

NEW DURHAM BUDGET COMMITTEE
New Durham Town Hall
November 21, 2019, 7:00pm

DRAFT: These minutes are strictly a draft copy and are awaiting amendment or approval at a subsequent, duly noticed public meeting. Amendments to these minutes will be noted in the minutes of said meeting. The draft will be posted on the website as a draft copy for public informational use only.

Present

Terry Jarvis, Chair of Budget Committee
Mark Sullivan, Budget Committee
Ellen Phillips, Budget Committee
Joan Swenson, Budget Committee
Kenneth Fanjoy, Budget Committee – excused absence
David Swenson, Board of Selectmen Representative
Ron Uyeno, Budget Committee

Also Present

Scott Kinmond, Town Administrator
Anina Soucy, Finance Manager
Shawn Bernier, Police Chief
Peter Varney, Fire Chief
Kevin Ruel, Assistant Fire Chief
Josh Johnson, Solid Waste Supervisor
Don Vachon, Road Agent
David Bennett, Highway Supervisor
Bob Bickford, 1772 Meetinghouse Committee

Call to Order

Ms. Jarvis called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Approval of Minutes

Postponed to November 25, 2019.

Tax Rate Setting

Mr. Swenson stated the Board of Selectmen met on November 18, 2019 and approved a tax rate for this coming year. He summarized the actions by the Board: the Unassigned Fund Balance to be used is the same as last year, \$275,000 which resulted in the following breakdown of the total tax rate: \$5.63 for the Town, \$2.86 for the County, \$13.04 to local education/Governor Wentworth School District, and the State portion is \$2.19 for a total of \$23.72. The Copple Crown Village District is an additional \$7.64. Mr. Swenson stated tax bills have been sent out. He stated the Town has the county tax bill and the State education tax bills both due in December and wants everyone to be aware of the substantial amount being paid out, with \$1,193,257 going to the county, and \$933,563

going to the State. Mr. Swenson noted the Town was also recently served with a lawsuit by a resident, David Bickford, specifically regarding a complaint that he filed with the court, “the Board of Selectmen are refusing to perambulate the lot lines between the towns as required in RSA 51:2. The lines between the towns in this state shall be perambulated, and the marks and bounds renewed, once in every 7 years forever, by the selectmen of the towns, or by such persons as they shall in writing appoint for that purpose” and the states “The Chair of the Board of Selectmen, David Swenson claims there is no penalty to this law so ‘why bother.’” Mr. Swenson stated he does not make that claim. He stated Mr. Bickford also brought this complaint before the Budget Committee on November 6, 2019 and stated Town Counsel has been informed of this complaint which incorporates many false and misleading statements within the lawsuit. Mr. Swenson stated the Board of Selectmen has taken action over the last three to four years to try to perambulate the town lines, with Selectman Chase volunteering to do it on behalf of the Town but have had difficulty working with the other towns. Mr. Swenson stated the Wolfeboro boundary was done in 2011 and questioned Mr. Bickford’s actions in spending taxpayers money in legal fees. Ms. Phillips asked if the lawsuit were found in favor of the Town, would Mr. Bickford pay the legal fees. Mr. Swenson replied that while it is true that the Town has not perambulated all the lines, nor have the other towns in that period of time. Mr. Swenson confirmed the Board of Selectmen has tried to work with the other towns. He explained he expects a majority of the legal fees to be in this calendar year and the Board of Selectmen has already put into place some things to get the perambulation completed in a cost effective way. It was asked whether there is a precedent set where the State has penalized towns for non-compliance. Mr. Swenson stated there have been legislative actions over the years to develop a more reasonable approach to this issue. Ms. Jarvis noted much of the town has been mapped by GIS and Mr. Swenson stated the current RSA does not permit drones or GIS mapping at this point.

Account 4589 – Other Cultural and Recreation: 1772 Meetinghouse Restoration

Ms. Jarvis stated this account is a combination of the 1772 Meetinghouse and the Boodey Farmstead lines and she noted they have already reviewed the Boodey Farmstead line. Ms. Jarvis stated she had concerns last year about the number being budgeted each year and not being spent. She noted her research shows lines being unspent over numerous years, particularly line 551, advertising, which was not spent in 2018 or 2019, with only \$71 spent in 2017; the line for grants has not been spent since 2017; postage was spent in 2017 but nothing in 2018 or 2019 and proposed the lines for advertising, grants and postage be funded at \$1 to keep the lines available.

Bob Bickford, 1772 Meetinghouse Committee, stated one reason these lines have not been spent is they are in need of matching funds to move forward with the L-CHIP funds but until they get the CRF up to the amount to replace some of the roof and timber structure, they can’t apply for the L-CHIP grant. He stated they attempted to do some fundraising last year but it was unsuccessful. Ms. Phillips stated she knows funds were spent for the Halloween event but the account summary shows no expenditures. Mr. Bickford stated at the meeting last week, it was indicated the expenses came out of the Parks and Recreation Department. It was noted the current balance is approximately \$48,489. Ms. Jarvis noted the estimation for the next phase was about \$100,000. Mr.

Bickford confirmed that was correct but from a number of years ago and based on only a single estimate. Ms. Jarvis noted that to date, approximately \$124,000 of Town funds have been appropriated to the Meetinghouse for restoration. Ms. Swenson asked if L-CHIP is the only option for grant funding. Mr. Bickford replied the project has already been reviewed and approved but are waiting for matching funds to move forward; they are not excluded from going after other grants but L-CHIP has been their main focus. Mr. Sullivan stated he would feel better if the committee presented a long-range total plan for the project. Ms. Phillips suggested leaving the grant line as requested so they are able to apply for grants.

Ms. Jarvis made a motion to approve Account 4589, the lines pertaining to the 1772 Meetinghouse Restoration, for the 2020 Budget in the amount of \$1,150. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Ms. Jarvis made a motion to approve Account 4589, Other Cultural and Recreation, for the 2020 Budget in the total amount of \$10,401 to be divided as previously voted upon. Mr. Swenson seconded the motion. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Account 4210 - Police

Mr. Swenson stated the Board of Selectmen approved an amount that was revised on October 16, 2019 to \$582,198 due to health insurance changes. Ms. Jarvis stated the department requested amount for 2020 is \$584,201. She asked if the difference is strictly due to the changes in the insurance rates; Mr. Swenson replied there were some other cuts.

Ms. Jarvis noted the year-to-date expenditure for part time officer line was \$37,000 however only \$21,340 is being requested for 2020. Police Chief Bernier replied they were short-handed in the first five months of the year so had a lot of overtime to cover shifts. However once the number of officers was brought back up, the overtime was reduced. Ms. Jarvis asked if he anticipates an overtime issue due to an officer attending the Police Academy in January; Police Chief Bernier replied there is a possibility. He noted that instead of putting an officer on for a 24-hour shift, they would have them on-call. Ms. Swenson asked why the gasoline line went down. Mr. Swenson explained the Board of Selectmen calculated a consistent rate between the departments. Mr. Sullivan noted SUVs have higher maintenance, more gas versus a sedan and asked if that was factored in. Police Chief Bernier replied their current SUV gets the same fuel economy as the sedans and the new one being proposed will be the same. Ms. Jarvis asked if the SUVs are better suited for the demands of the department. Police Chief Bernier replied yes, particularly in getting into areas around the lake. Mr. Sullivan asked if there are any expenses anticipated for building maintenance. Police Chief Bernier replied the only problem he has is the garage door, which is original from 2000 and regularly has problems with it.

Ms. Phillips made a motion to approve Account 4210, Police, for the 2020 Budget in the amount of \$582,198. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Account 4220 – Fire Department

Mr. Swenson stated the Board of Selectmen approved \$252,237 on October 8, 2019; there was a question on how many times the ladder truck goes out and Fire Chief Varney indicated at that time, it goes out for every structure fire. Fire Chief Varney stated that is going to be more often now as they are covering for Alton now and he was informed by the Alton Budget Committee they do not plan to replace their ladder truck this year. Mr. Swenson stated the Board of Selectmen discussed some rust repairs with the ladder truck and whether the expense was operational or vehicle maintenance repairs from the CRF account but the Board of Selectmen decided it would be funded with the CRF. Fire Chief Varney stated the increase in the line for repairs is for various trucks, noting the utility truck is being reallocated for rescue, due to anticipated increase in activity on Birch Hill. Ms. Jarvis asked if there have been any discussions about having private funding for the potential increase in rescues associated with the Birch Hill conservation. Fire Chief Varney stated he has discussed additional training with a company out of Maine for more advanced hiking and trail rescue. It was noted to review any impact on the budget during the quarterly reviews. Ms. Swenson asked about the line for personal protection. Fire Chief Varney noted another individual need to get suited up and that runs about \$2800 to \$3000. Ms. Jarvis noted the amount requested for inspections is \$895, which is the same as previous years, but the most ever spent from that line was \$110. Fire Chief Varney replied he tries to use the guys to do most of the inspections but has been unable to find people who have the extra time so he does them, and he is salary.

Ms. Jarvis stated the department requested amount for 2020 is \$253,237 and the Board of Selectmen approved \$252,237.

Fire Chief Varney explained some tracking changes that will be coming due to federal mandates associated with Medicare and anticipates an increase in costs associated with this, which will include tracking personnel and inventory in detail.

Ms. Swenson made a motion to approve Account 4220, Fire Department, for the 2020 Budget in the amount of \$252,237. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Account 4290 – Emergency Management

Ms. Jarvis stated the department requested amount for 2020 is \$552 and the Board of Selectmen approved the same amount. Fire Chief Varney explained he contacted the State, explaining there were no new businesses in Town and the current plan is approved. Fire Chief Varney stated the company hired to do the maps would have cost \$8,000 with matching funds to cover the difference however he worked with Town Administrator Kinmond and they were able to make the necessary changes.

Ms. Swenson made a motion to approve Account 4290, Emergency Management, for the 2020 Budget in the amount of \$552. Ms. Phillips seconded the motion. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Account 4291- Forestry

Ms. Jarvis stated there was an increase in the training line but other costs remain the same.

Mr. Sullivan made a motion to approve Account 4291, Forestry, for the 2020 Budget in the amount of \$12,856. Mr. Uyeno seconded the motion. Motion passed, 7-0-0.

Account 4312 – Highways and Streets

Ms. Jarvis stated the department requested amount for 2020 is \$924,954 and the Board of Selectmen approved \$908,694. Mr. Swenson stated there were a few line items changes made by the Board of Selectmen: 10-140, reduced by \$5200; 10-660, by \$10,000; 10-662, reduced by \$10,000. Mr. Sullivan asked why the line for overtime was not level funded. Mr. Swenson replied they made significant adjustments in hourly rates along with promotions. It was noted there was also an anticipation of more part time employees. Ms. Jarvis noted the line for brush cutter has zero expenditure but the request is \$14,000. Don Vachon, Road Agent, explained they just rented one for about 50 hours and are in the process of looking into purchasing one as it was \$3600 to rent for one week with H.P. Fairfield. Town Administrator Kinmond stated they have discussed purchasing a cutter in collaboration with the town of Middleton, to share the cost and use. Ms. Phillips asked if there is money in the CRF to purchase. Ms. Jarvis noted the amount requested for supplies is \$7,000 but year-to-date expenditures are \$8,000. She noted line 9610 consistently requests \$300 but consistently goes over.

Ms. Jarvis made a motion to approve Account 4312, Highways and Streets, for the 2020 Budget in the amount of \$908,694. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

Account 4324– Solid Waste

Ms. Jarvis stated the department requested amount for 2020 is \$308,853 and the Board of Selectmen approved \$307,423. Mr. Swenson stated the reduction was made in the part time position hourly rate. Ms. Jarvis asked if this reflects the new five-year contract. It was confirmed it does. Mr. Uyeno stated a scale was purchased and asked if it would save any money in the budget. Ms. Jarvis replied it would be seen in the revenue line, which goes into the General Fund. It was also asked whether the overtime would double again this year. Mr. Uyeno stated he thinks overtime could be managed better between the Highway and Solid Waste departments. Town Administrator Kinmond explained some of the employees from Solid Waste help out with snow removal.

Ms. Jarvis made a motion to approve Account 4324 Solid Waste, for the 2020 Budget in the amount of \$305,853. Ms. Phillips seconded the motion. Motion passed, 5-0-1. Mr. Uyeno abstained.

Next Meeting

November 25, 2019, 7:00pm, New Durham Town Hall

Adjourn

New Durham Budget Committee

November 21, 2019

DRAFT

Mr. Sullivan made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Swenson seconded the motion. Motion passed, 6-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary