



## TOWN OF DEERING

762 Deering Center Road  
Deering, NH 03244

### *Board of Selectmen*

Meeting Minutes – 9 February 2023

Members present: Chairman Roy Watson, Vice Chair William Whisman, Selectman Jill Smith  
Also present: Interim Town Administrator Peter Flynn, Minutes Taker Elizabeth Kirby

Meeting reconvened and the Board went through the changes being made to the budget presented at the Public Hearing.

#### **Executive 4130 – No changes - \$210, 378.00**

Jill – I have significant concerns regarding the 8% wage increase. I have to represent many people in town. There are people struggling to pay their bills. Overall in the budget how much this increases the budget is, not looking at healthcare, is \$80,000.00 – that's only half the year of this 8% raise – next year will be 12 month period. That is a significant jump for when we don't have a plan.

Roads – we don't have a wage analysis. Some departments that are paid well and some that aren't paid well at all. I don't think throwing 8% out there is a fair way to do this blindly. The issue is when we put this in the budget that makes us raise taxes. So even if later on we're going to do a wage correction, then we've already said to the tax payers your taxes are going up and X amount.

Bill -what do you recommend?

Jill – I did a wage analysis to some degree. Bennington – 5.6%, Lyndeborough 2% COLA with up to 4% increase, Salisbury did 6.5%, New Hampton 5%. As you go through these and if you write down when they made these decisions, you'll see a big disparity. Folks that made this decision on what they were going to present to their boards, in October and September, they were 7-8%, decisions to right around now are bringing them down to 5-6%. There are 3% out there. Some of the numbers that are being presented are from towns that are much larger than us. For a part-time position advertised today at \$16 per hour and we already have staff at \$17.92. so, they're getting 8% on \$16 and we're giving 8% on \$17.92. They are much larger towns. At the federal level, none of the agencies are at 8%. I would feel more comfortable splitting the difference and staying at the 4% range.

We do know that, and I can go through the different departments with you, some of the departments have a buffer. For example, the police, as I was playing around because we have that contract with Hillsborough, we would be able to bring up those wages to a competitive wage, give them raises or wage correction at this point and still fit within that budget but when you look at Fire Dept. they're vastly underpaid and we're going to be at a deficit there. If we are offering the same 8% to the folks that work in the office or DPW they're going to be getting an 8% on a competitive wage. It's not fair.

Roy – I do know I wasn't able to get good data from across NH. Atlanta federal reserve – 12 month rolling average and at no point does this cross the 7% threshold. Average for public administration was at 6.5%. I would be amenable to whatever is going to make our town competitive for wages. I guess next year if I was to make an ask that this thing made it through department head recommendations, the entire BAC, now us(selectmen).

Jill – I want to clarify about the BAC role. Have you served on the BAC?

Roy – I have not.

Jill – So, what happened there. They received, as everyone put together a spreadsheet for the budget for them, the department heads give them the narrative that you see on the website. The narrative asks them to explain any requests in increase. It doesn't ask them to defend what they have. It doesn't forget hours. Brian did break out every single employee, he put down the wages, he split them out so you could see everything. Fire and Police no where says how many hours they're budgeting for, it's just a number given. It's difficult to figure out and pull back and say what does this 8% actually cost us. With the BAC, they listen to the feedback from the chief and they say that's good or that's bad, at the end after they've gone through everything, they don't look at the end result. We have an 8.1% increase. And they didn't look at that and say gosh we need to go back and cut. There is no cutting There was no looking at the overall. When it did come to wages, there was a split decision at the BAC. There was a lot of talk about it because we were at the height of what are we going to do here. So, what was ultimately decided was that was not the responsibility of the BAC to be looking at. It's the responsibility of the selectmen. So that was not vetted.

Roy – so, from what I understand now is we're on. We're good with lines 1 – 24? Ok?

What about lines 25 – 49? Let's start at the top with wages.

Jill – that's the conversation we need to decide what if any percentage we want, to utilize or to address it.

Roy- we might as well talk about it and address it now. What's the material difference between one function and the administrative function. Jill - With the Administration position you're already locked into the next phase and as for the finance position, I'm not sure what that increase. 6-month increase.

#### **Town Clerk – 4140 –**

It was proposed that 4.0% be used like the Federal wage increase for Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Line 25 - \$24,134.00 - Town Clerk

Line 26 - \$9,454.00 - Deputy Wages

- FICA, Medicare, Retirement, and Life/Disability to be adjusted accordingly.

#### **Financial Administration - 4150**

Line 53 - \$24,134.00 – Tax Collector

- FICA, Medicare, Retirement, and Life/Disability to be adjusted accordingly.

Line 72 - \$24,000.00 – Auditing – Professional Services

#### **Property Assessment – 4152**

Line 75 – \$18,898.00 Clerk Wages

- FICA, Medicare, Retirement, and Life/Disability to be adjusted accordingly.

#### **Legal – 4153**

Line 82 – Legal – Professional Services – \$18,000.00 (\$5,000.00 to ETF if Warrant Article 9 passed)

#### **New title Article 9 – update the wording To Establish a Legal Expenses Expendable Trust Fund**

To see if the Town will vote to establish an Expendable Trust Fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a to be known as the Legal Expenses Trust Fund for the purpose of funding legal issues and to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$13,500.00.

#### **Planning and Zoning – 4191**

Line 88 – \$1.00 (\$2000.00 to Warrant Article 9 if passed)

Line 97 - \$1.00 (See Warrant Article 9)

**General Government Buildings – 4194** No change

**Cemeteries – 4195** – No change

**Insurance – 4196** - No change

**Advertising & Regional Assoc – 4197**

**Police – 4210** - will go back to this section along with Fire and Ambulance.

**Building Inspection – 4240** no change

**Emergency Management – 4290** – no change

**Other Public Safety – 4300** – no change

**Highway and Streets Administration – 4311**

Line 190 – From 7% to be recalculated to 4% increase for F/T wages.

- Line 194-197 FICA, Medicare, Retirement, and Life/Disability to be adjusted accordingly.

**Highways and Streets -4312**

Line 221 – change to \$1 (\$5000 going into ETA Warrant Article 8 if passed)

**Street Lighting – 4316**

Line 224 – increased to \$4000.00.

**Solid Waste Disposal – 4324** –

Lines 225 – 226 to be adjusted to \$136,000.00 (new contract pricing) line 225 - \$98,000 and 226 - \$38,000.00.

**Welfare Administration -4441** –

Bill moves to strike the section – removed.

**Direct Assistance – 4442** no change

**Welfare Vendor Payments – 4445** – no change

**Parks and Recreation – 4520** – no change

**Library – 4550** –

Line 248 – other supplies – remains \$1600.00. Discussion followed and the \$500.00 was returned to the budget.

**Conservation Administration – 4611**

Line 250 – PT Wages Lake Host Program - concerns were discussed regarding where the Lake Host wages will come from along with Exotic Weeds Trust Funds and its usage. It was suggested a majority of the funds be added to the Exotic Weeds Trust Fund. The goal is to have the fund at \$50,000 for mitigation. Right now, at \$36,500.00 – Take line 250 down from \$9145.00 to \$1500.00. The \$7200.00 to be added to the Trust fund.

Bill – one change – at the function – Conservation Administration they are actually Conservation Commission.

**Principal Long-Term Bonds & Notes – 4711 – no change**

**Principal Other Debt – 4712 - no change**

**Interest Other Debt – 4722 – No change**

**Interest on Tax & Revenue Anticipation – no Change**

**Police – 4210 –**

Starting with line 115 -- Jill ran two scenarios if the Chief were here the whole time and what is we increased the starting wage up to \$24.00. Wages should be based on 2 full-time and 4 part-time. Jill will provide the calculations.

Bill – need to look at overtime, details, etc.

Jill – will run numbers and looking for changes in lines 115, 116, 117 in addition to 123, 124, 125 and 126.

Line 120 - \$2700.00 will stay.

Line 118 – calculated hours for the assistant while the chief is gone -

**Ambulance 4215 --**

Line 145 – discussion regarding raising wages – there have been problems getting to work. No coverage on same days. If we budget too low we have a revolving fund to cover any overages.

Jill suggested: Increase wages to \$15 per hour – raising budget line from \$76,032.00 to \$91,400.00. (\$104,000 if we started January 1) - it was suggested to do the increases in increments.

Line 146 – Stays the same at \$15,000.00.

Line 147 – increases from \$6,946.00 to \$8,140.00.

Line 148 – increases from 1,320.00 to \$1,543.00.

Bill showed concerns regarding such a large increase and Jill said any other item okay, but this is in regard to people's lives.

Jill – how about starting in April? It won't be approved until then anyway.

Bill - Start now with the increase cut in half.

Roy – tough one – we want to advertise the higher wage to attract employees.

Discussion went back and forth between the amount of the increase -

**Fire – 4220**

Reduce to 4% wage increase –

Line 161 – from \$48,456.00 to \$47,524.00

Line 163 FICA – from \$5,199.00 to \$5,128.00

Line 164 – Medicare – from \$986.00 to \$972.00

End of Budget discussion.

Jill to be working on Police and Highway to get those numbers.

**Item 4 – New Business –**

**Next Meeting – 2 March 2023**

**Item #5 - Public comment - None**

**Roy motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:52, Bill seconded. All in favor Motion passed.**

DRAFT