

Town of Tuftonboro
Budget Committee Meeting
December 19, 2023

Present: Rob Roriston, Gary Chehames, David Dauphinais, Brendan Gaughran, Jeff Reisner, Chris Sawyer, and Selectman Albee, also present were Selectman Murray, Selectman Pike and Town Administrator Fraizer

Chairman Roriston called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

It was determined there was a quorum followed by the pledge of allegiance.

There was no public input.

Approvals: Chairman Roriston pointed out one error in the December 5th minutes under Cemetery comments. Chris Sawyer made a motion to accept the minutes of December 5, 2023 as amended. The motion was seconded by Brandon Gaughran. The motion passed 5-0-2 (G Chehames and J Reisner abstained).

Chairman Roriston Comments: Chairman Roriston discussed his concern with the growth of the budget for 2024. Year to date, only 2/3 of the budgets have been considered and escalation over 2023 is up 9.4%.

Budget Items for Approval

The **4220 Fire Department (FD)** budget was held from December 5th for discussion. Chairman Roriston invited Fire Chief Thompson into the discussion. Chairman Roriston is concerned with the growth rate of the Fire Department being sustainable with a growth rate of 11% per year. The discussion turned to holiday pay for the employees. Chief Thompson asked what he should do if an employee works a holiday. Holidays are a benefit and are part of the salary line. If a person is required (i.e. is called out to a fire) then they are paid for both the holiday and the work hours at straight time. The Chief can also allow the employee to take an alternate day off. The Budget Committee reiterated they are responsible to present a sound, fiscally responsible budget to the residents. Both Chris and Jeff commented that the discussion and decisions are not personal. Chris was able to point out trends where the FD shift coverage was high. There was also discussion about the needs of the community and how it is changing.

Chairman Roriston made a motion to reduce the FD Holiday Pay to \$0, reduce shift coverage from the BoS recommendation of \$45,000 by \$1,848 for a total FD Budget of \$668,176. The motion was seconded by Gary Chehames for discussion. Gary felt the line item could be removed or called something else. Selectman Albee explained that line items could not be omitted for a couple of years as the historical figures have to total. Chairman Roriston call the vote. The motion passed (7-0).

4550 Library Chairman Roriston made a motion to approve the library budget in the amount of \$237,075. The motion was seconded by Chris Sawyer. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Presentation of Budget Items for Consideration:

At 7:20 p.m. Jim Bean presented the **4312 Highway and Streets** proposed budget. He discussed the jobs that occur in each season. The cost of materials continues to rise. Over the past year, the Town

experienced four (4) major storm events which contributed to the high expenses. Chairman Roriston explained it is difficult to get a full understanding without some details and asked Mr. Bean to compile some actual expenses from 2023. It was agreed that the sand and salt usage would be researched. David Dauphinais has concerns that the 2024 budget is overcompensating for the events of 2023. Chairman Roriston brought up the use of a contingency fund for storm events. He also asked for a paving analysis for the past 3 years.

At 7:48 p.m. Police Chief Shagoury presented the **4210 Police Department (PD)** budget. The department has not changed in many years. He has done research into what attracts new officers and described his ideal future of the PD would be to hire a 4th officer as soon as possible, a 5th officer in the summer, and 6th officer in December. This would allow the department to manned 24 x 7 reducing the on-call night rotation. However, the BoS reduced the PD budget to 4 officers. There was discussion about the onboarding of a new officer, the process takes between 8 months to one year. The police academy is 4 months long and the field training takes 3 months. There was discussion about the holiday coverage for the PD being necessary to have the streets patrolled during the holidays. Uniforms and body armor need replacing in 2024 and will have to be acquired for the new officer. In new equipment the Chief is requesting to purchase night vision equipment which is less expensive than renting over time.

Budget Items for Approval

Chairman Roriston called for a vote on each of the following budgets:

4191 Planning in the amount of \$28,733. Chris Sawyer made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Brandon Gaughran. The motion passed unanimously.

4191 Zoning Board of Adjustment in the amount of \$4,650. Jeff Reisner made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Brandon Gaughran. The motion passed unanimously.

4195 Cemeteries in the amount of \$33,350. Chris Sawyer made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Jeff Reisner. The motion passed unanimously.

4612 Conservation Commission in the amount of \$22,600. Gary Chehames made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by David Dauphinais. The motion passed unanimously.

4711 Long Term Bond & Notes in the amount of \$153,710.29. David Dauphinais made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Gary Chehames. The motion passed unanimously.

4723 Interest on Long Term Bond & Notes in the amount of \$15,309.54. Chris Sawyer made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Brandon Gaughran. The motion passed unanimously.

4290 Emergency Management in the amount of \$19,710. Jeff Reisner made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded by Brandon Gaughran. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Budget Items for Consideration:

4196 Insurance in the amount of \$88,205. The PRIMEX quotes were attached for Worker's Compensation, Property & Casualty Insurance, and Unemployment Compensation. It was asked if insurance is put out to bid. Selectmen Albee replied it was not for 2024, there are very few firms that cover municipal insurance.

4415 Health Agencies in the amount of \$41,241. A letter of request from each agency was sent to the Town. Health Agencies provide local support to residents that Town cannot provide on it's own (i.e. Meals on Wheels).

4313 Docks and Bridges in the amount of \$5,000 is a small sum for repairs and maintenance of docks and bridges as needed from year to year.

Board of Selectman's (BoS) Update

Selectman Albee brought the Budget Committee up to date on the Warrant Articles the Board of Selectmen are considering for 2024. They include a property purchase, Town road paving, extending the Town Garage. The Board of Selectmen only have a couple of budgets remaining to review.

Selectman Albee discussed self-financing the solar project from the Town's unassigned fund balance.

At 8:37 p.m. Chris Sawyer made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Gary Chehames. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Fraizer