and put in a necessary drainage at one difficult location on Ferry Brook Road.

Capital Reserves:

Highway Major Equipment: \$20,000 – Todd introduced this request noting that the average age of Sullivan's highway equipment is 20 years. He suggests that the Town begin planning for the replacement of the Terrastar (approximately \$150,000 built out for highway department use) and put in place annual funding for a 10-15 year replacement schedule for other equipment. He does not want to see vehicles fail, only to be replaced hastily with older, used pieces that may also fail in a short period of use. To replace all of our equipment would, at current prices, is estimated at \$750,000.

Todd noted that the \$20,000 request for Capital Reserve was made prior to the recent assessment that the F550 should no longer be used as a plow vehicle.

The replacement of the Terrastar would give the Town a reliable 2nd plowing vehicle and allow the International 7400 to be used as the backup plow, thereby extending its life.

Budget Committee members were provided with an analysis of the current vehicles, their age and use. This letter will also be published in the upcoming January/February Sullivan Newsletter.

Chairman Merrifield noted that Roxbury purchased our old grader that is still in use;

Chairman Merrifield asked Todd to provide his priority; Todd feels that a new plow truck built on the same 4WD 1-Ton style (but not a Terrastar) would be preferable. The second purchase would be replacement for the backhoe, or alternatively, have it rebuilt completely (approximately \$40,000).

Chairman Merrifield noted that a 10-15 year cycle will require more money for Capital Reserve annually; Todd noted that the Town of Nelson has a major equipment committee which allows for more than one person to make these financial decisions. He also noted that it takes at least a year from the time a vehicle is ordered to build and deliver it.

Paul Bolduc asked what Todd would change the Highway Major Equipment request to: Chairman Merrifield noted that, even with an appropriation of \$75-\$80,000 this year, we would still not have enough of a base to begin equipment purchases.

Todd emphasized to the Budget Committee that he and Paul greatly appreciate, and will certainly work with, any equipment the Town provides to the Highway Department.

Reconstruction and Resurfacing: \$5000, used to augment special projects as needed.

Town Bridges: \$5000 Currently there are no Sullivan bridges on the "red list;" should that happen in the future, the cost of replacing bridges, as with vehicles, will be high. This fund will help defray future costs.

Other Business:

- William Thorndike will be representing the School Board on the Budget Committee again;
- Chairman Merrifield requests that the school budget be available to the committee for the meeting of 12/26 for the committee's review prior to the 1/4/2022 meeting with the School Board.
- Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 28, 2021 – 6:00 PM
Fire/Emergency Management
Selectmen
Associated Capital Reserves

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:45PM made by Dave Jakway, seconded by BJ Wahl, all aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen N. Rowe
Secretary