

Candia Budget Committee Meeting
Approved Minutes
December 3, 2024
Town Hall Meeting Room

Called to order: 7:00 PM.

Attendees:

Lynn Chivers, Chair

William Saffie

Susan Gill

Brenda Coughlin

Joshua Reap

Susan Young (Selectman's Rep)

Stephanie Helmig (School Board Rep)

Katrina Niles was absent

Ryan Young was absent

The committee reviewed the Nov. 18 meeting minutes. There was conversation about the minutes' reference to the spelling of the Smyth building, but no other changes or corrections. A motion to approve was made by S. Young, seconded by S. Gill. Brenda and J. Reap abstained, all others voted to approve.

Minutes of the November 25th meeting were reviewed. Some discussion about the discrepancies from AI's recordings. Motion by B. Coughlin, second by S. Young. L. Chivers abstained, all others voted to approve.

L. Chivers said we will have the public comment period on the town budget first, close out of that then move on to the Warrant Articles. Budget Committee members only just received them tonight; a consensus was reached that we can review them and vote on them at the next meeting.

L. Chivers opened the public hearing on the Town Budget. We received an updated Town Budget this evening. Selectmen's budget is \$4,285,095; Default budget is \$4,044,354; Budget Committee's budget is \$4,166,059.

Question asking how the budget committee came to the number they voted on. L. Chivers explained that it was 5% above last year's budget. B. Coughlin: this is a \$76,679 budget increase. B. Coughlin wanted to know the difference which brought up the default budget to the amount. A. Hansen explained the increase was because of a police retirement, and contractual agreements between fire dept. and Londonderry, library contract with a roofer and Waste Management. There was discussion and question about how the police budget line was calculated on the Default Budget; related to how the police retirement allotment was calculated, A. Hansen stated it is based on the current number of officers (six) that we have.

Public Comment Period.

A participant, Carla, would like to request that we move the Trustees Administrative Expenses line to \$800 (page 8 of budget document). She said a note from the Attorney General stated that we

have to list all the dead people getting perpetual care (420 of them). We must list their initial investment and then we have to compute interest the fund earned, divide it up among those who invited (based on original investment amount). It was last updated in 2013, and we'll use that data to bring it all forward. We believe if we get involved with auditors, we believe they will be able to build us a spreadsheet with a formula which will automatically put the interest earned into it for us every year. What we are proposing is to use the \$550 that was allocated for lectures, add \$250, and use that money to hire auditors to do the work for us. The auditors they'll use is the same on that does the town work.

26:00 Kevin Coughlin. The police line item on page 5 he wanted to know how many officers that budgeted for; the answer is seven total. In discussion it was mentioned we currently have five, which includes parttime. One is going the academy; others are on road duty. Pat Morran state that we have five part time, two full time and the chief. Officer ready to go to academy is slotted to go soon, likely January. Until that person goes through the academy.

No other public comments. Public hearing closed at 7:28pm.

L. Chivers noted that we have a supplemental hearing on the calendar for January. It is after the town closes out the year and lists all its encumbrances. If the town encumbers anything that was written into the proposed budget, at this hearing the committee can take it out of the budget.

31:30 B. Coughlin said she is struggling with the police department's 16.5% increase. Expressed confusion about the number of budgeted positions versus those on staff. P. Moran said it is not a total of seven people. It is a total of five part time and seven full time. Moving forward the budget is to pay for seven full time officers. We presently have four officers and five part time officers accounted for right now, with a hope to hire three additional officers. P. Moran stated that the part time officers help us get coverage so we don't have to pay other municipalities to cover our town, which is typically a higher amount. State Troopers continue to cover the town at night with no charge to the town. Part time officers are covered under the Special Police Officer Wages. S. Young brought up that the full amount of \$35,000 doesn't seem like it can be adequate given paying officers at hourly rates around \$35/hr. B. Coughlin asked if the goal of the town police is to have full time coverage 24/7. P. Moran said yes, that is the goal. The concern about having State Police coverage is the response time and they are short staffed as well. The town had full coverage until May of this year.

41:57. B. Saffie. If we did not hire two more full time officers, how much in wages would we be saving? Discussion was that it would be about \$100,000.

Mark Hewett. Retired Manchester police officer. Shared his experience working in New Boston for two years. He said that having State Police coverage at night is inadequate. B. Saffie mentioned that the conversation is more than about police, it's about the town budget and the school budget with the increases that we are faced with addressing. Committee discussed that the effort is to do our due diligence.

J. Reap suggested that it would be helpful to have a better understanding of the need for coverages of the town's policing. Having a sense of call response times, analytics, frequency of calls would be helpful in future conversations.

51:50 L. Chivers noted that the Default budget is last year's budget plus contractual agreements. If we take the Default, adding in the stuff we have to pay and doing a cost of living wage of 3% would come to \$4,165,684. Add in the fire department wages, retirement and FICA amount of \$40,055, the total comes to \$4,205,739. She took out the Animal Control officer because the police chief said we don't need it, removed \$30,000 from ambulance based on what they have in the revolving fund, Solid Waste can pull from Captial Fund, Smyth Building fund has money they can draw from so they remoted \$15,000. Looking at the Selectman's Budget and the Budget Committee's proposal, the Revised total of \$4,202,113 is a compromise. S. Young said it would be hard to make a decision without having accurate numbers.

L. Chivers asked if anyone wanted to stay with our already voted upon budget, or revise the number. B. Saffie said he likes the revised budget. S. Gill made a motion to \$4,205,989, which includes the \$250 Carla asked for the cemetery operation. The amount is a six percent increase over last year. Seconded by B. Saffie.

Roll Call Vote:

Lynn Chivers, Chair - Yes

William Saffie - Yes

Susan Gill - Yes

Brenda Coughlin – No

Joshua Reap - Yes

Susan Young (Selectman's Rep) - No

Stephanie Helmig (School Board Rep) – Yes

No more discussion on the Town Operating Budget.

Conversation regarding Warrant Articles:

Once we all have the chance to review these, we will vote on the articles at the next meeting.

Warrant Article 2 budget amount will be changed to \$4,205,989.

Warrant Article 3. Question asked by taxpayer is what is the total amount to run the library? The amount to run the library is the amount listed in the warrant article. The amount is strictly for operating costs, no things like capital improvements.

Warrant Article 4. For the CYAA, amount went up last year.

Warrant Article 5. The amount of \$30,000 is the same as it was last year; last year was the first time it was introduced.

Warrant Article 6. No comments.

Warrant Article 7. Discussion about North Road paving.

Warrant Article 8. Fieldstone Lane reconstruction. Brian Bock stated that the road is in rough shape. B. Coughlin asked about taking the money from this and applying to North Road to get that all done

at once. Some discussion about the overall shape. L. Chivers suggested that people review the Capital Improvement plan, which lays out the methodology behind the paving planning.

Warrant Article 9. Fire Apparatus. No discussion.

Warrant Article 10. No conversation.

Warrant Article 11 Police Station fund. This was tabled by the Selectmen.

1:25 mins. Warrant Article 12. Police Department Capital Reserve Fund were tabled by Selectmen's board. The idea behind the latter warrant article would be to sell surplus property with the proceeds going into a specific police department capital reserve fund. B. Bock explained that the town's properties in question are typically left over from right of way acquisitions. Typically, the property is landlocked and not useful to anyone but the abutting properties. The consensus of the board was to take it out the police department capital investment fund and put it into the general capital reserve fund. B. Saffie asked how much is in that capital reserve fund. B. Bock stated it's about \$300,000.

Carla's question: If we sell these properties, why doesn't it go into the general fund? It was stated that it could go into the general fund unless spelled out in a warrant article like it is in this article.

B. Coughlin asked for report on the capital reserve fund, which was last shared in August. A. Hansen said it can be provided and the amount has not changed. Current amount is about \$408,000.

Warrant Article 13. No comments

Warrant Articles 14-15. No comments

Warrant Article 16. Does not change the amounts. In discussion it was mentioned that it is hard to qualify for this fund.

Charity Warrant Articles were reviewed.

Warrant Articles submitted by Dick Snow.

1:40 Public comments on these Warrant Articles. Carla stated that the Budget Committee has inconsistently applied how it doesn't require other groups to draw support from all their supplemental monies in the way it singles out the Smyth Memorial Building. S. Young stated that the town will likely support the warrant article for the Smyth building. The Budget Committee's recommendation was an overall reduction of the budget, it's up to the Selectmen to determine how to deal with that, which will effect the Smyth Memorial Building allocation.

Conversation about the ambulance revolving fund, which was Warrant Article 12 from year 2021. L. Chivers read the warrant article. The warrant article includes language about operating ambulance services, so there is a question whether or not it can include wages. A. Hansen will get legal advice from an attorney.

S. Helmig said someone from the school district will be at our next meeting to answer questions. There will also likely be people from the school administrative unit.

1:50. S. Young asked when we will make a decision on the warrant articles and budgets. It'll be at the January 22 meeting. S. Young asked if we can have a non-public meeting? L Chivers said even non-public meetings have to have a notice. You can cite the RSA 91A:3 and go right into the conversation.

Motion to suspend meeting until January 22, 2025 made by L. Chivers. Seconded by S. Helmig. Unanimously approved.

L. Chivers cited RSA 91-A:3, II(c).

Motion by B. Coughlin to go into nonpublic session. Seconded by S. Helmig.

Lynn Chivers, Chair - y

William Saffie – y

Susan Gill – y

Brenda Coughlin – y

Joshua Reap - y

Susan Young (Selectman's Rep) - y

Stephanie Helmig (School Board Rep) – y

9:28pm came back into public session. Motion by S. Helmig to seal nonpublic meeting minutes, seconded by S. Young; passed unanimously.