

Town Of Groton, Vermont – Budget Meeting Minutes, November 7, 2015 (Approved)

The duly warned Budget Meeting of November 7, 2015 was held at the Groton Community Building, 1476 Scott Highway.

Attendance for the meeting included: Lisa Hart, Carrie Peters, Linda Nunn, and Dan Robinson.

The Following Selectboard Members were in attendance: Peter Lyon, Andrew Dorsett, and Mary Grant

The Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM

Fire Department/Emergency Services:

Wayne Knott, Dorothy Knott, Brent Smith

Ambulance Contract – budgeting \$15,000, actual is unknown

Dispatch, unknown if there will be an increase – budgeting \$2000

Dues expected to increase to \$1300

Emergency Services Vehicle fund up from \$16,000 to \$20,000

Forest Fire Expenses – Level Funded

Lisa recommended separating out the Mileage and Training into separate lines for the rest of the department and will be asking all departments to do the same. Not all travel is related to training and this will make it easier for department heads to manage.

Mileage reimbursement rates need to be adjusted to current municipal rates.

Chief Knott want to report to the Selectboard that today's training was conducted by State Trainers and was at no cost to the Department and the department members were attending with no pay. He also informed the Board that his department tracks "no pay" training hours performed.

Select Board Note – Funds from the sale of the old fire truck will be placed in the department reserve fund.

Law Enforcement:

Budget was covered at the Nov 5th Select Board meeting. Andrew reported that he was continuing to look for grant money that would help offset the cost of both the radar sign and communications equipment. He also asked other board members for recommendations in regards to the 2nd Constable position.

Auditors:

Peter reported that the Auditors were level funding their budget. Linda Nunn mentioned printing and distribution changes made by the State which could decrease the cost of the town report. Peter said that he would check with the printer and see if the contract allowed for adjustments to the number of copies printed.

The select Board is considering eliminating the Town Auditors positions in favor of utilizing an auditing firm.

Town Clerk:

Linda Nunn reported that she would need to increase Balloting Clerk wages due to the increase in elections. BMU budget votes in the past couple years have caused the line to increase.

Wages for an alternate Town Clerk have been a challenge. By the time the alternate is trained there is no money left to pay wages when the alternate is need to perform Town Clerk duties. Mary Grant suggested that perhaps working with the Assistant Treasurer to give her some training time while she is not busy with the Treasurer, would work out and give her an alternate that is already familiar with some of the Town Clerks duties.

Dues to various municipal organizations are seeing increases this year, phone/internet costs increased this year due to adding a dedicated line for the fax machine.

Linda said that she wanted to create a separate line for IT support and fund it at \$1000. She reported that currently that support is being done as volunteer work by Gary Lamberton and he has put in a lot of weekly hours keeping the IT infrastructure of the town offices running and has always made himself available for support over the phone. The Select Board wanted to discuss the issue further. Peter indicated that there was a lot of volunteer work that is done at the town offices and Community Building and he didn't want this to set a precedence where other volunteers would expect to be paid.

Planning Commission and Zoning:

Planning Commission is putting \$7629.00 into their budget however they are requesting grant monies to cover this line. The Select Board stated that this may need to be worked into the budget if there is no grant available. Zoning budget was level funded.

Listers:

Kitty Diggins Submitted her Budget showing decreases in mileage, dues and supplies, with anticipated increases in NEMRC support. Mileage increase was due to property checks. She also moved \$1600 from reserve to Tax Map Maintenance. Her total budget had an increase of 1.07% well below the target of 1.75%

Treasurer:

Lisa reported to date her health insurance money is to go to Asst Treasurer wages. Her budget will be level funded with the exception of the above \$8000. Training set at \$1600 and Mileage \$200. Peter had a question during the discussion on accrued leave. The consensus was that employees have accrued leave and elected officials have current year only. Peter said there needs to be a policy for managing leave and the Board will consult Town Legal and make a motion at the next Select Board Meeting.

Delinquent Tax Collector:

Is currently under Budget but the Current Tax year has just ended so she is anticipating being on budget at year's end. This budget will be level funded.

Highway:

Brent reported culverts were up \$3000.00, the town has smaller culverts that need to be brought up to the 24" standard, Sand is down \$2500.00. 2016 is the gravel crushing year planning on 5000 yds @\$5.00 per yd for \$20,000.00. Gasoline and diesel cost are both down. Highway equipment reserve is up \$585 (annual increase) Highway Infrastructure reserve is up \$15,000.00 for Boulder Beach (bridge 26) AOT grant invert repair & Railroad Street culvert upgrade. Highway paving reserve up \$10,500.00 paving Branch Brock Rd \$18,500.00 and Glover Rd \$22,000 and there is a good chance Groton may be in line for a class 2 paving grant in 2016. The Select Board asked Lisa to move Sidewalks into the Highway and asked Brent to review that budget and make recommendations at the next Select Board meeting. Brent wanted to express his appreciation for Peter's assistance on the Ricker Mills Road project. Peter stated that his only assistance was on the contract, that the project was successful because of the coordination between the contractor and Highway department.

General discussion ensued in reference to storage of the Tractor used for mowing and clearing sidewalks. It is currently in the firehouse and will need to be moved. A suggestion was made to check the structural integrity of the pump house and determine whether or not it would be an option of moving the pump house in the proximity of the firehouse and rehabbing it for that purpose or if an addition on the back of the community building was a better option. The Select Board agreed to do research into the various alternatives.

Parks and Fields:

Lisa suggested combining gas, diesel and propane into one line, putting \$100 into repairs and level fund the remaining lines.

Building Committee: Linda submitted an estimate to have the front wall of her office refurbished to add insulation, remove an unused air conditioner and update the walls. Estimate total was \$1942. The Select Board asked that she relook the estimate to include an electrician to inspect and update wiring and outlets and that she would need a plumber to reset the baseboard heat after the new wall was completed. Linda agreed and would resubmit when completed. Lisa covered the budget for a cleaning contract. She wanted to see the original contract and suggested that be researched and perhaps put out to bid as an annual contract at a fair price. The Treasurer and Town Clerk agreed to work with the Building Committee to build a budget.

Library:

The Library's budget will be presented at a later date.

Tree Warden:

Level funded. Select board suggested funds may be reallocated to Linda's office wall rehab.

Recreation:

Level Funded. Select Board asked that any possible non-expenditures be reallocated to lines that may be short.

Animal Control and Health Officer:

Level funded. The Town clerk mentioned the Animal Control officer completed a dog survey for Danville during 2015 which resulted in adding over 100 dogs to the town's register bringing in significant revenue. Linda said she would like to complete a dog survey for the Town of Groton in 2016. This line could be funded with half the revenue received from the survey.

Cemetery:

Deb Jurist asked for an increase of \$1500.00 to help offset the cost of hiring a professional firm to straighten and restore broken headstones. The Select Board asked that she do a survey of other towns in the area to see if Groton cemetery fees are comparable and update the fee schedule for the town. This would cover the cost of the budget increase and help support perpetual care.

Select Board and Miscellaneous:

The Select Board asked the Treasurer with the assistance of the Select Board Secretary and Town Clerk to produce a master schedule of fees.

Lisa asked what account the Building Committee Secretary wages come from. The Board answered The Community Building fund which has wages associated with it.

The Board also discussed the Assistant Treasurer wages and the possibility of establishing a part time Select Board Administrative Assistant position.

The Treasurer asked the Select Board when they would like her to distribute their stipend, all agreed on November, Peter designated his stipend to the Memory Wall, Mary designated hers to the rehab of the wall in the Town Clerks office.

Select Board Meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm.

Minutes prepared by Dan Robinson, Select Board Secretary