

Town of Candia
Budget Committee Meeting
OCTOBER 25, 2023
7:00 PM
Town Hall Meeting Room
and via Zoom

Lynn Chivers called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendees: Susan Young (Selectmen's Rep)
Brenda Coughlin
Katrina Niles
William Saffie
Lynn Chivers, Chair
Josh Reap
Bob Stout

Absent: Stephanie Helmig
Susan Gill

Selectmen: Brien Brock, Chair
Patrick Moran, Vice Chair
Boyd Chivers
Russell Dann

Guest: Andria Hanson
Dean Young, Fire Chief
Beth Chalbeck – Cemetery Trustees
Mike McGillen – Police Chief
Jeff Wuebbolt – Road Agent
Carla Penfield – Smyth Building
Mike Kelly (remote)
Scott Komisarek - Planning Board*

Old Business:

Minutes from October 11, 2023, meeting.
Bob Stout made a motion to accept the minutes of October 11, 2023.
Bill Saffie seconded the motion.
The motion passed. 7-0-0

Answer Questions from last Meeting

Town – Questions submitted to Selectmen regarding the proposed town budget.

Ambulance

1. How much of the \$360,672 proposed budget can we expect to be offset by the income to the revolving fund?

Fire Chief Young said none of the funds will go to the budget.

Mike Kelly said there are a couple items to be purchased with the purchase of the ambulance that were not included in the budget. Things like a ventilator that cost \$15,000, billing is an additional \$15,000 etc. There is between \$30,000-\$40,000 that they need to build up for equipment for the ambulance that was not in the cost of the purchase of the ambulance. They need to plan around \$500,000 for the next time we need an ambulance. Instead of creating another reserve fund, they would use the money in this account to put towards a new ambulance in the future.

Bill Saffie asked what is the average life of an ambulance?

Mike Kelly said an estimate is 7-8 years for frontline ambulance and then it moves back as the reserve ambulance.

Brenda Coughlin asked if the ambulance purchased was brand new.

Mike Kelly said it is brand new and has 800 miles on it.

2. With the increase in expenses to the budget for the service, will you be considering altering the existing warrant article now with a fixed percentage of the income to be used for reduced costs or eliminating the existing one or replacing it with a warrant article similar to the existing ones for equipment and facilities, and allow all the revenues to be deposited in the general fund again to offset the service?

Chief Young said no.

Cemetery

3. Facility improve / maint. \$15,000 budgeted for 2023 but only \$725 has been spent so far. Another \$15,000 is requested for 2024. Will the 2023 money be used and what is the plan for the 2024 funds?

Beth Chalbeck stated that they need to plow if it snows this winter. When they take 15 trees out of Holbrook Cemetery, they have to wait for the ground to harden. They also need some trees done in Hill Cemetery and work to be done at Village Cemetery. Once the deed is deeded to the town, they need to have trees removed and a survey done. A tree company is meeting them on Friday to give an estimate to get the existing part of Village Cemetery trees out. Once it is deeded to the town, they need to give six plots to the landowner. They need money to expand Village Cemetery.

Lynn Chivers asked if it is not cold in December, will they wait until January. She asked if the \$15,000 budgeted this year was or will be spent this year?

Beth Chalbeck said they already spent around 14,000 to remove trees and they needed a new trimmer and leaf blower. A good \$3000-\$4000 is coming out that is not in the expenditures yet.

Bill Saffie asked if there will be other plots for sale in Village Cemetery.

Beth Chalbeck said yes to approximately 400 plots but depending on the size it may be less.

There is a lot of planning involved. The road will need to be paved, which will cost money.

Brenda Coughlin asked if they are responsible for the plowing instead of the Town?

Beth Chalbeck said it is usually closed in the winter, but they will need to have it plowed to get the trucks and cranes in to do the tree.

4. Why the increase in the cemetery wages? \$37,160 budgeted this year but only \$18,794 used so far?

Beth Chalbeck said she is concerned about this question. Last year they took out \$5000 from the budget.

Andria Hanson said they can cut this year's back. It should be \$37160.00.

Beth Chalbeck said she level funded.

5. What are the lines for equipment / software and computer tech services for? No expenses this year in those categories.

Beth Chalbeck said GIS program only has on Holbrook Cemetery up at this time. There are still 4 cemeteries to be on the GIS program.

Mark Chalbeck, Cemetery Trustee, said they are getting the cemetery on-line so they can see who is in each area to make genealogy easier or finding a loved one.

Highway

6. How much was spent on wildlife management this year? How did you arrive at an estimate of \$10,000 for 2024?

Jeff Wuebbolt, Road Agent, said they spent \$12,000 on wildlife management. They are not planning on doing as much trapping as they did this year and that is where the \$10,000 came from. They need to keep it there because they need to do maintenance on beavers building dams etc.

7. Why are winter payrolls so much higher than last year?

Jeff Wuebbolt said this year they are giving subcontractors a 15% increase in wages to be competitive with surrounding towns and the increased costs to maintain trucks.

8. Why is there such an increase for mowing? Will we use what was budgeted for this year?

Jeff Wuebbolt said there is a plan to give an increase in rates for summer and equipment as well for next year. This year they did problem areas; some of the money was reprioritized for projects that needed to get done. A lot of the money that would normally be spent in mowing as spent on other projects.

Bill Saffie asked if they just buy salt for the town and do they pay a higher rate because we are a small town.

Jeff Wuebbolt said they buy tons of salt from Mortens in Portsmouth. He doesn't know if he can buy it from the State.

Bill Saffie said in MA they are destroying people's wells with too much salt. Does Candia consider that as they put down salt and run at a minimal level?

Jeff Wuebbolt said how much comes out is calibrated based on speed etc. They can determine how much speed is needed for the auger and spinner to work. They do not put out more than they have to because it is too expensive.

Planning Board

9. Master plan implementation line, only \$316 has been spent so far this year. Do you plan to spend that and what is the additional \$8501 requested for next year going to be used for?

Lynn Chivers read the statement from the Planning Board saying "for the 2023 Master Plan and

Implementation line, we have contracted with Southern New Hampshire Planning and Commission to update two impact fee schedules, road impact fees, and public safety police and fire impact fees. However, we anticipate that the funds will not be fully expended by the end of 2023, and we will be requesting the contracted funds be encumbered by the Board of Selectmen.

For the 2024 Master Plan and Implementation request, this will be to complete the remaining two impact fees for the schools and solid waste fees.

Town Building Expenses

10. Please furnish an itemized list of how the \$28,229 will be spent.

Carla Penfield said the itemized list has been given to the committee for the Smyth Building.

Brenda Coughlin asked what the emergency \$1600 is for that is budgeted.

Carla Penfield said they don't have any money if anything goes wrong so that is what the \$1600 is for.

Town Clerk

11. Computer software and support line, nothing has been spent so far this year. Will that be used and what is the plan for the increased amount of \$4500 for next year?

Andria Hanson said that the bill comes at the end of the year, so it hasn't been spent yet. It is software and support for the DMV.

12. The Bond for Safety Complex

Lynn Chivers asked Brien Brock if we are going to have a bond this year for the safety complex.

Brien Brock said there will be a warrant article asking to allow the Selectmen to negotiate a bond for it. It doesn't get generated until July or August. The bond amount should be just over 2.9 but the Board of Selectmen have not voted to do the warrant article. It will include the amount to construct the PD and for the Selectmen to negotiate the bond.

Brenda Coughlin asked when the warrant article comes out, will they be able to tell the taxpayers what the burden will be?

Brien Brock said it will be an estimate but by the time March comes around they will have an idea based on what it is at that time and that is the number they will use.

Josh Reap said then we won't have an interest rate at the time of voting?

Bill Saffie asked if it will be clearly stated on the warrant article that they don't have the exact rate and will they show a range for the taxpayers to have an idea?

Brien Brock said they will have a better idea by deliberation session. It has not been determined if it will be a 10 year bond or 20 year bond.

New Business

Vote on preliminary town budget recommendations

Susan Young asked if the budget shows the 3% increase for the cemetery.

Andria said it will go up by the 3% increase.

Lynn Chivers said the amount will be \$38274.00. This would make the bottom line \$6151 less than it is now.

Bill Saffie asked what the tax rate would be on the \$375,000. Lynn said it is .75 cent increase without the warrant articles.

Bob Stout asked to talk to about the ambulance service. He said he is fully supportive of the ambulance service. What troubles him is that there are line-item expenses in the budget and then line-item expenses that they are going to be incurred that with no visibility. He feels there should be some accountability for the areas where we can't see what is going on. We don't do this with any other department in town. There is no visibility to the revenue, and can the town people see it?

Chief Young said it has been \$75,000 each year for the past two years.

Bob Stout asked how much can the town expect over a 12-month period? If there is \$120,000, is there a reasonable amount for some of the expenses in the budget and still leave a chunk in there for the larger items that they are saving for.

Mike Kelly said Medicare hasn't gone up in the rates since 2001.

Chief Young said there isn't as much money coming in as they think. They are not spending it on anything frivolous. It will be spent on things they need for the ambulance, no more than they need, but they then have it when needed.

588 people in town supported them and he would like to keep it that way.

Susan Young asked if they would like a report that shows all the money that came in and went out. Andria Hanson said they could have a monthly report.

Bob Stout said he just wants transparency.

Carla Penfield said she is one of the people who voted against it. The taxpayers don't know how it is handles they should be able to see it.

Mike Kelly stated that other than the ambulance they have not spent any of the money from that account. He said they can pull that report easily and they will see only money spent for billing purposes and the \$140,000 for the ambulance. A cardiac monitor which will be needed will cost around \$50,000. It also supplements the \$30,000 that was cut from the ambulance budget last year. He said they can post the report if that's what people want.

Josh Reap said he thinks it is a good idea because the fund gives them money for things that come up that aren't in the budget.

Lynn Chivers asked if it costs the same thing for everyone whether they are on Medicare, or live out of town etc.

Mike Kelly said the rates are set for all. An ALS transport cost around \$1200. Medicare said they are only worth \$360 and that is what they pay. They cannot bill the person for the difference. If they have supplemental insurance, they get billed for that. There are a ton of billing regulations. They only receive about 40% of what they bill. They can go to collections, but they only get around 10% when doing this and it is a lot of work.

Chief Young said this is the budget for next year. They are going to collect some money and build up the account. They may need to buy a monitor or ventilator, but they do not know how much money they will have at the end of the year. The money will only be spent on things they need for the ambulance.

Andria Hanson suggested waiting a couple years to see what comes in as this has only been the first year and they need more time to see what funds come in.

Carla Penfield asked how much is the new ambulance and then the other items need to be added, so as a taxpayer how does she know the total cost of the ambulance?

Mike Kelly said they go to the Board of Selectmen to present a case as to why they need to purchase something. Approval is required.

Josh Reap asked if we ever looked into leveraging office supplies and other things with the surrounding towns.

Andria Hanson said they haven't, but they could look into it.

Lynn Chivers said in the health insurance line, it showed the employees contribution.

Andria Hanson said it has not been broken down.

Lynn Chivers said the budgeted amount and the expenses through November doesn't reflect the employee contribution. Can they take the \$30,000 out?

Andria Hanson said they like to leave it in because they could hire an employee, or someone could change to a family plan etc.

Lynn Chivers said the bottom line is \$3,990,675.00.

Susan Young made a motion to approve the preliminary proposed town budget for 2024 for \$3,990,675.00.

Brenda Coughlin seconded the motion.

Roll call was taken.

Bob, yes

Josh, yes

Lynn, yes

Katrina, yes

Susan Young, yes

Brenda, yes

Bill, yes

Motion passed. 7-0

Lynn will check with Stephanie to see if the meeting with the School Board on November 29, 2023 can be held at the Town Hall to allow for the use of Zoom.

Other

Bob made a motion to adjourn at 8:22 pm.

Josh seconded the motion.

Motion passed. 7-0

The next meeting will be November 20, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Monaco

Administrative Assistant