



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, January 20, 2021, at 6:30 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Call to Order: Chairman Koenig called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Present at the meeting: Chairman Koenig, Vice Chair Boyd, Councilor Harrington, Councilor Rothhaus, Councilor Albert, Councilor Healey, Councilor Woods and Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali.

Absent: Town Manager Eileen Cabanel

Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman Koenig led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements: Chairman Koenig announced the dates of the upcoming meetings.

- Thursday, January 21, 2021, 6:30 PM - Budget meeting
- Wednesday January 27, 2021, 6:30 PM – Budget Meeting
- Thursday, January 28, 2021, 7:00 PM - Regular meeting
- Thursday, February 11, 2021, 7:00 PM - Regular meeting
- Thursday, February 25, 2021, 7:00 PM - Regular meeting

The Town Council held a public meeting to review the 2021/22 budget, to include the following departments:

Solid Waste:

The goals of the Division for FY22 are:

- Continue to look for ways to make the transfer of materials out of the facility as inexpensive and environmentally friendly as possible.
- Continue to partner with Eversource/NHSaves to offer free recycling events for our residents.
- Work to reopen the Swap Shop as COVID-19 restrictions lessen.
- Develop Job Hazard Analysis on each of our major work functions.

Solid Waste Budget Highlights:

- Overall budget up 8.7% - \$150,222
- Personnel expenses up 7.7% - \$43,491
 - Contractual raises and benefits, 53rd week
- Operating expenses up 10.4% - \$107,481
 - 8355 Solid Waste Disposal up \$84,375
 - Tipping fee increase from \$71.50 to \$75.25
 - Contract Period ends 12/14/21
 - Can extend for five years (twice) with 6-months' notice
 - Single Stream fee increase from \$92 to \$128
 - Contract expires 11/30/21
 - 8359 Other Outside Services up \$5,000
 - Point of Entry Treatment System Maintenance

- 8370 Landfill Monitoring up \$4,500
- 8388 Special Waste Disposal up \$16,000
 - Cost increase for brush grinding based on recent bids
 - Now have to pay to dispose of waste oil
- Capital Reserve Fund Equipment Purchases
 - Live Floor Trash trailer – 100 CY capacity, 1 of 4 trailers (2005 model year)
 - Combine purchase of planned FY21 trailer with this one for better pricing
 - \$70K each
 - Pickup with plow (2010) - \$35K

Paul Micali began with a brief overview of the budget changes for Solid Waste. He explained that they have the 53rd week of payroll (like all other departments), an increase in retirement, two unions that are both receiving a 2% increase and two large expenses (tipping fees and recycling). Asst. Town Manager Micali also mentioned that the Special Handling budget item is increasing by \$16,000 due to brush grinding and waste oil. Someone used to collect the waste oil for us at no expense and now they are charging for it.

Kyle Fox (Director of Public Works) was in attendance and was joined by the Solid Waste Foreman Kristopher Perrault to present the Solid Waste budget to the Council. Mr. Fox began by providing an overview of the functions the Solid Waste Department is responsible for and then presented the goals along with the major changes to the proposed 2021-2022 budget.

Councilor Albert asked if anyone is looking at ways to bring the cost of recycling down. Kyle Fox responded by explaining that they had brought in NRRA to do a presentation during the last budget season and they were hopeful that companies in the Mid-West were going to open up recycling plants to re-use the materials that were previously sent to China. These plans (like many others) were put on hold when COVID-19 hit. Mr. Fox stated that he does still believe that the ingenuity within the United States will come up with a solution but in the meantime, we will have to deal with the added expenses. He also added that the current recycling contract expires on 11/30/2021 and the trash contract expires on 12/31/2021, Paul Micali is trying to extend both contracts.

Mr. Fox briefly touched on the Point of Entry Treatment System Maintenance expense by explaining that the town currently maintains three treatment systems in private homes that are near the landfill, two are a result of PFAS and the other is a result of high dioxane levels. The maintenance of these systems has been more costly than originally anticipated. He also expanded upon the Landfill monitoring increase by explaining that the DES requirements have become much more burdensome so the impact is being seen in the budget. Mr. Fox then turned his attention to the Special Waste line item, explaining that the cost of brush grinding has been under-budgeted the last several years so they are adjusting for it now and he reiterated what Mr. Micali mentioned earlier about now having to pay someone to dispose of the waste oil. Mr. Fox wrapped up the Solid Waste presentation by reviewing the items that are set to be purchased with the Capital Reserve Fund. They are hoping to combine the purchase of the FY21 and FY22 trailers to get better pricing and are also looking to replace a 2010 pickup with plow truck.

Councilor Harrington asked for clarification on if the tipping fee increase from \$71.50 to \$75.25 is the price per ton. Mr. Fox confirmed that it is and added the clarification that it the fee is for trash disposal. Councilor Harrington then asked about the increase in recycling fees. Mr. Fox explained that the contract is run on a calendar year and the budget is not so the figures are a combination of two contracts. The recycling has ultimately gone from \$54.50 per ton to \$128 per ton and may go even

higher. She also stated that she recalled that during last year's NRRA presentation they mentioned that in some instances the recycling is not in fact being recycled and is being transferred to landfills instead and is curious if we know what is happening to ours. Mr. Fox indicated that the company the town contracts with (E.L. Harvey in Westborough MA) brings the recycling to their location and sorts it by type so he knows for certain it is not ending up in landfills. Councilor Harrington stated she is glad to hear that because we are spending an additional \$79,000 on recycling compared to regular trash. Mr. Fox explained that the recycling cost also includes the compactor, the trailers and the removal of the recycling material. The trash removal (i.e. tipping fee) is just the cost of the disposal, on top of the \$75.25 per ton fee, the town also has other expenses such as personnel trucking and equipment. Councilor Harrington asked if when the other items are factored into the cost of trash removal, if it is close to the recycling cost. Mr. Fox explained that he and Paul Micali conducted a cost comparison last year and found that when all items are factored in, the cost is relatively comparable, so that coupled with the fact that recycling is the right thing to do for the environment, they made the recommendation to continue the recycling program. Councilor Harrington also asked for confirmation that the \$16,000 increase for item # 8388 is just due to the brush grinding and waste oil. Mr. Fox confirmed that is accurate.

Councilor Woods asked if there would be a benefit to going back to separating the recycling by material because some of the materials can be sold for profit. Mr. Fox explained that they did discuss that option but the additional staff that would be needed would basically wash out any potential gain. He also added that long lines at the recycling center was one of the other factors in going to single stream recycling so eliminating it now would cause this problem again. They also looked into just separating the cardboard but found there is no benefit because they would not get a price reduction from the current vendor due to the fact that their machines are calibrated to sort cardboard already.

Councilor Healey asked where independent trash collectors take their trash and what are they doing not to incur the increased cost. Kristopher Perrault responded that most of them take their trash to Bow and it is his understanding that they are incurring the cost too and their tipping fees are comparable to ours. Paul Micali added that the reason the independent collectors go to Bow is because we only allow trash from Merrimack residents and a lot of these contractors have clients in surrounding towns too.

Chairman Koenig asked about the addition of a part time employee to avoid having to use a Highway employee. He indicated that he did not see the savings passed along in the proposed Highway budget. Mr. Fox apologized for not including this item in the slides and explained that they are looking to hire a part time maintainer for the summer to fill in at the transfer station as needed. This position will eliminate the need of having to backfill the slots with Highway employees that we have to pay overtime to. Since the position is for the Transfer Station, the money comes from the Solid Waste budget, which is why it is not reflected in the Highway budget. Chairman Koenig asked if there is a line item for overtime in the Solid Waste budget that these numbers would be reflected in. Paul Micali explained that they cannot budget for it because they never know how many days someone will be needed to fill in so they have just left it under the Personnel line item and have been over-spending the last several years. The hope is that hiring a part time employee will help bring this under control because they will not be paying so much in overtime expenses.

Chairman Koenig also asked Mr. Fox to address the maintenance of vehicles and equipment budget and why it's down from the current budget. Paul Micali addressed the question by explaining that we have recently purchased some new equipment (trailers, tractors, etc.) and so we expect to see a savings in repair costs because the newer items will not need repairs. Mr. Fox also added that the maintenance budget is a tough one to predict because they never know what is going to need repairs. They use a

five-year average of maintenance costs to determine the budget. Paul Micali read the actuals from the last four years to give the council an idea of what has been spent. Chairman Koenig also asked where the revenue from items that we charge to dispose of can be found, Mr. Micali responded that it is off-set from the budgeted amount. Councilor Healey asked if we could off-set the price of the waste oil by charging people to dispose of it. Mr. Fox stated that it could be done but he is worried that if we start charging people to dispose of it, they are going to just dispose of it inappropriately (i.e. in the woods and storm drains).

Chairman Koenig asked about the Capital Reserve Fund and what the plans are for the next budget. Paul Micali explained that at the end of the current budget, they expect to have 145,000 in the fund and depositing another 125,000 to bring the total to 270,000. They anticipate spending approximately 100,000 (on trailers and a truck) which will leave 170,000. The Waste Water equipment is costly (sometimes 250,000) so they try to save for these expenses gradually. Mr. Fox reviewed some of the expenditures projected within the next couple years to demonstrate the need for adding to the Capital Reserve fund.

Councilor Albert suggested adding a link to the Public Works website so the town residents can see where the recycling goes. Mr. Fox indicated that was an excellent idea and the Kristopher Perrault would take care of it.

Highway

The goals of the Division for FY22 are:

- Continue to perform all of our functions in a professional manner, giving top customer service to our residents.
- Look for opportunities to provide public service for the Town including participating in outreach programs such as touch a truck events and other educational outreach opportunities.
- Improve overall condition of our road network through the continued use of our milling machine attachment combined with rental of a sidewalk paver to repair distresses before they become potholes.
- Develop Job Hazard Analysis on each of our major work functions.

Highway Budget Highlights:

- Overall budget up 3.0% - \$161,054
- Personnel expenses up 7.7% - \$138,750
 - Contractual raises and benefits, 53rd week
 - Full year for the Stormwater Foreman
- Operating expenses down 2.5% - (\$20,696)
 - 8359 – Crushing asphalt pile - \$25,000
- Capital Expenditures up 1.8% - \$39,000
 - Sidewalk Project – Town Center Committee recommends Twin Bridge Road
- 8910 – CRF Expenditures for FY22
 - Stormwater Drainage improvements - \$250,000
 - TAP Grant (if awarded) - \$975,000 (TAP is up to \$1.25M)
 - Wood Chipper (2004) - \$50,000
 - Asphalt Roller Trailer (1981) - \$15,000
 - Backhoe Loader (2007) - \$140,000

- 10 Wheel Dump Truck (2010) - \$195,000

Paul Micali began with a brief overview of the budget changes for Highway. He explained that they also have the 53rd week of payroll (like all other departments) and they like Solid Waste, they have two unions that are both receiving a 2% increase. He also summarized a few key changes to the budget:

- Operating Expenses (8359) line item is down by \$25,000. This is due to the fact that the asphalt pile was just done last year so it does not need to be done again.
- Building is down \$30,000 because the roof on the salt shed was replaced last year.
- Paving is up \$50,000 because the town is trying to incrementally increase the paving budget.
- Operating Equipment is up \$19,000 due to the purchase of a flail mower for \$31,000. The reason it is only up \$19,000 instead of \$31,000 is because they are eliminating the \$12,000 purchase of a second mower and just buying one.

Kyle Fox (Director of Public Works) and Lori Barrett (Operations Manager) were in attendance to present the Highway and Equipment Maintenance budgets to the council. Mr. Fox began by providing an overview of the functions the Highway Department is responsible for and then presented the goals along with the major changes to the proposed 2021-2022 budget.

Mr. Fox elaborated on the Capital Expenditures sidewalk project, explaining that the Town Center Committee is recommending Twin Bridge Road for the next sidewalk project. The reason for this is because it will complete the connection to Twin Bridge Park and will make a nice loop once the bridge is replaced in the coming years. He also advised that the 275th Anniversary committee is looking to possibly do a covered bridge project at Twin Bridge Park. Chairman Koenig stated that he thought the goal was to install sidewalks along the DW Corridor. Mr. Fox responded by explaining that a new grant has become available that they are proposing to use for the DW Sidewalks and will provide the details later in the evening.

Councilor Woods asked about the \$1400 increase for door hangers. Mr. Fox explained that one of the challenges the department faces is notifying residents when they are going to be working in their neighborhood. Lori came up with the idea of creating door hangers to leave on people's doors to alert them of upcoming work so the \$1400 is the printing cost.

Councilor Harrington asked why line item 8362 (traffic signals) is up by \$11,000. Lori Barrett explained that some of their traffic signal equipment is approaching the 5-7 year age recommendation for replacement so they are anticipating that some of that equipment may need to be replaced.

Councilor Albert commented that the Highway Department is budgeting \$2,000 for the netting at Twadowsky field and that does not even include the cost of the netting itself, which was included in the Parks and Recreation budget. He estimates that the town is spending \$10,000 on this net and suggested that they take another look at the fees they are charging the teams that use the field to see if we can off-set the cost.

Councilor Boyd asked about line item 8341 (sand and salt). This item is being decreased by approximately \$6,000 and asked how we are doing so far with usage. Lori Barrett stated we have only had 6 events that needed plowing and we have only used 7% of our material. Paul Micali added that at the end of every season we refill the salt shed so money is set aside for that. Councilor Boyd also asked if the tracking equipment has been helpful. Mr. Fox responded that the town never purchased that

equipment. They looked into it a couple years ago but determined it was not effective and would not save the town any money. Councilor Boyd also asked if the money allotted for drainage maintenance is enough for the town to remain compliant with MS4. Mr. Fox explained that the CRF also contains \$200,000, which is used for the larger projects. He went on to say that a big part of the Stormwater budget will be hiring a Stormwater foreman. They had previously advertised the position and are re-advertising it now because they did not find anyone that was the right fit.

Councilor Albert asked about 8505 (infrastructure/paving) and asked if it includes the paving of gravel roads. Mr. Fox responded that it does not include the gravel roads and funding has not been determined for that project yet. Councilor Albert also asked if they plan on posting a list of the roads that are going to get paved this year. Mr. Fox commented that they are going to post the list once it is complete. The discussion regarding item 8505 continued and Paul Micali explained how purchases budgeted in one fiscal year but paid in another are accounted for. Chairman Koenig stated that he is looking for ways to save some money and perhaps postponing the sidewalk project for a year could achieve that goal. Councilor Harrington stated that using some of the money in the unreserved fund balance was also suggested but Chairman Koenig stated that a lot of that money was already factored into the proposed budget. Paul Micali expressed his agreement with that statement and commented that he will review that budget during the council deliberations. Mr. Micali also mentioned that there is a potential in using funds from this year to purchase the flail mower. He will provide an update when he knows for sure.

Councilor Rothhaus asked for an update on the condition of our roads because he remembers when we were falling behind in the upkeep and the decision was made to allocate more funds to that budget. He does not want to propose reducing that line if we are not keeping up with the maintenance. Mr. Fox explained that the town is “treading water” and keeping up as best we can with the funds that are available. They use 50% of the budget on the major roads (i.e. the roads travelled the most). They also try to focus on keeping the roads that are in good condition in that condition by resurfacing them when they start to show signs of distress. This maintenance helps to prevent costly major road work.

Councilor Albert brought up the sidewalk project again and suggested that it possibly be postponed until the bridge is ready to be replaced in 2025. Paul Micali went into detail about the money that is reserved for the sidewalks and how it is allocated but the end result is that the Town Council has the final determination. The Town Center committee just made a recommendation for Twin Bridge Road. Councilor Healey stated that she would like to see the sidewalk projects postponed. When the plan was established we were not in a pandemic and now things have changed and a lot of people are out of work so her preference would be to postpone the sidewalks to save some money.

Chairman Koenig asked for clarification on the flail mower attachment. Lori Barrett explained that it is an attachment to the sidewalk tractor. The tractor is used for mowing and is used almost every day in the summer. This attachment will help to mow down embankments.

Equipment Maintenance

The goals of the Division for FY22 are:

- Continue to improve our knowledge of the new vehicles that departments purchase.
- Continue to work with departments to identify cost saving approaches to maintenance of the fleet.
- Develop Job Hazard Analysis on each of our major work functions.

Equipment Maintenance Budget Highlights:

- Overall budget up 3.7% - \$17,476
- Personnel expenses up 3.8% - \$17,400
 - Contractual raises and benefits, 53rd week
- No capital purchases anticipated

Paul Micali began with a brief overview of the budget changes for Equipment Maintenance. He explained that they also have the 53rd week of payroll (like all other departments) and they like Solid Waste and Highway, they have two unions that are both receiving a 2% increase. There are no large expenses planned.

Kyle Fox (Director of Public Works) and Lori Barrett (Operations Manager) were in attendance to present the Highway and Equipment Maintenance budget to the council. Mr. Fox began by providing an overview of the functions the Highway Department is responsible for and then presented the goals along with the major changes to the proposed 2021-2022 budget.

Councilor Albert commented that the town is lucky to have the Equipment Maintenance department and they do an excellent job keeping all of the town vehicles running. Councilor Woods asked with more and more things being computerized in vehicles these days if we have had to out-source any of our maintenance. Lori Barrett responded that the town purchased some diagnostic equipment that is needed for the newer vehicles and there is a yearly cost for software updates added into the budget. Chairman Koenig commented that the budget is roughly half a million dollars and asked if anyone has an idea of what the cost would be if we had the maintenance done by a garage. Lori Barrett responded that there was a study done approximately six years ago and she could forward along the results to the Council. She also added that the cost is only one factor because our maintenance department saves time too, especially when something breaks off hours and they can be called in to help to get the repair done immediately. Paul Micali interjected and stated that we pay roughly a \$50 per hour shop rate for our maintenance department and the town recently approached a mechanic about handling the police vehicle fleet and they were quoted a shop rate of \$75 per hour. This was also a discount from the garage's normal rate of \$133 per hour.

Councilor Rothhaus asked if there has been a noticeable difference in responding to storms since the new garage was built. Lori Barrett said that there has been a very noticeable difference in their response time because they no longer have to clean off the trucks before they take them out. She estimates that it has saved them between 45 minutes to an hour.

Wastewater Treatment

The goals of the Division for FY22 are:

- Begin construction for the Phase III upgrade project!
- Continue to look for ways to improve operations to lower our energy consumption.
- Work with various stakeholder groups to help establish appropriate limits for our wastewater discharges.
- Continue to develop our Asset Management program.
- Develop Job Hazard Analysis on each of our major work functions.

Wastewater Treatment Budget Highlights: Budget funded from user fees, not tax base

- Overall budget up 2.3% - \$102,519
- Personnel expenses up 6.0% - \$131,471
 - Contractual raises and benefits, 53rd week
- Operating Expenses up 1.2% - \$20,704
- Capital Expenditures down 8.9% - (\$49,656)
- 8910 – CRF Expenditures for FY22
 - Manhole/Sewer Line Rehab- \$25,000
- Front End Loader (1975) - \$100,000
- SCADA Upgrade - \$75,000
- Sewer Assessment Study (ongoing) - \$13,920

Paul Micali started by reminding the Council that the Wastewater budget is funded by user fees. He then summarized the changes to the budget by noting the 53rd week of payroll, increase in retirement costs and increase in wages for the union employees. He also mentioned that they are projecting a \$13,000 savings in electrical costs. The plant uses a lot of electricity so the town recently upgraded all of the electrical panels and switched to LED lights. Mr. Micali briefly discussed a few more changes in the budget and then turned the floor over to the DPW staff to go through the specifics and answer questions.

Kyle Fox (Director of Public Works) and Sarita Croce (Assistant Director Wastewater) were in attendance to present the Wastewater budget to the council. Mr. Fox began by providing an overview of the functions the Highway Department is responsible for and then presented the goals along with the major changes to the proposed 2021-2022 budget.

Councilor Albert asked if research has been done on alternative energy sources since the Wastewater treatment facility uses a lot of energy. Paul Micali responded that the town has looked at solar panels and the cost is very high and the payback period is very long. They looked into it for the Highway garage and were quoted \$75,000 and the payback was 7-10 years. Municipalities do not get tax breaks so it is not lucrative for the town at this time. The town will continue to keep an eye on it and if the cost goes down they will consider it again. Mr. Fox added that Public Works is a big proponent of natural energy and would love to see the town get there some day when it becomes more affordable. They added conduit to the ground at the new Highway garage so when and if it becomes an option, they will be ready to go.

Councilor Boyd asked about the decrease in line item 8331, he questioned if the decrease made sense given the recent problems discovered with perlite. Sarita Croce responded that since the perlite was discovered the department has increased their preventive maintenance checks on the equipment and have made several key replacements. The liners for the screw press were also recently replaced and are good for approximately 18 months so that cost will not be incurred until the 2022-2023 budget. She also added that last year the department replaced the compost screener so the cost of maintaining the old screener is a savings in the proposed new budget. Ms. Croce discussed a few more maintenance items that were conducted and then concluded that she feels they are in good shape now because of all of the preventive measures that they took.

Councilor Albert asked for an update on the disposable wipe problem. Sarita explained that with the onset of COVID it appears that people are using even more disposable wipes than they ever have. The pump stations are constantly getting plugged with the wipes and just this past weekend they had to pay

employees overtime to unclog a pump. The situation will not get better until upgrades are made to the pump stations.

Chairman Koenig asked how long it is going to take to complete the upgrade to the treatment facility and if some of the maintenance costs will be eliminated when the upgrade is complete. Sarita stated that the upgrade is going to take a minimum of 2 ½ years and maintenance will still be needed.

Councilor Boyd asked for an update on the Sewer Assessment Study and whether or not we have learned anything from it, Sarita responded that the study is behind schedule but they have a plan to get caught up. She also added that they are not waiting for the completion of the study to make repairs; they are fixing them as they are found. Councilor Boyd also asked if the Sewer repairs are paid through user fees and Sarita confirmed they are. Paul Micali clarified that once the sewer is accepted by the town, it goes into the Wastewater budget. Prior to that, it is paid through the general fund.

Chairman Koenig asked if we know how much of the town is on public sewer. Mr. Fox replied that he does not have the exact number but 25-50% of the town is on sewer.

Councilor Boyd commended Sarita on a job well done and the other council members echoed their agreement.

Building and Grounds

The goals of the Division for FY22 are:

- Continue providing safe work and public spaces for our employees, residents, and business owners.
- Continue to provide timely service to all of the users of our facilities while performing preventative maintenance on systems to maximize useful life.

Building and Grounds Budget Highlights:

- Overall budget down 15.7% - (\$63,468)
- Personnel expenses up 2.7% - \$5,328
 - Contractual benefits, 53rd week
- Operating expenses down 2.5% - (\$20,696)
- Capital Projects down 83.1% - (\$68,646)
 - Completed Town Hall LED Lighting Project
 - Propose replacing rail and spindles on bandstand - \$4,000
 - Town Hall Window Replacement project (combine with FY21 budget) – West wing - \$10,000

Paul Micali starting by explaining that the only change to the Personnel budget is the 53rd week of payroll. He also briefly discussed the projected savings in the budget and that it is mainly due to the LED Lighting project that was just completed. He wrapped up by mentioning that there is a proposal to spend \$4,000 to fix spindles and add a rail to the bandstand and feels that this is something that can easily be accomplished.

Kyle Fox (Director of Public Works) provided an overview of the functions the Building and Grounds department is responsible for. He paused to commend this group of individuals for all of the extra work

they have endured since the onset of COVID-19. These employees have been responsible for disinfecting all of the buildings on a daily basis and have done an impeccable job doing so. Mr. Fox then presented the department goals along with the major changes to the proposed 2021-2022 budget.

Councilor Albert asked about the \$7,000 increase to line item 8359 (plowing municipal lots) and asked for an explanation on the increase. Mr. Fox explained that the town started contracting this out a couple of years ago and there have been some growing pains involved in the process. We ended up requesting that the company do more than what was originally agreed to which resulted in an increase in fees.

Paul Micali explained that the cost of the West Wing window replacement project is so high because the large windows are a custom size.

Councilor Boyd commended the maintenance staff on a job well done!

Administration/Engineering

The goals of the Division for FY22 are:

- Continue our Department wide initiative to foster our ‘Big Three’ – Professionalism, Ethics, Teamwork.
- Develop TAP Grant application for DW Highway Sidewalks.
- Enhance our GIS and asset management capabilities.
- Increase our solicitation of public input into capital projects.
- Continue to develop information sharing of the Department’s goals and accomplishments through social media platforms.
- Evolve the Public Works Training committee

Administration/Engineering Budget Highlights:

- Overall budget up 3.9% - \$20,613
- Personnel expenses up 3.6% - \$17,961
 - Contractual benefits, 53rd week
- Environmental Coordinator
 - Hope to have in place by end of January
 - Focus on MS4 stormwater requirements
 - Will assist with asset management and GIS

Paul Micali began by explaining that other than the personnel increase due to the 53rd week of payroll; this is a flat line budget.

Kyle Fox (Director of Public Works) and Dawn Tuomala (Deputy Director/Town Engineer) were in attendance to present the Administration/Engineering budget to the council. Mr. Fox began by providing an overview of the functions the Highway Department is responsible for and then presented the goals along with the major changes to the proposed 2021-2022 budget.

Mr. Fox segued to discuss the new Tap grant that they recently learned about and explained that there is a deadline of February 5, 2021 to get the application in. He stated that they are interested in applying for this grant to help pay for the construction of sidewalks in the town center. Paul Micali interjected

and suggested that they table the discussion for now and place it on the agenda for January 28th to allow the council to finish the budget items first. Chairman Koenig asked Mr. Fox if this would still allow time to complete the application. Mr. Fox confirmed that the 28th meeting would be fine and added that they would be looking for approval to submit the grant application and would need either a council member or the town manager to sign it. Councilor Healey asked what type of grant it is and Mr. Fox explained that it is an 80/20 grant. Eighty percent of the funds come from the Federal Government and we will be responsible for twenty percent. He also added that it is a reimbursement grant, we have to pay the initial cost and then get reimbursed from the government, but the reimbursement can happen as phases of the project are complete, it does not need to be done at the end. Councilor Boyd also added the recommendation that they consider taking the sidewalk down to tie into the 360 plaza to tie into the apartments that are being proposed there.

Since it was decided to table the TAP grant discussion, Mr. Fox turned his attention back to the budget changes. As previously mentioned by Paul, there are not many changes to the budget and the largest one is the addition of the Environmental Coordinator. The position has been filled and the new employee is scheduled to start on February 1, 2021.

Councilor Boyd asked what the project focus will be for the summer interns this year. Dawn Tuomala explained that the interns will have a lot to keep them busy including the assisting the new Environmental Coordinator with obtaining samples, road PCI indexes and road survey work. She then explained to the council what PCI (Pavement Condition Index) is. Councilor Albert stated that he thought we did the indexing every year and Mr. Fox explained that they try to do it every other year because it takes the bulk of the summer to complete. Mr. Fox expanded upon the explanation and stated that they can give the findings to the council when it is complete. Dawn Tuomala spoke briefly about a pavement preservation program that they started this year to add crack sealing to damaged roads to prevent them from deteriorating more.

Councilor Boyd commended Dawn Tuomala on all of the work she has done on the MS4 project the last 9 years.

Issuance of Debt

Paul Micali explained that we have a \$75,000 SRF grant for a Stormwater study for Pine Knoll Shores. This is a reimbursement grant however in order to get the reimbursement, the residents need to vote on it as if it were a bond. The cost will not be felt by the residents but it will require a separate warrant article and will require 66.7% approval.

Kyle Fox (Director of Public Works) explained that the Pine Knoll Shores subdivision is still gravel roads and the residents of that neighborhood have requested that the town do something to improve them. DPW contacted a consultant to get an estimate on what it would cost to design a plan and were quoted \$68,000. Public Works is proposing that we use the SRF grant money to cover the cost of the plan (i.e. study).

Councilor Albert asked if they were supposed to be voting on the item tonight and Paul Micali advised no, this will be on the agenda for the Public Hearing on February 11th. At that time it will be voted on and moved onto the deliberative session if necessary.

33 Fire Protection

Paul Micali explained that this is a self-supported fund and consists of the hydrants in the Manchester Street area that are maintained by Pennichuck. The residents of that area pay an additional tax that covers the cost of the hydrants. The budget is being increased because Pennichuck has increased their rates. This will result in an increase to the additional tax to these residents are paying.

Councilor Harrington commended the DPW staff on all of the work they do to keep the town running. She referenced all of the extra work they did for the elections as most residents do not see everything that goes into making those elections happen. Chairman Koenig agreed and added that they do not get the recognition they deserve.

January 21, 2021 Agenda: Paul Micali briefly reviewed the agenda for 1/21/2021. Chairman Koenig also mentioned that there is not currently a meeting scheduled to finalize the budget. The Council discussed the options and decided on January 27, 2021 at 6: 30 PM.

Adjourn:

MOTION made by Councilor Harrington and seconded by Councilor Albert to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:08pm

Respectfully submitted by Rhonda Fleming