

**MINUTES OF ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, January 18, 2017**  
**Draft Subject to Review, Correction and Approval at Following Meeting**

**Advisory Budget Committee Members Present:** Howard Hatch, Jon Hobbs, David Joslin, Peter Conrad, Barbara Dutile and Daniel Brady

**Selectboard:** Darwin Clogston, Tom Friel and Mike Bonanno

**Town Manager:** Jo Lacaillade

**Road Agent:** Stuart McDanolds

**Call Hearing to Order:** Chairman Brady called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Chairman Brady asked for a review of the minutes from January 12<sup>th</sup>. Howard asked to speak to a couple of the budgets that were passes last week when he was not in attendance. The first one was the Trustee of Trust Funds. Howard gave an overview of how the accounts currently draw very little interest and the fees, in some cases, are higher than what is earned. He would like to see the money invested in a different manner. TM Lacaillade gave an overview of a Town Meeting vote a few years ago that gave the Trustees of Trust Funds to allow the fees to be absorbed by the funds instead of paying them through the budget and that was the direction they went. There are statutory guidelines on where the money can be invested. Barb asked who has that responsibility and the committee was advised it lies with the Trustee of Trust Funds as elected officials. There was more discussion about how it might be invested in the future or if this is anyway that it can be changed. Dan said that Howard's concerns will be noted in the minutes. Howard said that he also has concerns about the sewer lines for the business park. He has done some research and believes Woodsville should be paying for repairs to the sewer line. TM Lacaillade said that she has met with Dick Guy and they will be meeting again to try to understand who is responsible for what. Howard provided a year to look at in the Town Report that might provide answers. These minutes will reflect Howard's concern. Jon Hobbs made a motion to move the minutes; Barb Dutile seconded and the motion carried with Howard abstaining.

**Highway and Streets:** Stuart was in attendance to discuss the proposed highway budget. He gave an overview of the 2016 season and projects. He said that the big expenditure in the budget is a replacement truck. Jo reiterated that it will be the Highway Advisory Committee that reviews the needs for the new truck. There was discussion regarding the difference between the highway request for tar of \$140,000 and the Town Manager budget of \$100,000. There was discussion about the project that Stuart wanted to do which was a section of French Pond Road from the Bath end but he had not put in the money needed to do the top coat on the Clark Pond Road project that needs to be done this summer. Jon did not want to see the tar budget cut for the sake of gravel. Howard stated that there are many gravel roads in Town and for years there has been little maintenance done to them. Stuart said he will just do a smaller section of French Pond Road this year and the other section in next year. Howard voiced his concern about the timeline when gravel is put down, the time spend mowing, and that he feels there should be outside people looking at it to see how to keep things done; we have inefficient equipment and we should be hiring more out. Dan brought the discussion back to the tar line. Stuart said that the amount the Town Manager has budgeted he will finish Clark Pond Road and do a smaller section of French Pond Road. Stuart did not have any issues with the rest of the Town Manager Highway budget. Peter Conrad made a motion to approve the Town Manager Highway budget; the motion was seconded by Dave Joslin. Jon asked about the money unspent from the 2016 budget for roads. TM Lacaillade said that it will go into ending fund balance that will be used in 2017 to offset the tax rate and she had addressed that in her cover letter to the committee. There was a brief discussion regarding the projects from 2016 that will be done in 2017. There was a discussion about fuel prices and where the sand and gravel is coming from and the life span of the pit and who tracks usage. Voting yes was Peter Conrad, Dave Joslin, Dan Brady, Jon Hobbs and Barb Dutile. Howard Hatch abstained.

**Highway Department Vehicle:** There was discussion about the difference between buying the truck outright which shows in the Road Agent budget and the leasing/purchase that the Town Manager budget shows. The Town has not leases Highway vehicles in the past. Howard felt that if the Town took a regular loan on the vehicle they may get a better interest rate. Peter Conrad made a motion to approve the TM budget for the Highway vehicle. The motion was seconded by David Joslin and carried unanimously.

Stuart departed at 7:50 pm

**Town Administration:** There was discussion regarding the fact the Town Manager had not put in for the 2% raise that was given to other employees. After a brief discussion, Barb Dutile made a motion to increase the Town Manager salary by the same 2% as other employees; the motion was seconded by Dave Joslin. Howard stated that Jo's starting salary was more than the range the Board had looked at when hiring a new Town Manager. Jo said that her salary was at the same hourly rate as the former Town Manager but that it is based on a 45 hour week instead of a 40 and she works way beyond that. Jon asked how long Jo has been at the salary she is now. She stated she is making what she made when she started as interim Town Manager on March 1, 2016. The increases in 2017 are effective April 1<sup>st</sup>. Barb stated that it is about the position, not the individual. There was a call for a vote on the Town Manager salary. Voting yes was Dave Joslin, Peter Conrad, Jon Hobbs, Barb Dutile and Dan Brady. Howard Hatch voted no. David Joslin made a motion to approve the rest of the Town Administration budget; seconded by Barb Dutile. Jo stated that if they leave the 2% in their recommended budget there are other lines such as FICA, Medicare and retirement that will need to be adjusted. Dave made a motion to amend the motion to include all associated benefits and seconded by Barb. Voting yes was Dave Joslin, Peter Conrad, Jon Hobbs, Barb Dutile and Dan Brady. Howard Hatch voted no.

**Town Clerk:** There was a brief discussion about staffing and benefits. Barb Dutile made a motion to approve the Town Clerk as presented; seconded by David Joslin and carried unanimously.

**Accounting and Auditing:** There was a brief discussion about the current staffing status in this department. The staffing was short for several months in 2016 so there was a lot left in the budget but the salary line is still down from the previous year. Peter Conrad made a motion to approve the budget as presented; seconded by David Joslin and carried unanimously.

**Tax Collection:** It was clarified that the tax collection is one part time position. TM Lacaillade stated that at some point the Board may need to consider a second part time person for very limited hours as a Deputy Tax Collector, we currently do not have one. This has caused some audit issues because of deposits being made before they are entered into the computer to meet statutory guidelines. There is only one person that has working knowledge and enters data regarding taxes. David Joslin made a motion to approve the budget as presented; seconded by Peter Conrad and carried unanimously.

**Revaluation of Property:** There was a brief discussion about the contracts that fall under this line item including the property assessor, the utility assessor and the added cost of having our utility assessor attend court hearings. Barb Dutile made a motion to approve the budget as presented; seconded by Howard Hatch and carried unanimously.

**Legal Expense:** TM Lacaillade explained that the Board has been carrying over the balance of the legal budget for the past few years so she felt that with that carryover or \$35,000, the \$25,000 budget request should be adequate. Jon Hobbs made a motion to approve the Legal Expense budget as presented; seconded by Barb Dutile and carried unanimously.

There was a brief discussion about the request from Rich Clifford for a stipend for his equipment to plow and sand the JRM, CMB and Railroad Park lots. There were suggestions that the stipend would work better and others felt that a per plow method should be considered. Howard wanted to discuss the heating and cooling

system in the JRM building. Dan thought that the budget committee could recommend to the Board that they try to study options for improving these systems. It was suggested that some of the utility companies might come and provide a review of the building. Jon suggested that the budget committee put a line item in for a study. TM Lacaillade said if they want to increase the budget and make sure that the money stays in a place that can only be used for the building, they should consider increasing the Building Capital Reserve Fund because that does not get used for anything other than the purpose it was established for. A \$10,000 figure was discussed for this purpose. Barb felt that we would not have to pay for an audit; we could just have people come in review the building and give us suggestions and costs to review. It was suggested that we research grant money that might be available for an energy audit. The budgets were tabled for both the Clifford Memorial Bldg. and the JRM building until some further information could be gathered from Rich and they have time to think about the heating/ac issue.

Barb Dutile made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 pm; the motion was seconded by Howard Hatch and carried unanimously.

Minutes transcribed by Jo Lacaillade