

**Amended Draft Minutes of the
Litchfield Budget Committee Meeting
Held on October 1, 2020**

The Litchfield Budget Committee held a meeting on Thursday, October 1, 2020, at Litchfield Town Hall, Two Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052 and remote locations.

In response to COVID- 19 and the resulting need to practice social distancing, the meeting will be held remotely via Webex and be broadcast live via LCTV

PRESENT: A Cutter (Chair), N Fordey (Vice Chair), K Douglas, B Hodgkins, W Hayes, J Son, S Taylor, C Harrison (School Board Representative), R Leary (Selectmen Representative)

Absent:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Cutter called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

● **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

2. PUBLIC INPUT

Residents were encouraged to submit comments via email to Andrew Cutter, Budget Committee Chair, acutter@litchfieldnh.gov. Messages must include commenter's first and last name & address.

There was no public input.

3. REVIEW / REVISION OF AGENDA

Members in person at Town Hall: Andrew Cutter, Jon David Son, Nicole Fordey, William Hayes, Robert Leary, Brion Hodgkins, Keri Douglas, Scott Taylor. Members remote: Christina Harrison

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Cutter shared correspondence that included the school district budget report and announced Mr. Taylor has been sworn in as a Budget Committee member. He mentioned he circulated an Excel file consisting of the 2021 Town budget.

5. REVIEW / ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

● **September 24, 2020**

The minutes were deferred to the next meeting.

6. REPORTS

- **Town Business**
 - **Review of Accounts**

Mr. Brown commented the budget process will be different this year as all department heads will be participating remotely due to COVID-19 guidelines. He indicated this year the Select Board requested department heads prepare their budgets with a zero-based approach, which typically does not apply in municipal budgeting, but everyone did their best to comply. He thanked all department heads for their work and noted that the Select Board is proud of their budget.

Mr. Brown commented there are many things going on and the Select Board is still struggling with the tax cap. He explained that the warrant article for the construction of the communications tower that was approved by the voters contains a lease purchase payment that was not included in the 2020 budget; however, the first payment for that project is included in the 2021 budget and impacts the tax cap. He was concerned about some revenues, particularly those that are generated through the rooms and meals tax, and although activity has increased that revenue was impacted. He explained that it is uncertain the impact it will have on the budget and that he is waiting for the tax rate to be set.

Mr. Brown mentioned that the possible tax cap exceedance will most likely increase. He indicated the budget is well over the tax cap, but the Select Board has taken some action to decrease that overage. He noted we will try to pay some things ahead for 2021 to alleviate the tax burden. He indicated the Police Chief took a hard look at his budget and due to staff vacancies and other encumbered funds for vehicles we were able to remove approximately \$62,000 from that budget.

Mr. Brown reported other items that will increase this year include NH Retirement and health and dental insurance; although, the health insurance unofficial rate will increase a little over 6% and dental rates approximately 1%. He noted we are waiting for quotes for Workers Compensation and Property/Liability insurance. He mentioned that the district has not yet communicated the propane price this year in which the Town participates. Mr. Brown indicated there will be a union contract to negotiate this year and the Town was impacted by COVID-19, but department heads have a good grip on it. He believes that the Town will have a solid budget by the end of October; however, it currently exceeds the tax cap by \$27,000, which took good work to reduce.

- **Town Meeting**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Town Meeting budget with a total of \$9,265, which represents a decrease of \$11,229. He attributed the decrease to the fact that there were four elections in 2020, but only one budgeted for 2021. He indicated there is a small increase of \$100 to program voting machines. He mentioned that the Town has been carrying \$3,000 in the budget for election supplies over the last few years to upgrade voting booths, tables, etc., but this year only \$1,000 has been budgeted for supplies due to COVID-19 guidelines.

- **Town Clerk**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Town Clerk budget with a total of \$124,079, which represents an increase of \$7,933. He reminded the Committee that the Town Clerk and Town Tax Collector

are two separate departments, but are staffed by the same employees and are budgeted at 50% in each budget.

Mr. Brown reported the budget includes wage adjustments for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk, which is a full time position. He explained the Town recruited a deputy clerk and hired a person who is fully trained and a resident of the town. He mentioned that a full time clerk who has been in the position for 28 years, stepped down to part time at 35 hours with prorated benefits. The salary was increased \$8,700 due to her years of service in the position.

Mr. Son commented it appears that printer cartridges doubled in some instances.

Mr. Brown indicated the original request carried an increase in cartridges, but we took a look at actual usage and the actual annual cost is \$1,800. He explained that some of the cost was driven by increased work during COVID-19, which he anticipates will continue for approximately 6 months or more. He noted we were able to remove the increase and level fund it. He mentioned the Town Clerk applied for a grant of \$5,000 to help with the cost of elections and operating her department due to COVID-19 impacts.

Mr. Cutter indicated that many changes occurred yesterday that were not reflected in the budget received on Tuesday, so there will be some differences in our sheet vs the budget sheets. Mr. Brown indicated going forward we will list those changes in the Select Board column.

Mr. Hayes asked if the printer cartridges budgeted are generic cartridges or brand name cartridges.

Mrs. Briand, Town Clerk, explained that the office was using generic cartridges, but they did not function in the office printers. She indicated when they reached out to the vendor, they refused to take them back. She noted she spoke with the IT Manager who recommended staying with name brand cartridges. She mentioned she again spoke with the vendor and after expressing her view they sent out a new generic cartridge, which did not work in the printer.

Mr. Son commented that he looked at mileage, conventions and seminars and asked if there would be a cost savings since many of those may be virtual. Mr. Brown commented that although we are currently participating in virtual training, there is training that requires in-person participation.

Mrs. Briand reported the travel she and the deputy clerk will be doing is for the NH Tax Collectors' Association and will be paid by the association. She indicated the deputy clerk will need to keep up with training and updated information. She mentioned that there are two conferences budgeted for September and October of this year, but it is unknown what will happen next year, and certification programs in August next year, which is important for the deputy clerk, but it is unknown what will happen.

Mr. Cutter commented Mr. Son raised a good point regarding seminars. He indicated when he started to review the budget he found mileage is basically level across the budget; however, seminars appear to be budgeted at an increase of \$5,000, with code enforcement and police as the

main drivers. He asked if knowing the first part of the year will be virtual, a reduction would be warranted.

Mr. Son commented that conferences are being offered at reduced cost because they are virtual. He suggested reaching out to ask if the training and seminars will be offered at reduced rates also.

Mr. Taylor commented in his employment, he is seeing that conferences and seminars will be virtual because hospitality facilities will not be able to handle it.

Mr. Cutter commented even if we reduce this by 50% it will still allow for a good amount of funds for conferences that are not virtual.

Mr. Taylor asked if the increase in the clerk line is due to the overall number of hours clerks are working and if that is tied to the increase in the number of vehicles and property taxes that need to be processed.

Mr. Brown indicated Mrs. Briand has done a great job in expanding and managing office access hours. She has expanded hours on Thursday evenings and early morning hours, which she comes in to cover. He noted the extra hours are to transition the clerk that went to 35 hours. He mentioned that there has been a discussion for the last two years regarding the increased demand on the clerk's office.

Mr. Taylor asked if online capability has not yielded a productivity benefit.

Mrs. Briand commented even though we offer online services, we are still doing the work in the office. She explained that vehicle registrations have to be processed, details coordinated and then mailed by this office, which is all hands on work.

Mrs. Fordey indicated that Mr. Brown mentioned health insurance is being budgeted at approximately 6% and asked if that has been calculated in the budget.

Mr. Brown indicated that number has been entered into the budget within the last 24 hours. He commented since the last Select Board meeting there have been reductions totaling over \$100,000 applied to the budget, but since then the calculation for health insurance has been entered.

- **Tax Collection**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Tax Collection budget with a total of \$122,916, representing an increase of \$7,522. He noted these positions are shared and should mirror the Town Clerk budget. He mentioned there was a sizable decrease in postage directly due to the fact the staff decided to take in the work involved in preparing the information to be mailed out.

Mr. Cutter commented that he is looking at mileage and seminars, as well as overtime. He mentioned overtime has increased to over \$200,000 across the budget and a hard look is needed.

Mr. Brown commented that overtime does occur, but in this department if a customer walks into the building around closing time, we will not tell the customer to leave. He noted there are times they are asked to adjust their hours to manage the extra time worked.

Mrs. Briand indicated the reason for overtime is due to the increase in absentee ballots going out and needing to be counted. She commented we do not usually use overtime, but in this case we may need to. She noted we manage overtime in the office by staggering staff hours.

Mr. Cutter commented he was not speaking to these two lines specifically, but across the budget in other departments.

Mr. Taylor commented that in this particular department of the town you are generating revenue. He asked about typical overall revenue totals.

Mr. Brown reported in 2017 we had approximately \$1.7M in revenue and now we are seeing approximately \$1.9M. He indicated vehicle registrations are the largest revenue generator.

- **Sanitation Administration**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Sanitation Administration budget with a total of \$454,557, representing an increase of \$25,262. He indicated there is an increase in the Manager's salary line, which was increased due to a comparison of similar positions that were reviewed and an adjustment made in recognition of 25 years of service to the Town. There is a decrease in staff wages of \$3,000 and overtime is level funded. Other increases include \$1,300 in dues directly related to the NRPC who coordinates our hazardous waste collection, \$15,000 in demolition material disposal, and approximately \$4,000 in solid waste disposal. He explained that run rates are used to calculate solid waste and demolition material disposal. He noted disposal demand is very high.

Mrs. Douglas asked if hours for COVID have been added or are extra hours carried forward. Mr. Brown stated that was not the case.

- **Road Agent**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Road Agent budget with a total of \$24,468, representing a decrease of \$2,607, which is directly related to projections on electricity and propane. He indicated there is not a lot of scheduled maintenance and repairs. He explained that he used a 3 year average to come up with the estimate for maintenance and repairs.

Mrs. Douglas asked about the stormwater permit and if there is a summary of what is expected for 2021.

Mr. Brown indicated updates are done by an environmental engineering firm. He explained we have a catch basin system under our roads that runs water to the streams and rivers. There is a certain standard we have to meet and we are required to have a stormwater permit. Within the permit timeframe, which is for 6 years, there is one year for mapping of infrastructure; then policies and regulations; standard operating procedures on cleaning and inspecting catch basins

and outfalls. The outcome is a way to try to eliminate nitrogens, bacteria, and phosphates from getting into our rivers and streams, and it requires the expertise of an environmental engineering firm to manage. He indicated as we move more toward some of the mapping requirements to identify swales and catchment areas, it will require more money. Mr. Brown commented we have been trying to do what we can with the allowance we get.

Mrs. Fordey commented that she appreciates the updates the Committee receives on how the budget is expended. She indicated this account is in one line and difficult for us to know the breakdown in terms of stormwater management, construction, etc. She requested if those details can be provided.

Mr. Brown indicated that he can provide that detail to the Committee.

- **Road Maintenance**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Road Maintenance budget with a total of \$719,823, representing a decrease of \$83,516. He indicated a large part of the decrease is due to the Highway Block Grant. He explained last year the Town received a one time grant from the State that had to be included in the operating budget so it was accepted by voters, which artificially inflated that line.

Mr. Cutter asked about Mr. Brown's confidence in the decrease.

Mr. Brown indicated the number we will be using in this year's tax rate setting is \$202,000. He noted whatever number we put in is offset totally by revenue. He explained typically he will budget what is received, but he is concerned that if the number is lower, the difference will have to be made up in taxes. Mr. Brown pointed out in the 2021 Road Maintenance budget that there have been some changes in the department over the last two years. He indicated the highway manager's hours are at 40 hours from 32 hours and this is the first year we have a full time laborer, which will be reflected in the 2021 budget.

Mr. Taylor asked if there is any relief or grants to offset a harsh winter. He indicated in 2019 the salt purchase increased significantly.

Mr. Brown indicated the only way would be to have a storm event where the Governor declares a disaster or state of emergency, which allows us to apply for FEMA money. He noted the Town has taken advantage of that in past years.

Mrs. Douglas asked Mr. Brown about his confidence in the cost of salt.

Mr. Kevin Brown indicated there is no increase this year and the contract will hold the cost steady.

- **Street Lighting**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Street Lighting budget with a total of \$13,800, representing an increase of \$450. He reported there are 47 street lights in town and the budgeted amount is based on the calculated run rate.

Mr. Cutter commented there have been discussions in past years about the Town transitioning to LED lighting. He indicated he is aware there are costs associated with it, but wondered if it would produce a cost savings.

Mr. Brown indicated he has wanted to take a look at that, but has not had time. He commented it is something the Town needs to do, but he is unsure if it will result in a cost savings, since typically the savings are used over time to finance the cost of installation.

Mrs. Harrison commented that there may be incentive at the State level. She indicated the district is looking at energy efficiency and there may be additional funding available for that.

Mr. Taylor suggested having a student at CHS do a project in this area, such as looking for those types of rebates and taking care of a feasibility study. He commented it would be a great benefit for them going into the workforce.

Mrs. Harrison indicated she cannot speak for the students, but agrees it would be a great project.

- **Accounting**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Accounting budget with a total of \$276,565, representing an increase of \$7,578. He indicated the budget includes an increase in wages for the finance staff, which was applied through the performance review process. He noted that an adjustment was made for the finance director. He explained that we compared the existing position with a similar position and responsibility and at the same time changed the position title to Assistant Town Administrator. There are many decreases for overtime and health and dental services changes in enrollment. Mr. Brown indicated there is an increase in auditing due to a new contract. He explained the Town has developed a good relationship with the firm over several years and the contract increases gradually over the next 3 years.

Mr. Brown commented in addition to auditing service, there is another requirement through GASB to look at the post retirement benefits and identify the liability for the Town. He explained employees that retired and continue to be on the Town's health and dental insurance are a higher risk and it impacts what the Town contributes. He noted the document is required to be included in the financial statements. Mr. Brown was unsure of the cost, but estimated the cost could be between \$2,000 and \$5,000.

Mrs. Douglas acknowledged that the Town would like to continue their relationship with the auditors, but asked if other firms were investigated for a contract price.

Mr. Brown commented the contract price is reasonable and comparable. He indicated that the Select Board had this discussion some years ago and there was a verbal agreement regarding a sole source, but no official vote. He noted the Select Board will have that discussion at the end of the 3 year contract.

Mrs. Douglas commented this is a significant increase for a tight budget. She does not have confidence that it is the right amount.

Mr. Cutter indicated Mr. Leary will bring the concerns back to the Select Board. He commented it is a contract and we cannot dispute it.

Mr. Son asked if the bank deposits are a daily trip.

Mr. Brown indicated that daily trips are made to the bank to deposit cash that is taken in by the Tax Collector's office. He mentioned over the years we have looked into ways to electronically deposit checks, but we still take in cash. He noted state laws require the Tax Collector to deposit cash amounts that are \$1,500 or higher. He commented if we had a service where we could scan checks it would be a cost savings; however, we still have cash and have to go to the bank.

- **Revaluation of Property**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Revaluation of Property budget with a total of \$26,996, which represents a reduction of \$29,701. He indicated the reason for the reduction is that we just went through an update year. He explained the contract we had with the assessors for the prior five years included administrative work that goes along with their services. Mr. Brown noted in addition, the assessors would drive by homes each year for four years to update information on properties in the town. He commented they have a comfortable level with their data and do not feel it is necessary to do the additional work throughout the four year period. Mr. Brown indicated in the fifth year the actual work to do the update is approximately \$100,000. He reported the Select Board is proposing to establish an expendable trust fund to put aside \$25,000 per year to pay for the services in year five.

- **Board of Selectmen**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Board of Selectmen budget with a total of \$137,500, which represents an increase of \$6,609. He indicated there is a salary increase in the Town Administrator's wages and other increases includes expenses for awards, recognitions, and retirement gifts, as well as health and dental insurance estimates. He noted that clerical support for the Select Board, Budget Committee and Zoning Board are budgeted in this account.

Mr. Cutter asked why the clerical support cost is budgeted higher for the Budget Committee than the Select Board.

Mr. Brown indicated that the rate per meeting for clerical support for the Select Board should be \$150 per meeting.

Mr. Son commented that he looked at the 3 year average for mileage and training and felt that is an area for reduction.

Mr. Brown indicated that the expenditures for 2017 is a more accurate total of what the Town Administrator's travel expense should be. He explained in 2018 and 2019 he was attending certification classes in Concord and he was the Interim Zoning Officer with extensive travel in town. He noted for Level II, the certification classes will be virtual for at least 6 months.

Mr. Son suggested using the knowledge of virtual training and workshops to apply to other mileage and travel lines in the budget.

Mr. Brown cautioned that may not work for other department heads.

Mr. Taylor prefaced his comments by stating that they are not personal. That being stated, he went on to say that he has seen a trend in the increase of salary that is greater than 5% and is approaching 8%. He commented that he heard that some positions that received increases in salaries are being compared to similar jobs and wages, but when you look at the private sector standpoint a person can work for a Fortune 500 company and get a 3% salary increase. Mr. Taylor indicated based on the communication refresh and cost, he is struggling with that type of increase in salaries. He commented the Town did a good job of having people hold onto their jobs. He indicated you can have salary, you can have benefits or you can have stuff, but you can't get all three. He noted there has to be a balancing act and if you want a higher salary maybe you have to pitch in more toward the benefits.

Mr. Cutter commented that this is a good point. He indicated that there are increases in salaries, but there is over \$200,000 in overtime. He noted that the position is contractual and different from other positions, such as the Sanitation Manager.

Mr. Taylor commented that he is hearing we cannot go against it because it is a contract. He indicated if you are going to tie my hands on this then you have to take away some of the toys.

Mr. Leary commented that the Select Board negotiated this contract last year and kept the increase at 2%. He noted that the Town Administrator gave in on some other areas as well.

Mr. Brown indicated next year at his time you will see a 2% increase, which is locked in for the contract. He noted that for the first two years his salary was level funded.

Mr. Taylor commented as these types of contracts are negotiated, people in the private sector can go for 3 years with a level funded salary regardless of performance. He indicated especially with the methodology that you look at similar jobs and bring the salary up to those standards, in the private sector and company will not do that because it is up to you to go to that other job and take that job. He noted from a negotiating standpoint it is troubling to see that kind of increase.

Mr. Brown indicated the Select Board has negotiated a 2% increase in other positions as well.

- **Legal Expenses**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Legal Expenses budget with a total of \$38,116, which represents a decrease of \$6,884. He explained that the budget is based on a three year average.

Mrs. Douglas asked what happened to the budgeted costs for PFOA representation.

Mr. Brown indicated that has been removed and any expenses related to PFOAs will be absorbed in the general budget. He explained with this level of funding the Select Board's hands are tied

on how active they can be. He noted this budget represents funding for general counsel and issues that continue to arise with St. Gobain may be handled through the State.

Mrs. Douglas asked if the Town is still meeting with the consortium, which was a group of towns that agreed to unite and split the legal fees.

Mr. Brown indicated initially the Town had one or two meetings with the other towns, but there was never a formal agreement to unite. He commented it is difficult for the Town to determine the actual damages and individual cases are being filed on behalf of those affected.

Mrs. Douglas commented she was under the impression there would be revenue to offset some of the expenses. Mr. Brown indicated that is the hope.

Mr. Cutter commented this Committee still has to present a budget that is below the tax cap and one area he will be looking at is legal expenses. He indicated he plans to recommend to budget this account at \$30,000. He noted in a year where funds need to be identified, this is one of those accounts he is going to consider reducing.

Mrs. Douglas commented this is one of those situations where St. Gobain can spend more than this Town can afford.

Mrs. Fordey commented there will be a more efficacy at the state level to go after them. She indicated it seems as though things are shifting more through state agencies.

Mr. Taylor asked if there is tangible evidence we can show to people what we have paid in expenses over the last three years.

Mr. Brown commented when there was discussion with St. Gobain we were able to grind every road they touched down to gravel and repave the roads at their expense, which was a huge benefit. He noted it allowed the Town to get caught up with paving.

Mr. Cutter indicated that the installation of the hydrants in the north side of town is a benefit we did not have before, but we realize a cost for the hydrants.

Mr. Taylor asked if there is a point where it is a diminishing return to continue to spend the legal amount on this to get some type of tangible benefit.

Mr. Brown explained with a \$38,000 budget and how much of it is normally spent for general legal work, there is not a lot of money to get what we want accomplished. He noted that with more people testing their water, there is expansion.

Mr. Leary commented that he knows of some people who have tested their water and are contaminated. He indicated Mr. Boehm and Mr. Lascelles have filed legislation with the state to require them to pay not only for installations, but for water bills for the affected residents.

- **Planning Board**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Planning Board budget with a total of \$41,616, which represents an increase of \$443. He commented the Board is run by volunteer members and there is a part time administrative staff member that handles the office and minutes. He indicated the NRPC planner is contracted and there is small reduction. He explained this person reviews all the plans submitted, makes technical notes against zoning issues, works with the Board on conditions and additional studies that should be looked at. Mr. Brown noted that the cost of public notices increased due to the fact that newspapers are slowly disappearing and printing costs are increasing. He indicated the Board is required to give legal notice for subdivision plan or site plans and they have to go into the newspaper. He commented we have an application fee of \$100 per applicant that helps offset the cost of advertising.

Mr. Cutter commented that in past years the NRPC line has been higher. He indicated actual expenditures for this year are at \$6,400. He asked if \$18,000 for the planner is the right number.

Mr. Brown indicated it is really driven more by development activity in the community. He explained if there is a development that requires four to six meetings it can become costly. He noted that the Board also has administrative activities such as site plan regulations and work on the Master Plan. He added that the Capital Improvement Plan Committee expenses were charged to this budget.

Mr. Cutter commented in addition to their own meetings, they were also supporting the Capital Improvement Committee and actual expenditures are still at \$6,400.

Mr. Brown indicated the NRPC lags in their billing. He noted he will reach out to them to get updated invoices. He commented the work the Planning Board does, such as updating the Master Plan and site regulations, is important work.

Mr. Cutter asked Mr. Brown to determine how a \$3,000 reduction would impact this Board in 2021.

- **Zoning Board**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Zoning Board budget with a total of \$1,616, which represents an increase of \$700. He explained the increase is related to the advertising for notifications and is driven by activity. He noted that residents have been installing garages, additions, and pools and the Board has been very busy this year. He anticipated that activity will continue.

Mrs. Douglas asked why the application fees are not helping to offset the legal notices.

Mr. Brown indicated there are also mailing costs associated with the cases.

Mrs. Douglas commented last year the application fee was commensurate with the expense of the notices, but this year it is not.

Mr. Brown commented it depends on how many notifications have to be mailed out.

- **Cemeteries**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Cemeteries budget with a total of \$13,790, which represents an increase of \$3,290. He explained when this budget was presented to the Select Board he informed them that although this appears to be an increase, it is based on actual cutting costs that were not captured in past budgets. He indicated upon looking back at when the service was bid out, it was based on a bid cost per cutting. At the time it was based on 14 cuttings and we never captured that. Mr. Brown noted he made some adjustments for the real cost, but every season is different and some may need more cuttings. He pointed out that this is not a fixed cost, but is cost per cut. He explained we have been carrying a flat number and have not calculated on cuttings. Additionally, he noted the Town has picked up costs for spring cleaning, which was previously handled by the County Prisoner Program, but that program is no longer available.

Mr. Cutter commented the groundskeeping budget is very high.

Mr. Son asked if it was a bid. Mr. Brown indicated the bid occurred several years ago.

Mrs. Douglas asked when the contract expires. Mr. Brown indicated that there was not timeframe on the bid and the Town just held that price.

Mr. Cutter recalled past conversations about the use of volunteers that performed this service. He commented he would like to see that program reinstated as it is a good way to bring the community together and care for our properties.

Mr. Leary commented that years ago when volunteers were used people complained that flowers they left on graves had been cut and flags removed or torn. He indicated the company that cuts the grass has done a good job.

Mr. Brown commented there is a lot to cut around in cemeteries, such as head stones, trees, etc. He noted this is not like mowing fields.

- **Advertising & Regional Associations**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Advertising & Regional Associations budget with a total of \$16,316, which represents a decrease of \$4. He commented with the loss of the local newspaper, the Town needed to find a way to reach the voters with information. He explained the voter guide was printed last year in partnership with the school district, which saved the town money. He indicated the fee we were paying to the printer and the cost for the newspaper to insert it was around \$1,700 per year, but sharing it with the school district and using the mail service reduced it by half. He noted that this account is also used for public notices by the Select Board for hearing notifications or RFP notifications. Mr. Brown indicated that the Town belongs to two associations: NHMA and NRPC, for which dues are budgeted.

Mr. Cutter commented the dues allow the Town to use their services, but in the Planning Board budget the NRPC charges by the hour.

Mr. Brown commented that the NRPC does not just provide staff, but regional work such as household hazardous waste collection, tax maps, surveying and GIS data.

- **Welfare Vendor Payments**

Mr. Brown commented that the \$0 total budget was left on the agenda for discussion. He explained an expendable trust fund was established last year for this purpose. He indicated for the last five years the Town has been trying to determine a budget, but finds that the number is always different. He noted at the recommendation of the Budget Committee we established a trust and if funds are used they will be replenished.

Mr. Brown commented any expense needed for these purposes will be taken from the general budget and we will reach into the trust fund if needed, but we will try to preserve the fund as long as we can. He indicated at this time there has not been much activity in this area. He was concerned because of the impact of COVID-19 on families in town. He noted there has been assistance out there for rentals and electric, as well as laws regarding eviction prevention, but he is concerned that the closer it gets to the winter the town may see a lot more need in this area.

- **Patriotic Purposes**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Patriotic Purchases budget with a total of \$1,550, which represents an increase of \$50. He indicated that the budget total was based on a three year average and funds the Memorial Day services. He commented this year the service was cancelled, but the Town still purchased wreaths and flowers, and replaced the flags and ropes on buildings along Route 3A.

- **Conservation**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Conservation budget with a total of \$1,495, which represents an increase of \$97 over 2020. He indicated the Committee is requesting to purchase a mower and chainsaw so they can utilize volunteers.

Mr. Cutter commented that we discussed this last year and they can also utilize the Highway services.

- **Debt Service**

Mr. Brown presented the 2021 Debt Services budget with a total of \$263,564, which represents the Fire Station bond payments. He noted that the communications tower will be a lease payment and is budgeted under General Government Facilities.

Mr. Cutter thanked Mr. Brown, Ms. White and the department heads who provided their input this evening.

7. MEMBER INPUT / NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Cutter asked if members felt it would be beneficial to review the spreadsheet analysis he shared. Hearing no comments, Mr. Cutter indicated that he hopes it will help members understand the budget.

Mrs. Harrison commented that she appreciates the spreadsheet uploaded to Google Drive. She asked if it would be updated when changes are made.

Mr. Cutter indicated as he updates the spreadsheet he will repost it.

Mrs. Harrison indicated she was speaking about the actual Town budget.

Mr. Brown indicated it is a live file and will update as changes are made.

8. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

9. ADJOURN

MOTION: by Mrs. Douglas

Move to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: by Mr. Son

VOTE to adjourn the meeting was taken by roll call:

Mr. Hayes, yes; Mr. Hodgkins, yes; Mrs. Fordey, yes; Mrs. Douglas, yes; Mr. Son, yes; Mr. Taylor, yes; Mr. Mrs. Harrison, yes; Mr. Leary, yes; Mr. Cutter, yes.

The motion carried.

Next meeting: October 8, 2020

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Recorded by: Michele E. Flynn, Recording Secretary

Approved: