

Budget Committee
October 4th 2017
7:00PM
Town Office/Police Station Conference Room
Approved: November 8th, 2017

Budget Committee Members: Judy Brotman, Chair, Susan J. MacKenzie, Erik Colberg, Greg Lange, Richard Jones, Charles Ragan, Cybele Merrick, Scott May, Elizabeth Glenshaw and Eric Furstenberg.
Excused: Wilkes McClave.

Select Board member Bradford Keith. Administrative Assistant Dina Cutting.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chair Brotman.

1. The minutes for the following meetings were reviewed:
 - Jones moved to approve the minutes of September 27th, 2017. Seconded by May. Brotman offered changes to the Police budget discussion which she read out loud. Voted unanimously in favor with changes noted.
2. Brotman noted the Budget Committee will be working on recommendations for the upcoming 2018 Town operating budget. The goal for this meeting is to formulate a recommendation for the Select Board on salary increases and an overall percentage increase in the operating budget. The sense of the Budget Committee was to try and accomplish this goal.
3. The Budget Committee reviewed and discussed the following topics:
 - a. Employee wages:
 - The New England CPI is 1.6% for the month of August.
 - Brotman polled the Budget Committee on their feelings for wage increases. The majority of the Committee supported a 1.6% wage increase.
 - School wages and the step and track increases.
 - Longevity raises for school employees - it was noted Lyme does not do this.
 - Increasing some employee wages to make them competitive with area towns. When we lose employees it is not to towns of the same size and economic makeup as Lyme. We need to be competitive with Upper Valley towns, such as Hanover, Hartford and Lebanon.
 - Difficulties in keeping employees because of low wages in some departments.
 - Difficult in hiring any CDL drivers because of highway department low wages. The committee would like to see documentation on area wages for comparison.
 - Merritt wages for job performance.
 - One-time bonus for employee(s) who may have had an extra work load and/or more responsibilities assigned to them.
 - b. What the next step in the budget process will be. The Select Board will now come back to the Budget Committee with a proposed 2018 operating budget, including recommendations on wages.
 - c. Increases in tax rates, expenditures, revenues and assessed values, and how this calculation works with respect to the tax rate.
 - d. The Budget Committee would like to see uncontrollable expenses and controllable expenses presented separately.

- e. It was the consensus of the Budget Committee that the operating budget goal should be to stay within a 1.6% increase, realizing that this would be a challenge.
 - f. The Budget committee would also like to see an estimate of the capital reserve funds being used this year in upcoming warrant articles, along with the balances of those capital reserve funds.
 - g. The Budget Committee requested a spreadsheet of all Capital Reserve Funds balances for the next meeting.
 - h. Significant road projects ahead in the coming months from the July 1st storm.
 - FEMA is involved but no hard figures on that yet.
 - A soft estimate of \$3 million dollars for road damage left to repair (through Hazardous Mitigation funds) - this would mean the town has to come up with \$750,000.
 - The Select Board will be looking into ways to fund these repairs. FEMA pays 75% after the work is complete.
 - i. The wish list items were helpful to all.
 - j. The Budget Committee, Select Board and Town needs to have more information on the Fire Station and Transfer Station facility funding in order to plan ahead for these expenses.
- 4. The Budget Committee and the Select Board thanked each other for the in depth discussion. MacKenzie noted this was very helpful for the Select Board.
 - 5. At 8:20 PM Mr. Ragan moved to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Glenshaw. Voted unanimously in favor.

Sincerely,

Dina Cutting