MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD & ADVISORY BUDGET
COMMITTEE BUDGET WORKSHOP
November 17, 2020

Board & Committee members present: Chairman LaCourse, Selectman Bugbee, Selectman Brown, Chairman Thomas Murdoch, Rebecca Hawthorne, Pat Barbour, Cord Blomquist and Stacey Waitz.
Others present: Town Administrator Julie Glover

1. Chairman LaCourse calls the meeting to order via Zoom at 6:30 pm.

“As Chairman of the Select Board, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is meeting electronically utilizing the Zoom platform. We previously gave notice to the public of how to access this meeting using Zoom and instructions are provided on the Town of Lee’s website at: www.leenh.org

If anybody has a problem with access, please call 603-659-5414

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Let’s start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their presence, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

Chairman LaCourse turns the meeting over to the Chairman of the ABC, Tom Murdoch, Julie Glover is present and Joanne Clancy is in the room. Selectman Bugbee is here and alone, Pat Barbour is here and alone, John LaCourse is here and alone, Rebecca Hawthorne is here and alone, Cord Blomquist is here and alone, Stacy Waitz is here and alone, Selectman Brown does not respond and Tom Murdoch is here and alone.

2. Julie Glover, Town Administrator, presents her budget. There are no increases or decreases to the BOS department budget. In the Finance Administration budget, there is a slight increase to the Accounting Assistant wages. Back in March the Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector took on the role of this part-time position which made her a full-time employee. The increase in the IT line is in anticipation of needing to replace the server. There is a slight increase in Assessing due to a new contract year. The health insurance went up by 9% which is the largest increase we have seen in a very long time. We had a part-time employee move into a full-time position and we had an employee move from the buy-out to taking the insurance. We also added another full-time police officer. The retirement system was hit with large increases as well. The retirement system contribution for the town’s municipal employees went up 25.9% and the police went up 19.2% and the fire went up 9.7%.

Government Buildings has mostly increased due to the future cost of leasing the Daley building; however, the costs for running the Town Hall and the Annex have been decreased.

Property Liability insurance went up a bit mostly because they increased the appraisal of the town buildings.

Thankfully even with Covid, the town has not seen a significant increase in welfare costs.
TA Glover explains that permission was received by the Department of Revenue Administration to use $125k out of the unassigned fund balance to fund the cost of fitting out the building and the 12 months of lease costs. The $50k is for the remaining lease payments in FY22 not paid for by the unassigned fund balance and the cost to be in the building such as security, electricity and propane.

Selectman Bugbee asks why the internet highway cost comes out of this budget. TA Glover indicates that it is has just historical been that way. He asks that it be changed for FY22.

Pat Barbour asks what impacted the increase in health insurance and retirement. The impact was from 4 things; the 9% rate increase, the proposed new police officer, the employee moving from the buy-out to taking the insurance and the newly created full-time position. She asks if the fire department is looking to hire someone. TA Glover says that she does not know that yet. The retirement system sets the rate in which the town has no control. The health trust rates have historically been the best rates. The health insurance coverage has changed during the time the TA has been here. Stacy Waitz suggests taking a look at the coverage and possibly getting something less expensive for the town.

TA Glover updates the ABC on the progress of moving into the Daley building. A temporary alternative plan has been presented to DOT and they are waiting for a response. The highway department will not be plowing Buzzell Lane. DOT is considering this a change in use so that is why it is taking longer. There is a discussion surrounding how long DOT could take to answer the town’s request. Cord Blomquist suggests that the Select Board write a letter. TA Glover states that previously someone went over someone’s head and it did not go over well.

Stacy Waitz asks if there is a preferred provider or contracts for office supplies. TA Glover indicates that we do get municipal pricing from Staples and WB Mason. It hasn’t made sense to combine forces. We do take advantage of state contacts such as for the elevator inspection.

TA Glover applied for the GOFERR money. We were allocated $104,310 along with a lot of rules on how we could spend the money. Actual costs that were for out of pocket was approximately $4k. We were ultimately allowed to seek reimbursement for payroll and benefit costs for first responders and the health officer which was about $100k.

For many years municipalities in NH have been fighting Fairpoint over the value of the right of way in terms of assessing them for tax purposes. The NH Supreme Court has just handed down its decision and it is not beneficial to the towns. The attorneys are still working out the details.


4. Chairman LaCourse moves to adjourn at 7:21pm. Selectman Bugbee, seconds. All in favor. Motion Carries.

Minutes transcribed by Denise Duval, Town Secretary