

## Selectboard Minutes

October 25, 2022

Present: Jenn Jones  
Robert Mantegari  
Jon Morgan  
Russ Kelly  
Andy Artimovich (joined at 6:10pm)

Jones called the meeting to order at 6pm.

The Board reviewed payroll and AP. The manifest was signed.

Mantegari motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the consent agenda. All were in favor.

Artimovich arrived at 6:10pm.

Jones spoke about COLA (Cost of Living Adjustments) and how employee compensation is currently managed. She explained there seems to be no uniform employee compensation plan. Jones explained in an effort to offer transparency, equity and fairness she would like to discuss how pay increases are given. She suggested finding a way to standardize the increases. Jones explained the fire department offers increases based on skills/education while the police department offers increases based on the number of years worked. She further explained all other departments have no matrix in which to decide increases.

Further discussion ensued among board members. Jones added COLA increases should be offered across all departments in her opinion. She explained her employer offers market adjustments based on inflation and other factors combined with merit-based increases by utilizing the same review across all departments. Based on how an employee scores within their review determines their merit increase, Jones explained. She explained this method offers equalization across all departments. There currently is no policy explaining how merit increases will occur.

Artimovich stated the town has implemented something similar in the past and encountered issues. He explained one board cannot encumber for the next year's board. Jones questioned why a town policy could not be voted on. She pointed out that the fire department and police department both utilize a matrix. She questioned why it would not be acceptable for all other departments.

Mantegari stated COLA increases across the board would not recognize employees for their good work or longevity. Morgan asked what other towns do. Karen Clement, Town Administrator, responded Fremont is giving 5% COLA across the board. Jones shared she believes the merit increases should be based on performance. Clement shared she currently has a good management team she believes could handle fair assessment of their employees. She stated she also believes budget season could be easier and eliminate some of the drama between departments by using the same method to measure merit increases.

Artimovich stated consistency between departments could be easier to sell to the budget committee. Jones expressed her thoughts that employees deserve to get a raise to keep them competitive with the market. She questioned if the ARPA funds had been fully used. Clement responded the ARPA funds have not been used as originally planned. She explained there has been some ARPA funds used, however there remains about \$352,000.

Mantegari suggested a 5% COLA increase and a 1-2% merit increase. Artimovich shared it is important to offer competitive wages to help with employee retention.

Mantegari asked if the tax rate has been set yet. Clement responded the town is still waiting for the DOE's (Department of Education) apportionment of the SAU.

Jones stated she believes for consistency and transparency; COLA should not be negotiable, and she feels the town should offer steps or other merit based increases.

Clement shared the Trustee of the Trust Funds set COLA at 5.2% while Social Security Administration set it at 8.7%.

Mantegari asked what the budget impact would be with a 5% COLA increase and a merit increase of 0-2%. Based on Clement's calculations, she believes it would be about \$86,000. Morgan asked what the tax impact would be if there were no ARPA funds to use.

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Clement responded it would be \$.12 per thousand.

Mantegari agreed with Jones that ARPA funds could be used to help offset the increase in pay. Clement explained the funds must be committed by 2024 and spent by 2026. Kelly clarified the ARPA funds could be used to offset COLA and merit increases. Kelly shared he is in favor of paying employees a fair wage and showing the employees they are valued. He understands recruiting and training has costs to it.

Artimovich motioned, seconded by Mantegari, to support 5% COLA increases and up to 2½% merit increases for all budgets. All were in favor.

Mantegari motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the use of ARPA funds to keep the payroll budget neutral from last year's numbers. All were in favor.

Kristen Aldred-Cheek, Planning Board Chair, and Jillian Benedix, Planning Board Administrative Assistant, were present to discuss the Planning Board and Zoning Board budgets. Aldred-Cheek stated the money remaining in the Planning Board budget was due to a gap in staffing and only one chapter of the Master Plan being done. She shared the Planning Board recently voted to fund half of the PlanNH charrette utilizing money remaining in their budget. Aldred-Cheek also stated she hopes the Rec Commission will reconsider paying a portion of the PlanNH charrette. Mantegari requested the Planning Board encumber \$10,000 for potential legal fees.

Benedix highlighted the following in the Planning Board budget

- Salary – down \$26 or 0.05% with a 7.5% increase in pay (COLA 5%, merit 2.5%)
- FICA/Medicaid – Increase of \$225 or 6%
- NH Retirement – Increase of \$284 or 4.5%
- Circuit Rider – Increase of \$334 or 1%
  - Glenn Greenwood, Town Planner, has not received an increase since 2019
  - Four Wednesdays and two Planning Board Meetings per month
- Circuit Rider/Long Range
  - Requested to remain the same
  - Encumber some money for PlanNH
- RPC dues – increase of \$170 or 3.8%
  - Rate is determined by Rockingham Planning Commission
  - Based on town's population
- Other lines level funded

Mantegari motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the proposed planning board budget of \$109,970. All were in favor.

Mantegari motioned, seconded by Artimovich, to accept the proposed level funded Zoning Board budget of \$1,401. All were in favor.

Planning Board and Zoning Board will be presenting to the Budget Committee on November 21<sup>st</sup> at 6pm.

Kip Kaiser, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement, was present to discuss his budget

- Salary
  - 7.5% increase in pay (COLA 5%, merit 2.5%)
  - Part-Time position of 34 hours
- Electrical Inspections – increase to \$7,500
  - Offset by permit fee revenue
- Plumbing Inspections
  - New account line
  - \$4,200
  - New outsourced expense
  - Offset by permit fee revenue
- Books & Publications
  - Increase to \$900
  - Beginning 1/1/2023 new 2018 codes take effect requiring new books

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- Last Year's Permits
  - 309 permits
  - \$82,000 in revenue
- 2022 Permits
  - 360 application YTD
  - ~\$79,000 in revenue

Artimovich motioned, seconded by Mantegari, to accept Code Enforcement budget in the amount of \$81,291. All were in favor.

Mantegari motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the Budget Committee's budget in the amount of \$500. All were in favor.

Clement shared information on the Health Insurance rates and her research on potential new plans. She explained currently the town offers 3 plans.

- Plan A
  - Higher premium
  - Fewer dollars attributed to premium
  - no deductible
  - more options for broader network
- Plan B
  - 100% premium coverage for employee / 75% premium coverage for couple/family
  - Traditional HMO plan
  - No deductible
- Plan C
  - Same amount of dollars attributed to premium
  - More of premium covered
  - \$1000 deductible/person
  - \$3000 maximum deductible per family
  - HMO

Clement explained keeping plans status quo will result in an 11.7% increase. Changing plans to a higher deductible decreases the premiums to \$500 (single)/\$1500 (family). The Town may contribute up to 50% towards an HRA to offset the \$3000 (single)/\$9000 (family) deductible. This would save about \$20,000 for the year. She said in comparison to other town's the employee share is high and would not recommend switching plan options based on these predicted savings. Jones asked what the percentage change was last year. Clement said there was a decrease last year and over the last 5 years, rates are trending at a 4% annual increase. Clement's recommendation is to remain with the status quo options.

Artimovich motioned, seconded by Mantegari, to keep current insurance options and use up to \$35,000 in ARPA funds to cover the increase. All were in favor.

Conflict of Interest statement for the Energy & Efficiency Advisory Committee was discussed. Jones explained she believes there is no need for the statement which was recently drafted. The town adopted an RSA for conflict of interest which covers all elected officials, appointed members and employees, according to Jones. RSA 31:39-A will eliminate the need for conflict-of-interest statements for the committees. Kelly requested that any recent COI statements that have been signed be destroyed and a form like what is provided to new employees be given the committee members.

Clement shared that one member of the Energy & Efficiency Advisory Committee has withdrawn because he sought the position as a full member not as an alternate. Kelly asked who that person was. Clement replied it was Matt Lipinski. Kelly reminded the board that the vote was to name alternates preliminarily and that positions would be discussed at the first meeting. He suggested Lipinski attend the first meeting before he withdraws. Kelly also asked the subcommittee to be launched as soon as possible, especially with the holidays coming. Clement is waiting to hear back from the members on their availability as to when the first meeting can be scheduled.

Morgan offered an Economic Development Committee update. He stated PlanNH was discussed at a recent meeting. Morgan added there are two items currently being explored:

- quarterly breakfast with Brentwood business owners

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- listening/networking session
- considering Rec Center as hosting location
- informal in nature
- bi-annual developer's open house
  - specific to Route 125 corridor
  - considering library as hosting venue
  - exploring potential for large scale water service

Morgan also added there is a possible grant for Q1 and Q2 the committee will be exploring. Additionally, he shared they will be looking at signage on Route 101 for Brentwood businesses. Artimovich stated he believes the committee would need to reach out to the DOT. He will send Morgan the email address of the supervisor that Econ Development can reach out to.

Mantegari had nothing to update the board regarding Conservation Commission.

Artimovich shared that the Budget Committee approved all budgets presented to them on Monday evening. He shared there was some discussion about changing the budget from July 1 – June 30 rather than keeping the current schedule. Clement will email the selectboard members the RSA explaining how the change could occur and the steps to take if the board decides to explore that avenue. There was some discussion about trying to understand the benefits of changing to that budget cycle and the possible implications. Morgan asked if switching to an SB2 town would help the change in the fiscal year. Jones asked if any towns have moved their budgets to a new cycle. Artimovich responded the county recently did and he believes Chester did make that change but switched it back.

Letty Bedard, Middle Road, stated according to the RSA the town meeting could still be held in March or moved to May if the budget cycle were to be changed. Bedard added it would require the town to do an 18-month budget in order to get to a new budget cycle.

Jack Mitchell, Budget Committee, thanked the board for accepting the budget committee's proposed budget. Mitchell asked why the department heads would not do the merit increases for their staff. Jones explained that is the plan and thanked Mitchell for summarizing the plan.

Doug Finan, Gove Road, stated the Economic Development Committee is currently soliciting businesses for the quarterly breakfast. He explained that is being done via mail. Finan pointed out there is a cost associated with the solicitation – postage.

Having no additional public comment, non-public or other board business, Mantegari motioned, seconded by Artimovich to adjourn at 7:42. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamera Peek

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WEEKLY TREASURER'S REPORT

DATE:

10/25/2022

General Fund:

TD BANK

Previous Balance:	4,229,089.51		
Deposits:	35,284.63		
Payroll:	28,999.79	DDP: 28,999.79	
		CHK: \$	
FICA:	6617.31		
to Impact Fees		Reg A/P Cks \$64,168.36	NHRS \$
A/P:	64,168.36	Swasey : \$	CO-OP: \$
From GF to REC CC	50.00		
Admin CC Paid			
Account Balance:	4,164,538.68		
Interest Earned YTD:	9,208.36		

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 Joyce A. Gallant, Treasurer

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 Ambrose Kizza Deputy Treasurer