

Town of Candia Municipal Budget Committee

Approved Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: November 10, 2021
Location: Town Office Building
Zoom Meeting ID# 846 2248 7141
Attendees: Lynn Chivers
Stephanie Helmig
Katrina Niles
Susan Gill
Bob Stout
Sue Young
Todd Keating
Kaycee Vitale
Absent: Dick Snow

Chairman Chivers opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of the Minutes from October 27, 2021

- Bob Stout motioned to approve minutes
- Jodi Hedstrom seconds the motion
- Katrina Niles absent from vote, Dick Snow abstains
- Motion passed 6 approve-1 absent-1 abstain

Vote on Preliminary Town Budget Recommendations

- Budget Committee was supplied with all the new insurance figures as well as the new budget line with and without the Ambulance included.
 - Selectman Young asked Bob Stout if he knew definitively if the Ambulance needs to be included in the budget?
 - Bob answered no, it does not need to be included in the operating budget as long as it is invoiced properly, and read aloud a written statement from the administrator of the ARPA funds, "...as long as the Town of Candia has appropriate documentation that aligns this expense to its' ARPA allocation, invoices etc. The omission from the 2022 operating budget for this expense will not render it ineligible for funding under the American Rescue Plan Act. The Town will need to document the ARPA eligible expenses in a consistent and robust manner for audit purposes, regardless of whether these expenses are included in the operating budget or not."
 - Selectman Young said that Andria has an email out to the New Hampshire Municipal but we have not heard back yet.
- Chairman Chivers said that Todd, Susan and herself got together and took the suggestion from last meeting to look at past expenses in departments that had zero spends on a specific line but were asking for money to be budgeted again this year.
 - Susan Gill said that what they found was that there were numerous lines that were budgeted and not spent but if you looked at the departments those budgets rolled up into, those departments fluctuated. The fluctuation was not large enough to make large cuts from any one department but instead look at the departments that continuously give back year over year and cut from there. Generally, the town returns about 4% every year and the 4% it returns does not always come from the same departments, but there are a few we can look at that consistently give back money.
 - Chairman Chivers said that even though we did not find thousands of dollars the important thing is that we looked at the data to make an informed recommendation.
- Selectman Young noted that she is supporting the vote of the Selectman so she will oppose any budget changes. This does not necessarily represent her opinion on each line item.

- **Ambulance**

- Jodi Hedstrom said she is worried that if we take out the ambulance (\$223,000) this year and then next year it comes back up without ARPA funds, our default will not be high enough to cover the ambulance...what happens then? Where do we get \$223,000?
 - Chairman Chivers said that after this year we will have a better idea of what will actually be needed for the Ambulance line.
 - Jodi Hedstrom responded that the problem is that our bottom-line budget will increase with COLA again and our default budget is significantly less because the Ambulance is not in there this year, what happens if the public votes for the default budget? We still need the ambulance, so how do we do that if the operating budget is voted down and the taxpayers vote for the default?
 - Chairman Chivers said the same could happen this year. We have the same issue whether we put it in this year or next year. Next year we will be better informed on how much the cost will be and the income we will actually get.
 - Selectman Young said that this year we will only need \$17,000 which Chief Young said he will make work with his budget this year. Next year, we are looking at \$223,000 and with all due respect to the gentleman that handles the ARPA funds, a woman was hired from NH Municipal just to do CAREs and ARPA funds and she did not seem to have the same response.
 - Bob Stout asked if there was anything in writing?
 - Selectman Young said no. She answered all her questions over the phone. Selectman Young is just concerned on what we do as a contingency if in fact it does need to be included in the budget.
 - Chairman Chivers said that we will go with what the State Association that handles the disbursement of the funds, which we have in writing, and if later we find out its wrong and the person at the NH Municipal commission is correct, we can make a change.
 - Bob Stout made a motion to reduce the Ambulance Line by \$222,996
 - Todd Keating seconds the motion
 - 5 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Chairman Chivers)
 - 2 opposed (Selectman Young, Jodie Hedstrom)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 5 in favor-2 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent

- **Cemetery**

- Selectman Young stated that the Cemetery thought was that other budgets were not being lowered so they would go with their amount and if lowered, they would get help through the trusts.
- Chairman Chivers said she would like to take \$7000 out of Cemetery.
 - Todd Keating said that the Cemetery trust balance is \$698,700.
 - Selectman Young said of that you can only take \$75,000 which is the annual gain.
 - Bob Stout asked how did you come up with the \$7000?
 - Chairman Chivers said that Sue told us before that they only needed a 2% increase and that we could take out \$7000 but Selectman Young had not spoken to them yet.
 - Selectman Young said that she has not had a meeting since so she is just going to keep it the same.
 - Todd asked why they do not spend the \$75,000 in the trust?
 - Selectman Young answered that she is new and was unaware. Also, she (Selectman Young) is a new liaison and has not gotten in depth with how they operate.
 - Todd would like to see the feedback from the Cemetery Trustees to see how they will use the trust and what lines could be paid out of it.

- Selectman Young said that she just has not had a meeting since our last Budget Committee meeting and is open to doing what is best for the town.
 - Todd Keating said then from that feedback it just sounds like she was not aware that she has \$75,000 to spend. In that respect, the gravesite markers that are \$1,000, the facilities improvements at \$14,500 could come out of that trust fund.
 - Susan Gill noted that Cemetery was one of the departments that consistently returns money to the town each year.
 - Todd Keating wanted to make clear that he is in favor of cutting \$15,500 from the budget and using it from the trust. He is not saying he wants to make the \$15,500 disappear.
 - Susan Gill said her idea would be to just keep them flat year over year and they can use any increase out of the trust. If we cut them \$15,500 it puts them under last years budgeted amount from this year.
 - Todd Keating made a motion to reduce the Cemetery Line by \$15,500
 - Stephanie Helmig seconds the motion
 - 3 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig)
 - 4 opposed (Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Jodie Hedstrom, Chairman Chivers)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Fails 3 in favor-4 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent
 - Susan Gill made a motion to reduce the Cemetery Line by \$10,000
 - Todd Keating seconds the motion
 - 5 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Chairman Chivers)
 - 2 opposed (Selectman Young, Jodie Hedstrom)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 5 in favor-2 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent
 - **Budget Committee**
 - Todd Keating made a motion to reduce the Budget Committee by \$1,000
 - Susan Gill seconds the motion
 - 6 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Chairman Chivers, Jodie Hedstrom)
 - 1 opposed (Selectman Young)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 6 in favor-1 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent
 - **Building Inspection**
 - Susan Gill said that this is a department that regularly returns about \$3000.
 - Todd Keating said that if we are saying the code enforcement was high in 2021 because of new buildings and people getting increased permits for home improvements during COVID, the is 2019 and 2020 more the norm for their budget?
 - Selectman Young said that it will never go truly backwards but the inspections are way down year over year.
 - Chairman Chivers reminded the committee that \$5000 was placed in the budget to help with prosecution of code violations.
 - Selectman Young said it is her belief that the \$5000 was in the budget to allow the current building inspector to enforce the code, not hire anyone new.
 - Chairman Chivers said there is another guy that they had tried out at one point but he did not work out. The \$5000 is in there in case they find someone else.
 - Selectman Young said it was her understanding that he was being paid overtime and that \$5000 was to allow the current inspector to do the job.
 - Todd asked Susan Gill and Chairman Chivers if they had the actual spend in 2019 and 2020?
 - Susan Gill answered that in 2019 the actual expenses was \$54,000 and 2020 was \$59,000

- Chairman Chivers asked how long we have had the new building inspector?
 - Linda answered that he has been here about a year.
 - Todd Keating made a motion to reduce the Building Inspection by \$5,000
 - Bob Stout seconds the motion
 - 4 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Stephanie Helmig, Jodie Hedstrom)
 - 3 opposed (Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Chairman Chivers)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 4 in favor-3 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent
- **Fire and Forestry**
 - Chairman Chivers reminded the committee that Dean pays for the phone and that there is an extra \$1,200 in the budget because the town charged back the phone allowance.
 - Susan Gill made a motion to reduce the Fire and Forestry by \$1,200
 - Todd Keating seconds the motion
 - 6 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Chairman Chivers, Jodie Hedstrom)
 - 1 opposed (Selectman Young)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 6 in favor-1 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent
- **Parks and Recreation**
 - Todd Keating asked Selectman Young what the plan was for Parks and Recreation?
 - Selectman Young answered that she did not get mulch, picnic tables, or trash receptacles this year because she was unsure of where the town budget would be at this point. She is planning on making those purchases and encumbering some funds for next year.
 - Todd Keating said that the expense seems kind of high when no one is using it.
 - Multiple members noted that the playground and the skateboard park are constantly used.
 - Selectman Young said that the fields were only used by Jesse Remington this year. The basketball court is used all the time. She also said that she is open to cutting from parks and recreation if necessary.
 - Todd Keating said he does not want to cut the funds if we are going to use them to improve and maintain our park and fields.
- **Planning Board**
 - Stephanie Helmig asked why they did not spend any money in their budget this year?
 - Chairman Chivers answered that they have a bill from Stantec that has not been paid out of the budget yet.
- **Police**
 - Stephanie Helmig asked why are we not budgeting for a cruiser?
 - Chairman Chivers said that they were able to purchase a cruiser out of this year's budget.
 - Todd Keating asked how many full time and part time officers do we have now and how many are we going to have in 2022? The wage line has increased dramatically.
 - Bob Stout texted the Chief and he responded that there are 6 full time officers not including himself. There is 1 part time officer and we just interviewed another part time officer and they may be hired for the part time January academy.
 - Selectman Young said that we did give all officers a raise of \$1.80/hour.
 - Todd asked why there is \$30,000 increase in the wages line with the same amount of people?
 - Chairman Chivers said that all the officers received the \$1.80/hour raise and then there is a 5.4% COLA which impact that line by the \$30,000.
- **Tax Collector**
 - Susan Gill said that the Tax Collector was another department that regularly gave back about \$3000 a year. In 2018 the bulk of the funds returned were from the deputy and the credit card punch maintenance support, and in 2019 was the deputy, and in 2020 it was the deputy again.
 - Chairman Chives aske Selectman Young if she had a deputy all year?

- Selectman Young answered that she was unsure of the actual start date but sometime before March.
 - Stephanie Helmig asked why they need 2 new computers?
 - Chairman Chivers said one for the deputy and one for the tax collector.
 - Susan Gill said that one idea could be to take out the \$3,100 in computer software and support with the idea that they will probably have enough left over in the budget this year to cover the new computers.
 - Chairman Chivers said they could even encumber the funds if they cannot get the computers this year.
 - Bob Stout made a motion to reduce the Tax Collector by \$3,100
 - Susan Gill seconds the motion
 - 6 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Chairman Chivers, Jodie Hedstrom)
 - 1 opposed (Selectman Young)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 6 in favor-1 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent
- **Smyth Memorial Building**
 - Chairman Chivers said that \$4000 is utility allocation per lease agreement.
 - Jodi Hedstrom asked how much was the total?
 - Chairman Chivers answered \$11,460
 - Bob Stout asked if there was a Warrant Article this year?
 - Selectman Young said yes, there is a warrant article but the Selectman have not made a recommendation yet. It was tabled so her side can be heard.
 - Bob Stout asked if we could leave the \$4,000 in the budget and the rest go in a warrant article?
 - Selectman Young said the danger is that the voters need to have a choice. Selectman Young asked if the Budget Committee could increase a warrant article?
 - Chairman Chivers said no but it can be changed at the deliberative session.
 - Selectman Young also noted that they have a trust with \$11,138 in expendable funds
 - Bob Stout made a motion to reduce the Smyth Building by \$7,460
 - Jodi Hedstrom seconds the motion
 - 6 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Chairman Chivers, Jodie Hedstrom)
 - 1 opposed (Selectman Young)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 6 in favor-1 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent
- **Final Town Budget**
 - Total reduction recommendations equaled \$250,756
 - Susan Gill made a motion to approve a budget of \$3,136,698 (a reduction of 4.6%)
 - Todd Keating seconds the motion
 - 6 in favor (Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Chairman Chivers, Jodie Hedstrom)
 - 1 opposed (Selectman Young)
 - 1 abstains (Dick Snow)
 - 1 absent (Katrina Niles)
 - Motion Passes 6 in favor-1 opposed-1 abstains-1 absent

Other Business

- Non-Petitioned Warrant Articles are due on 11/17
- Non-Petitioned Warrant articles will be reviewed by the Budget Committee on 12/08
- Next Budget Committee meeting will be on 11/18 to review school budget and formulate questions, if time permits review warrant articles
 - The town is waiting on a warrant article from the library and possibly from the Safety Complex Committee.

- Bob Stout said we will know in two weeks what the amount will be and if it will be a warrant article. (Refer to audio for more information.)
- Stephanie Helmig offered to preemptively ask some of her questions as they may be the same as the budget committee. She will put them on paper, get the answer in writing, and present it to the budget committee at the next meeting if she has the answers by then.
- The Budget Committee discussed a possible conflict on the place and timing of the next meeting. Refer to audio for details.

Bob Stout moves to adjourn the meeting

Todd Keating seconds the motion

All in favor

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm

Submitted by: Kaycee Vitale, Administrative Assistant