



# Warner Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, January 25, 2018  
**APPROVED**

Mike Cutting opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Committee members in attendance: Mike Cutting, Martha Mical, Kimberley Edelmann, Alfred Hanson, David Minton, Martha Bodnarik, Pete Newman

Absent: Jonathan Lord

Others present: Jim Bingham – Town Administrator, Bill Chandler – Police Chief, Ed Raymond – Fire Chief, Ed Mical, Tim Allen – Director of Public Works, Varick Proper – Transfer Station Foreman, Romeo Dubreuil, Marianne Howlett, John Leavitt

## **1. Meeting Minutes**

- A. Mike explained to the Committee what he had added to the minutes dated January 9 and called for a motion to approve.
- B. Alfred moved to approve meeting minutes dated January 9, 2018. A motion was seconded, approval was unanimous.
- C. Mike read into the record an email that was sent to Mike from Kimberley explaining she was completing the next set of minutes as a transcript based on the feedback she received from the Committee. Mike explained to Kimberley that transcripts are not necessary. In the email that Kimberley sent to Mike, she did explain that she will no longer create the minutes for the Budget Committee because she is a Selectman and some may feel she can't remain neutral when creating them.
- D. Alfred wants to see the minutes created the same way as the first 7 years he has been on the Committee, and if more time is needed for the Selectmen's Secretary to create the minutes, then so be it. Martha said the Selectmen's Office can also use the Temp. Service money in the budget. Bill said years ago the Budget Committee had money budgeted for a recording secretary.
- E. Mike asked Jim to come back to the Committee with a cost for the Budget Committee minutes and any additional minutes that will need to be created in 2018. Martha M. preferred to rephrase what Mike said. Martha M. would like to add \$1,000 for Temp. Services in the Selectmen's budget. Jim feels the amount should be at least \$1,280.
- F. The Committee talked about creating a line for the Budget Committee that will fund a Recording Secretary for about \$1,088. Mike called for a motion, but Alfred wanted to hold off. Martha M. wanted the information out to the public. Martha M. made a motion to add \$1,100. No second to the motion, the motion died.

## **Committee Action**

Alfred made a motion for the Budget Committee members to think over the weekend and have something prepared for Monday night for the budget. Kimberley seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

## **2. 2018 Operating Budget**

- A. Mike said the Committee began last week developing and adjusting the 2018 BC budget. Jim and Kimberley were not able to attend the last meeting and Jim asked if motions were made for each of the changes and Mike said yes. Mike reiterated the changes as follows:
  - Selectmen's Secretary reduced to \$30,000. Jim asked what was the Committee's thoughts on that reduction. Martha M. said the line was reduced because the Selectmen are in the process of hiring a new secretary and she hopes the Selectmen would not hire at the top wage. Jim said that decision hasn't been made, and basically, the BC is limiting the Selectmen.

- The newsletter was reduced from \$1,900 to \$1,700 based on the number of Newsletters that have been sent out, 3 in 2017.

- B. Alfred asked Mike why the BC is going over what the BC did last week, he wants to pick up where the BC left off at their last meeting. It was felt that those who were not in attendance at the last meeting can read the minutes to catch up. Mike asked the members if they want to do what Alfred suggested and all were in agreement, Mike moved the meeting on to review the Police Department budget.
- C. Highlights of the 2018 Police Department budget review:
- Full-time wages was adjusted from \$204,500 to \$203,510, based on taking .35 cents per hour x each individual man hours x 52 weeks per year.
  - Building Custodian was adjusted from \$2,075 to \$2,114.
  - Martha B. asked Bill if \$3,000 for electricity is enough because he has spent \$3,200 last year. Bill said his original request was more but he and Jim reduced it a bit, Bill feels it will be close. There is a reduction in electric rates in 2018, the Committee decided not to adjust.
  - The Committee asked Bill if his fuel usage in 2017 is correct. Bill said yes, because the Police Department 32 hour position, that has not been filled, it's a strict road position that wasn't utilized to its capacity in 2017. Bill said he does feel vehicle fuel can be reduced by \$1,000.
  - Bill said the vacant position will be advertised as a 20 hour per week position instead of a 32-hour position, he will be moving forward to fill the position.
  - Bill was asked what if the part-time labor is reduced. Bill said the position previously paid \$21.00 per hour, he cautions reducing the line in case he is able to hire someone with a strong background. The budgeted amount covers the 20-hour position.

#### **Committee Action**

Martha M. moved to reduce the vehicle fuel line in the Police Department budget to \$7,400 from \$8,400. Alfred seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

- The total 2018 operating budget for the Police Department now totals \$512,371.00.
- Bill explained there will be rain gutters installed on the building in 2018 to prevent drip damage to the building as well as some curb work.
- In 2019 Bill will be replacing a sedan.

- D. Highlights of the 2018 Fire Department budget review:
- Martha M. asked if \$77,000 budget amount is the actual bill for the ambulance service. Jim said the estimate he was provided with is \$79,000 which based on history. Jim budgeted \$77,000 because he doesn't feel it will be as high as \$79,000. The payment is always in arrears. The payment is based on what it's going to cost Hopkinton which provides the ambulance service. Hopkinton bundles their costs together then Warner is charged 20% of that budget.
  - Ed was asked if he needs more budgeted for training in 2018 because he overspent in 2017. Ed said there was a lot of training completed in 2017 and doesn't expect the same level in 2018.
  - Alfred asked Ed how the wages are determined. Ed said by classification. Alfred asked Ed if he follows the same wage increases as the regular employees? Ed said the last wage increase offered he reneged on.
  - Martha M. said she spoke with Ed earlier in this day and he feels \$500 could be reduced in the vehicle fuel line.

#### **Committee Action**

Martha B. made a motion to decrease the vehicle fuel line by \$500 (\$2,800 total). Martha M. seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

- The total 2018 operating budget now amounts to \$165,996.00.
- Alfred asked Kimberley if the new fire station passes at Town Meeting when will the job be completed. Jim said if the ground is broken in April it will be finished in November.
- Alfred asked if the cost to operate the new fire station been determined. Kimberley said the operating costs won't be known until the mechanical systems are known for the new building. This information will be known for the public hearing. Alfred asked regarding the functioning of the new building will any of the current line items be increased. Ed said he is sure there will be some increases such as heat, electricity etc.

- E. Highlights of the 2018 Building Inspector budget review: No changes.

- F. Highlights of the 2018 Emergency Management budget review:
- Mike asked Ed Mical, Emergency Management Director, what he will be using professional services for in 2018. Ed said the Hazard Mitigation Plan needs to be updated in 2018 to be completed in early 2019. Updates are required every 5 years.
  - No changes in the operating budget.
- G. Highlights of the 2018 Public Works Department budget review:
- Martha M. said Tim will be providing a cost breakdown for the Building Supervisor. Tim said he will have the breakdown for the Monday meeting. Jim wanted to talk about the Building Supervisor line so everyone understands what going on. Building Supervisor line was increased to \$29,000 because the position is moving towards being responsible for the grounds as well. Martha M. said the previous Building Maintenance person also did the mowing and snow shoveling. The \$29,000 was pulled from the full-time labor amount which amounts to 1,463 hours. Jim said this position is still being tracked to know what it takes to have an employee be responsible for the repair and maintenance of all the town buildings, facilities and grounds.
  - Alfred sees a trend, eventually, Tim will lose a man. Alfred said a few years ago building maintenance was costing between \$14,000-\$18,000, now it's \$29,000. Alfred is asking to take a hard look at the trend he sees happening, he sees the Public Works Department labor increasing by \$50,000 which Alfred thinks doesn't have to happen. Jim said maybe a discussion is needed on what is the acceptable level of maintenance. Martha B. said she has learned by talking to people the most important maintenance is road maintenance.
  - Alfred commented that there is a Road Committee that he is a member of that hasn't met in 4 years. Alfred agrees with Jim regarding the tracking of the Building Supervisor's hours and if that information can be described he feels the position will stand a better chance. He said for the last 5 or 6 years he thinks the Highway Department has been a fluff.
  - Jim said Tim is tracking actual real-time costs so that he will know the cost of a 14" snow storm.
  - Mike said in 2015 the total man power cost at the Public Works Department was \$264,862; 2016-\$311,962; 2017-\$348,718; 2018-\$354,655.
  - Romeo Dubreuil asked if there is a breakdown of what it costs for a subcontractor to plow. Tim said not since he's been employed and does see it as an option, but his only issue is finding someone dependable for winter maintenance. Finding part-time help is very difficult. Mike said the State is finding it hard to fill positions as well.
  - Alfred asked Tim how prolonging his equipment reflects the Capital Improvement Program. Tim said it doesn't affect it much because the 2 pieces he prolonged are on the further end of the CIP. Tim said when the time comes, he wants to replace the 1997 Mack with a 550.
  - Martha B. asked Tim if \$30,000 will be enough for outside services because he has gone over in the past. Tim said he feels \$30,000 is appropriate for this year.
  - Martha B. questioned the amount budgeted for propane, she feels it's too much based on history.

### **Committee Action**

Martha M. made a motion to leave the propane budget amount at \$5,000. Alfred seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

- Alfred said this budget has \$31,000 for supplies and \$40,000 for parts. In the last two years, 2 of the largest servicing equipment is now gone. Alfred said it has been explained over the years the reason the maintenance budget is so high is because of the two pieces of equipment now no longer in the fleet. The idea was to save on maintenance. Tim said the new equipment needs to be tracked for a year. Last year he dropped the budget by \$10,000, he was hoping not to spend \$40,000, but he did and that's the reason for the amount in 2018. Tim is working on breaking down all the costs, the Bookkeeper is assisting Tim with this.
- Alfred asked if there is money in the operating budget to reconstruct a part of Burnt Hill. Tim said yes, he will be working on 2,000'.
- The total for the operating budget is \$1,024,810.

- H. Highlights of the 2018 Transfer Station budget review:
- Martha M. asked Varick if the disposal fees have decreased. Varick said no, the difference from year to year is due to the billing cycle.
  - Part-time labor increased to better staff open hours on the weekend.
  - The electric bill in December amounted to \$30.00 for 17 days. Alfred asked if the revenue is known from the solar array. Jim doesn't have the calculation with him.

### **Committee Action**

Alfred moved to reduce the electric to \$3,700. Martha M. seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

- The total for the operating budget is \$230,280.
- Alfred asked if the Transfer Station will have a fire suppression system as well. Tim said provisions are going to be made for the water usage for a suppression system.

I. Highlights of the 2018 Health budget review: no changes.

- Martha B. asked if the Selectmen looked at getting a separate Welfare Director. Jim said the Board talked about it and didn't see the need for one.

J. Highlights of the 2018 Parks & Recreation budget review:

- Salary line amounts to \$13,530.
- Part-time hours in the amount of 200 hours for \$2,600 has been added to help with the maintenance.
- Martha M. is recommending the ice rink location be changed. It suffered damage from the recent ice jams on the river. Alfred asked if the damage is covered by insurance and Jim said yes, he is waiting for pictures.
- Total operating budget is \$33,500.
- Martha M. said Parks & Rec. has a revolving fund and she asked Jim if the \$1,000 overspent came out of their revolving fund or was it absorbed. Jim said it was absorbed. Marianne asked how much was expended from the fund. Martha M. said that figure is not available tonight, she knows it's not a large amount.

K. Highlights of the 2018 Conservation Commission budget review: no change.

L. Solar array payment is budgeted for \$20,521, interest amount to be paid is \$4,830.

M. Pumper payment is budgeted for \$24,142, interest amount to be paid is \$8,114.

N. Hopkinton Landfill is budgeted for \$6,000 for monitoring costs.

O. The total amount for the operating budget is \$3,147,431, a difference of \$5,135. Mike asked if the Selectmen will be presenting the BC budget for uniformity purposes. Jim said since he doesn't know what was adjusted at the last meeting because the minutes are not available, he has to look at that to see if the Board wants the BC to reconsider any of their adjustments. Mike recommends going to Town Meeting in unity. Martha B. disagrees because the budget is the Budget Committee's, the Selectmen do not have to agree. Jim said from what he saw this evening, he doesn't see any problem with what was cut. But, he does need to review what was cut at their last meeting and will get back to the Committee if those cuts make sense.

### **3. New Fire Station**

A. Kimberley reported the architect has the estimated energy costs, he needs the figures the town pays for those energy costs so he can calculate the operating costs.

### **4. January 29 Meeting**

A. Warrant articles will be reviewed. Jim said the final wording is done except for the bond, that wording is still being created.

B. Alfred asked how much money was allocated last year for construction management. Kimberley said phases I & II were approved at Town Meeting, phase III is construction. Jim said \$10,000 was allocated last year.

C. The bond process was discussed if approval is granted at Town Meeting. Alfred recommends not to start construction until everything is guaranteed.

### **5. Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 10:15 pm.

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen