

Waterford Selectboard Working Meeting
 Monday, October 28, 2024 @ 6:00 PM
 Davies Memorial Library

In attendance: Rob Gray, Sue Hayes, Kevin Gillander, Marcia Martel, Sukey Watson

Ron Gray called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- No action taken for previous minutes

Budget

- Kevin Gillander provided a brief history and reported that he and Marcia Martel met with each the Highway Department and Transfer Station Departments and Sue Hayes worked with the Fire Department. to assist in preparing the budget.
- Heather Gonyaw Presented the preliminary budget. The budget format now is organized by department so that total expenses for each department are clearly delineated.
- Pertinent changes in terms of decreases and increases were noted; with brief description below. Those departments for which there is no change, are omitted from this description.
- **Auditors** - no change from 2024; have 3 yr contract for town report amount for cost savings, \$1,296.00/yr
- **Cemetery** - the mowing contract is higher; cemetery portion will be \$7,350.00, (total for 2024 also included all departments, that is being split out into three cost centers: Town properties, Fire Department, and Cemeteries.). Addition of Sexton is included (primarily to mark burial sites and work with funeral directors - at \$1,500.00
- **Community Appropriations** - Davies Memorial Library, 5% increase to \$ 35,300.00, Historical Society decreased to zero, not all appropriation letters of request have been received, per Town Clerk, Deb Benoit.
- **County Tax** - non-negotiable, tentative figure, same as 2024
- **Delinquent Tax Collection** - Small increase as per Heather (from asst, town clerk Marcel LaPierre) for advertisement for likely tax sale
- **Development Review Board** - no change
- **Election** - Decrease to \$ 2000.00 due to only one election, there were 5 for 2024.
- **Insurance** - Workmans compensation insurance reduced due to improved backup documentation; Buildings and Equipment final figure unknown therefore increased by \$ 1,250.00
- **Library & Town Office Building** - increase in custodial services due to hourly rate increase from \$30.00/hr to \$35.00/hr; no other extra contracted services anticipated so this decreased *???? BUT INCLUDES MOWING?*
- **Listers** - note that the requested amount \$ 35,000.00 remains due to future services needed in regards to the Moore Damn Valuations for tax purposes
- **Payroll Benefits & Taxes** - changed to \$ 902.00
- **Planning** - no change
- **Professional Fees** - for outside audits which occur once every 3 year, putting aside 7,500.00/yr

- **Public Safety** - Ambulance remained the same ; total of \$ 64,980.00. Law Enforcement is an unknown, budgeted \$ 10,000.00 for 2024, but actual calls billed by St. Johnsbury Sheriff Dept. were only \$ 3,565,50 for 2024 to date. Selectboard Member Sukey Watson is reaching out to the department to obtain clear guidance on exactly what we can expect in terms of service they can realistically provide (e.g. evenings: weekends; ATV/UTV etc.) because it has never been totally clear. Budget number is therefore left blank. She stated that we may have to get creative in our thinking of enforcement in order to have all our ordinances enforced.
- **Selectboard** - Deb Benoit reiterated that the state now requires childcare tax to be collected. She suggested that there needs to be selectboard Discussion on how this should be cost allocated, e.g. percentage town pays vs. percentage from selectboard stipend. Generator maintenance needs selectboard discussion because it is currently at the school, and should an emergency arise, it is possible we would need the school as a shelter and therefore need to discuss contributing to maintenance etc. Legal fees increased by \$ 500.00 to \$ 5,500.00. Payroll taxes increased by \$ 184.20 for a total of \$ 902.00
- **Solid Waste Facility** - decreased slightly. Green up Day removed due to lack of participation. Operating Supplies decreased slightly due to no pest control services. Wages increased by 2.5% COLA from \$7 ,030.00 to \$ 7202.75.
- **Town Clerks Office** - computer services increased by \$ 6,700.00 for a total of \$ 13,000.00 due to MS Office and NEMREC computer systems cloud storage, which permits remote access. Sukey Watson asked about computer license taxes but that figure is unknown. There are slight increases in land line telephone, Wages due to COLA and workmen's compensation being split between departments.
- **Zoning Administrator** - Contract is July - July, and expired without renewal. Currently over budget. There was discussion on mis-use of office time and the selectboard will look into this.

Highway Expenditures

- Wages increased by 2.5% COLA and are budgeted for 3 FTE. Total of \$ 204,990.78
- Some discussion on Calcium Chloride, but it is anticipated not to change.
- Culvert expenses are expected not to change, but still unknown.
- Equipment maintenance increased by \$ 13,000.00 to a total of \$ 107,000.00
- Highway Garage Operating decreased by \$ 3,000.00 to \$12,000.00
- Landline and Road Foreman Cell Phone increased by \$300.00 to a total of \$ 2,700.00
- Health Insurance with BCBS has risen by 18% from \$ 78,964 to \$ 115,787.00
- Payroll taxes increase slightly for 2025 to \$ 15,681.79
- Overtime is Overtime budget and for 2025 is budgeted at \$ 35,000.00
- Workman's compensation doubled from \$ 5,000.00 to \$ 10,000.00

Discussion ensued about Highway Department Health Benefits

- Kathy Hodgdon suggested that the selectboard look into different health plans to find a better price. She questioned the need for the Health Reimbursement Account.
- Ron Gray stated that other towns pay mostly for platinum plans close to but not 100%, and that we offer a 100% premium payment for a gold plan which is in line with other similar towns.
- It was mentioned that other towns offer sign on bonuses but no discussion ensued.

Tim Doyon had questions concerning advertisements for a road position. Ron Gray responded and read the advertisement that will be placed in multiple outlets this week.

Fire Department Expenditures

- It was noted that the fire department budget has not yet been presented to the entire department.
- There was minor discussion concerning the loan amount, which would be dependent on yet unknown percentage.
- The entire department budget increased by \$ 185.00. to and expected \$ 148,650.00

Final Budget Approval

Heather Gonyaw stated she needs final budget numbers no later than the first selectboard Meeting of December, which is 12/2/2024 at which time the board needs to approve the budget in order to be included in the Town Report for March of 2025. She called for a special selectboard meeting on Monday November 25, in order to be able to have the final numbers for presentation and approval on 12/2/2024.

Other Business

- Road Foreman Jim Hayes requested that the selectboard send letters to CALEX, Waterford School, Green Mountain Power, and others [Sukey's edit here: Consolidated Communications, NEK Broadband] about possible delays in snow clearing due to our lack of road personnel.
- Road Foreman Jim Hayes reminded us that he has Jury Duty beginning Nov. 20
- Town Clerk Deb Benoit said that a letter of request for the excuse from duty had to be received by Oct, 28.
- Road Foreman Jim Hayes noted he has surgery on November 7, 2024 and would be out for 14 days.

Next Meeting

Tuesday November 12, 6:00 PM Davies Memorial Library

Agenda Items for November 12 Meeting

Modifications to Agenda

Approval of Minutes of September 23 (Site Visit), October 14, 21, and 28.

Hazard Mitigation Update (Discussion/Action)

Highway Department Update

Town Garage Update (Discussion/Action)

ATV Ordinance (Discussion/Action)

Zoning Administrator Contract (Discussion/Action)

Caledonia County Sheriff - Enforcement Availability

Driveway Non-Compliance Letters (Discussion/Action)

Transfer Station Supervisor Performance Appraisal

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Executive Session 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(B) - Personnel

Executive Session 1-V.S.A. 313, Personnel

- Marcia Martel made a motion to enter Executive Session, Kevin Gillander seconded it.
- **Motion Passed 5-0 The Selectboard entered Executive Session at 7:06 PM**
- The group exited Executive Session at 7:54 PM. No action was taken/

Kevin Gillander made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sue Hayes seconded the motion.

Motion passed 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM

Respectfully Submitted by
Sukey Watson Selectboard Member