

Town of Sullivan, NH
Budget Committee
Approved Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, January 16, 2024
Sullivan Town Hall

Board members present: Al Merrifield, Chairman; Mike Blanchard, Gary Patnode, Bradford Smith, BJ Wahl;

Board Representatives: Dave Jakway, Selectmen; Paul Bolduc, Selectmen alt.; William Thorndike, School Board

Others: Virginia deAngelis

Staff: Kathleen Rowe, Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Merrifield called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

On a motion by Al Merrifield, seconded by BJ Wahl the minutes of 01/09/2022 were unanimously accepted and approved as corrected (date).

2. BUDGET REVIEW

A. Fire Department : \$59,468 (\$-2,180 to 2022)

Mike Blanchard presented the Fire Department budget.

4220 - Operating Budget:

430 - Building Maintenance: \$1000 (decrease \$1000) includes regular building maintenance and installation of "high bay" overhead LED lighting in Forestry bay.

560 - Dues & Membership: \$1500 (increase +300 over 2023) - reflects actual costs

611 - Rescue Supplies: \$1500 (decrease \$500)

612 -Fire Supplies: \$750 (no change)

635 - Gasoline \$1000 (increase \$550) new Forestry vehicle is gasoline rather than diesel

636 - Diesel: \$5700 (no change) expense is cost +\$.15; no substantial change from 2023 expected

660 - Vehicle Repair: \$10,000 (decrease \$2,000) expense for custom valve; delivery date is TBD

682 – Training: \$3000 (+1000 over 2023) Anticipated training for 3 member (FF1) and 2 (EMT)

740 - New/Major Equipment: \$8000 (no change) includes replacement CO2 meters; turn-out gear (1)

Chairman Merrifield noted that the entire budget is less than the 2023 appropriation. Gary Patnode questioned the life expectancy of turn-out gear; Mike noted that the certification is for 10 years.

4290 – Emergency Management: \$400: remains the same as prior years

Capital Reserves:

- Breathing Apparatus \$2,500
- Dry Hydrant - \$5,000 for hydrant repairs located at Rt.9 & Centre Street to be completed in 2024. The hydrant is no longer useable; although trucks can draft directly it is an inefficient process.
- Fire Dept Vehicle - \$20,000

Mike pointed out that the Fire Department remains a dozen members who respond to Town residents' needs with no compensation. The Department remains the last completely volunteer department in New Hampshire. There is concern that in future years the department will not be able to compete for new members, as current starting pay rates for new firefighters continue to rise.

Gary questioned if we are training young firefighters who then move on to other towns for paid positions; Mike responded that Sullivan members do not leave the department; attrition, if any, is very low. He suggested the future need for paid firefighters could be anticipated by beginning to fund a capital reserve account for that purpose, much like saving to replace vehicles, etc.

Chairman Merrifield noted that having a local fire department has a positive effect on lowering property insurance for residents.

Will suggested that this topic be brought to the Town Meeting for discussion.

B. Selectmen's Budget: \$277,177 (+\$19633 over 2023)

4130 – Wages: \$80372 (-\$301 from 2023) – Although Planning Clerk payroll has move to Planning Board, TC/TC payroll will increase; remaining wages include 3% increase.

4140 – Election & Registration: \$3819 (+2269 from 2023) - 4 elections (Town Meeting, 2 Federal, 1 State) in 2024

4150 -\$55431 (+\$2661 over 2023) – includes IT security hardware replacement and Increased costs in accounting support

4152 – Revaluation \$9602 (+\$600 from 2023): Contracted pricing plus additional hourly work on utility valuations for tax rate calculations

4153 – Legal/Audit \$32525 (+10,000) includes additional funds for continuing court cases and follow-up.

4155 – Personnel: \$10,526 (+1238 from 2023) – Credits used for Primex (unemployment and workmen's comp) invoicing in 2023 not available in 2024.

4194 – Building Maintenance \$16800 (+1390 over 2022) Utilities (+725) and modest increases in building maintenance and repair costs

4196 – Insurance \$14470 (+1043): Contracted expense

4215 – Ambulance: \$14,000 (-1300 from 2022) Ambulance and Keene stand-by contracted charges

4221 – Fire Mutual Aid: \$11500 – contracted charge

4415 – Health Agencies: \$10437 (\$4437 over 2022): Increased use of area health agencies by Sullivan residents has raised annual requests for services. AI asked for a listing of the agencies and their individual requests; AA to provide listing to Chairman Merrifield.)

4442 – Welfare: \$1000 – no change

4445 Welfare: \$14000 (+11,000 over 2022) – Anticipated annual exposure for 2023 for single request.

Capital Reserves:

Revaluation: \$4000 in anticipation of 2024 revaluation

Town Building Major Repairs: \$5000 add to fund for necessary major maintenance

3. OTHER BUSINESS:

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:20PM made by BJ Wahl seconded by Gary Patnode, all aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen N. Rowe
Secretary