

Town of Tuftonboro
Budget Committee Meeting
November 14, 2023

Present: Rob Roriston, Gary Chehames, David Dauphinais, Brendan Gaughran, Jeff Reisner, Chris Sawyer, and Selectman Albee, also present were Selectman Murray, Selectman Pike and Town Administrator Fraizer

Chairman Roriston called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

It was determined there was a quorum followed by the pledge of allegiance.

There was no public input.

Approvals: Chris Sawyer made a motion to accept the minutes of September 12, 2023; October 3, 2023; and October 10, 2023. The motion was seconded by Brandan Gaughran. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Roriston Comments

Chairman Roriston reminded the Committee of the process, the budgets will be reviewed at one meeting and approved at the next meeting. He also stressed the importance of communication and asked that the members respond if they are attending a meeting or not as a quorum is required.

Budget Items for Approval

Chairman Roriston called for a vote on each of the following budgets:

4153 Legal in the amount of \$41,700. Chris Sawyer made a motion to approved, the motion was seconded by Jeff Reisner. The motion passed unanimously.

4414 Animal Control in the amount of \$1,750. David Dauphinais made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Chris Sawyer. The motion passed unanimously.

4442 Direct Assistance in the amount of \$9,750. Gary Chehames made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Brendan Gaughran. The motion passed unanimously.

4582 Patriotic Purposes in the amount of \$1,500. Jeff Reisner made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Chris Sawyer. The motion passed unanimously.

4589 Gifts and Donations in the amount of \$1,200. David Dauphinais made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Gary Chehames. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Budget Items

4550 Library: Dennis Guilmette, Library Director, explained the increase in the salary line item was the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 3% approved by the Board of Selectmen (BoS) and a merit increase for all of the staff with the exception of himself. Mr. Guilmette feels his salary with the COLA is appropriate. The Budget Committee is interested in how the library is tracking with their expenditures compared to budget. Mr. Guilmette said they have several year end subscriptions and anticipate coming in on budget. Chairman Rorison requested an update of the libraries budget to actual to date.

4152 Assessing: There is an annual contract for Assessing. 2024 is the final year of the contract in the amount of \$42,420.

4152 Assessing: Chris Sawyer made a motion to approved, the motion was seconded by David Dauphinais. The motion passed unanimously.

4240 Building Inspection: Chairman Roriston reviewed the Building Inspection budget. The only increase was a COLA for the Code Officer Salary.

4194 Executive: Selectman Albee pointed out that the Town Administrator is a new position and the salary was negotiated. David Dauphinais asked why there was a slight decrease to the salary amount. It was to fit the position into the hourly salary scale. There was discussion regarding the Administrative Overtime and the Clerical Assistance. There was recognition that combined there were very few hours available to hire anyone to take meeting minutes.

4140 Town Clerk: Jennifer Coulter, Town Clerk, presented the Town Clerk budget. It is significantly higher than 2023 because there are four (4) elections in 2024. Each election has associated costs associated additional postage for absentee ballots, supervisors of the checklist, ballot clerks and food for the workers. The Town Clerk Salary has the 3% COLA applied. The Deputy Town Clerk has the COLA and a step increase.

4520 Parks and Recreation: Dennis Zilembo the Parks and Recreation Director and Eileen Gil Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission presented the budget. A new position of Assistant Director is proposed for 2024. This will allow for a diversity of programs and allow for succession planning. The maintenance of the beach was a challenge in 2023, the person who gives swim lessons is available and willing to maintain the beach in 2024. There was a date change in the Old Home Days in 2023, as a result the old car show didn't take place. This will be reevaluated for 2024.

There was a great deal of discussion about the amount Tuftonboro pays Wolfeboro. After much discussion, Selectman Albee made the suggestion that the line item be removed for the Parks and Recreation budget and be put into a Warrant Article or in a separate line item of the budget. There will continue to be an effort to find the original vote related to participating in the Wolfeboro programs. Also, the figures for reconciling the invoice to the "non-resident" rate will be sent to the Budget Committee.

4215 Ambulance: Fire Chief Thompson explained the Ambulance is a contract, there is a 2.8% increase in 2024 which amounts to \$3,039.30 for a total of \$26,858.49. The contract covers one ambulance 24 x 7 from Wolfeboro or Moultonborough. There are clauses in the agreement if terms are not met. The Tuftonboro ambulance is for overflow calls.

There was conversation about future of the ambulance service. Wolfeboro had put their contract out to bid and received two very expensive bids. As a result, they are considering creating their own department. The Town of Tuftonboro has been satisfied with Stuart Ambulance and do not have any reason to change the contract. It is prudent however to watch the industry and how other Towns are meeting the increased need for medical response and transport.

4220 Fire Department: Fire Chief Thompson presented the Fire Department budget. Chairman Roriston note the combined salary line figures, the current trend in percent increase is not sustainable. There was some discussion about various line items but it mostly centered around the shift coverage line item.

The Holiday line item is also of concern. Chairman Rorison asked for historical data for the past 3 years. Possibly a contingency fund could cover if emergencies occurred and excessive hours were expended.

4290 Emergency Management: Fire Chief Thompson reviewed the line item of the Emergency Management budget with the Budget Committee. It was noted that Board of Selectmen had reduced the first line item, Operations from \$3,370 to \$800. The increase to this line item was to have the ability to change the electronic sign remotely instead of doing it manually on the sign.

Board of Selectman's (BoS) Update

Selectman Albee brought the Budget Committee up to date on the 2024 estimate for paving and the status of the solar project.

At 9:10 p.m. Chairman Roriston made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Chris Sawyer. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Fraizer