



TOWN OF BOW

Budget Committee

10 Grandview Road, Bow, New Hampshire 03304

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Bow Budget Committee Minutes - Town Budget Approved Minutes January 7, 2021

Mark Zerba, Chair	P	Melissa Radomski	Remote
Jennifer Strong-Rain, Vice Chair	P	Kathy Garfield	Remote
Ben Kiniry, Secretary	A	Jeffrey Knight	P (6:30 PM)
Christopher Nicolopoulos (Selectman Rep.)	P	Martin Osterloh (School Brd. Alt.)	A
Bruce Marshall, (Selectman Alt.)	A	Robert Blanchette	Remote
David Stack, Town Manager	P	Geoff Ruggles, Finance Director	P

* P = Present; A = Absent

I. Call to Order

Chair Zerba called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM. This meeting has been posted and is being held both in person and remotely on ZOOM, per the procedures outlined in Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12, regarding public access to meetings,

<https://www.governor.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt336/files/documents/emergency-order-12.pdf>

Committee members who were participating remotely stated their name, location, whether anyone was with them and reason for attending remotely. Kathy Garfield – home, alone and COVID exposure. Melissa Radonski – home, alone and COVID exposure. Robert Blanchette – home, alone and COVID exposure.

II. Approval of January 23, 2020, January 27, 2020, February 10, 2020 Meeting, February 12, 2020 Public Hearing and January 4, 2021 Minutes.

Motion:

The Committee decided to move the minutes as a group. Jennifer Strong-Rain moved to approve the minutes of January 23 and 27, 2020 as well as February 10, 2020 Public Hearing and February 10, 2020 Budget Committee meeting and January 4, 2021 minutes.

Roll call vote for the 2020 minutes: Zerba – yes; Strong-Rain – yes; Garfield – yes; Radomski – yes; and Nicolopoulos – yes with Blanchette abstaining.

Motion carried 5-0-1.

Roll call vote for the January 4, 2021 minutes: Zerba – yes; Strong-Rain – yes; Garfield – yes; Radomski – yes; Blanchette – yes; and Nicolopoulos – yes.

Motion carried 6-0-0

III. Review of the Town Budget

Town Manager David Stack told the Committee that revenues were down, and the Town proposes to use \$250,000 out of Fund Balance in the budget. Tax rate for the proposed budget is \$7.10 per \$1,000.00, which is one cent lower than last year. Contributions to the New Hampshire Retirement System have gone up considerably; there are no staff reductions; and it was noted the PSNH settlement obligations will be over in FY24/25. The largest increase is in general employment which is up 26% due in part to the increase in retirement costs. There was decreased utilization (approximately 25%) of the health reimbursement fund so it did not have to be replenished in this budget year.

The Committee then reviewed the Budget Workbook by tabs starting with Administration and Assessing. Legal costs are down. Assessing includes the contract renewal for assessing services and Vision Annual Maintenance/web hosting costs. Community Development includes more hours for the Building Inspector. The Elections budget is based on the number of elections per year. There are not as many elections in the upcoming fiscal year, therefore the elections budget is down.

Emergency Management's budget includes a "step" increase for the Emergency Manager. Facilities includes an additional part-time temporary building maintenance technician. There was some discussion on the Public Safety Center electricity costs and amount of solar generated electricity. The Committee would like to see the costs for solar and for Until Electric broken out. It was noted that the Town does not own the solar panels. The panels have not been in operation long enough to generate enough electricity for all the Public Safety Center's needs. Under Capital Projects it was noted that the salt containment shed project would be done in conjunction with the mixing shed. The Parks and Recreation budget includes a two-car garage size building to be used for equipment storage. Finance includes increased retirement costs and cost of living increase. Technology's budget includes the cost of three additional licenses for documentation automation software. Some technology needs had been put off, but the proposed budget includes some catching up. Next year they will need to replace the server at the police department.

The Fire Department budget shows increases in retirement costs and additional hours in the Fire Inspector line in order to train a new part-time position. Under Capital Projects there are costs to replace the turnout gear which is at the end of their 10-year life span. Heritage Commission had asked for \$10,000 for engineering for a new carriage house but the Select Board reduced it. Parks and Recreation budget moves the Recreation Assistant position to the revolving fund. There was some discussion on whether the fund could be used to make building improvements.

The Police Department budget took out a part-time position to put in one full-time position. The Committee wants to see the costs related to the Police Canine, broken out into its own line item. The current canine "Roxy" is going into her 7th year and will be retiring. Public Works budget includes the increased retirement costs, cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and one new position. The custodial position has been moved to the Facilities budget. The department has caught up on their striping schedule but has money in the budget for tree removal. They are working with the utilities to coordinate dropping the trees. Town Clerk/Tax Collector budget shows them breaking even between costs and revenues. Water and Sewer budget is self-sustaining. Under Capital Budget a new capital reserve fund (CRF) is proposed for Revaluation with an \$18,000 initial contribution. The biggest hit under Revenues is interest on deposits. While State revenues are up the meals and room tax revenues are down.

IV. Other Business

There was some general discussion on how to hold the annual Town Meeting and legislation pending on that subject. Since there will be some Committee members attending remotely at the next meeting, it will be held both in person and on ZOOM.

V. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the Chair called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion:

Selectman Nicolopoulos moved to adjourn, seconded by Jeff Knight. Roll call vote: Zerba – yes; Strong-Rain – yes; Garfield – yes; Radomski – yes; Blanchette – yes; and Nicolopoulos – yes; Knight – yes.

Motion carried 7-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gilman, Recording Secretary