

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2019

Members Present: Ron Schneider, Marisa Caputo, Brian Toomey, Russ Markgren, Richard DeBold, Bill Wade, Alternate Jim Gaylord

Staff Present: Town Manager Jon Carter, Finance Director Jodie Sanborn, Accountant Casey Welch, WEMS Director Jim Lapola, Meeting Recorder Cinni Davidson.

Selectman Kathy Chase

Bob Mulcahy, applicant for the Budget Committee

Excused: Bob Subilia and Suzie Finnell

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

1. Minutes: Motion by Brian, seconded by Richard, to accept the January 9, 2019 minutes as written. Passed unanimously.
2. Budgets and CIP to Review

~WEMS: The \$238,000 for 2019 changed to \$265,000 with the Selectmen's approval. The total budget is \$1,100,000 and the Town is asked to provide \$315,000. The increase over last year is primarily due to personnel costs. WEMS has had a hard time filling shifts because their stipend was not competitive with surrounding communities and other jobs in the area. The call volume is up and there are many calls for lift assists (primarily elderly people who fall and can't get up). They don't bill for these calls. Starting pay is now \$13 for basic EMT's, \$15 for advanced EMT's and \$20 for Paramedics. Four people are on duty at all times. Many of the employees are firefighters at their full time jobs and want to focus on EMS when they are here. Increases will be based on COLA, with no more longevity increases. Last year's call volume was about 2,000 including transports, non-transports and fire calls.

Reimbursements are significantly down, especially Medicare readjustments. When they accept Medicare they can't bill the patient for the balance. Many of the calls in season are for tourists. There is an arrangement with the Canadian government; WEMS accepts what they pay.

Ron asked about consolidating WEMS and the Fire Department. Since most of the WEMS employees are firefighters in other communities, they couldn't work under the Wells Fire Department. Jon said it is less expensive to keep them separate.

Subscriptions were discussed. Jim is planning a price range based on the number of people in the family. Subscription applications are mailed to full-time residents. Jim proposed enclosing a notice with the tax bills for part-time residents.

Motion by Russ, seconded by Marisa, to approve \$315,000. Passed 7-0.

CIP: There are 3 identical ambulances used on a rotating basis. One is replaced every 3 years. They use one vendor rather than going out to bid so everything can be standardized.

Major medical devices: Stretchers cost \$16,000 and last 7-10 years. Treating a patient in cardiac arrest is very labor intensive—they have to stay on the scene for an hour, depending upon the rhythm. The thinking among emergency medicine physicians is that a paramedic on the scene would do everything that could be done in the ER. Mechanical compressors can replace extra personnel. At \$13,000 apiece, they are requesting to add \$20,000 to the reserve fund and to spend up to \$45,000 to equip each ambulance.

~**Harbor:** Revenue decreased in 2018 with funds used to pave the restaurant parking lot. The Town owns the land and leases it to the restaurant owner, who pays the personal property tax. There is software for the mooring wait list and renewals to facilitate recordkeeping and processing payments. The SHIP grant will cover cross-bracing, re-decking and a handrail. Total cost of the work is \$194,000 with the state paying \$185,000. Chris Mayo has been working on improving the facilities; as maintenance is done the operating costs will decrease. Continuing the maintenance program is a priority for the new harbor master. We received 6 applications and 4 interviews are scheduled. The Town physically owns the harbor and all the equipment. There are 90 moorings and Chris has been working to increase the private moorings on the river.

Motion by Marisa, seconded by Russ, to approve \$32,598. Passed 7-0.

CIP: includes \$20,000 for floats and \$30,000 for the dredge. The new pump out is covered by a state grant.

~**Human Resources:** We are hiring a professional negotiator for the collective bargaining with the unions. Other services and charges are up 122%; background checks and testing are being moved to this budget line. Background checks are free for municipal governments so this can be cut by \$1500. People with CDL's have mandatory drug testing and OSHA requires hearing tests for people who use noisy equipment.

Motion by Brian, seconded by Richard, to approve \$51,810. Passed 7-0.

~**Employee Benefits:** The unemployment premiums we pay are based on salaries. We usually get a dividend at year end. The Teamsters health insurance is through Cigna. The clerical workers and Highway Department have a policy with Allegiance. The other 2 unions are covered by Anthem through the MMA.

Motion by Brian, seconded by Russ, to approve \$2,128,095. Passed 7-0.

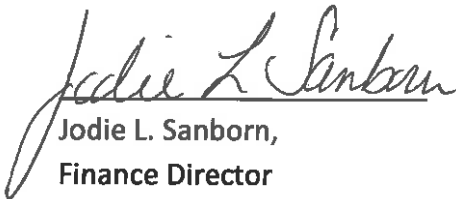
~Property & Liability Insurance: Premiums increase when we purchase new equipment at a higher value. The premium for workers' comp. is tied to salaries. We had several accidents this year. Our risk manager works with the Safety Committee, and if he gives us a good score it helps reduce the premiums.

Motion by Marisa, seconded by Brian, to approve \$584,000. Passed 7-0.

~Grants: The Historical Society is requesting an increase to add Internet service. MMA membership is being moved to Jon's budget. The Memorial Day flowers and flags are part of the beautification program. The Agency on Aging handles Meals on Wheels, Medicare information, legal services for the elderly and a buddy system. The Harbor Concerts have sponsors and collections; each concert costs about \$1,000-1,500 and June signs the contracts with the bands. Patriot Riders didn't submit a request; they will be dropped. The Laudholm grant will be increased. Jodie will review the list and determine which items should be moved to the Town budget. Ron suggested an agenda item to discuss grants and proposed cuts, including what the organization does for Wells.

3. Motion by Brian, seconded by Marisa, to adjourn. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Jodie L. Sanborn,
Finance Director

Approved by,



Ronald Schneider, Jr.
Budget Committee Chairman