

Hope Budget Committee Meeting

Minutes of Meeting

March 7, 2022

Present: Mike Schultz, John Jensen, Bill Pearse, Jr, John Monroe, Wendy Pelletier, Samantha Mank, Sarah Ann Smith, Bruce Haffner, Beth Gindel

Present by Zoom: Theresa Withee & Rick Bresnahan

Meeting called to order @ 6:34

Election of Officers for coming year,

Chairman – Nomination of Bill Pearse, Jr, 2nd, unanimously approved

Vice-Chairman – Nomination of John Jensen, 2nd, unanimously approved

Secretary – Nomination of Betty Ingraham, 2nd, unanimously approved

Recreation Budget - Rick Bresnahan

Discussion centered around the fact that Rick the past 2 years has asked for \$1,000 a year to be used towards a total cost in a year 3 term of \$3,000, and while this current budget has the next \$1,000 installment, the previous 2 year \$1,000 allocations have lapsed to surplus. Discuss was rather to carry forward the \$1,000 each year prior to the 3rd year when the funds would be actually spent.

Rick said that within the next 5 years will need to rototill and level the field. Also, next year will have to discuss paving the parking lot.

Cemeteries Budget – Beth Gindel

Discussion of the cost for removal of remaining trees hanging out over the head stones. Question of why last year budget showed \$8,000 and this year shows a request of \$12,000 for tree removal. Why the increase. It was pointed out that at the June Town Meeting, the amount to be raised was adjusted to come up to a total of \$12,000 for the current year. Some of this increase came from the Cemetery Maintenance Fund and the rest from surplus.

There are 10 trees to be removed, each of significant size and height. Beth and others have gone thru and removed some of the undergrowth so as to hold down the cost.

Discuss rather it made sense to rebid the work, as the current budget was a quote from the contractor that was used last year. It was suggested with the hope that the price might come in lower.

Also, since this line has increased in the budget request by \$2,324 it was pointed out that no funds are budgeted to be taken from the Cemetery Maintenance Fund which has a balance of \$7,314.95. Maybe the increase could come out of the Maintenance Fund.

Roads Budget – John Monroe

We're in the 2nd year of a 5-year snow removal contract.

Budgeting \$18/yard for sand and \$16/yard for salt. Unsure if these numbers will hold given the current increase in fuel costs.

Paving this year was to be High Street but John couldn't get the right size and type of culvert delivered this year and unsure if it will be available in the coming year. Also, question was whether there were fish in the water way that this culvert served, thus requires more review and comment from DEP.

2022/2023 will show paving the 1 mile previously unpaved stretch of road on Alford Lake Road. This area was previously passed over as the road wasn't in that bad of shape and thought it would last 5 years or more before needed repaving, which it did.

Budget is for \$87 a ton for asphalt, unsure if this price can be obtained given current oil costs.

New Line Item – Storm Damage

Spent \$107,000 in storm repairs caused by the fall of 2021 storms. This amount has been submitted to the State as part of a State wide request for FEMA Funding. It was believed that the request would be funded, but might not receive the actual funds until next fiscal year. Concern was that the Road Commissioner is capped on the amount that he can overspend the budget by. That rate is 15% and the \$107,000 on its own is more than the 15%, estimated to be around \$78,000. Selectmen may have to ask special permission at Town Meeting in asking for this over spend. It was noted that there was \$20,000 estimated to be remaining in the paving and emergency road repair funds, which would reduce the \$107,000 thus maybe getting this below the 15% cap.

Also, the current proposed budget includes another \$54,000 in add'l storm damage that will need to be down this spring. This cost may be available for reimbursement from FEMA as well. Need to keep this in mind when Budget Committee makes their recommendation, as the \$54,000 is in expenses of the Budget, but the \$54,000 potentially coming from FEMA is not.

Meeting Schedule:

A review of the meeting schedule was done and adjusted to accommodate the school. (Afterward the school said it was not sure if could meet that schedule, so the meeting schedule will need to be revisited again.)

What was approved was:

3/14/22 – Public Safety – Fire Department, Ambulance, Animal Control, Street Lights, Sanitation

3/21/22 – Town Administration – Town Payroll, General Admin, Municipal Bldg, Professional Fees, General Assistance, Reserves

3/28/22 – School

4/4/22 – Open Date

4/11/22 – Budget Committee Round Table

4/14/22 – Budget Committee Final Vote

General Discussion about ambulance coverage and cost in surrounding communities and in the Town of Hope.

No further discussion motion made to adjourn, 2nd and unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM.