

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
November 5, 2022
BEDFORD MEETING ROOM
10 MEETINGHOUSE ROAD**

ROLL CALL: A budget workshop of the Bedford Town Council was held on Saturday, November 5, 2022 at the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Rd. Present were Bill Carter (Chairman), Lori Radke (Vice Chair), and Councilors Phil Greazzo, Chris Bandazian, Sue Thomas, Dave Gilbert, and Kathleen Bemiss. Also present was Town Manager Rick Sawyer and Finance Director Matt Mannino.

Chairman Carter opened the meeting at approximately 8:00 AM.

BCTV – Bill Jennings, Station Manager

Mr. Jennings stated that they were underfunding their budget to build up their Capital Fund Balance. Their projected revenue is about \$514K and their budget is \$490K. He emphasized that no tax dollars were used for the BCTV operation or the building.

Mr. Jennings stated that their energy, heating, and property repair costs had increased. Their biggest purchase would be to replace their broadcasting system. They planned for this in the CIP to purchase the new system for \$31K. They reduced their equipment purchase lines, but put more money into equipment repair for repairing or replacement. Personnel costs is the majority of how they spend their money.

Councilor Thomas wanted to know if people were leaving cable TV and how that affects them. Mr. Jennings referred to the advertising dollars they receive, the franchise fee, and home shopping commissions. They watch it closely.

Human Resources/Welfare – Pam Hogan, HR and Welfare Director

- Human Resources

Ms. Hogan would like a system that would help manage employment applications quicker for applicants, HR and Department Heads. It is under professional services for about \$9,729 for the first year. There would also be annual fees.

Councilor Gilbert wanted to know about the fees. Ms. Hogan stated that they would be about the same; negotiated for the first year. Chairman Carter wanted to know if they would be looking at a \$10K increase every year or the standard \$12K a year. Ms. Hogan stated that it would be under \$10K for the first two years. Beyond that, it shouldn't be much more; just what their routine rate increases would be. If they had lower utilization maybe they would negotiate down for them.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if they were limited to the bid they got or could they

look at other companies that have a more robust package. Ms. Hogan stated that she hadn't found many that wanted to give a quote. Mr. Sawyer added that there was no contract signed; this was just for budgeting purposes. They couldn't enter a contract until after Town Meeting. Councilor Bemiss stated that she would like to see a more robust package; the one quoted was more limited. Ms. Hogan stated that they found one that would bid for them; most would not, but they could look at others.

Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if they had to increase that line to look at others. They have \$10K based on the package Ms. Hogan had looked at. To have a more robust package, he wanted to know what that line had to be increased to. Ms. Hogan stated that she found one or two that had extra packages they could add on to, but she thought it would be around the same amount.

- General Assistance

Mr. Sawyer stated that it's currently at \$10K and they are asking for \$12K.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if they thought \$12K was enough. Ms. Hogan was hoping it was. When they set that amount they didn't realize the rental assistance was losing their funding. They've been able to manage using other resources and referral programs. Mr. Sawyer stated that any extra funds have to go to the Council for unallocated, which is \$35K, or transfer from other departments. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if it had always been \$10K. Ms. Hogan stated that way back there were some years that were about \$8K or \$9K.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if the disbursements were for electricity, heating, utility bills. Ms. Hogan stated that most of it was rent. Ms. Sawyer stated that Ms. Hogan did an excellent job with the referrals to other agencies. Councilor Radke stated that she would entertain adding \$3K to bring it up to \$15K. The Council decided to revisit it.

Mr. Sawyer mentioned the proposal to change a policy in the health section of the Employee Manual. The buyout in the Manual says \$1,500 and his proposal was to change that to 25% of the HMO plan, which was what the unions currently had and would be available to all non-union employees. It's about a \$20K cost if no additional people take buyouts, but if one or two people take it, it pays for itself. He was underfunding the health insurance line by \$200K and this was one of the ways to help mitigate that cost. Having a better buyout program to entice people to take it.

Councilor Radke did a scenario of a family plan with the highest plan and wanted to know how much that person would get as a buyout. Mr. Sawyer stated that \$6,200 was the max payout. Councilor Radke stated that as plans get more expensive, the percentage goes up and the employee would get more as opposed to a set fee that is stable and doesn't change even if the plan goes up. She thought they should think about percentages versus a flat fee. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's having enough to entice people to do it, which was the whole point of trying to make the change. They unions already have it, so this would to bring the non-union employees up to par with them.

Mr. Sawyer mentioned adding a 3rd insurance plan, which was a higher deductible plan and a lower cost for the employee and Town. He hoped that they would support both changes. That would be a policy on an agenda towards the December or January. They could adopt it and make it contingent upon passage at Town Meeting or just have it in place. The health buyout piece would be effective July 1st for open enrollment.

Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if the buyout was traded for IRS purposes as wages where the Town pays an additional 7.65% in Social Security Tax. Ms. Hogan stated that it did go through payroll with taxation. Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if they could go through some other vehicle like HRA's where the Town and employee wouldn't be paying Income Tax and Social Security Tax. Ms. Hogan stated that usually with those plans you have to have an insurance plan that goes with it, so if it's a buyout it's a little different, because they're not taking the insurance. They could look into it.

Councilor Radke thought the buyouts were included in payroll so it increases their overtime rate. Mr. Sawyer didn't think that it did. Councilor Bandazian thought it would be interesting if it increases the retirement system contributions, but Mr. Sawyer assured him that it didn't hit retirement.

Town Clerk – Sally Kellar, Town Clerk

Ms. Kellar wanted to add money to have an assistant clerk part-time to help manage the absentee ballots the end of December for the presidential primary in January/February.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know the cost would be for the part-time help. Ms. Kellar hoped to get someone in for 20-30 hours a week. She didn't think \$10/hour would entice anyone. Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if it was something they should revisit.

Councilor Radke stated that the part-time wages were \$13,314. Ms. Kellar stated that was for the Deputy Town Clerk so she would have coverage for vacations and hours working up until the Election. It's full-time about two weeks before the Election and maybe a week after the Election. Mr. Sawyer stated that in 2019 it was \$3K and there was no deputy. He thought \$3K would cover hours the end of November and December. FICA, Medicare, etc. would have to be calculated. They could do the breakout and give it to them at their November meeting. All agreed that that was best.

Mr. Sawyer was suggesting \$10/hour, but Councilor Greazzo didn't think \$10 would be enough to entice anyone. Mr. Sawyer stated that part of the budget request was to increase the Election workers from \$7.75 to \$10/hour, and usually that who they bring in who has some knowledge on how to handle stuff. Ms. Kellar stated that one thought of increasing it more than \$10/hour was she felt that there was more to the task of being an assistant Town Clerk than it was working as a ballot clerk. There was more responsibility and duties. She would like them to consider more than \$10/hour.

Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if Mr. Sawyer would come back with a number increase at the next meeting. The Council agreed that's what they wanted to do.

Ms. Kellar mentioned all of the work assistant moderator John Morrison had done and he was getting paid as an election worker. The stuff he has set up for Election workers and Signup Genius and helping get up the training had been phenomenal. If they don't have him anymore, they would need to have another volunteer coordinator for the elections. That person would do more hours than an election worker. Councilor Radke suggested maybe that person could be the assistant too. Ms. Kellar stated that if they had a part-time assistant they could spend the time doing that as well.

Ms. Kellar mentioned at the new animal control officer wanted to revisit the way the civil forfeiture fines were handed out. By June 15th every year they have about 1,000 dogs still unlicensed. They needed to send out certified letters before they could send them a court summons if they don't pay their dog fines. There are 150 dogs that were not renewed in 2022. Those letters need to be sent certified. The Police Department has offered to help with the certified letter fees. Councilor Greazzo thought since animal control was under Police that they should be paying. Councilor Radke stated that it's about \$7.50/letter. Ms. Kellar stated that's why in the past she and Councilor Radke never sent out the letters certified; they just sent them out regular mail. To get to the next step, they have to send out the certified letters. Councilor Radke thought that their State reps and State senators should work on changing that Legislation. They tried to do that years ago and she testified, but the Legislature at the time wouldn't budge.

Ms. Kellar stated that they used poll pads at the Special Election and they were great. There have been new election laws regarding how fast they want the reconciliations out, and she felt that the poll pads could help them do that. The biggest concern with the poll pads was if there was a power failure. She thought the poll pads would be a good addition to the Town, because of the amount of voters that they have.

Councilor Radke thought they had been saving money for the poll pads. Mr. Sawyer stated that there was \$33K in the Capital Reserve for voting machines. He would have to check to see if that money could be used for poll pads. Ms. Kellar stated that 10 poll pad kits would be \$15K, plus a one-time set-up fee of \$1,950 for a total of \$16,950.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know the life expectancy of the poll pads. Ms. Kellar stated that she would ask LHS and Londonderry as they have been using them for years.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know how their current ballot boxes were functioning and if they needed to replace any. Ms. Kellar stated that they were tired. New ballot machines need to be approved by the NH Ballot Commission. Councilor Radke wouldn't be surprised if the State offered the towns to be able to purchase new machines by 2024.

Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if they should fund poll pads for \$16K taken out of the CIP. Mr. Sawyer stated that he wanted to confirm that the CIP was written for that. Ms. Kellar thought it included both. Chairman Carter thought they should check into that and have further follow-up. Mr. Sawyer stated that he's added it as an appropriation and if they can take it out of Capital Reserve he would follow up at a future meeting.

Cemetery Trustees – David Bailey (Chairman), Steve Wiggin (Trustee)

Mr. Bailey stated that there was unspent money in their budget, which was for an irrigation system. They got zero bids and received one bid after the deadline, but it was high and wasn't the way they wanted it, so they rejected it. Meanwhile, they had a problem with their computer system that Bill Duschatko ran, because none of them know how to get into it. They went out to bid for a new system and awarded a bid yesterday. They also have two big maple trees in the cemetery that are diseased. Branches had fallen and damaged some gravestones, which they had to pay to repair. The trees need to be removed. They awarded that bid yesterday as well. Those two projects take up most of that money that's leftover.

Mr. Bailey stated that they were waiting to hear from the guy who repairs the gravestones. He's the only one in the entire area that does it, but they've been trying since the summer to get him to come. The season is almost done for that, so they were hoping to encumber the money they have leftover to do that.

Mr. Bailey stated that the Friends of the Bedford Cemeteries dissolved, and left the Cemetery Trustees \$10K. There were some restrictions on that; it has to be historical stones, but eventually they will get to use that money.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know the tree company they used that damaged the gravestones and why they weren't paying for the damage. Mr. Wiggin stated that tree branches came down and damaged the stones. The tree company didn't do that.

Mr. Wiggin explained how the existing irrigation system on Hilltop got damaged. They were told by the guy who installed it that he could get it up and running again, but he also gave them a price to run new lines.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if the computer system was still functioning, but that they couldn't get into it. Mr. Bailey stated that they can get into it and extract information, but they can't add stuff to it. He's got about six years of burials that haven't been put in. The new company is going to train them on the new system. Mr. Sawyer stated that before Bill's passing they had discussed going to a new system.

Councilor Radke wanted to know how they were doing for space. Mr. Bailey stated that when the Joppa Hill land becomes available they would be vying to get it. They believe there was some extra space in the cemetery. He estimated that they had 7 or 8 more years. Councilor Radke mentioned John Wood's idea of a memorial garden.

Mr. Wiggin thanked Peter Barbuto, Chris Anton, Kevin, and Jeff Foote from DPW. They were very responsive and everything they've asked for, they've done.

Mr. Sawyer stated that he couldn't thank Mr. Bailey and Mr. Wiggin enough for all of the hours they put in. It's a tremendous amount of work.

Planning Department – Becky Hebert, Planning & Zoning Director

Ms. Hebert stated that there was a request for a Capital Reserve deposit for the next Master Plan and Impact Fee Study. They were 10 years away from starting the next Master Plan process in 2032 with a targeted adoption of 2034. Savings for this have been deferred for the past three years. She thought it was important for the community to start the savings process. They have extended the Master Plan horizon out a couple of years to have their next Plan coincide with the census, and it was important to stay on track with that timeline in order to benefit from the census data. The other Capital project was the Impact Fee Study. The new impact fees were adopted in January 2022 and they need to be reevaluated every six years. They are recommending that \$1K be set aside for the next update, which would be starting in 2028.

Councilor Radke wanted to know what the new impact fees were. Ms. Hebert stated that they weren't new fees, they are for Recreation and School. There is a rational nexus and calculation that determines what the dollar amount was going to be. Because finances change, they reevaluate that every six years to make sure it's defensible and makes sense. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know what determined the six years. Ms. Hebert stated when you collect an impact fee you have to spend it within six years, so it makes sense to be updating the fees every six years to make sure that their calculation was current and valid. Mr. Sawyer stated that if they go beyond that six year period, someone could challenge whether it was still justifiable. Councilor Radke wanted to know if there was a time when they had to give it back. Councilor Bandazian stated a long time ago they did. Ms. Hebert stated that they try hard to use the fees. Mr. Sawyer stated that the School has been using their impact fees on debt service and about \$200K of Recreation Impact Fees were used for Sportsman Field.

Ms. Hebert stated that they set aside \$18K for dues for Southern NH Planning Commission. She received the invoice for 2023 and they were not planning on raising their rate for communities, so the fee amount was about \$16K, which is about a \$2K savings. Mr. Sawyer stated that that line would change to \$16,089.

Councilor Radke wanted to know how much they put in last year for the Master Plan. Mr. Sawyer stated that they didn't fund it last year. They skipped two years, because of the delay in starting the Master Plan. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if it was going to be \$18K for the next 8 or 9 years and Ms. Hebert responded yes. Mr. Sawyer stated to have \$180K, and they would probably have to match that with some grant money.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if they use Southern NH Planning Commission's services and Ms. Hebert responded yes and listed the benefits of their services.

Assessing – Doug Irvine, Assessor

Mr. Irvine stated that the Capital Improvements area was increasing due to the increase in revaluation fees. They will be doing one in 2023, which is estimated at around \$45K. He stated that conferences and training was up due to the Assistant Assessor's

requirements for future certification. He's working towards his CNHA, the certification for assessors statewide. He's also working towards his Department of Revenue certification, which would take him from assessor to assessor supervisor.

Chairman Carter wanted to know why they were doing 2-year revals rather than 5-year. Mr. Irvine stated that they used to do them every five years, but values were changing considerably so it was spiking increases. In some cases it was a tax problem; if value doubled in a 5-year period or if a class or type of property was appreciating at a greater rate than the median. You get too far out of whack and things come back to bite you. There were advantages to more frequent updates. The 2-year advantage keeps you more current with market trends and when those begin to change, even if it's subtle, they are going to catch that up much more quickly than being on the 5-year cycle.

Councilor Radke wanted to know the difference between a statistical update and a revaluation. Mr. Irvine stated that they were both revaluations. The full revaluation is when they physically go and relook at a property; it's expensive and time consuming. The statistical update is what he relies on. They don't go out and look at every property. They look at sales, building permits, etc. They are looking at sales and doing an analysis and then those adjustments get applied to similar properties to those that sold. They were just using statistical data. They also have the aerial imagery with sophisticated measuring tools that they are utilizing and they are so happy with it. It allows them to do a lot more; it's not intrusive and bothering people that don't have time.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if they had any commitment from the person to stay a certain amount of time if they pay for his certifications. Mr. Irvine stated that the intention was that person stays and not take all that education and go elsewhere. Mr. Sawyer stated that they were conference and training lines. It's not going to get their master's degree or something like that. This was a much lower cost item that they wouldn't require an educational agreement for. Councilor Radke stated that they were using the Town's money to get this person certified, so when there was an opening in another town, they can't stop them from applying. Mr. Sawyer stated that they want to have the best certified people within their own departments that would stay for a long time as Doug has. Mr. Irvine stated that they invested in his training and it's paid off. Mr. Sawyer stated that it had been underfunded for a while. They need to be going to conferences and trainings to stay current.

Public Works – Jeff Foote, DPW Director

Mr. Foote stated that most of the increases were for diesel, gasoline, heating oil, propane, and electricity. He mentioned the increase with the new municipal solid waste contract. There were some CIP adjustments, which were directly related to the increase in equipment costs.

- Facilities – Peter Barbuto, Facilities Manager

Councilor Radke wanted to know what the maintenance contracts were for and if the

Town did their own plowing. Mr. Barbuto stated that maintenance for the Town buildings was contracted out. There was a slight increase in that line due to the increased size of the Library parking lot.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know about maintenance services. Mr. Barbuto stated that maintenance services was the cleaning services for all Town facilities.

Chairman Carter wanted to know if they go out to bid for maintenance services. Mr. Barbuto stated that they were staying with the same company; there hadn't been a lot of increases. This company was very responsive and they did a good job. At the Safety Complex, they have them do a background check and this company hasn't had any issues. Where there were no increases they were going to stay with them. If that changes, they would go out to bid.

- Public Works Administration - Denise Nobert, Business Manager

Mr. Foote stated that miscellaneous equipment had increased due to their copier lease. Mr. Sawyer stated that it wasn't a regular copier. It was a large format copier, printer, plotter, and scanner.

- Local Road Maintenance – Denise Nobert, Business Manager

Mr. Foote stated that there was an increase for salt. It went from \$49.50/ton in 2021 to \$72.50 in 2022 and this year it's just under \$80/ton.

Mr. Sawyer stated that they were trying to get to \$2M in 2024 for this line item. They would have a significant appropriation in this line next year, because debt service was carried in a separate section of the budget and they would be paying off one bond during 2023. They increase that number as they pay off bonds to get to \$2M, which eventually will get to \$2.5M. Councilor Radke stated that it was to maintain the upkeep of the roads, so in future years they don't have to take out bonds. Mr. Foote stated that they were at the point where they would have a company come in the spring and evaluate all the roads for a PCI (Pavement Condition Index). He thought they would have one of the highest PCI's in the State because of what's happened over the years. They need to spend money, so they don't have those major projects anymore and they keep the roads where they are. The roads were in very good shape.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if the Town dedicated any funds from vehicle registration towards that or was it just money from the general funds. Mr. Sawyer stated general funds. Motor vehicle registrations offset the overall budget. There is a \$5 fee that you pay when you register your vehicle, which goes to the general fund revenues; it's a transportation fee. Councilor Radke thought it had to be earmarked specifically towards roads. Mr. Sawyer stated or highway funds. They spend more than they collect. They might be able to increase that by \$1 and they would look into that.

Councilor Bandazian stated that he would be happy if the Beals Road Bridge was

closed to vehicular traffic. That's a project they haven't done, because Merrimack wouldn't pay their 10%. Over time, 100% of the cost had eclipsed the 90% that they were paying. Mr. Foote stated that as part of a NH law distributing Federal money, their share went from 80% to less than \$50K. The obligation for Bedford and Merrimack had been reduced dramatically. They were working with DOT to bring that project forward; hopefully by July 2023. Mr. Sawyer stated that 100% of construction was covered, so it's just right-of-way and engineering that they were having to pay 80% of the costs. They would get together with Merrimack soon. Councilor Bandazian stated that there was an opportunity cost to not doing it. Mr. Sawyer stated that if they don't want to do the bridge and close the road, tell them. Councilor Bandazian stated that he would be happy. Now that Gage Girls Road was paved, they didn't need that bridge for public safety. It could be a pedestrian bridge in terms of the Town's fiscal well-being. Mr. Foote mentioned a school bus had to get through. Councilor Bandazian stated that if there was a good deal on the table they should grab it before prices went up. Mr. Sawyer stated that there was additional State bridge aid money coming to communities that hasn't been distributed, so it's important for them to get Merrimack and hopefully they could earmark a portion of the money they're going to get to complete the project.

Councilor Radke wanted to know where they were with the sidewalks on County Road. Mr. Foote stated that they supplied the Highway Safety Committee with an estimate of the work and there was some discussion at the Council level on what the cost was. He was a proponent of sidewalks, but also has a lot of arrows on his back from proposing sidewalks over the years. If the Council wanted to bring that forward, he would be happy to do that. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was left that they would pursue it if there was grant money available, but the Council at the time was not willing to fund the project. Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if they would have to go to closed drainage. Mr. Foote responded yes.

Mr. Sawyer stated that the highest priority sidewalk was Old Bedford Road, because they have \$100K developer contribution that they would have to return if they don't build that sidewalk. They were at the 5-year mark. Yesterday they submitted an additional grant request to fund that project. Councilor Bandazian mentioned that the closed drainage was already in the ground. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know the drop dead date for using the \$100K. Mr. Sawyer stated that they had five years left. After six years they have to give it back.

Mr. Sawyer stated that he had many arrows on his back for trying to put sidewalk funding in the budget, so he stopped trying. It was the first thing taken out at these meetings. Councilor Radke stated that the TAP grant was coming up. Mr. Sawyer stated that they applied for the CMAQ grant. They alternate years and this year it's CMAQ. Councilor Radke stated that next year the TAP grant was coming up and Mr. Sawyer stated that they would apply for that as well. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know how much the grant was for. Mr. Foote stated that when they applied a couple of years ago for the Old Bedford Road sidewalk, but they thought the estimate was too low. The estimate for County Road was in the \$250K range. He thought they were further along as far as the \$100K contribution they got for Old Bedford Road. They need to build that

or lose that \$100K. He hoped that with the application, SNHPC and DOT would find it to be a worthwhile project. Councilor Gilbert summarized that they had two potential sidewalk plans, County Road and Old Bedford Road. Figure out how much each costs and they could possibly get grants for both. The one on Old Bedford Road has \$100K. Mr. Sawyer stated that the total cost of the grant application was now over \$700K. Mr. Foote stated that he got a cost estimate from Continental in June of 2021 for about \$250K and he asked that they update that estimate for the resubmittal of the grant through the State and last week it came in at \$360K.

Mr. Sawyer stated that in the past he tried to establish a Capital Reserve for sidewalks. The first year he asked for \$200K and it didn't go ahead. The next year he asked for \$50K, so they could match a grant if it came down the road or if you put \$50K away every year you could eventually build a sidewalk. They weren't supported in the past, so he haven't asked to fund them. \$50K would add one cent to the tax rate. Councilor Radke clarified that they weren't saying sidewalks on every road, just where it was necessary. Mr. Sawyer stated that they had a sidewalk master plan that called for 13 miles of sidewalks; two miles of that was already built along Route 101, so maybe a total of 10 miles of sidewalks connecting schools and commercial areas. Councilor Gilbert stated that what they've discussed in the past was the two they were just talking about were at the top of the list. He thought Chief Bryfonski would say the one on County Road was #1 on his list and Councilor Radke stated that it's #1 on her list too. Mr. Sawyer stated that it might be if they didn't have developer funding that they were about to lose. Councilor Radke stated that she gets that. Councilor Gilbert stated that the bottom line was those two were highest ranking on the list. Mr. Sawyer stated that they hadn't pursued anything other those two for grant money. Mr. Foote stated that the sidewalk on County Road would eliminate a lot of roadside parking, so at some point someone had to accommodate for that as well, whether it was the School or the Town. Those were indirect costs that they needed to consider as well. Councilor Gilbert thought people would have to park at McKelvie or at the SAU building and walk. Mr. Sawyer stated that this started because a neighborhood complained that people were parking in their neighborhood. The point was build a sidewalk so they could park in the parking lots and walk. Councilor Radke thought it was a safety issue and they should be looking at it sooner rather than later.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know about snow removal on sidewalks. Mr. Foote stated that after a big storm, at the first opportunity they would send folks out to clear sidewalks. If it's an average storm, usually it's within 24 hours. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know how many sidewalk plows they had. Mr. Foote stated that they had two plus a skid steer, which wasn't very efficient. Councilor Radke added that the Town was responsible for doing the sidewalks along Route 101. Mr. Sawyer stated that State law requires them to have a plan for sidewalks, but it doesn't require them to be done immediately.

- Highway – Denise Nobert, Business Manager

Councilor Radke wanted to know what happens if they run out of diesel fuel. Mr. Foote

stated that at \$6/gallon he didn't think they were going to run out.

Mr. Sawyer stated that he took \$450K out hoping that the Council would approve use of SB401 funds to purchase the two dump trucks that would otherwise be in the budget for next year. That would be on one of their upcoming agendas. If they wanted to use those funds for something else highway related, \$450K would have to be added to the budget.

- Winter Maintenance – Denise Nobert, Business Manager

Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if the overtime line was anticipating not filling regular positions. Mr. Foote stated that they took \$25K of that and applied it towards the utility extension on Chubbuck Road. It was level funded and they just look at historical averages. Having \$25K available in 2022 was a result of having an open winter and not finding personnel to fill those positions. They were in the same position today.

Councilor Gilbert stated that the chemical line stated they were seeking \$300K in funding; increase due to anticipated price increase in road salt to \$79.22/ton, but the Manager budget brought it down \$65K. Mr. Foote explained that they were projecting \$100/ton. When it got to Rick, they got the State price and that's what brought it down.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if they had considered brining to reduce salt use. Mr. Foote stated that the last four trucks they purchased had the capability of that. At some point when they can build the infrastructure on site to do that, it's one of the things they want to do and need to do to save money and it's better for the environment. Councilor Greazzo stated that his company does that and he could help them set them up a brining station. Mr. Foote stated that he would have somebody contact him. Chairman Carter wanted to know if brining would keep the roads better than salting them. Mr. Foote stated that that was the intention. They can't utilize it on every storm.

Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if they were still paying to bring trucks to have them washed and Mr. Foote responded no. He found a company that does onsite vehicle washing. They have someone that goes to the Highway garage and washes them. It's recycled water so they bring it in and haul it off. It doesn't do as good a job if they had a bay, but it's a lot better than not doing it or driving to another community to do it. They've been doing it for two years. They put it in their MS4.

- Traffic Control – Denise Nobert, Business Manager

Mr. Foote stated that the increase was due to electricity.

Chairman Carter wanted to know the purpose of the cones and stop sign at County and Back River by Peter Woodbury School. Mr. Foote stated that the State did a highway safety audit and had some recommendations. One was to clear the trees as you approach County from the east; they cleared pine trees north and did some brush cutting south. The last one for this particular mitigation was to introduce an island. It would come out on County from where the school was closer to Back River Road, which

would increase the sight distance for folks looking north and south and would also reduce their time to make the left maneuver going north. By pushing that stop bar out 8 or so feet, it increases the sight distance and reduces the time it takes people to make that maneuver. The school bus can make that maneuver, but a small tractor trailer couldn't. He wanted to construct that island while they were doing the curbing at the Library, but he was still working through the details on trying to accommodate everyone. He's not sure they will be able to, but if motor vehicles and school buses could utilize the intersection, he thought that outweighed some of the other potential uses. They hadn't come to an absolute conclusion yet. That's why it's still cones and not curbing. It would slow down those going north on Back River making a left to the school. An island would help the intersection and make it safer. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know what it would cost to make it a permanent feature. Mr. Foote thought \$6K - \$8K. The Town requested the audit through SNHPC, but DOT is the one that evaluates intersections. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if there was a limit line further out on the other side of County Road. Mr. Foote stated that they didn't move that stop bar, but they moved the double yellow line on that side north 3 or 4 feet, so it would T better.

- Transfer Station – Jeremy Spooner, Environmental Coordinator

Mr. Foote mentioned the cost of municipal solid waste. At some point they need to make a bigger push on food composting. They were going to have a table set up on Election Day. If there were policy measures the Town wanted to introduce at a later date to make food composting mandatory, that discussion should be had. There was a lot of discussion and ideas on composting, recycling and how to educate the public.

Councilor Bandazian mentioned the swap shop and how it was closed for six months. He stated that before that, there was a slab of concrete that people would drop off items they didn't want anymore. He wanted to know if they could do that while the swap shop was closed to keep it out of the trash. There were a lot of ideas that were discussed.

Councilor Thomas stated that as they are talking about the budget, they could say that a little over five cents on the tax rate was because the Transfer Station fees went up and if they compost more and recycle more they could reduce that. She thought every time they have a meeting they have to say that. That's something they could reduce if more people took advantage of composting and recycling. Chairman Carter suggested putting it under Old Business, so it comes up every meeting that talk about it.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if Councilor Bandazian wanted to do a quick PSA on refrigerators. Councilor Bandazian stated that until the end of the month, NHSaves would pick up an inefficient working refrigerator and pay \$75.

- Recreation Field Maintenance

Councilor Radke wanted to know if now that they have the turf field they take some fields offline to breathe a little bit. Mr. Foote thought they needed to develop a better schedule. They had some problems with Legacy Field, so when football is over that field

is going to come offline until June. A lot of the plan had to do with other actions within the budget as far as improvements to fields. It's fluid and they aren't there yet with an exact plan. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if they were taking Legacy Field offline until June, if that meant the cross country skiers weren't going to use it. Mr. Foote stated that they'll use it, but with any luck they'll have a late fall and an early spring to give it time to regenerate. He talked about improvements they did to Joppa Hill field. Councilor Gilbert stated that he would equate their field maintenance to the roads. If they maintain them, they will be fine. If they don't, they're going to have trouble and it's going to cost more down the road. There was a discussion about fees and dogs on fields.

- Sewer – Jeremy Spooner, Environmental Coordinator

Mr. Foote stated that they had some capital projects last year, so that line item has been reduced by about \$500K.

Councilor Radke pointed out that the sewer enterprise fund didn't impact the taxes.

Mr. Sawyer stated that the \$1.5M for the sale of Sunset Lane was in the Facilities budget. It's shown in the Facilities Design/Build Capital Reserve.

Mr. Sawyer mentioned moving a warrant article forward for solar at the Transfer Station. They have to get them the full warrant language if the Council wants to do it. He thought it was the only way to mitigate the long-term impacts of uncontrollable cost of electricity. It would fully cover their consumption costs for electricity by moving that project forward. He needed some direction. Councilor Bandazian liked Exeter's warrant article. Mr. Sawyer thought it was a good example. He would include the costs of selling the bond.

Councilor Bandazian mentioned Capital Reserving for replacing a backhoe and wanted to know if they would wean themselves off of that at some point. Mr. Foote responded absolutely. Mr. Sawyer stated that they would use the backhoe for what it's intended for; not pounding trash. Mr. Foote stated that they would still have a backhoe, but they wouldn't have to have it in Capital Reserve. Councilor Bandazian stated that it's \$23K now in Capital Reserve. Mr. Sawyer stated that they would still have a Capital Reserve for future replacement of compactors if they move this forward and it passes.

Mr. Sawyer stated that he needed to know if the Council wanted them to continue to do the language so they could vote at their upcoming meeting to move it to the warrant. They've been including about \$3.5M in total costs, but they need to finalize those numbers and get them before the Council.

Councilor Bandazian stated that if they divide the cost by the life expectancy of the project, it works out to 1 cent per kilowatt hour; 1.1 cent or .09 cents is where it would cost guaranteed for 40 years. Mr. Foote stated that the analysis showed a nine year payback and a savings of \$13M over the life of the project. Councilor Bandazian stated that it takes it out of the operating budget, which is what hits the taxpayers.

Mr. Sawyer stated that he didn't want to do all of that work if the Council had no interest. A majority of the Council agreed to move forward with it. Mr. Sawyer stated that they would need Council support to get the word out, because they need 60% passage on it.

Fire – Chief Scott Hunter

2023 Request:

- Transition two positions designated as day shift to 24 hour (\$0)
- Add two emergency responder positions in May 2023 (\$114,000)
- Minimum required staffing remains at seven (-\$90,000)
- Offer voluntary OT to staff up to 8 for day shift (\$90,000)
- Submit SAFER grant for six emergency responders in 2023. Positions to start in 2024. The year grant value= \$1.7M.

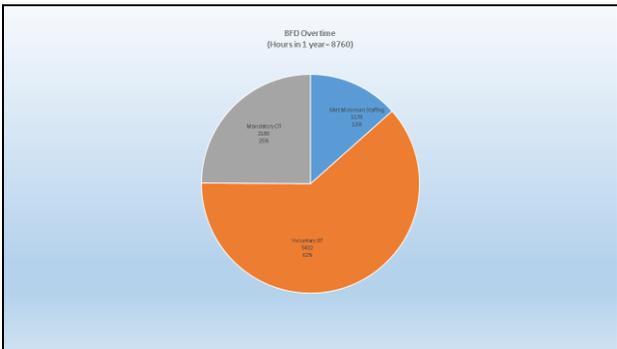
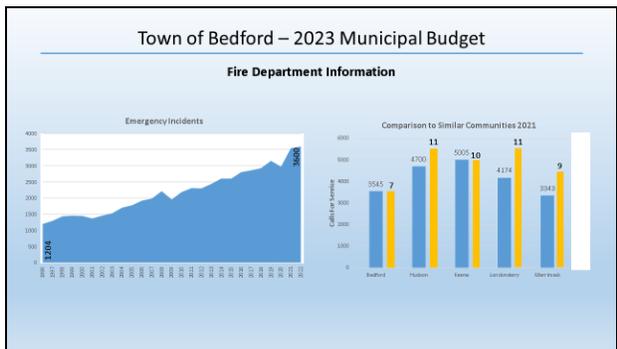
Reasons:

- Public Expectations: health, wealth, quality of life
- Comparable Communities
- Emergency Call Volume
- Emergency Call Distribution
- Employee Retention and Recruitment
- LTCF, medical offices, age-restricted housing, urgent care
- Changing landscape: Rural to suburban: \$4.76B property value
- Societal changes/expectations

- Regional Mutual Aid
- Combination Fire Department
- Signposts: failed systems: CQI, preplanning/inspections
- \$1.7M ambulance billing revenue

Comparable Communities

Town	Population	Δ	Sq Miles	Δ	# of Stations	Standard of Cover	Δ	FF/EMTs/Paramedics	Minimum Staffing	Δ
Bedford	23,322	1	32.8	1	5	33	1	34	7	1
Londonderry	25,826	1.14	42	1.28	8	34	2.3	48	12	1.7
Merrimack	26,632	1.18	31.6	8.99	2	35	2	44	11	1.6
Hudson	25,294	1.09	28.5	8.87	2	30	3.5	44	11	1.6
Keene	23,047	8.89	37	1.11	2	39	3.5	48	19	1.4



Due to the nationwide staffing shortage, Any Kid dressed like a Firefighter on Halloween will be required to pick up a shift.

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Chief Hunter referred to a chart and the demand for each individual responder. They are in a very competitive labor market. When you've got a call volume lower than Bedford's, but there were more available people to handle it, that attracts them to that community. Councilor Radke wanted to know if it was because they had to do less. Chief Hunter responded yes. Mr. Sawyer stated that they feel overworked going from call to call.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know the indicators they would be at 3,700 calls. Chief Hunter stated that they do an average of 10 calls per day with 57 day left in the year; 57 times 10. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know how many calls were unwarranted. Chief Hunter stated that he could address that later in the presentation.

They discussed turnaround of getting ambulances ready for another call after coming back from a call. They also discussed mutual aid.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if there was a push from the Town to require nursing homes to outsource their ambulance. Chief Hunter stated that it's not something they were looking into. They have great relationships with those administering those facilities, however it takes a lot of maintenance to keep that up, because of their high turnover. It's constantly an educational process about what was required of them in order to make this sustainable for the Town. That includes utilizing private ambulance services for non-emergent calls. Bedford is an emergent transfer service. Private ambulance companies may also ask about insurance before they accept the transport.

Chief Hunter addressed Councilor Greazzo's question about unwarranted calls. People's idea of an emergency was changing. Things his generation might have driven themselves to the hospital for, they don't anymore. They call an ambulance, because that's what's expected. The the bottom line was once that call to 911 was made, they have a duty to act: respond, assess, and transport. From a legal standpoint that becomes a really hard decision for an EMS provider to make.

Councilor Bemiss thought people think that if they call an ambulance they would get a bed sooner, which wasn't necessarily the case. Strokes were an emergency; systems include droopy face, arms not equal, and slurred speech. Time was of the essence, because you need get to the emergency room FAST (face/arms/speech/time). Chief Hunter stated that an ambulance call for a stroke emergency, there were things that they could immediately and make a difference.

Councilor Radke wanted to know how many times someone called for a possible stroke and they didn't have an ambulance or personnel to help. Chief Hunter stated that he could get those numbers. They've collected some numbers on how many emergencies they didn't have someone to respond to or they had to call mutual aid for. Councilor Radke thought would be good on his monthly reports to list what the calls were for.

Chief Hunter stated that if they were interested in a scanner app, so they could listen to what's going on at the Fire Department, it's really easy to download on your phone.

Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if Merrimack and Manchester were predominate mutual aid partners and Chief Hunter stated that he would include every town that touches the community. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if most of the mutual aid was long-term care and 55+ and Chief Hunter responded no, but the likelihood was higher.

Chief Hunter talked about preplanning and inspections and Chairman Carter wanted to know if they could have an iPad with that information, so they would have it when responding to a commercial property. Chief Hunter stated that they had an excellent system for that, but it wasn't getting kept up to date.

Chief Hunter read a real scenario from the perspective of a firefighter picking up an overtime shift and a forced overtime shift, which was the motivation of making the request for more staff and retaining current staff.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if he would consider 12-hour shifts. Chief Hunter stated that the schedule they had last was 10-hour day shifts and 14-hour night shifts for over a decade. It changed like other towns to the 24-hour more desirable schedule.

Chief Hunter stated that if they grant his request, it didn't mean that they were going to be able to find those folks. Making some of the changes and the consideration of a CBA this year might be the combination of things that help them keep afloat.

Mr. Sawyer wanted to know what Chief Hunter needed for the SAFER grant authorization. Chief Hunter stated that it would be announced in January 2023, so he needed to start writing it now. There was discussion about the two additional personnel requests and SAFER grant and there was general consensus to move forward with both requests.

Mr. Sawyer stated that there was a new Capital Reserve program that he didn't fully fund. He wanted Chief Hunter to explain the cistern program he proposed this year.

Chief Hunter stated that there were places in Town that didn't have water for firefighting, and if the Town wanted to invest in its water supply availability in those sections in Town for firefighting purposes. That means cisterns in the ground with 30,000 gallons of water that would be available for them. The Town was 53% hydranted, but he was concerned about the 47% of Town that wasn't. He looked at the map and saw the places that needed something. They go around every year and check and some of them were out of service. They were looking to extend the reliability of those and availability of Town-owned land now and in the future for cisterns to benefit those neighborhoods. To install one cistern is \$100K. Mr. Sawyer stated that the request was for \$125K annually, but he only funded it at \$25K just to get him started with some site acquisition or design.

Councilor Radke mentioned if a new development comes in if they were required to give money for a cistern and Chief Hunter responded yes. The Town had a subdivision rule, which he's been enforcing, which resulted in more cisterns. Mr. Sawyer stated that in the past 15 years it's been implemented when the Fire Department sees the need for it.

Chief Hunter stated that if it's more than 1,000 feet from an established water supply it requires a cistern. If they fund this, it wouldn't prevent them from enforcing that rule. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's just filling in areas that don't have it. Councilor Radke confirmed that they would continue to enforce. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if he had identified local water sources they could utilize and Chief Hunter responded yes.

Chief Hunter didn't know of any grants for this, but if it was an established project and they found a grant or other funding for something like that, they may want to pursue that. Councilor Gilbert clarified that the cost was \$100K and he's identified six spots, so if they decided to do \$100K, they could do one each year for the next six years.

Councilor Bemiss stated that with \$25K they could get a detailed plan. Chief Hunter thought they would be using \$25K towards the first cistern or an existing one that needed maintenance they needed funding to fix it, they would do that first. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was a need, but he didn't see it as an emergent need where they had to do it immediately next year. They could save for a few years and be able to do one.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know how many gallons the tanker held. Chief Hunter responded 2,500. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know how many times he's needed to use it and didn't have enough water on hand. Mr. Sawyer stated that every structure fire they've had mutual aid tankers. Chief Hunter stated that what they need on the scene right away was people for life safety and immediate extinguishment. Water supply tended to be something that they had a little bit of time on. If they had to wait a few minutes for a mutual aid tanker, that's what they were going to do.

Councilor Gilbert wanted to know how many cisterns needed work. Chief Hunter stated that there was one that he would pursue. He didn't know what the cost would be, but would work with DPW on it. Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if he could have the cost by their next meeting and then they could make a decision. Maybe add that amount, and keep the \$25K towards doing a new one. Chief Hunter stated that he would want time to analyze it and examine it. They have several in Town that were not reliable and didn't know whether or not they would invest in them right now or seek to replace them.

Mr. Sawyer suggested increasing that line to \$35K instead of \$25K to give time to analyze and study it. Councilor Radke suggested that they put that on the list to review.

Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if the design and engineering was standard, so if they did one for \$25K it could be replicated. Chief Hunter responded yes. He wanted a product that was good for 50 years. Councilor Bandazian suggested adding design money to the operating budget in Capital Reserve. Mr. Sawyer stated that's what he had the \$25K to do. Councilor Bandazian was suggesting add to the operating budget and have the CIP as well so next time they have something to build they have a design.

Information Technology – Chief John Bryfonski, Nate Gagne, IT Manager

Councilor Bandazian mentioned Microsoft 365 and redundancy and wanted to know if

there was some plan to have some offline redundancy. Mr. Gagne stated that as far as email, the redundancy was no different than how they have it implemented now. If their email servers were to go down, people who use the full version of Outlook have a cached copy of their email that goes back three months and can work off of that. With 365, it's the same thing. The difference between the two was there was more redundancy in the 365. Councilor Bandazian wanted to know about if he wanted to work on a document in the back woods on his Town laptop. Mr. Gagne stated that nothing about that would change. One benefit of 365 that they don't get now was people would get not only the full desktop version Office Suite, they would get the online version as well. Councilor Bandazian stated that he was a fan in terms of security and updates and lowering the amount of maintenance that had to be done in-house. Synchronizing sometimes was annoying. Mr. Gagne stated that part of their plan, should it be approved, was to have a phased approach. Email would be one of the first things to get migrated and then start working on the other aspect of it. It was a big undertaking to make the switch, but once it's done administration becomes much easier. They can focus on delivering the service and making sure people have the access they need and making it easier for people to do their jobs by having access to documents wherever they are. The security piece of it was big as well and a lot of it is shifted to the provider.

Chairman Carter wanted to know what the timeline would be to get it done. Mr. Gagne stated that assuming they couldn't start until after Budgetary Town Meeting, the email portion of it could happen pretty quickly, because they were virtually already set up for it. As far as the timeline for the entire project, the entire thing could be done next year.

Chief Bryfonski stated that some of the cost to move to Microsoft 365 was somewhat offset by about \$18K of savings in other lines in the IT budget.

Police – Chief John Bryfonski

Chief Bryfonski stated that they were looking at a 1.22% overall increase in the budget. They were looking to fund two vehicles in 2022 with surplus funds instead of in 2023. He went through the line items and highlighted any major increases.

- Administration

- Professional Services – \$2K increase
- Medical Services – \$2.6K increase
- Department Specific – \$3K increase
- Vehicle Repair – \$10K increase
- Gasoline – \$40K increase
- Conferences & Training – \$2,733 increase

- Operations Support

- Overtime-Vacations – \$2.6K increase
- Overtime-Sick – \$2K increase

Overtime-Training – \$1K increase
Overtime-Vacancies – \$2K increase
Maintenance Contracts – \$10,440 increase

- Patrol Operations

Overtime-Vacations – \$6K increase
Overtime-Arrests – \$3K increase
Overtime-Town Events – \$2K increase
Overtime-Training – \$5K increase
Overtime-Holidays – \$1.7K increase
Uniform Allowance – \$6.8K increase
Investigative Expenses – \$3.6K increase
Vehicles – \$94,978K increase (possibly using 2022 funds)
Machinery & Equipment – \$3.4K increase
Miscellaneous Equipment – \$2K increase

- Detectives

Overtime-Regular – \$1K increase

Mr. Sawyer stated that the vehicles were out of that number already. Chief Bryfonski stated that his budget was then less than 1.22% increase.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know how often they use the polygraph. Chief Bryfonski stated that they use it for all of their hires.

Library – Miriam Johnson, Library Director and Caitlin Loving, Assistant Director

Ms. Johnson stated that the one change from last year was updating their copiers and printers. They are 11 years old and were having print quality and other issues.

Councilor Gilbert mentioned that wages went up 7.68%. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's not added staffing, but there were some adjustments in 2022 that were reflective in 2023.

Councilor Thomas wanted to know what budget were the electric costs for the Library. Mr. Sawyer responded Facilities.

There was some discussion about the Library parking lot and landscaping. Ms. Johnson stated that they have a plan for landscaping. The Trustees and the Foundation were already working on funding for it. Mr. Sawyer stated that if there were any funds leftover from the construction they would move those towards the landscaping.

Town Council – Rick Sawyer

Mr. Sawyer stated that it was essentially a no-change budget. He pointed out that there was \$528 in Training, but it should be in their Miscellaneous line.

Councilor Bemiss stated she was told Town Councilors could not forgo their stipend. Councilor Bandazian stated that it was a Charter provision, so it may be required.

Supervisors of the Checklist – Hugh Donovan

Councilor Thomas wanted to know how many new registrations they had and Mr. Donovan responded about 200.

There was a discussion about the checklist purge.

Mr. Donovan stated that they only have one election in 2023, so they were requesting a 30% reduction from last year. They've put in some hours for himself and Barbara Chagnon, because the State has asked them to be beta testers for new software.

There was discussion about the election, the purge and registering to vote.

Councilor Radke wanted to know if they put in for an increase in wages and Mr. Sawyer stated that they didn't; they did last year. The only increase was for the poll workers from \$7.75 to \$10. It was stated that the Supervisors of the Checklist were getting paid \$12.50. Chairman Carter asked Mr. Sawyer to take a look at it.

Recreation – Jane O'Brien, Recreation Manager

Ms. O'Brien stated that they needed to up the salary for pool and camp. She gave comparisons of what other towns pay lifeguards, and Bedford was the lowest. Because the pay was so low, some got other jobs and it was difficult to have a quorum at the pool. Councilor Thomas stated that the staff report for pool says \$12 and then \$15 and Ms. O'Brien explained that she was proposing \$12 in '23 and \$15 in '24. Councilor Gilbert thought they should go to \$15 now. For head guards, the proposal is \$15 in '23 and \$18 in '24. If they do \$15 for lifeguards they would do \$18 for head guards in 2023.

Councilor Bandazian wanted to know if there were times in the past year where they hadn't had staff and had to turn people away. Ms. O'Brien stated that there were times they had to close or adjust the times. Councilor Bandazian stated that capital expenditure and the operational maintenance go on, but they get less use out of it.

Councilor Radke thought they should look at increasing the seasonal pool fees to help offset the increase in wages.

Councilor Gilbert wanted to know why property repair & maintenance went down. Ms. O'Brien stated because of changing to the Accu-Tab system last year.

Councilor Radke stated that for camp, Ms. O'Brien had \$70K and Town Manager had \$100K. Ms. O'Brien stated that it was for wages. Mr. Sawyer stated that the new wages weren't in what the departments had to submit. There was complete agreement in the camp wages. They would have to increase camp rates to cover that increased cost.

This year camp took in \$82,570. To go to a budget of \$100K, they were going to have to increase rates to cover for that.

Councilor Gilbert talked about enforcing dogs not on the fields, especially Sportsman Field. He suggested she contact the leagues to remind them to remind their people.

There was a discussion about Legacy field being offline and pickle ball courts.

Finance – Matt Mannino, Finance Director

Mr. Mannino stated that there would be an increase of \$3K to the Auditing Services line, because they just got their quote in. He stated that Longevity was down to \$0, because two of their long-time employees had left this past year.

Town Manager – Rick Sawyer

Mr. Sawyer stated that there was a \$10K decrease under Professional Services. They were waiting for their next step in the PFAS saga of the BCTV building and the study that was going on. They had a presentation with the State by their consultant. Out of that, the State is going to give some recommendations of what the next phase of study needs to be in response to the BCTV building. He anticipated they were going to have to have an additional contract with their environmental consultant to continue that work. He didn't believe the work done to date got them to a point where the State would say they don't have to do anything else. He didn't know what those costs would be.

Energy Commission

Mr. Sawyer stated that they reduced the amount for transcriptionist, because they've been doing it in-house, but he would like to keep it in there if that changes.

Legal

Mr. Sawyer stated that there was a \$5K increase. They will be significantly overspent this year as a result of four ongoing court cases and the labor negotiations with the three unions plus the fourth union that has been proposed. He thought the additional \$5k for next year would be enough.

Unallocated Reserve

Mr. Sawyer stated that it was level funded at \$35K.

Insurance

Mr. Sawyer mentioned the discussion when HR was there. He stated that there was a \$30K overall increase in that line. They were underfunding health insurance by \$200K, which would otherwise be \$3.2M.

Long-Term Debt

Mr. Sawyer state that it was about a \$90K reduction this year.

Revenues

Mr. Sawyer stated that the big ones included ambulance revenue at a \$250K increase; Vehicle Registrations has another \$100K increase; Investment Interest increased by \$75K; Police Detail was up \$50K; Rooms & Meals from the State have been exceeding expectations; Recycling & Solid Waste has done really well, but with solid waste, they will have to come back to the Council with a rate increase for disposal at the Transfer Station based on those new costs, so there's an additional \$20K in solid waste.

Mr. Sawyer stated that there were some additional revenues going into 2023 that were different. The biggest were the two PFAS grants that they applied for in 2022 that represented \$2.9M in revenue in the 2022 budget that were not there in the 2023 budget. Some of that was offset because of the sale of Sunset Lane, which was \$1.5M.

Fund Balance

Mr. Sawyer stated that his budget has it at \$12.6% if nothing changed in the budget. The Policy calls for staying between 7% and 17%.

Mr. Sawyer stated that he didn't see any revenue that they could increase significantly unless any of them know of Legislation coming from the State. Every piece of revenue they collect was one less tax dollar they had to raise. In this budget, it's just under 4% additional being raised by taxes, 3.97%.

Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if the 3.97% increase was comparing what the total Town budget was last year to where they were now. Mr. Sawyer responded no; the amount being raised by taxes. Last year they had to raise \$18.8M in taxes and as part of this budget it would be \$19.5M.

There was discussion about the tax rate and retirement contributions.

Mr. Sawyer stated that they hadn't talked about union contracts. There were no increases in the Police, Fire or Public Works wage lines for the union employees. They all have contracts coming to an end at the end of this calendar year. Those would be on the warrant for vote by the public at the Budgetary Town Meeting. Those costs would be an addition to everything they've been talking about and budgeted here. Councilor Radke wanted to know if those would be absorbed the following year. Mr. Sawyer stated if they pass at Town Meeting they would become part of the operating budget.

Mr. Sawyer stated that they have ARPA funds available. The Council had a priority of using those for facilities and they didn't need to change that. With the 4 Sunset Lane funds becoming available there was more flexibility like finding a piece of property; they

would have additional funds available if everything passed at Town Meeting in March. They could make decisions on using ARPA funds next year. They have to make commitments on those by the end of 2024. They have about \$1M. Chairman Carter thought they had to use them by the end of 2024. Mr. Sawyer stated that they had to allocate the funds by the end of 2024 and spend them by 2026. Chairman Carter wanted to know if those funds could be used for sidewalks. Mr. Sawyer responded absolutely. That's something they could bring to the Council in 2023 without having to budget for it here. ARPA funds could be used outside of the budget process.

Councilor Thomas thought they should keep it where it's at, because they may need it. Councilor Gilbert stated that \$1M would go a long way to help buy a piece of property.

Councilor Bemiss mentioned parking permits under Field Maintenance and wanted to know if that was high school parking and Mr. Sawyer stated yes. When that parking lot was paved, the condition was those would be shown as revenue on the recreation side.

Councilor Bemiss mentioned health fees and wanted to know often the health inspector went out. Mr. Sawyer thought it was annually that the restaurants were inspected, but he could get that answer. Councilor Bemiss stated that at the Student Senate meeting there was a question about food safety. Councilor Thomas stated that the health inspector inspects the concession stands, everything. He's around a lot.

Councilor Bemiss mentioned the swap shop revenue and wanted to revisit that sooner rather than later. She didn't like that it was closed and didn't think the community liked that it was closed. Councilor Gilbert stated that he was going to retire and be done with it, so somebody else might be able to come in. Mr. Sawyer stated that they could put a bid out in 2023 for proposals. Councilor Thomas questioned whether it could stay open in the winter, because he puts a lot of his stuff outside. Mr. Sawyer thought even if it was just Saturdays in the winter. Councilor Bemiss stated that she sees people throwing away things that they would normally bring there like patio sets. She wanted to know if they had to wait six months. Councilor Gilbert stated that he had an agreement with the Town that was still in place. Mr. Sawyer suggested they take the spring and summer to decide what they would like to put in the request for proposals. Councilor Thomas thought when he gets back and was reopening it one more time maybe have him come in and talk about it. He's done this for a long time.

Mr. Sawyer did a review:

- Assistant Town Clerk hours for \$3K
- Poll pads for \$16,950
- Planning Department reduce \$1,911 FROM SNHPC
- Audit for \$3K

Those changes might bring it up to \$14.16. They also had to go back and calculate the additional cost of the poll salaries.

Mr. Sawyer would bring back for review:

- Cisterns
- Supervisors of the Checklist pay

Mr. Sawyer wanted to know if they were moving forward with the warrant article for the solar and the response was yes.

The budget workshop ended at 2:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Boufford