



Town Council Budget Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 6:30 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Call to Order

Chairman Rothhaus called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Present at the meeting were Chairman Rothhaus, Vice Chair Harrington, Councilor Healey, Councilor Hunter, Councilor N. Murphy, Councilor Hunter, Councilor M. Murphy and Town Manager Paul Micali.

The Town Council will hold a public meeting to review the 2024/25 budget, to include the following departments:

Public Comment

- Assessing

Mr. Micali shared that for this budget, health insurance went up \$11,000 and the overall budget went up \$21,000. The Capital Reserve Fund went up \$2,700 for the revaluation.

- Town Clerk / Tax Collector

Diane Trippett and Brenda Dulong were present to discuss their budget. Before they began, Mr. Micali shared that there is an election line item for \$80,000 for new voting machines. This will be discussed further in the general government budget. Diane Trippett then discussed their budget, sharing that it is another flatlined budget, with about 85% of the budget being personnel services. Operating costs account for about 15% of their budget, and their increase in operating costs was \$1,720. Their printing line item also increased by \$1,000 to cover cost increases of billing forms, envelopes, etc. General insurance went up \$359. Software support contracts also increased to \$361.

- Media

Nicholas Lavalley was present to talk about the Media budget. He shared that the budget is similar to last year, with an increase in their dues and fees (from \$3,500 to \$7,000) and equipment (\$30,000 to move the antenna and transmitter to a different site with elevation and a tower for the antenna for town-wide frequency) budgets for the low power FM frequency project. Councilor Healey asked if it would be possible to add the FM antenna to the police and fire MHz tower, in which Chief Levesque said he can check on this for Mr. Lavalley, and Mr. Lavalley was on board with this idea.

- Community Development

Robert Price and Casey Wolf-Smith were present to share their budget. Mr. Price began by sharing that there is an increase of \$151,000 in the budget to accommodate a new 10 year Master Plan being developed. Overall, their budget is up \$176,000 with mostly minor increases aside from the Master Plan. He would like to replace two desks for staff and purchase some new chairs as well, in addition to fuel and vehicle maintenance for the town vehicle. Councilor Healey asked Mr. Price to explain what the Master Plan is, in which Mr. Price stated it's basically the all-encompassing guiding document that contains all the ordinances and regulations that the Planning Board has and the town administers.

- Communications

Police Chief Levesque and Deputy Chief Tarleton were present to share their budget. They began by sharing that there is a \$500 increase in lodging for dispatcher training opportunities in Maine and Vermont this year. Additionally, there is an increase in the annual preventative maintenance and security upgrade services budget of 15% as there is not an exact number yet, which is part of the MHz project.

- Police

Chief Levesque shared that for this budget, they have changed their Animal Control position from part-time to full-time due to difficulty in filling it. Their ammo budget has also increased due to cost savings last year as well as the cost of ammo increasing. For fees and dues, their “a child is missing” went up \$50, MSAB, which is their forensic digital software, as well as their scheduling software, increased slightly. For their psychological exams/drug tests, their psychologist increased their fees by \$150 so Chief Levesque multiplied that by 4 due to the 4 job openings to increase it by \$600. He then shared that the state reimburses up to \$500 so they will see that money reimbursed to them. Lastly, he shared that K9 insurance increased due to the dogs getting older.

- Police Detail

Mr. Micali shared that the budget is fairly even from last year and there are no major changes.

- General Government

Mr. Micali shared that there is a new position, Assistant Technology Communication person, to help with the workload of IT tickets and various projects. Compensated absences increased to \$60,000. Office supplies went up \$6,500 for toner, paper, staples, etc. Legal/litigation went up \$15,000. Finance software increased about \$6,000, and virtual town hall is switching over to Drupal 10, which is a \$4,000 increase. Office 365 security is going up by \$3,000. General computer monitors, files, etc. are going up about \$5,500. Outside services are going up \$13,000. Armor Guard pick up is going up \$500. Contractual maintenance for ambulance billing is going up about \$3,000. Nashua Transit went up \$35,000- this will be discussed in more detail when Pat from Welfare presents her budget next Thursday. As mentioned earlier, elections is going up \$85,000- \$5,000 for the election and \$80,000 for the voting machines.

- Revenues

Mr. Micali shared that there were significant revenue administration charges for wastewater, police admin, media, outside detail, and day camp. Interest flatlined at a million dollars. Ambulance revenue increased to \$1,080,000, and he would like to talk to the Council when the fire department presents their budget about Medicare- the town currently does Medicare 50, but he would like to change that to Medicare plus 75 or MariCare. Mr. Micali also shared that the revenue for the Safer grant went down to \$286,000 due to the grant being done in February 2025. Building permits reduced by \$25,000 due to mortgage and interest rates, and a majority of the building permits being for mixed use.

ADJOURN

MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Councilor Koenig to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully by Jennifer Steagald