MINUTES OF THE SELECT BOARD & ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE BUDGET WORKSHOP

December 1, 2020

PAGE 1

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

Others present: Chris Lemelin, Scott Nemet, Howie Huff, Wayne Lehman, Bob Smith, Caren Rossi, and 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 conducts a roll call vote. TA Glover and all board members are present and alone.

2. Chris Lemelin from McGregor EMS, presents their budget. He talked about the issues they have faced during Covid and the financial loses they have experienced. The appropriation calculation they used was based on three relatively stable costs: Dispatch, station and overnight paramedic costs which have increased by $1514, $1766 and $1623 respectively. The total difference between FY20 and FY21 is an increase of $11,370. They plan to absorb a portion of this cost and will ask the communities who are served to help with the rest which is $11,370. The Community Share is allocated based on call volume to that community and unfortunately, Lee’s share of the total calls went up from 24% last year to 26% this year bringing the requested amount from Lee to $26,190. Durham is $37,560; UNH is $21,297 and Madbury is $4940.

3. Fire Chief Nemet presents his budget. FY22 represents a .5% increase from FY21 in the amount of $2843.17. The increases can be found in the personnel lines for certification incentives, night time coverage, uniforms and dues and subscriptions. There are decreases in equipment maintenance and repair, radio repair, diesel fuel and lease agreements/contacts. Chief Nemet reads a paragraph from the State of the Volunteer Fire Service Report produced by the International Fire Chiefs Association in 2018. A visual was used to show how the membership of the fire department has changed over the years. It was very effective. In 1998 there were 46 on-call members when the chief was hired. Back then there were multiple family members on the department at the same time. He was brought on in 2004 as a part-timer; there was a full-timer hired at that time as well. In 2010 there were 20 on-call members, 1 full-time and 1 part-time member. In 2015 they added a full-timer and a part-timer and had 27 on-call. In 2018 they added 2 part-timers but lost a lot of on-call staff. They were down to 14 in 2018 and
lost even more in 2020. They are up to 4 full-timers and 5 part-timers now but are down to 9 on-call members. Now they must use part and full-timers to cover shifts, calls and night time coverage. It is a struggle to fill the night time shifts.

Selectman Brown asks what it would take to put together a staffing plan. The Chief says that the biggest concern is trying to hire a 4th firefighter. He informs the Board that he is losing a full-timer who has been with the department for at least 10 years to a city department. He believes that Lee is competitive but we do not have a 24hr shift schedule and that is what the firefighters want. Most of the exit interviews that the Chief has conducted have indicated that if Lee had 24 hrs shifts they would have stayed for longer. So a 4th firefighter would get them to the 24hr rotation and take a long of stress off the department and him. Most of his staff lives out of Lee. The ABC asks the TA to find out what it would cost to add a full-time firefighter to the budget. The Chief says that the truck that they need this year would be coming out of the CIP. They lost a part-timer a few months ago.

4. Chief Nemet is asking to keep the EOC budget the same as last year which is $1000 for the EOC Director (Chief Nemet) and $600 for the Assistant (Caren Rossi) and $4000 for supplies.

5. Bob Smith makes the CIP presentation. He begins with the Highway Department. The CIP calls for them to buy a buffalo turbine for $12,096 this year from Highway Equipment. They have adjusted the plan by adding a Skagg “O” turn mower with bagger for $10,080 for 2026. They moved loader tires and paint out to 2023. They have kept the CIP in balance for 15 years. Out of Roads and Bridges they are going to have to pull $141k to redo the Chesley Brook culvert. They have to plan for the entire amount but it will be much less after we adjust for State funding. Steve Bullek has pulled the Fisher Brook culvert from the plan but added the Cartland Road replacement for 2030 and Snell Road Bridge replacement for 2035 both for about $300k each.

A replacement car for Code Enforcement has been pushed out to 2030. The one they have now is still working well.

Fire Engine #1 is in the plan for replacement this year at $655k. The Fire Chief has moved out the replacement of Engine #2 and combined Rescue #1 with Engine #2 for 2027 which separately was going to be $1.3 million but together will be $800k. He has added the “portable radio” replacements to 2030 at $110k and moved the “radio infrastructure” to 2023 for $100k. These prices are estimated prices but they have done a good deal of research to get these figures. There are no 2022 plans or adjustments for cisterns and fire ponds.

There are no requirements for the Transfer Station in FY22. There are 2 plan adjustments. When Mr. Bullek took over the Transfer Station he renamed all the cans to meet DOT standards and they will replace Bailer #1 to a new machine in 2030 for $200k.

The Library is planning to do some major renovations which include replacing shelves, carpeting downstairs and the circulation desk. These were in the plan but now they are coming into 2022 and the costs are going up. Adjustments for the following year (2023) will be
bringing in more shelving for $27k, adding new furniture for $10k and adding new carpet upstairs for $11k. Mr. Smith says that the Library is covered.

There aren’t any requirements for the Conservation Commission in 2022 but they have made 2 adjustments. They have moved the purchase of Conservation easements to 2023 and they want to start adding deposits into the Land Acquisition Trust Fund again starting in 2024 for $20k.

The ABC’s recommendation for the Police Department is to start an Equipment Trust Fund. In the past the Town has bought 1 cruiser each year. The Town is spending an average of $43.5k per year on cruiser and police items.

The Recreation Commission is asking to refurbish the tennis courts at Memorial Field in 2022 for $30.6k. There are no plan adjustments.

The plan for town buildings this year is for a new furnace in Town Hall for $12k, a new furnace in the Annex for $12k and a highway shop addition for $175k. There is a plan adjustment to swap the highway salt/sand shed from 2022 with the highway shop addition for 2026. There is also a plan to redirect the inside painting of the Library to the outside painting of the Library.

Mr. Smith states in summary over all the deposits have gone up year to year by $120k. Mainly because of the increases to the trust funds such as $25k for the Transfer Station Bailer replacement, $35k for funding Roads and Bridges, $10k for the Recreation Commission and $50k for the Town Hall renovation.

6. Selectman Bugbee give a brief update on the TCVC. They are working on presenting costs for the necessary renovations to the Board. They will be applying to LCHIP for funds. They are presenting to the Board that the Town Hall be used to rent out for community use and committee and commission use. They want to add a bathroom and make the Clerk’s office a meeting room. The question is still being discussed about what to do with the 2nd floor.

The plan is to first move the Town Hall offices to the Daley Building and then move forward with creating a Town Center sometime in the future.

7. The next ABC meeting is next Tuesday at 6:30pm. The ABC presentation to the Board is December 14th at 6pm.

8. Chairman LaCourse moves to adjourn at 8:22pm. Selectman Bugbee, seconds. All in favor. Motion Carries.

Minutes transcribed by Denise Duval, Town Secretary