

MINUTES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BUDGET MEETING
Town Hall

November 10, 2020
5:15 PM

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Leo Enos, Shane Beattie

Budget Committee Members Present: Jon Gainer, Keith Kopp, Herb Richardson, Tricia Frenette, John Eddy, Rick Bernier, Leo Rideout, Jr., Dana Southworth

Others in attendance: Town Manager Edward Samson, Finance Director Michael Nadeau, Fire Chief Randy Flynn, Asst. Chief Ted Joubert, Asst. Chief Michael Kopp, Benjamin Gaetjens-Oleson, Charity Baker, Rob Christie

Board of Selectmen Chairman opened the meeting at 5:17 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Leo Enos asked what the Fire department had to present with regards to the 2021 budget. Ted mentioned what they are presenting is the 1,750,000 budget which was previously discussed at both Selectmen and Budget meetings. Leo stated the change in staffing can't start effective January 1st because the budget will not be approved at that time. Ted expressed the staffing is going to change effective January 1st because they cannot continue to work the part-time staff the current number of hours being worked. It is up to the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee to decide how they should move forward. If we don't hire the full-time people effective January 1st, they will not be able to continue taking transfers as they have been.

Shane feels it wasn't clear that the process was going to start in January. He thought Ed said he wanted to start cutting back in October. It was mentioned that was discussed but realized it was not feasible and the plan was then to start January 1st and has been that way during the previous discussions. Several budget committee members asked if the change should begin after town meeting once the budget was approved. It was explained that staffing needs to change January 1st so the department needs some direction before then.

Leo Enos asked if currently we are upside down by \$350,000, and it was explained that this year we are solvent however, effective January 1st if the full-time staff is not hired, they will not be able to keep up with the number of transfers and they will lose income. He asked if this issue occurred by mismanagement or someone not paying attention to staffing. It is believed that is not the case.

Herb said, he contacted the department of labor and he was told that the Town of Lancaster has not contacted them about paying stipends so they have not made any ruling that what they are doing is not legal.

Ed stated it wasn't the stipends that was solely the issue, it was the number of hours that were encompassed by the stipend trips. They were working more hours than a part-time employee is allowed.

Keith asked how many employees they could maintain keeping them all part-time. Ted stated if we went 911 only then they could probably keep all the part-timers because they would work their 24 hour shift then go elsewhere to make more money.

Tricia asked if there really would be large difference in the first 3 months where we have been paying out a large amount of wages already for the hours they have been working by stipends.

Ben explained it is all theoretical, but a decision needs to be made on whether the ambulance service is going to do what they can to cover transfers or to do 911 calls only.

Ted explained it is also about the affordable care act. We have many working over the 32 hours a week due to the number of transfers they are taking.

Keith asked if there was any happy medium and if we could cut back on the number of full-time hires. Ed feels 2 additional full-timers to take up the extra hours that the part timers were working and keep your part timers covering transfers.

It was asked what the rate of pay was for the part-time employees.

EMT - \$12.50

AEMT - \$14.50

Paramedic - \$25.00

It was mentioned that is to cover town, not doing transfers.

There was much discussion regarding different scenarios and what will work best for the taxpayer. Shane mentioned the Board of Selectmen gave the department the direction they wanted to see presented to the budget committee which were the scenarios with the 6 new full-time employees and only 911 calls.

It was asked if they would need to increase the number of ambulances to the fleet in order to keep 6 new full-time employees going. Ted said they will not need to increase the fleet, adding 6 full-time employees is to keep the department functioning as it is now, taking the number of transfers they are already maintaining if not more.

Ben explained that Randy and Ted will manage whatever budget they are given.

Tricia said if they chose to go with 4 new full-time employees instead of 6, it is not going to be enough to continue covering all the calls and transfers, then they will be working overtime and making time & half. She feels it would be more practical to pay 6 at straight pay.

John asked where the stipend money comes from and it was explained it is in the budget however, the issue is they can no longer be paid by stipends because they are going over in the number of hours worked.

Keith asked if any of the budget committee members would like to see any of the plans in between. Keith said an in-between plan is something that Ed has also suggested.

Dana asked if they have projected what will happen over the next several years. Ted stated they have and when the plans were originally presented to the Board of Selectmen it was presented that the deficit is projected to lessen over time.

Leo Rideout, Jr. asked if the Board of Selectmen has looked at alternatives to offset the increase we will see with the change. He suggested taking money out of capital reserve. Ed explained the capital reserve funds are for specific purposes and they have been underfunded for the last several years.

Rick asked since we are not going to buy an ambulance next year can we use the money in the fund balance to help toward the deficit being proposed.

Tricia asked if they thought there would be a possibility of making more revenue. Ted explained just because you give them the \$1.75 million budget doesn't mean it will all be spent. Ted does feel that after 3 years they will break even or at least minimize the deficit.

Keith asked if they could see projected numbers for hiring 2 full-time employees instead of 6. Ted said he will do his best to work up the figures and get them out to the committee members for their review.

The budget discussion ended and Ed had a couple items that needed to be discussed with the Board of Selectmen.

Ed presented the board with the proposal for services from Wayno's Rubbish services for 2021. The cost is going to increase from \$900 a week to \$975 a week.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Leo to accept the proposal from Wayno's for curbside rubbish removal. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ed mentioned the only bid he received for the handicap ramp project at Col. Town was from Bruno MacKenzie. Leo asked if Jim Dubreuil was asked to bid on the project and Ed said he was and Jim stated he is currently busy and can't take on the job at this time. Bruno is going to build a pressure treated ramp.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Leo to hire Bruno MacKenzie to build the handicap ramp at Col. Town with funds to come from the Municipal Aid money accepted at the November 2, 2020 Selectmen's meeting.

Ed stated the meeting with the department heads and Board to discuss the 2021 budget will be Wednesday, November 18th.

Motion made by Shane and seconded by Leo to adjourn. All in favor. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charity M Baker

Board of Selectmen

Date: _____

Leo Enos

Leon Rideout

Shane Beattie