

**TOWN OF WOLFEBORO
BUDGET COMMITTEE
APPROVED MINUTES
December 28, 2023**

I. Call To Order

Chairman MacDonald opened the meeting at 6:04 pm at the Wolfeboro Public Library.

Members Present: John MacDonald, Chairman, Bob Tougher, Vice-Chairman, Bob Loughman, Brian Black, Bob Moholland, Paul O'Brien, Bobbi Boudman, Tom Bell, Matt Plache, Members, Brian Deshaies, BOS Representative, Linda Murray, BOS Alternate Representative.

Staff Present: Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director, Lee Ann Hendrickson, Administrative Assistant.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Committee participated in the pledge of allegiance.

III. Public Comment

None.

IV. 2024 Budget

Agencies

Northern Human Services; \$7449

Valeda Cerasale, Director, reviewed the program and its services.

L.I.F.E Ministries; \$15,000

Bill Connors, President, reviewed the program and its services. He stated the distribution days are the first and third Wednesday of each month or on their website lifeministries.org.

CASA; \$2,000

Tarah Bergeron, Development Associate, stated the agency is requesting \$2,000 to support a new advocate for the Town of Wolfeboro. She reviewed the program and its services.

John MacDonald questioned whether the agency is receiving \$10,000 from the County and questioned why the taxpayers should pay twice.

Tarah Bergeron stated she is not aware of such. She stated a request was made however; she is not aware the funding request was approved.

John MacDonald questioned the towns in Carroll County that support the program.

Tarah Bergeron stated she could retrieve that information and noted they are receiving funds from Ossipee for the first time. She stated the County funds support those towns that do not provide funding and are served by the program.

Dinner Bell; \$6,000

Bill Peterson, All Saints Church, reviewed the program and its services.

Granite VNA; \$22,000

Julie Stone, Vice-President of Strategy, reviewed the program and its services.

Children Unlimited, Inc.; \$2,730

Schelley Rondeau reviewed the program and its services.

It was moved by Bob Tougher to increase 01-44184-830 Children Unlimited, Inc. from \$0 to \$2,730. Bob Moholland seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed (10-0-0).

Estimated Revenues

Kathy Carpentier reviewed such and noted there is no action required by the Committee. She stated the BOS are considering increasing user fees at the January 3, 2024 BOS meeting.

Paul O'Brien noted the rental for Dockside is ten times more than the rental of the Train Station building.

Default Budget

Kathy Carpentier read the definition of such per NH Municipal Association and reviewed the default budget.

John MacDonald questioned how ambulance services (contract with Stewarts Ambulance) would be paid if a default budget occurs.

Kathy Carpentier stated it would be a dilemma for the Town because there would not be funds available to pay the contract; noting \$500,000 of the 2024 cost would not be covered.

John MacDonald questioned whether there could be a special Town meeting to address the matter.

Linda Murray stated the Town would be required to petition the court to do such.

Kathy Carpentier stated the entire operating budget would have to be reconsidered at the Special meeting.

Bobbi Boudman questioned whether a warrant article could be presented in the event of a default budget; noting the warrant article would include language that the funding of the ambulance services would be contingent upon a default budget.

Kathy Carpentier stated such would advocate for a default budget.

John MacDonald questioned a stand-alone warrant article for ambulance services and remove such from the operating budget.

Kathy Carpentier recommended further discussion when the Committee reviews the remaining warrant articles.

The Committee reviewed the potential consequences of submitting a warrant article.

Paul O'Brien questioned "other approved labor" in the amount of \$563,000.

Kathy Carpentier reviewed such; noting school resource officer, AFSCME contract (year 1 and 2), firefighter (1/2 this year, 1/2 last year), etc. are included in such.

Paul O'Brien questioned whether the Budget Committee could make a \$2 million budget cut.

Kathy Carpentier replied yes and noted the Town is committed to the amount of the default budget.

Paul O'Brien questioned whether overtime is included in the default budget.

Kathy Carpentier stated the approved overtime in 2023 would be included.

John MacDonald questioned the amount of cuts made to the budget.

Kathy Carpentier stated the Budget Committee cut \$10,958 out of the operating budget and \$4,090 out of capital.

Paul O'Brien noted a motion to increase the Children Unlimited budget by \$2,700 was made this evening.

Warrant Articles

The Committee tabled such to January 8, 2024.

Re-Visit Items

Skidsteer Capital Outlay; \$98,000

It was moved by John MacDonald to remove the Water Department Skidsteer capital outlay request (decrease from \$98,000 to \$0). Tom Bell seconded the motion.

Discussion of the motion:

John MacDonald stated he went to the Highway Garage and saw a lot of equipment and feels it is not the right time to purchase additional equipment. He stated the Departments should be sharing equipment.

Steve Randall stated two of the trucks parked at the site are broken down and he is waiting until after the first of the year to submit a purchase order to repair them. He stated the Department would be sharing the skidsteer with the Water Department and noted the skidsteer would be replacing an existing piece of equipment and not adding equipment. He reviewed activities that the skidsteer would be used for.

Bob Loughman questioned the amount to rent equipment to perform mowing (offset).

Steve Randall replied \$4,000/year to mow at the Transfer Station (cost is noted in outside services). He stated the remaining mowing is done with the existing equipment (and future skidsteer).

Brian Black asked if the Parks and Recreation Department could get use out of the existing equipment that is being replaced.

Steve Randall stated the Parks and Recreation Department has had the equipment for one month and has had to put another \$3,000 into it. He stated every time the equipment is used it breaks; noting it is beyond its life expectancy.

Brian Deshaies questioned the age of such.

Steve Randall stated 23 years old.

Tom Bell confirmed that if the skidsteer is not purchased the Department will have to outsource all the mowing.

Brian Deshaies asked if the equipment would be used monthly, weekly, or daily.

Steve Randall replied daily.

John MacDonald stated he believes the cost should come out of the capital reserve fund.

Linda Murray stated the total amount cannot come out of the capital reserve fund.

Bob Loughman confirmed that \$48,000 would come out of the Water Fund and \$48,000 would come out of the capital reserve fund.

Kathy Carpentier stated the amount is \$49,000 from each fund.

Paul O'Brien questioned whether the need for the equipment has been addressed.

Steve Randall stated the equipment being replaced has over 10,000 hours on it and is used all of the time. He stated the replacement equipment will do more than what the current equipment is capable of doing (cross country line mow, ditch digging, etc.). Referencing Mr. MacDonald's request to take the entire cost of the purchase from the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund, he stated the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund cannot pay for equipment for the Water Department. He stated the \$49,000 from the Water Fund is already calculated into the rate structure for 2024.

John MacDonald stated he has not seen an updated vehicle and equipment inventory and questioned whether the skidsteer is on the replacement schedule and CIP.

Steve Randall replied yes and stated he would provide such to the Committee.

John MacDonald withdrew his motion. Tom Bell withdrew his second.

It was moved by John MacDonald to fund the Skidsteer Capital Outlay solely from the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$98,000. Paul O'Brien seconded the motion.

Discussion of the motion:

Bob Tougher confirmed the amount of the skidsteer is covered by the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund.

Steve Randall stated half of the cost is covered by the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund. He stated he is in favor of half the cost coming from the Water Fund.

Paul O'Brien questioned the financial consequence of Mr. MacDonald's motion.

Kathy Carpentier stated it would put the Public Works Department \$49,000 behind the planned replacement schedule.

Linda Murray stated the Water Fund is collecting the amount of money needed in the rates.

Matt Plache questioned whether the Water Department would be using the skidsteer if all of the money comes out of the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund to fund the purchase.

Steve Randall stated he would allow it however; it is his understanding that the Water Department has their own Water Fund and that fund should be funding the Department's projects.

Matt Plache confirmed that if such occurs that the Public Works Department would be subsidizing the Water Department.

Roll call vote: Bobbi Boudman – no, Bob Tougher – no, John MacDonald – yes, Tom Bell – no, Bob Moholland – no, Brian Black – no, Matt Plache – no, Bob Loughman – yes, Paul O'Brien – no, Brian Deshaies – no. The motion failed (2-8-0).

Public Works Solid Waste Dumpster Replacement Capital Outlay; \$10,000

It was moved by John MacDonald to reduce the Solid Waste Dumpster Replacement Capital Outlay from \$10,000 to \$0. Paul O'Brien seconded the motion.

Discussion of the motion:

John MacDonald stated the project is noted as desirable.

Steve Randall stated Casella does not currently charge the Town rent on the cans however, as the cans need to be replaced Casella will start charging the Town rental fees. He stated the plan was to replace the cans now by purchasing one this year and one next year.

Bobbi Boudman questioned the fees if the Town were to be charged.

Steve Randall stated he does not know.

Brian Black questioned the lifespan of the cans.

Steve Randall replied ten years.

Roll call vote: Bobbi Boudman – yes, Bob Tougher – yes, John MacDonald – yes, Tom Bell – yes, Bob Moholland – yes, Brian Black – yes, Matt Plache – yes, Bob Loughman – yes, Paul O'Brien – yes, Brian Deshaies – no. The motion passed (9-1-0).

Fire/Rescue Portable Radios

Bob Tougher stated the BOS removed the funding for such.

Bob Moholland questioned the future plan to replace the radios and expressed concern regarding the process by which the defunding of the request occurred.

Paul O'Brien stated the Town Manager assigned the duty of determining the replacement plan for all Motorola radios in this Town to the former Director of Public Works, the Fire Chief and the Police Department. He stated he does not believe that review ever happened and recommended requesting a plan for the replacement of the radios.

Tom Zotti stated the radio project has been included in the Department's Asset Management/capital outlay for several years. He stated the Town Manager reviewed the request and asked for it to be moved out one year. He stated the request is not urgent and believes it could wait one year. He stated the costs associated with a lease purchase were forwarded to the Town Manager; noting the BOS reviewed such and agreed not to include such in the budget.

General Fund Budget

It was moved by John MacDonald to cut \$75,000 from the 2024 budget, to provide the Town Manager the opportunity to identify those cuts, and/or allow the Town Manager to justify why the \$75,000 should remain in the budget so that the Budget Committee can consider putting the funds back into the budget. Tom Bell seconded the motion.

Bob Loughman recommended the motion be amended to state the General Fund Budget.

John MacDonald amended the motion to include the 2024 General Fund Budget. Tom Bell seconded to amend the motion accordingly.

Referencing the document titled 2023 Spending Freeze and Budget Cuts, John MacDonald stated given the information the Committee received in that \$256,756.13 was found in the 2023 budget to cover the overexpenditure of the budget. He stated \$75,000 is approximately one third of those cuts.

Matt Plache confirmed the Committee can revisit the motion following the Town Manager's review.

Bobbi Boudman questioned Mr. MacDonald as to whether the \$75,000 is an amount that he feels should come out of the budget or whether the Budget Committee should work to find more places to cut.

John MacDonald stated he believes there could be more cuts and it is everyone's choice as to what they believe should be removed. He stated the BOS and Town Manager were able to find \$256,756 out of the 2023 budget within one week and does not believe it is unreasonable that \$75,000 cannot be found and removed from a \$34 million budget.

Paul requested the amount be increased to \$150,000.

Bob Tougher stated the Committee discussed earlier this evening the consequences of a default budget. He stated would support cutting \$75,000 however not \$150,000.

Brian Black stated he feels that the motions are indicting the Budget Committee's process in that the Committee did not do their job properly by not examining individual lines and making individual cuts. He stated by the time the Committee receives the budget it should be cut fairly well by the BOS and Town Manager. He stated he would support cutting \$75,000.

Paul O'Brien stated the Committee reviewed a five-year history of BOS and Budget Committee budgets and the percentage difference between the two; noting the percent difference was .66%. He stated that if \$150,000 were removed from the General Fund budget it would be .78%. He stated through all the budget presentations the Committee did not stop anything but rather, only added onto the budget.

Kathy Carpentier stated the Town Manager removed \$327,000 out of capital outlay and the BOS removed an additional \$194,000 out of capital outlay.

Paul O'Brien stated those are adjustments to Department requests and not a "stop."

Bobbi Boudman stated she does not feel the Committee has done their due diligence and does not believe the Committee should ask the Town Manager to cut the budget when the Budget Committee members sat at the meetings and did not make cuts.

Roll call vote: Bobbi Boudman – no, Bob Tougher – yes, John MacDonald – yes, Tom Bell – no, Bob Moholland – yes, Brian Black – yes, Matt Plache – yes, Bob Loughman – yes, Paul O'Brien – yes, Brian Deshaies – no. The motion passed (7-3-0).

It was moved by Paul O'Brien to reduce an additional \$75,000 from the 2024 General Fund Budget, to provide the Town Manager the opportunity to identify those cuts, and/or allow the Town Manager to justify why the \$150,000 should remain in the budget so that the Budget Committee can consider putting the funds back into the budget. There being no second, the motion fails.

Brian Black agreed with Ms. Boudman's position.

V. Other Business

Meeting Schedule

January 2, 2024, 6 PM at the Library – Tri-County Community Action and final budget review.

January 8, 2024, 6 PM (location to be determined) – warrant articles.

January 9, 2024, 7 PM at the Great Hall, Wolfeboro Town Hall – outstanding business

January 9, 2024, 7 PM at the Great Hall, Wolfeboro Town Hall – 2024 Operating Budget & Warrant Articles Public Hearing.

January 11, 2024, 7 PM at the Great Hall, Wolfeboro Town Hall – 2024 Operating Budget & Warrant Articles Public Hearing SNOW DATE.

VI. Approval of Minutes

The Committee tabled the approval of the December 12, 14, and 18, 2023 minutes to January 2, 2024.

VII. Public Comment

None.

VIII. Adjournment

It was moved by Paul O'Brien to adjourn the December 28, 2023 Budget Committee meeting. Bob Loughman seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Next Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for January 2, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Wolfeboro Public Library.
Agenda to include final budget review.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Ann Hendrickson

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