

Chichester Board of Selectmen

Minutes of Meeting

Tuesday February 6, 2024

Members Present: Edward Millette, Richard Bouchard, and Jodi Pinard Town Administrator, Kristy Jobin Administrative Assistant

Advisory Budget Committee Members Present: Frand Swirko, Don Peterman, Corie St. Germain, Tara Blaney, and Marlene Hammond.

Others present: Brenda Boswak, Caroline Pynes, Mardy Friary, Doug Hall, Carolee Davison, Kathy Doult, Cy Auries, Richard and Sandra Millette, Donna Chagnon, Zack Boyajian, Tom Downey, Chief Wright, Chief Quimby, Evelyn Pike, Dan the man, Craig Sykes, Phil Royce and other members of the public.

Mr. Millette stated that the expenses have increased \$177,000. He stated that some significant increase came from health insurance which is up \$18,000, NH retirement \$19,000 and property liability is up \$17,000. Merrimack County Dispatch also has an increase of \$9,000 and Capital Mutual Aid up \$1200. The IT contract increased \$11,000. The loader payment also moved into the operating budget and road reconstruction is up \$30,000. The Police Department cruiser is up \$23,500.

The total operating budget is up \$262,000.

The Boards looked at warrant articles which have come down \$100,000 from the original ask.

The Board has proposed a 3% salary increase for employees. COLA this year is 3.2%

The bottom line of the budget is up \$105,000 reflecting an approximate .19 increase.

Mr. MacKinnon went through the budget line by line. The total proposed operating budget is 3,440,635.00.

Mr. MacKinnon went through the warrant articles.

Mrs. Pike asked about warrant article number 8, as the figures did not match.

Mrs. Pinard will adjust that correct amount to \$118,750.

Bob Mann- Hook Cemetery.

Mr. Mann asked about the damage which was caused by the D.O.T. plow trucks. Who is responsible for restoring the cemetery to good condition before taking it over?

Mrs. Boswak stated that the cemetery was damaged by an intoxicated driver who fled the state. No money was recouped. The intention is to restore it with a list of repairs and will get prioritized.

Mr. Boyajian-Revenues. It appears that there are no federal resources coming in, what did the Town lose?

Mrs. Pinard stated that the Town put in for a grant for the forestry truck and had tried three times and the Town did not get awarded any funds so the anticipated funds were removed.

Mr. Boyajian also asked why no capital reserve money was going into Parks and Rec and stated his concern for the long term when repairs come up. He stated that there are CIP submissions that would be supported by that account.

Mr. Millette stated that The Board did not receive a request for Parks and Rec.

Mr. Boyajian stated that he was under the impression that CIP items put in a request. He stated that he was under the impression that the information he received was to not worry about funding.

Mr. Millette stated that it did not trigger a request.

Mrs. Davison stated that Town Facilities are not on the CIP fund requests.

Mrs. Pinard stated that the town facilities total is supposed to be \$50,000 and there is \$55,000 so there is no reason to request funds.

Bob Mann-Highway summer fund, road reconstruction. Mr. Mann stated that when the Town first started on a quest to rebuild the roads, it was not phrased that it would be ongoing. He asked what was being proposed to be rebuilt and if there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

Mr. Bouchard stated that there are a few projects for this year. Ring and Kaime Road are on for this year. They did get pushed back last year and need a lot of work and will use every penny. After the cycle is done, they will focus on maintenance. He stated that items keep getting pushed out due to budget.

Susie Butler- Kaime Road. Mrs. Butler came to discuss the level of disrepair of Kaime Road. There is an ice patch at Kaime and Ring and culverts are needed, along with quite a bit of other work.

Mr. Millette stated that it was pushed back because there was not enough funding to do it correctly last year.

Mr. Hall stated there are about twenty-four miles of paved road. The Town has to do so many miles a year. Once the first cycle is completed, the cost will come down for maintenance but then in 10 years it will restart.

Mr. Sykes stated that the increase in hot top is a big problem. It is currently \$105 per ton so that is a 25% increase. He stated that the aggregate is the same as the increase, so he is trying to make it all fit and work with increased prices.

Rep Cy Auryes- Mr. Auryes stated that he believes his culvert is collapsing on Perry Brook Road. He asked if that culvert was on the list to repair? He stated that he does appreciate the good job of the Highway Department.

Mr. Sykes stated that culvert is on the list to be repaired this year.

Mr. Millette closed the public hearing.

Warrant Article #8 Discussion-

Mrs. St. Germain asked about the Parks and Recreation Capital Reserve. She stated that it says 2024 Capital Reserve for \$10,000. Was that an omission?

Mrs. Pinard stated that the submission should have been made with budgets for Capital Reserves. She did not see that in the parks and rec request. She stated that it seems to be a misunderstanding. The Board does have the ability to modify and change items now if they would like to add it.

Mr. Millette stated that it was an oversight, and they have time to discuss it as now.

The Boards changed warrant article number 8 to \$128,750 with addition of letter E of \$10,000.

Mrs. Pinard stated that a resident submitted to add the two additional warrant articles for increases to the Elderly/Disabled exemption. Paul Twomey will speak to them on the Town Meeting Floor. They have not been updated since 2014.

Selectmen Business-

Phil Royce-1 Deer Run Road.

Mr. Royce came before the Board to discuss an issue with his property and excess water. He stated that he purchased the house in September of 2020. He stated that there have been no issues with his septic until recently. He just had it pumped and checked. On December 17, 2023, there was a large rainstorm and the property across the street started preparing the site to build a home. He has elevated his property and found a culvert that dumps onto his property. He reported that the septic started backing up into his house. He stated that he had an inspection and was told that the water was coming from the leach field back into the house. They also had to come back and pump again the next day. All the ground water was leaching back through. He then had another septic service come out to do full inspection to check the tank, septic and leach field. The report said that it is old but working as it should. He also had it blown out.

Mr. Royce stated that he spoke with Mr. Sykes who told him that he would have the Town Engineer look at the culvert. He stated that he does not want this new property affecting his property. The culvert should be moved to the other side of the road. It was the rainy season. There was torrential rain that day but the culvert was blocked and not working. He reported that the people building across the street started unclogging the culvert and it went down the hill and settled on his leach field. He stated that they were not able to shower and could not use the bathroom. He stated that the culvert had been there before his house, but it aims right to its leach field.

He stated his property is being damaged by all of the runoff. The lot across the street was logged and he was told that the lot was very wet. Mr. Royce tried to contact the developer who responded that he was not doing anything illegal. Mr. Royce stated that he should have to deal with the burden of all the extra water runoff. He would like to have the culvert looked at and moved to the other side of the road so it does not impact anyone's property. He stated that there are technically three culverts that dump into his property and the retention pond has already been built up multiple times to keep the pond from overflowing.

Mr. Millette asked if there are problems every day or just when there are torrential downpours?

Mr. Royce stated that the water flow has been ok since it was pumped but he is very worried about the spring thaw.

Mr. Sykes stated the new house is higher than the road so water is going to go to the lowest point. The logger reported to Mr. Sykes that he did not remove much timber from the lot. There are two areas in the back of the house that are wet and the terrain of the land the water runs either way. The builder excavated the drainage.

Mr. Royce stated that the perimeter drain comes out and is trenched down towards Highland Drive instead of moving it to the back of his property.

Mr. Millette stated he is unsure what the Town can do.

Mr. Sykes stated that the direction of the water can be changed but at a cost.

Mr. Millette stated that he cannot give him an answer tonight but the Board is willing to work with him. The Board will have to do some research.

Mr. Royce stated that he does not want to call the Department of Environmental Services and get attorneys involved, he just wants the Town to work with them. He would be willing to block that culvert and put another one down the side or dig the pond down.

Mr. Millette stated that the Town has limits and needs to stay in the right of way. He stated that he is not an engineer and needs an engineer to look at it and plan. The Board will talk to the Road Agent and get the Town Engineer out there to look at the site and give the Board some recommendations.

Department Heads-

Police Department-

Chief Wright reported that the Department did training for various subjects including interrogation, accident reconstruction and ARIDE.

Chief Wright reported that the transmission is no longer in service on the truck.

Chief Wright received a request for an internship for a high school senior. It would be for 10 weeks 9:30am-11am. They would be in the office doing reports. Per the RSA's, they would not be able to ride in the vehicles. The person is not 18 and typically you have to be 18 years of age. He is looking for guidance from the Board.

Mr. Millette stated that he is weary and would shy away from interning with anyone under the age of 18. Mr. Bouchard agreed.

Highway-

Mr. Sykes stated that they have been hit hard for two weeks by storms.

Mr. Sykes stated that there was a broken sander chain but has since been repaired.

There was an issue on King Road that required that hire a trapper. He trapped six beavers and four otters and a muskrat out of a culvert. They are releasing slowly so there is no flooding.

Mr. Sykes reported that they are picking up dead tree fall all over town.

Conservation-

Mr. Boyajian stated that the easement with 169 Main St. is close to being completed which is a huge accomplishment. He reported that the Commission is potentially going to participate in the Mill Foil project at the pond on Deer Meadow Road. The pond association requested a grant to do a treatment. The Town of Epsom appropriated some money but did not set aside enough funds. He is unsure that the full allotment of funding will be available between the two towns and the grant. This project has taken a lot of coordination. The association is coming to the next meeting. They did not find out about funding until mid-January. Mr. Boyajian also reported that there is a discussion about another conservation

easement at Jones Farm on Pleasant St. They would be helping with the administrative cost for Five Rivers to be the owner of the easement.

Mr. Boyajian reported that they are trying to engage the public more and get more members. He stated that the current ranks are aging and they need new members

Fire Department-

Chief Quimby reported that January had 42 calls for service.

He reported that they responded to a dryer fire today at 65 Main Street.

Deputy Brian DeFranzo responded first and put out the fire using the fire extinguisher out of cruiser. Chief Quimby would like to publicly thank him.

He reported that the Emergency Operations Plan is being developed.

Planning Board-

Mrs. Jobin reported that the Board put forward proposed zoning for a solar ordinance, additions to the recreational vehicle ordinances requiring a permit for extended stays to ensure proper septic and water disposal, restrictions on new single family/duplexes on Route 4 and new Flood Plain Ordinances as recommended by FEMA among other clarifications. A voter's guide is being developed to explain the proposed changes in the ordinance.

Selectmen's Office-

Mrs. Pinard stated that preparation for the audit has begun. The office is also working on the town report and getting it ready to go to print.

Approval of minutes will be at the next regular meeting.

Dan Schroth-

Mr. Schroth would like to get on the agenda for a conversation about climate change. He provided some information for the Board to read on the path forward to climate change. He stated that major policy changes are needed now, and reported floods are coming.

Adjournment: Being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Millette and seconded by Mr. Bouchard to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 pm. Roll call vote. Millette, aye. Bouchard, aye. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Jobin, Administrative Assistant

Richard Bouchard

Edward Millette

Stephen MacCleery