

## MINUTES

### Sanbornton Budget Committee/Board of Selectmen Joint Meeting

**Meeting Date and Time:** Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 4:00 PM

**Meeting Place:** Sanbornton Town Offices, Sanbornton, N.H. + Teleconference

**Present:** Selectman Jim Dick, Selectman John Olmstead, BC Chair Craig Weisman, Kate Osgood, Bob Presby, Ray Masse, Bob Lambert, Ralph Rathjen

#### **Initial FY22 Budget Reviews**

Selectman Jim Dick explained that this meeting is just for an initial overview of budgets and discussion with department heads.

Police – Chief Steve Hankard explained that the PD is currently at five officers and has a candidate for the sixth; he does not believe FY22 is a good time to request a seventh officer. The department's statistics for this year are skewed due to COVID and his mandate that officers not make unnecessary traffic stops in order to limit exposure. He stated that the State Police notified him they will not be covering 2am-6am effective immediately due to their own staffing issues so the PD will have to cover these hours now. Officers are given one hour straight pay for being on-call during this time and paid for two hours minimum if they do get called out.

Chief Hankard explained that he will need to buy a new pick-up truck as the current one is over 100k miles and was not built for police use. The new one will be police-rated. Chair Weisman asked what the pick-up is used for and Chief Hankard responded that it is used as a stealth vehicle to stop vehicles for speeding or used to transport large pieces of evidence or drive during snow storms. Most of the equipment in the current pick-up cannot transfer to the new one. The new truck can be paid for using lease or outright purchase; he will bring both purchase options to the BC for their input.

The FY20 budget line for software maintenance was over-expended by \$1600 due to a ransomware attack. Uniform purchase was over because of needing two sets of academy clothing and a swat team uniform. Lines for overtime and training underused due to COVID. Chief Hankard explained that he did put merit increases in along with the COLA increase as this is his own request, even if the BC and BOS decide to take the merit increase out; Selectman Dick agreed with this method. Selectman Dick asked if he can add a narrative for how many phones the PD has so that these can be tracked; Chief Hankard stated he will make this change.

Chief Hankard explained that the tasers purchased last year were \$10,000, and funded by different parts of the budget. Chair Weisman suggested creating a CRF for these since this is a sizeable expense. Selectman Dick suggested looking more closely at the line for fuel to see if that can be dropped more. He also stated that the BOS needs to look at how holiday pay is budgeted for across all departments.

Transfer Station – Transfer Station Manager Nate Douglass explained that the FY20 budget was inherited by the previous manager and he should have more clarity on the budget lines in FY23 after he has been there for a full year. He stated that a lot more trash was brought to the transfer station after COVID started in March, around 33% more. He would like to add more hours for personnel so that he can do more town buildings maintenance which is also part of his responsibilities. Selectman Dick explained that Nate has started keeping a separate log of hours dedicated just to maintenance.

The new attendant on Fridays has allowed him to do maintenance which has allowed him to cut \$2,000 from overtime since that person is at a lower hourly rate. There is no need for the third attendant position discussed last year because there aren't plans to move to sorted recycling any time soon; that line is still being held at \$1. He explained there is 4.5% increase in the contract with Casella every year. There were increases across the board that weren't outlined in their original quote when Nate met with them this July. He is working with Casella to double the size of containers so that he doesn't have to pay to truck two containers at a time, so he would still pay for tonnage but not have to pay to truck as much.

Nate stated that if he could increase a budget line it would be for tire disposal, as he doesn't have the current figure on what those cost. Ralph stated that the Town needs to be realistic about what items cost to dispose of, and if they can justify the costs do then residents will pay that amount. Selectman Dick will work with Nate to break out the costs of demo, municipal solid waste and recycling to see what the associated revenues are with each. The bag tags will increase \$.50 in October which will yield \$30,000 more in revenue but the Town is still paying more to dispose of trash than it takes in from residents. Nate stated that single-stream recycling is costing Sanbornton \$40,000 a year but nationally only 13% of these materials actually get recycled.

Nate stated that he needs a new printer but will try to extend the life of the current printer; he also wants a blower for grounds maintenance and has been using his own. He is in discussions with a landscaper to do mowing and weedwhacking which would allow Nate to do other things. The backhoe will need new tires and tire fill so that line is being increased by \$4400. He hopes to get several more years of use out of the pick-up truck by patching fenders so that it passes inspection; he needs to upgrade some small tools like shovels and rakes.

Highway Department – Highway Department Director Johnny Van Tassel stated that his major increase in the budget was due to including retirement in the individual department budgets now; he did not request a merit increase but did include COLA for his employees. The Block grant which makes up part of his budget can only be used for certain items, and he explained that without that grant figured in the operating budget is at about \$803,000. He has dropped the lines for periodicals, rentals, and tires. He did not use hired trucks in FY20 but is in contact with someone to do that for this current year. Selectman Dick noted that the step and grade for employees needs to be corrected in this budget.

Kate asked what parts of the road engineering study have been used by the Highway Department; Johnny explained that there are parts of the study that he thinks are overkill but he

did take \$50,000 out of the CIP money and used it to put ledgepack on top of gravel to build a crown on some roads.

Chair Weisman stated that having some tires in stock was discussed last year; Johnny responded that he has been doing that and it's working out well. Johnny stated that he is cautious about lowering the budget for snow removal because that is unpredictable, even though the budget was under for those lines in FY20. Ralph stated that the \$20,000 line for tree removal has been historically underspent and he would like to see the tree work taken care of every year immediately following the start of a new budget. Johnny explained that he works on a plan with the Tree Warden each year; Ralph suggested that if \$20,000 is requested each year then Johnny should have bids for tree removal by Town Meeting. Chair Weisman suggested cutting to \$10,000 and if he really needs more funds to ask the BOS; BC members Johnny were in agreement with this approach.

Fire Department – Chief Paul Dexter explained that per-diem employees are used by the department every day and this is reflected in the personnel budget. The position for a part-time assistant has allowed him to complete other tasks and is working out very well. The department limited callbacks this past year due to COVID and trying to limit exposure for employees. He has received a \$100,000 grant for new equipment like chairs, desks, and laptops using the \$163,000 life safety building improvement money as a match. Because of this he dropped the line for office supplies by \$500.

Selectman John Olmstead left the meeting at 7:27 and the BOS adjourned; no longer a BOS quorum.

Chief Dexter explained that emergency medical supply costs are going up and he is applying for firefighter turnout gear, as suppliers won't make repairs to older gear. He would also like to start working his way back up I the line for vehicle maintenance and repair with the arrival of the new frontline engine. There was less spent on training and other projects in FY20 due to COVID so the budget looks more underspent than it would normally be. He explained that his overall FY22 budget went up because of retirement being included.

He noted he is working on a justification document for the new deputy position he will be proposing to the BOS/BC in the future.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:00**

Respectfully submitted,

Audry Barriault

Selectman's Clerk \_\_\_\_\_

Approval Date 9.16.2020