

**Town of Haverhill Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2020**

Draft Subject to Review by the Committee

Members of the Committee Present: Sandi Pierce, Wayne Fortier, Robert Roudebush, Don Hammond, John Hobbs, David Robinson, Chris Luurtsema

Town Employees Present: Jennifer Boucher, Finance Officer & Sherri Sargent, Parks and Recreation Director

Members of the Public Present: Philip Courtier and Liz Bane

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM

Business:

Motion 1: Robert made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the January 21st, 24th, and 29th meetings. Don seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Court Street Arts: Phillip Courtier was present and introduced himself as the Interim Director of Court Street Arts. Philip talked a bit about the love people have for working at Court Street Arts. The Treasurer of Court Street Arts, Liz Bane, talked a bit about the different events they put on there. She stated that usually don't charge people fees but will every so often to covering things like cleaning. They do a lot of fundraises to try and bring in the money they didn't get from the events. Haverhill Heritage Inc runs Court Street Arts and is currently working on the Wentworth Brown project and they are using Grant money for that project. The Town thought that Court Street Arts would be self-sustaining. There is a question of whether this will eventually happen. Liz stated that they will always need contributions from Grants and Private Owners and over the year they have asked less of the Town. The Brown House is a separate entity from Court Street Arts and is specifically through private donations. It was suggested that Haverhill Heritage Inc. create a strategic plan for future finances, such as going to other nearby towns.

Motion 2: Robert made a motion to accept the proposed warrant article with the amount of \$8,500. The motion was seconded, and it passed 4-1.

Parks and Recreation: Sherri Sargent, Parks & Recreation Director explained many of the different experiences and opportunities that Parks and Rec has brought to the Town. Parks and Rec also does a lot of fundraising to try and take the burden off the taxpayers. There was a question about the Director Wages. Sherri received an increase at the end of 2019 and that is the 4% increase they are seeing. Sherri was asked to speak to the assistant position and wages. Sherri would like to put on more events on the weekend and offer more to the community, but she doesn't have enough time in her life to without eliminating vacations. So, this position would help to accomplish those goals. Last year the lifeguards and counselors pay schedule was revamped because it was hard to get people to come back. 10 or 11 lifeguards and 12 counselors. Lifeguards work around 32 to 35 hours for 10 weeks. HARP participation is steady. Sherri continued to answer more questions about the bare bones of the Parks and Recs operations. The revenue itself has been flat. Sherri has been underpaid for many years, and so the raises may look big, but she is still being underpaid. Others are underpaid and are also receiving pay raises.

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Motion 3: John is moving to recommend the total Parks and Rec Budget of \$146,060. Robert seconded the motion and it passed 4-2 with one abstention.

Health Insurance: The current plan is aged-based, and it is not a flat rate. So, if the family dynamic changes the rate fluctuates. With the new plan it is a flat rate no matter what. Last year started with 40 and went to 46 people covered. There will be 49 on the plan in this new budget year. The deductible will still be \$1000 per person; but the HRA and the Town contributions to the FSAs will be eliminated. Currently, the Town is covering anything from \$1000 to \$5000 on the deductibles. Money was put into an expendable trust fund for that and will be closed out and the money will go to pay for anything for the first 6 months. No money will be added to the budget. The cost per plan here will be more costly than the cost per plan last year. There is no premium payment from Town Employees and there hasn't been one in past years. The board wants to know if more research can be done on having employees pitch in on the premiums. Ms. Boucher said that different plans can be investigated, but they want to do what is best for their employees. Darwin Clogston, Select Board Chair stated that if anyone formally was to ask for research, he trusted that the current Town Administration would certainly get it done.

Motion 4: Chris made a motion to recommend the line item for the benefits otherwise not allocated with the suggestion that the Selectboard review possible scenarios as they see fit to help mitigate and reduce this line item. A committee member seconded, and the motion passed 5-2.

Legal: The committee would like to know what the \$50,000 is for. It was stated that with continuing negotiations with Woodsville legal advice would be needed. So, the Town put money into the legal budget to cover any expenses incurred. Also, there are utilities lawsuits statewide, Haverhill included, which is on-going. The money can be carried forward every year if not spent.

Motion 5: John made a motion to recommend the \$50,000. Chris seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IT Budget Section:

Motion 6: A committee member made a motion to approve the IT budget as recommended by the Town Manager. A separate member seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Planning Board: Looking at 2019 and now it seemed to double from \$7,000 to \$14,000. The biggest increase is in the professional services. The master plan is being rewritten for \$11,000 and it must be written every ten years. The North Country Council is now helping. Also, Chris recalled a discussion about the planning board clerk responsibilities be adjusted and a new employee taking it on. The Planning Clerk duties will be transitioning to the new employee completely soon.

Motion 7: A committee member made a motion to approve the planning board grand total. Robert seconded the motion. The motion was put to a vote and it passed unanimously.

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Zoning Board:

Motion 8: A committee member made a motion to accept the zoning board line items for \$626. Robert seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Chris had to leave the meeting at 7:42 PM.

Cemetery Budget Section:

Motion 9: Don made a motion to recommend the cemetery budget. Sandi seconded the motion. There are one or two years left on the contract. The motion was put to a vote and it passed unanimously.

Insurance not otherwise allocated:

Motion 10: Don made a motion to recommend these line items for \$2,000. Sandi seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Regional Associations:

Motion 11: Robert made a motion to recommend the budget associated with regional association at \$8,909. Don seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Business Park: The budget section for the Business Park has gone down. It was added that this is because a lot of fees have been moved to the new pump station category.

Motion 12: Robert made a motion to recommend the \$500 for the business park. David seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Emergency Management:

Motion 13: Sandi made a motion to recommend the line items for emergency management at a total of \$18,927 as recommended by the Town Manager. Robert seconded the motion. There was a question about the increase in budget and it was much higher. This year money has been put in for the clean-up of a hazardous site. There is already a lean on the property and another lean will be added to it to cover the additional costs. TM Codling is currently the acting emergency management director and Sherri will not be filling that position. The motion was put to a vote and it passed unanimously.

Health Officer:

Motion 14: Robert made a motion to recommend the amount of \$5,397 for the health officer. Sandi seconded the motion. The position has yet to be filled and TM Codling is currently filling the position. The motion was put to a vote and it passed unanimously.

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General Assistance: Leslie left from the position and Amanda Murtaugh took over. Amanda also works in the Police Department. Taking both positions now makes her a full-time employee so the cost of benefits goes up and that is reflected in the budget.

Motion 15: Don made a motion to recommend the amount of \$64,764 for General Assistance. Sandi seconded the motion and it passed 5-0. David abstained.

Patriotic Purposes:

Motion 16: John made a motion to recommend the amount \$ 2,500 for patriotic purposes. Robert seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Heritage Commission: There is no budget for the Heritage Commission because the commission is non-active and being decommissioned. There was a move to legally disband the Heritage Commission and allow the Historical Society to take the lead, but there was not enough time to get the required number of signatures on the petition this year. Responsibility of Hazen Park and the Caboose are now with the Parks & Recreation Department.

Motion 17: A committee member made a motion to recommend an allocation \$1,500 for the Haverhill Heritage Commission. The motion was seconded. The money, if it goes to them, goes into an account for them to use when needed. That account will stay active until the committee is disbanded. There currently may be funds currently in the account. There are currently not enough people for a quorum, with one member. **The motion was withdrawn.**

Conservation Commission:

Motion 18: Robert made a motion to recommend the \$100 for the conservation commission. Sandi seconded the motion. In 2019 the doubled the budget because there was no payment in 2018. So, they doubled the amount in 2019. The motion was put to a vote and it passed unanimously.

Economic Development for Lower Cohase Chamber of commerce: The money is for paying dues.

Motion 19: David made a motion to recommend the amount of \$1,150. Wayne seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Debt Service: The committee asked what the \$48,888 is for. Most of it goes to pay the last payment on the sewer line.

Motion 20: Robert made a motion to recommend the \$48,888. Sandi seconded the motion and it passed 5-0 with one abstention.

Capital Reserves:

\$200,000 is going straight to the French Pond Road project and not into the Capital Reserve fund.

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Clark Pond Road Bridge Construction: 75% of the cost will come from FEMA. The remaining 25% usually 80% comes from the state, but that is not happening this time. There have been many projects done on roads. Now that the three major roads (French Pond, Lilly Pond, and Clark Pond), the Board is looking at what other roads need work. The money has been allocated to different jobs so it should go directly to the work instead of the Capitol Reserve Trust Fund. This would be rather than going to the trust fund and being immediately pulled out. **None of this money for the project will come out of taxes.**

Capitol Reserve Fire Vehicles:

Motion 21: Don made a motion wants to adjust the line item 0149152096 to \$60,000 instead of \$20,000. Sandi seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Cruisers: There is a question about why the Town needs another cruiser. This cruiser would be an unmarked vehicle that would be used by the detective and by other officers who are on their way to training. Donnie asked why there was need for 4. The Committee explained the previous stated use for a 4th. Don suggested they turn the 3rd cruiser into an unmarked vehicle, which would be cheaper and quicker.

Motion 22: Don made a motion to reconsider the purchase of a new cruiser and postpone it for one year. John seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Capitol Reserve Buildings:

Motion 23: Sandi made a motion to recommend \$20,000 for the capitol reserve buildings. Robert seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

HEEC Cellular Broadband Expansion: Why is the Town Manager cutting it in half. TM Codling had stated that she and the HEEC are working to acquire a rural development grant for \$25,000 which would cover the feasibility study. If the grant does not get approved the \$25,000 in her budget would cover the cost. If they got the grant, then the money would sit in a reserve for future work. Without the feasibility study there is no clear path this project will follow and no idea as to how much money the group may need. TM felt this was something that needed to be investigated further and that would take time. The project is intended to be for the expansion of both internet and cell service. TM Codling said there wasn't a enough of a plan at this time. Members of the Committee said that creating the plan required money. The participants in creating this plan will be seeking money from donations and grants as well as the Town's money.

Motion 24: John made a motion that the committee recommend the original \$50,000. Sandi seconded the motion. TM Codling reiterated that the Town will be applying for a rural development grant. \$25,000 will cover the feasibility study and if they don't get the grant then they will know exactly how much money they need. The motion was put to a vote and it passed 4-0 with one abstention.

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French Pond and Clark Pond Road:

Motion 25: John made a motion to recommend the French pond road line items in the amounts of \$550,000 and \$635,530. Robert seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Airport improvement:

Motion 26: Robert made a motion to recommend the proposed for airport improvement plan \$240,000. \$230,000 will come from a grant and \$1,1000 will come from donation. Sandi seconded the motion. The improvements will be safety improvements and land studies. The motion was put to a vote and it passed unanimously.

Credit Card Reader Fuel Farm:

Motion 27: Sandi made a motion to recommend the \$25,000 for the reader. Robert seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Selectboard:

Motion 28: John made a motion to increase the Selectboard pay from \$1,500 to \$3,000 per Selectboard per year. Robert seconded the motion. The current Selectboard will benefit from it. There was question if the Selectboard could even bring this forward but no one else will because they are their own bosses. The motion was put to a vote and it passed unanimously.

Second Chance Animal Rescue:

Motion 29: John made a motion to recommend the \$1,500 for second chance. Robert seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Capitol Reserve Fund – Highway Reconstruction:

Motion 30: John made a motion to make a suggestion to appropriate \$100,000 for the reserve fund. It is less than has been done, but it is more than \$0.00. Don seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Motion 31: John made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sandi seconded the motion. The committee is done and doesn't need another meeting. David will get a rough report to the Selectboard of what they changed. The motion was put to a vote and it passed unanimously.

Minutes Provided by Alex Collins