

## **MINUTES**

### **Sanbornton Budget Committee Meeting**

**Meeting Date and Time:** Tuesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 7:00pm

**Meeting Place:** Life Safety Building Meeting Room, 565 Sanborn Rd, Sanbornton NH

**Present:** Chair Kate Osgood, Selectman Jim Dick, Ray Masse (remote, not voting), Bob Presby, Ralph Rathjen, Scott Fogg (not sworn in yet, not voting)

#### **General Business**

**a. Approval of minutes from 5/10/22** – Ralph Rathjen made a motion to approve the draft minutes of May 10<sup>th</sup> with corrections. Selectman Jim Dick seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**b. Discussion with Highway Dept Director Johnny Van Tassel** – Chair Kate Osgood explained that a memo was sent to Johnny asking for sand and gravel spending for the last several years, a plan for roads and tree removal, etc. Johnny stated that the salt and sand was combined in one line up until a few years ago so it was hard to track, but he was able to provide tonnage for recent years. Selectman Dick noted that the tonnage was halved from one year to the next but the price doubled. Johnny stated that it's hard to predict the pricing or how much will be used and he tries to use the least amount he can safely. Ray asked if there is a line item for the stone used during mud season that can be tracked, and Johnny responded that it's in the Road Construction Materials line which also includes items like tines for the grader. He stated that he could break out stone into another line but it would just make more lines to track.

Chair Osgood asked if weather is recorded year to year to help with explaining the budget expenditures; Johnny stated that some Highway Departments do keep track of this but he does not. He added that he has a small crew and is often out on the road so he does not have time to do the administrative tasks but he does have a software program that could help manage road jobs.

Selectman Dick noted that the Highway Dept receives \$600,000 plus the Block grant each year for roads and the Budget Committee would like to know what the actual needs are for roads so that the budget may need to be adjusted. Ralph added that once the needs are known, then the road projects can be prioritized. Johnny explained that most of the bridges are in good shape though the bridge on Prescott Rd will eventually need expensive repairs, and he should have a bridge report from the State this summer or fall. He stated that the paved roads are in decent shape and there may be three roads in the next five years that need to be reclaimed and repaved. Chair Osgood asked what roads need to be addressed right now; Johnny explained that some gravel roads are not holding up well because of weather patterns and amount of traffic but he wants to find the best solution that's affordable for the Town. He received an initial quote from GMI for Perkins Rd for \$416,000 but had that revised to only do 2,135 feet of the road with fabric and adding material to raise the road for \$82,000. He added that if this works to improve the road in mud season then it could be done on other roads.

Selectman Dick stated that Johnny has been asked to come up with a list of roads that are a priority to fix based on traffic and condition. Johnny responded that he thinks 75% of the road budget could go towards gravel roads. Selectman Dick explained that the paved roads may be okay now but a timeline for maintenance needs to be in place so that there are no surprise spikes in the budget. Ray noted that the road study completed by an engineer several years ago lists every road in town, its length, surface, etc. and when it should be updated for the next ten years. Johnny stated that he did have a ten year plan in place before the road study; Ray responded that if a ten year plan isn't updated each year then it is not useful.

Ralph stated that he wants a simple list of what needs to be done and when and how much money it will cost for the next five years, and what monies if any will roll over to the next year in the CRF year to year. Selectman Dick added that even a top ten list of the roads that absolutely need to be worked on would be good. Ray added that the lifespan of a reclaimed and repaved road is known, so that could go into a ten year plan, such as Upper Bay Rd.

Chair Osgood asked if the town's Tree Warden could help in creating a tree removal plan; Johnny responded that he is used more for residents that have questions about certain trees. He stated that he would like to make a plan for dead ash trees. Selectman Dick stated that a tree removal plan could be part of the road plan also.

**Chair Osgood asked for a plan for the top ten roads for the next five years to be emailed to the Budget Committee before the next meeting on July 12<sup>th</sup>. She added that Johnny should work with the Tree Warden, Guy Guinta, on a plan for tree removal.**

**b. Review of Chief Hankard's email about officer departures** – Ray provided the list of officers that have left the PD by year. He noted that other than 2017, there was only one departure so more than one officer leaving at a time doesn't happen often and staying only three to five years in a position is standard now. Selectman Dick responded that the officers that are leaving are not being replaced by a trained officer and it takes 16 months to train them. Chair Osgood noted that Chief Hankard and the admin assistant are working on gathering data about similar towns' salaries and benefits for officers as requested.

Ralph asked if there will be an issue with only looking at the PD rate of pay but not other departments; Selectman Dick responded that he feels that those departments that deal with public safety should be addressed. Ray stated that he is worried about the inflation rate and that a pay increase will be requested by the majority of town employees. Selectman Dick noted that the BOS has talked about the merit pool and creating a set of guidelines for which employees will be eligible; he feels that it should be limited to employees that are on the lower side of the pay scale as it will be more of a benefit to them but that process will not be looked at until later in the summer.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 12th at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Audry Barriault