

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
Tuesday, February 28, 2023 – 5:30 PM
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

Present: Tyler Ward, Bill Taylor, Bill Kennedy

Also Present: Nicole MacStay, Lilli Gilligan, Alison Kreutz

Budget Committee: Carl Mabbs-Zeno, Mandy Sliver, Rick Lesser, Ron McIntire, Leslie Lewis, Mary Clark, Al Lenos (*remote*)

The meeting was broadcast live on Ustream, YouTube, and Channel 22 (Comcast).

Chair Ward opened the Joint Select Board Budget Committee Meeting at 5:30 PM.

Ms. MacStay said Department Directors were asked to watch last week's meeting and offer their thoughts and ideas about further reductions:

- A significant typo was spotted in the Fire CIP line – Hoses that were budgeted for \$200,000 should have been \$20,000.
- Grove Street Bridge Reconstruction has been moved out to FY2025, though the Reserve Fund will be created with the money already received from the State. DPW Director Seth MacLean was comfortable with moving it out, especially considering that work on Pine Street will take up a lot of FY2024.
- Regarding the Operating Budget, costs of fuel were reviewed with newer numbers and there was a decrease in diesel but increase in gasoline. Still an overall decrease of \$33,216.
- The intern position in Planning & Building has been removed.
- Number of salary and benefits adjustments were made resulting in a reduction of \$215,571, the most significant of which was the reduction of new Police Captain from 12 months to six months.
- Removal of cell phones from ambulances.

A spreadsheet with potential cuts, categorized into three tiers, was displayed on the projector (the above items were in the first tier).

Ms. MacStay said she wanted to provide an opportunity for the Select Board and Budget Committee to ask any additional questions about the current draft of the budget and warrant.

Ms. Lewis asked about the reduction in role of Human Resources – Does the Finance Director have the bandwidth for those additional duties?

Ms. MacStay said most significant element of the new position in Finance was payroll/benefits, and she was confident that Mrs. Gilligan and herself were capable of handling Human Resources.

Chair Ward pushing the Grove Street Bridge off to next year may result in an increase in the cost of the work. Ms. MacStay said the recommendation for next year will be seek approval to get money from Downtown TIF and fund the Grove Street Bridge with TIF funds.

She said her recommendation was to stick with first tier budget cuts and leave second tier alone as they may have an impact on services. Third tier (COLA & Merit) certainly would have an impact: "We'll be losing staff."

Mr. Taylor said he appreciated the work that was done, and was in favor of the first tier budget cuts.

Ms. Lewis asked what the impact of the reductions would be on taxpayers.

Ms. MacStay pulled up a model showing potential tax impacts. The cuts would take about a dollar off of the town portion of the tax rate.

Ms. Lewis said she was concerned about the “kicking the can down the road” scenario.

Mr. Taylor said it was unlikely that inflation would be as severe next year as it was this year.
Ms. MacStay agreed inflation was slowing.

Ms. Clark asked how much Fund Balance has been used towards lowering the tax rate historically.
Ms. MacStay pulled up a chart with previous years’ expenditures, which had been between \$100,000 and \$1 million.

Mr. Lesser asked when the Select Board would decide to use Fund Balance.
Ms. MacStay said they could only decide when setting the tax rate in the fall.

Mr. Kennedy said, “I think you guys have done an excellent job of reexamining the budget.”
Ms. MacStay said the Department Directors and Mrs. Gilligan especially had done great work.

There was discussion about the decision to cut the intern position in Planning & Building.

Ms. Clark asked, regarding retirement of fire and police chiefs, how does it work if that person was an internal hire as opposed to an external hire?

Ms. MacStay said it would be financially beneficial, and promoting someone who already knows the department, staff, and community has benefits as well.

Ms. Lewis said there could be benefits to an outside hire who could provide fresh and valuable perspective.

Select Board Chair Tyler Ward asked how many Select Board and Budget Committee members would be in favor of the first tier of budget cuts. Both the Select Board and Budget Committee were unanimously in approval of the first tier budget cuts.

Chair Mabbs-Zeno said Budget Committee Vote to Recommend should be added to Changes to Budget Committee Charter as seen on the Warrant.

Potential wording of the Town Clerk Compensation article was reviewed in detail. Four options were presented by Ms. MacStay.

Ms. Lewis asked if other towns had been asked how they present this article.
Ms. MacStay confirmed, and said they were “all over the place.”

Mr. Taylor said he felt the first option (originally drafted) was the simplest and the best.

Option 1 draft language was as follows:

To see if the town will vote to amend the terms of compensation for the elected Town Clerk as follows:

A newly elected Town Clerk, or one appointed to fill a vacancy, shall begin service with all of the benefits equivalent to those offered in the Town of Peterborough’s Employee Manual to a salaried exempt full-time employee, which includes a salary level equal to the Executive Salary Structure’s Grade Level 6 minimum compensation. After the completion of each year of service, the Town Clerk shall receive an increase equal to the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increase approved at the prior Town Meeting.

Where applicable, all provisions of this warrant article shall be afforded the current Town Clerk. This article is to set the terms of compensation for the elected Town Clerk position only and does not raise additional funds.

There was ongoing conversation about the most effective wording of the articles and nuances of the position benefits.

There was general consensus that Option 1 was the best option, with a separate warrant article to address COLA and merit for the current Town Clerk. Ms. MacStay said she would run the language by Town Council one more time.

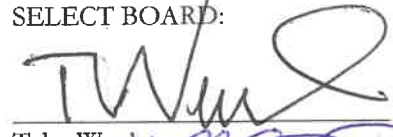
Mr. Lesser asked if changes that could be made between now and the hearing on March 7th.
Ms. MacStay said changes could certainly still be made.

Motion: Mr. Taylor made a motion to adjourn at 6:48 PM.

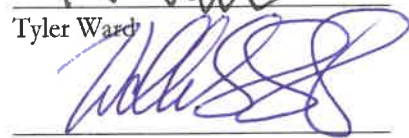
Vote: Seconded by Chair Ward. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alison Kreutz, Assistant to the Town Administrator

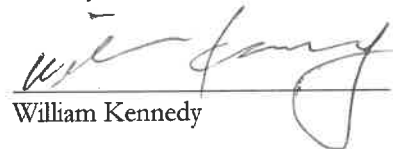
PETERBOROUGH
SELECT BOARD:



Tyler Ward

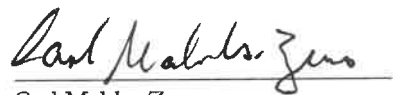


Bill Taylor



William Kennedy

BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIR:



Carl Mabbs-Zeno

