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**MINUTES OF THE
BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**MEETING OF
October 26, 2023**

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01) OPEN MEETING

9 The Municipal Budget Committee Meeting of Thursday, October 26, 2023 was called to order at
10 7:00 PM at the Knightly Meeting Room.

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02) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

14 Chairman Boyer opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and introduction of members.

15
16
17

03) INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

18
19

MEMBERS PRESENT:

20 Jeff Boyer, Chairman
21 Tanya Donnelly
22 Donna Loranger
23 John Stark
24 Sean Lewis
25 Brian Thornock

26
27

MEMBERS ABSENT:

28 Steven Goddu

29
30

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

31 Councilor Bob Bryant, Town Council Representative
32 Michael Carney, School Board Representative

33
34

OTHERS PRESENT:

35 Chris Dillon, Town Manager
36 Nicole McGee, Finance Director
37 Cindy Kenerson, Assistant Finance Director

38
39

01) CHAIRMAN COMMENTS

40 Chairman Boyer stated that they had received a copy of the Fleet Replacement Plan for tonight's
41 discussion.

42
43

02) RECEIPT OF MINUTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

44 None.

45
46

03) 2024 TOWN BUDGET REVIEW

Chairman Boyer stated that they would start with the Library.

Library

Chairman Boyer asked about the boiler replacement.

Kate Norton, Chair of the Kelley Library Trustee, stated that the tank replacement project was complete. The boiler was running well. The only outstanding item was the report on the soil condition around the underground tank that was removed.

Chairman Boyer asked if that would be an issue in the future.

Ms. Norton answered that they did not foresee that, but they did not have the final report back yet.

Natalie Ducharme, Library Director, stated that the project was 95% done. There was some paving and some planting left to be done.

Chairman Boyer asked if they planned to have a petitioned Warrant Article this year.

Ms. Ducharme answered that they did not expect to have one this year.

Municipal Services Administration

Councilor Bryant stated that the budget was down 11.93%.

Mr. Stark asked about the decrease in Line 4239 – Dam Repair and Maintenance.

Roy Sorenson, Municipal Services Director, stated that the line was down because the engineering for the Millville Dam repairs was done. There would be a Warrant Article for the Millville Lake Dam repair itself.

Garage

Chairman Boyer asked about the building card entry system under Line 4400 – Contracted Services.

Mr. Sorenson stated that the current push entry system had issues where the doors were not secure. People were able to enter through places that they were not supposed to and after hours when the building was closed. This was to upgrade the access control to the building to make it secure so that the public could only come in through the front door.

Fleet

Chairman Boyer asked about the increase in Line 4176 – Health Insurance.

Cindy Kenerson, Assistant Finance Director, stated that they had vacant positions in this section. They budgeted for family plans for those vacant positions which was why the line had increased.

Streets and Shops

Councilor Bryant stated that 4272 - Street Lining was up. It was probably related to the Depot project.

1 Mr. Sorenson stated that it was the Depot and inflation was hitting some of these lines hard.

2
3 Mr. Lewis asked about the Knotweed control program.

4
5 Mr. Sorenson stated that this was the time of the year to spray it to get rid of it. This was the
6 second year of the program. The spraying last year had been successful in reducing the knotweed
7 growth. He explained what knotweed was.

8
9 Mr. Lewis asked about expanding the program to cover more areas.

10
11 Mr. Sorenson stated that they would probably expand the program in the future as they found
12 new areas with knotweed. They had added some locations this year.

13
14 Chairman Boyer asked about seeing the impacts from the new vehicles in the budget lines.

15
16 Mr. Sorenson stated that there would be a reduction in the vehicle maintenance lines in the
17 future. They had just received the new truck, so it hadn't had an impact yet.

18
19 Chairman Boyer asked about Line 4462 - Tree Removal.

20
21 Mr. Sorenson stated that they had ash borers all over the place, so they had issues everywhere
22 with trees needing to come down plus the bid prices went up for next year.

23
24 **Winter Weather Operations**

25 Mr. Sorenson stated that they were in the red currently for this year. The Town would be okay
26 because they could handle it within the budget. They had to increase contractor rates to get
27 people and the salt prices shot way up over the past two years.

28
29 Mr. Stark asked why they were in the red for snow removal.

30
31 Mr. Sorenson answered that inflation was the cause. Winter was always a gamble which was
32 why they had the expendable trust fund. The fund could be used in a bad winter or added to if
33 less money was used on the winter cleanup.

34
35 **Solid Waste**

36 Councilor Bryant stated that the increase was in Line 4400 – Contracted Services.

37
38 Chairman Boyer asked about the disposal contract.

39
40 Mr. Sorenson answered that they were in the second or third year of the contract now. Tonnage
41 in the budget was based on the three-year weighted average. He spoke about the change in
42 recycling prices. The contract paid for disposal and for the contractor to sort the recycling out at
43 their facility. It costs more for recycling now because they did single stream and China and other
44 receiving countries wanted only clean recycling now. Single stream resulted in clean and dirty
45 recycling being mixed together which they would not accept. They used to separate things out at
46 the Transfer Station. The market was in flux now.

1 Chairman Boyer asked the rates for recycling and trash.

2
3 Mr. Sorenson answered that it costs more for recycling than it does for trash disposal.

4
5 Mr. Thornock asked if they were obligated to recycle.

6
7 Mr. Sorenson stated that was a philosophical question.

8
9 Mr. Thornock asked if looked at ways to increase revenues or reduce the recycling costs. He
10 spoke about the State having a grant program for cardboard crushers.

11
12 Mr. Sorenson stated that they were not set up to do that with the current setup of the Transfer
13 Station. They would have to change the operation because they contracted out the operations at
14 the Transfer Station other than the employee who worked at the scale house.

15
16 Mr. Thornock stated that recycling was good but the price leads to questioning if it was worth
17 doing.

18
19 Mr. Sorenson stated that the Town was fortunate in the past to have had a really good contract.

20
21 Ms. Donnelly asked what happened with the cleanup at the old wastewater plant.

22
23 Mr. Sorenson stated that they had effectively gotten rid of the soil contamination. They still had
24 the channels to clean out and to address a potential buyer. They had to wait for the company to
25 finish operations first, but they would have discussions in December about what to do with the
26 property.

27
28 Chairman Boyer asked about the testing wells under Line 4648 – Testing.

29
30 Mr. Sorenson stated that those were the wells at the Transfer Station. They would have to do that
31 testing forever because it was a former landfill.

32
33 Chairman Boyer asked about the reason for the increase.

34
35 Mr. Sorenson answered that the State was now requiring PFAS and PFOS testing in addition to
36 the testing that they had been doing.

37
38 **Parks/Property**

39 Chairman Boyer stated that he heard that the Planning Board had discussed a casino at the
40 Tuscan.

41
42 Mr. Lewis stated that he had not heard that.

43
44 Ms. Loranger stated that there was discussion about that at the Planning Board.

45
46 Chairman Boyer asked about the rear gate at the cemetery.

1 Mr. Sorenson stated that they had an easement from the expansion area out to Johnson Avenue.
2 They wanted to put a gate in there that they could use it when they had large funerals. The traffic
3 would be sent out that way to improve traffic flow during those events.
4

5 **Engineering**

6 Chairman Boyer asked about the Main Street Culvert under Line 4402 – Engineering Services.
7

8 Mr. Sorenson stated that the current culvert on Main Street was actually underneath Rite Aid and
9 had been for fifteen years now. They had received a grant in 2019 but they did not have an
10 easement so had to return the grant funds. They were in the process of getting the needed
11 easement now. They would then do the engineering to replace the culvert and resubmit for the
12 FEMA grant. There was also a culvert by the Rail Trail that would be replaced through this
13 project as well to improve water flow.
14

15 Chairman Boyer asked if this work was outside of the scope of the Tuscan project.
16

17 Mr. Sorenson answered yes.
18

19 **Lighting/Traffic**

20 Chairman Boyer asked about the traffic lighting project and if it was part of Line 4226 – Traffic
21 Light/System Maintenance.
22

23 Mr. Sorenson answered that the Town had a CMAQ grant that would help fund the traffic light
24 project but that was not shown here. The equipment is outdated currently, and the new update
25 would have the signals working together. The line in this budget was for regular maintenance.
26

27 **Human Services Administration**

28 Mr. Stark asked what Human Services was.
29

30 Councilor Bryant answered that it was welfare.
31

32 Mr. Carney stated that it was Community Assistance
33

34 Mr. Lewis asked if they had a record of how many people were helped or redirected to other
35 services.
36

37 Joe Devine, Assistant Town Manager stated that he would see about getting those numbers. In
38 the past few years, a lot of people were directed to other programs to help with their needs.
39

40 Mr. Lewis stated that he wanted to know the number of contacts.
41

42 Mr. Devine stated that the number of contacts had picked up in the past year because the COVID
43 relief money was gone.
44

45 Mr. Carney stated that the School District had 75 to 100 students who were considered homeless.
46

Mr. Lewis stated that the number sounded level from what he had heard a few years ago.

1
2 Mr. Carney stated that number was expected to climb if the economy were to take a downturn.

3
4 **Direct Assistance**

5 Chairman Boyer asked about the budgeting because not a lot had been spent.

6
7 Mr. Devine stated that the Town was obligated to help people who come in. The Human Services
8 Director found other assistance to help. This line would become more important in the future
9 now that the COVID relief was over.

10
11 Manager Dillon spoke about how Rockingham County had been helping people with rent for the
12 past year or two. They had benefited from COVID funds, and those funds were gone now.

13
14 **Outside Agencies**

15 Mr. Lewis asked about funding for Isaiah 58.

16
17 Mr. Devine stated that agencies were typically added to the budget after being approved for three
18 years. Last year was the first year that they were approved for funding so they would have to be
19 approved two more times.

20
21 **Community Services – Administration**

22 No questions.

23
24 **Ingram Senior Center**

25 No questions.

26
27 **Facilities**

28 Mr. Lewis asked about Line 4452 – Building Maintenance and the shed at Michele Memorial
29 Park being a one-time expenditure.

30
31 Councilor Bryant answered yes. He stated that the pickleball courts would be going in at that
32 park for use next year.

33
34 **Community Contributions**

35 Councilor Bryant stated that the Tuscan would be doing the fireworks again next year with the
36 Town covering the police and fire details.

37
38 **Capital Improvements**

39 Mr. Sorenson stated that they were replacing three vehicles. The j hook was a multipurpose truck
40 which could use several bodies. It was replacing two vehicles, one of which went to the auction
41 last week. It would take time to get the vehicles in and on the road.

42
43 Chairman Boyer asked how many j hook trucks they planned to have.

44
45 Mr. Sorenson stated that this would be the second one and it would stay that way for a few years.
46 The other two vehicles were smaller and in the vehicle replacement program.

1
2 Chairman Boyer commented on the vehicles in the plan.
3
4 Councilor Bryant spoke about the utility underground at the Main Street and Pleasant Street
5 intersection.
6
7 Ms. Loranger asked about the possibility of the utility poles along Route 28 having been buried.
8
9 Councilor Bryant stated that if the Town had been asked the poles could have been buried.
10 Council let Liberty Utilities know what the Council's feelings on those poles was.
11
12 Chairman Boyer asked about the document scanning.
13
14 Manager Dillon stated that the School District had allowed the Town to store documents there.
15 The Town had to move them to storage units when the School District needed the space. It was
16 not efficient to send staff to those storage units to search through boxes to find paper files. The
17 money was to scan those documents into an electronic format and reduce the number of storage
18 units. It was cheaper to scan than build space in the new Police Station for document storage.
19
20 Mr. Lewis asked what the end product of the scanning would be.
21
22 Manager Dillon stated that they would be in a pdf format.
23
24 Mr. Stark asked if the scanning would be contracted out.
25
26 Manager Dillon answered yes. They used ARPA funds to scan the building files into an
27 electronic format.
28
29 Ms. Loranger asked if this would be a one-time only expense.
30
31 Manager Dillon stated that this funding would take care of digitizing the majority of those
32 documents that were in storage. They would still have more to do in the future probably.
33
34 Mr. Stark asked about scanning newer documents.
35
36 Manager Dillon stated that most new documents were in an electronic format already.
37
38 Chairman Boyer asked how they would be scanned.
39
40 Manager Dillon stated that most documents were offsite already. They would meet them at the
41 location to pick up the documents.
42
43 Chairman Boyer asked about the storage costs.
44

1 Manager Dillon stated that it was also the costs of sending the Finance Director or the Human
2 Resources Director to a storage unit to search through boxes which were not calculated. In
3 addition to the storage unit costs.

4
5 Chairman Boyer asked about data storage costs.

6
7 Manager Dillon stated that it was a small cost. They had that electronic storage cost with the
8 footage from the body cameras that the Police Department had now.

9
10 **Sewer Administration**

11 Mr. Lewis asked about the increase in Line 4646 GLSD Operating Costs.

12
13 Ms. McGee stated that the GLSD debt was budgeted separately in the past. She moved to
14 combine the debt and the operating expense into one line item. There is an offset under Sewer
15 Debt Services.

16
17 **Sewer - Debt Services**

18 Chairman Boyer asked about the BAN.

19
20 Ms. McGee stated that they had a line to match the Bond Anticipation Note revenue last year.

21
22 **Capital Projects**

23 Chairman Boyer asked about Line 4723 – Wastewater Pump Station and the Butler Street Pump
24 Station.

25
26 Mr. Sorenson stated that the Butler Street Pump Station was the first major rebuild of a pump
27 station. There were ten pump stations. They used ARPA funds to do the planning for this one
28 and Brookdale which would be the next pump station to be done. They looked for grant funding,
29 but it wasn't there.

30
31 Chairman Boyer asked if they would see this in the budget annually since there were ten pump
32 station.

33
34 Mr. Sorenson answered no. They were working on the older ones first which were in the most
35 need of repair. The other ones might not need so much work. They might do them every other
36 year or every three years.

37
38 **Water Administration**

39 No questions.

40
41 **Water – Operations**

42 Mr. Lewis asked about the two new tests for the water system.

43
44 Mr. Sorenson stated that the UCMR5 test for metals had to be done every five years. The
45 coliform analyzer would allow them to test for coliform in-house. That would help identify
46 issues in the water system quickly.

1 Chairman Boyer asked about Line 4482 - Purchase of Water and if there were offsetting
2 revenues.

3
4 Ms. McGee answered yes.

5
6 Chairman Boyer asked if the revenues were shown in Line 4488 – Admin Service Charge.

7
8 Ms. McGee answered no. The Admin Service Charge was for the overhead expenses like the
9 water system’s portion of the billing clerk’s hours and such.

10
11 Mr. Lewis asked about the reason that Pennichuck Water dropped off the detail sheet.

12
13 Mr. Sorenson stated that they combined the Pennichuck sales with the sales to Windham in one
14 line now.

15
16 **Water - Buildings**

17 Mr. Sorenson stated that there was money here to replace the original boiler at the water
18 treatment plant.

19
20 Ms. Donnelly asked if they anticipated water plant upgrades over the next three years.

21
22 Mr. Sorenson answered yes and stated that they would address that under Capital.

23
24 **Water - Debt Services**

25 Chairman Boyer asked about Line 4507 – Drinking Water and if that was for Phase I of the water
26 purchase.

27
28 Mr. Sorenson answered yes.

29
30 Chairman Boyer asked if there were any bonds for Phase II.

31
32 Ms. McGee stated that there were no Phase II bonds.

33
34 **Water – Capital Projects**

35 Mr. Sorenson stated that they were doing a study to look at updating the water system processes
36 to meet the needs of the town better. They would do the engineering then plan out the repairs.

37
38 **05) TOWN COUNCIL REPORT**

39 None.

40
41 **06) SCHOOL BOARD REPORT**

42 None.

43
44 Councilor Bryant stated that if there were any questions, they should be sent to him so that he
45 could forward them to the Town Manager.

1 Chairman Boyer stated that the next meeting would be November 8th.

2

3 **MOTION by Mr. Lewis to adjourn the meeting at 8:15PM.**

4 **SECOND by Ms. Loranger**

5 **VOTE: 8-0-0 in favor.**

6 **Motion passed unanimously.**

7

8 Minutes recorded by: Jeremiah Lamson

9

10 Approved: _____

11

12 Date: _____

DRAFT