

## **Nottingham Select Board Meeting**

**10/30/2023**

### **APPROVED Minutes**

**Approved as amended on November 6, 2023.**

#### **Call to Order**

**Members present:** Ben Bartlett, John Morin, Tim Dabrieo, Matthew Shirland, and Steve Welch. Others: Town Administrator Ellen White. Matt Curry, Acting Fire Chief, Lorraine Anderson, Town Clerk, Jen Phillips, Trustee of the Trustees, and Amanda Stevens, Interim Library Director.

**Members of the public:** Please refer to the signup sheet at the end of this document.

**Members Excused:** none

**Pledge of Allegiance:** meeting began with a Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **Department Budget Review**

##### **Fire Department**

Matt Curry, Acting Fire Chief was present to answer questions about the Fire Department budget. Mr. Curry answered questions about the stipends, possible line items that could be decreased, service contracts line item, security system being billed annually through Central Station (for all of the Town departments that use it), etc.

The Board recognized that the Fire Department's budget was pretty tight and that it was difficult to find areas to cut. They also discussed the fire breathing apparatus line item and Mr. Curry clarified that it is funded through Capital Reserve fund.

The conversation concluded with an understanding that the Fire Department's budget was well-structured, with minimal increases and many zeros in the budget differences. It was noted that the discussion was intended as an information session, and the budget would undergo further review.

##### **Blaisdell Memorial Library**

Jen Phillips, Trustee of the Trustees, and Amanda Stevens, Interim Library Director were present to answer questions on the Library budget. Ms. Phillips noted that the library has maintained a flat operating budget since 2019, and that this is causing challenges, particularly in areas like carpet cleaning and the increasing demand for eBooks. She noted a 15% growth in eBook usage, which is impacting the budget. Ms. Phillips said that the library has over 3,400 cardholders, which is approximately 65% of the Town's residents. She also mentioned the importance of volunteer services provided for the information technology services. Ms. Phillips then said that library had to switch to Comcast for its phone lines due to the obsolescence of existing copper lines, and that this resulted in an increased base cost for telephone services. Ms. Phillips also spoke about the proposed salary budget as it seeks to bring the library's salaries in line with market-competitive rates. She said that it aims to provide a market-competitive salary for a full-time director and raise salaries to around \$15 per hour for most employees. Ms. Phillips also noted that the library's operating hours were reduced due to staff availability and spoke about the challenges of finding qualified staff in the current competitive job market. She said that the trustees believe the proposed

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budget, if approved, will help attract and retain staff while also allowing the library to return to its regular operating hours.

#### **Town Clerk Department**

Lori Anderson was there to present the Department budget. She spoke about splitting the salaries for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to increase transparency and noted the uncertainty of election hours, particularly due to 2024 election year increased workload.

Ms. Anderson noted that there were additional expenses related to telephone lines due to the switch to Comcast, along with the need for new office equipment, like a laptop for election management purposes and a new credit card processing unit. She also noted postage costs, particularly for absentee ballots, and that these costs are somewhat self-funded.

Ms. Anderson answered questions about State fees, conferences dues, current and future staffing needs, document retention policies and needs, etc.

Ms. White also asked Mr. Anderson about the parts of the budget that was shared with the elections budget, like posting notices in newspapers, printing ballots, and postage.

There was also a discussion about the uncertainty related to the Presidential Primary date and adverse weather impacts on elections.

Ms. White then answered questions from the Board about other budget line items such as:

- Merit Compensation Pool line is a placeholder for merit-based salary increases across all departments, typically ranging from 4% to 6%.
- Software licensing and service contracts.
- Financial Administration: This covers expenses for the bookkeeper, tax collector, and treasurer.
- Assessing and mapping updates.
- Legal: she addressed the legal expenses, including the town attorney's budget, emphasizing that it remains level-funded because of the uncertainty of legal issues that might arise.
- Personnel Administration: This part includes health insurance and retirement contributions, which were based on proposed salary levels.
- Planning Board: would be adjusted due to the Strafford Regional Planning dues increase and the potential need for a Master Plan update.
- Zoning Board.
- Town Hall and Other Buildings: This budget covers cleaning, maintenance, electricity, heating, and other expenses. Ms. White explained the changes made, such as shifting from a part-time cleaner to a contracted cleaning company and the potential need for additional funds for specific projects.
- Cemeteries.
- Insurance: including workers' compensation and property liability insurance.
- Building Inspector: Ms. White explained that there is a need for updated building code reference books.

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- Highway Department: Ms. White said that she would like to discuss this budget further with the newly hired Highway Director before finalizing it and will discuss it with the Board at the next meeting.
- Solid Waste Department: She mentioned that she needs additional figures for the budget, and that she would like to defer this discussion to the next meeting.
- Animal Control: Ms. White noted that she would like to increase the pay of the animal control officer.
- General Assistance: maintain the general assistance budget at the current level
- Social Services: Ms. White highlighted the need to reach out to several agencies and with that information to discuss this line item at the next meeting.
- Historical Society.
- Debt Service: Ms. White noted that this budget includes the principal and interest for the landfill loan, which will be closed out in 2024.

Ms. White reiterated that she would like Board to discuss the deferred line items at its next meeting on Monday. She said that the Budget Committee will be meeting with the Department Heads on November 16<sup>th</sup>. She noted that if additional meetings are needed, they may need to schedule one between then and November 30<sup>th</sup> to make sure that the tax cap of 4% is met. The next regular Board meeting is on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Members agreed to meet again on November 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Facility Assessment Committee Review/Workshop**

Charlotte Fyfe, Paul Dallaire, Gary Anderson and Barbara Draper from the Facility Assessment and Advisory Committee (FAC) were there to answer questions.

Members discussed the following:

- How to prioritize actions related to facility maintenance.
- The \$40,000 contract with the property maintenance company and a need for clarification on whether this amount covers both management and the actual work.
- The back area of the Town Hall building that needs attention, including clearing it out and securing it to prevent vandalism. There would need to be a warrant article to address significant issues in that building, such as mold, critters, structural problems, etc. Members agreed that the back of the building is a priority.
- Having one person who would be handling facility related issues and doing small jobs and how to fund it. This position would be looking at the scope of work related to the back of the Town Hall and how expensive and extensive this project may be.
- At some point moving the Police Department is one of the priorities as well and noted that it is on the CIP Plan.
- Need for storage space for important documents (a lot of which are stored in the back of the Town Hall area) and whether off-site storage or reorganizing existing spaces is an option.
- Creating a small area for the Highway Department personnel to be able to rest.

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- Installing heating in the Old Town Hall to make it a usable space.
- The Recycling Center is discussed as a priority due to its heavy usage and safety concerns.
- The idea of conducting a resident survey to gather input on facility needs was mentioned.
- Whether to address the health and safety concerns first and the plan for the building maintenance in the next year budget and going forward.
- Property maintenance person job description details.
- Funding sources, including ARPA funds and the Building Maintenance fund, were considered, and the order of addressing issues.

Members agreed to have Ms. White draft the job description for the Facilities Manager for their next meeting discussion and also check the back of the Town Hall area for what could safely be disposed of and what would need to be moved into secure storage. The other area to focus on would be the Recycling Center.

### **Adjournment:**

*Motion made by Mr. Dabrieo to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Welch. Motion carried by a 5:0 roll call vote. Mr. Bartlett, Mr. Shirland – aye, Mr. Dabrieo – aye, Mr. Welch – aye, Mr. Morin - aye.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by Alvina Snegach

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DATE: OCTOBER 30 2023

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

NAME

ADDRESS

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!!!

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <u>Jen Phillips</u>      | <u>17 Rocky Hill Rd.</u>    |
| 2. <u>Karyn Quinn</u>       | <u>26 Tuckaway Shores</u>   |
| 3. <u>Bob Desrosiers</u>    | <u>75 Stage Rd</u>          |
| 4. <u>Charlotte Fyfe</u>    | <u>85 Deerfield Rd.</u>     |
| 5. <u>Amecede Stevens</u>   | <u>Breakfield Rd</u>        |
| 6. <u>Daniel Bunker</u>     | <u>Northwood NH</u>         |
| 7. <u>Deb Ricker</u>        | <u>83 Stevens Hill Rd</u>   |
| 8. <u>Matt Cury</u>         | <u>14 Kingster Rd -</u>     |
| 9. <u>Doug O'Sater</u>      | <u>50 Conroy</u>            |
| 10. <u>Susan Schneider</u>  | <u>50 Raymond Rd</u>        |
| 11. <u>Bruce Schneider</u>  | <u>50 Raymond Rd</u>        |
| 12. <u>Allan Trant</u>      | <u>20 gravel Pit Rd</u>     |
| 13. <u>hori Anderson</u>    | <u>50 Gile Rd</u>           |
| 14. <u>Carol Wainwright</u> | <u>69 Shore Dr</u>          |
| 15. <u>Sarah Evans</u>      | <u>66 Lodge Farm Rd</u>     |
| 16. <u>HERBERT LAVITO</u>   | <u>2 Tuckaway Shores Rd</u> |
| 17. <u>Red</u>              |                             |
| 18. <u>Gary Anderson</u>    | <u>50 Gile Rd</u>           |
| 19. <u>Mary Crockett</u>    | <u>5 Tremblay Dr</u>        |
| 20. <u>Doug Cummings</u>    | <u>348 Stage</u>            |

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

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1.	<u>Judith Cummings</u>	<u>3 1/2 Stage Rd</u>
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