

**Town of Auburn  
Board of Selectmen  
Town Hall  
Stritch Meeting Room  
October 23, 2023  
Draft Minutes  
7:00 PM**

**Selectmen Present:** Keith Leclair, Michael Rolfe and Tom Carroll

**Others Present:** Tax Collector Susan Jenkins, Town Clerk Kathy Sylvia, Deputy Clerk Kaitlyn Folia, Police Chief Ray Pelton, Finance and Budget Administrator Mimi Friolet, Mike DiPietro, Town Administrator Chris Sterndale, and Recording Secretary Nancy Hoijer

## **I. Call to Order**

Mr. Leclair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **II. Public Comments**

Mr. Leclair asked if there were any comments from the public at 7:00 PM and there were none.

## **III. Appointments with the Board**

Mike Dross – Plow Rates - ***Tabled***

Mr. Dross provided a request to increase plow rates for labor and equipment by \$10 per hour to remain competitive with the state's increased rates and fuel surcharges. The Board reviewed the existing schedule of rates for contract labor and equipment.

Mr. Leclair asked when non-usage rates would begin to be paid and Mr. Dross noted the Town's season runs from November 1<sup>st</sup> or first snowfall whichever comes first, to April 15<sup>th</sup> whereas the state runs from November 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Board requested more information on what other towns were offering before making a decision and asked Mr. Sterndale to put the matter on the agenda for next week's meeting.

## **IV. Manifests**

## **V. Consent Agenda**

Mr. Leclair read out loud, and offered for inspection, the Consent Agenda dated October 23, 2023 which consisted of a Payroll Manifest for 10/25/23 in the amount of \$77,912.85, and a Release of Surety for Map 20 Lot 11A for Longmeadow Congregational Church from \$21,697.50 to \$0.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the Consent Agenda for October 23, 2023. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

## **VI. New Business**

### **A. 2024 Proposed Budget**

#### **I. Executive & Finance**

##### **a. Executive**

Town Administrator Sterndale presented the proposed budget for Executive in the amount of \$292,344 which is a 7.79% decrease from last year.

The Board agreed to eliminate line 12 as mileage used to be this line, reducing the proposed budget by \$500.

The Board discussed the number of elections per year which the Selectmen are required to attend. This year there are four elections, but the average is usually two so two elections was the number of average elections used for budgeting purposes, or \$500 per year for each of lines 7, 8 and 9. Mileage would be \$1,250. The Chair stipend is \$6,259 and two seats are \$5,872 with COLA 3/4/yr.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 Executive budget in the amount of \$287,240. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

##### **b. Legal Expenditures**

Mr. Sterndale presented the proposed budget for Legal Expenditures in the amount of \$23,000 which is a 17.86 percent decrease from last year.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to approve lines 36 and 37 of the proposed FY 2024 legal expenditures budget as presented (\$23,000). Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

##### **c. Personnel Administration**

Mrs. Friolet presented the proposed budget for Personnel Administration in the amount of \$681,459 which is a 17.39% increase from last year. She noted that there are changes in full-time employee benefits for library and firefighters now seen in a full year budget as well as an added full-time Deputy Town Clerk. Mr. Sterndale noted there will be two additional partial year positions for Highway Employees and calculations are based on a two-person estimate for their insurance plan.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget lines 38-45 Personnel Administration in the amount of \$681,459. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

d. Government Buildings & Maintenance

Mr. Sterndale presented the proposed budget for Government Buildings and Maintenance in the amount of \$151,216 which is an 11.76% decrease from last year.

Chief Pelton discussed the addition of an Aircard at \$500 per year for a Police Department cruiser in Line 61.

Mrs. Friolet noted there is a 21.43% increase in line 76 janitorial cleaning as there has been no rate change for the provider for some time. Mr. Leclair questioned whether the buildings needed to be cleaned twice a week.

The Board discussed Lines 69-72 for heating costs. Mr. Leclair asked about propane, if that is on the school contract. Mrs. Friolet will check with Mr. Dube. The Highway Garage, and Fire Department Station 2 use propane. The Town Hall, Safety Complex and Station 2 are through Burke. The Board requested that Mr. Sterndale make a reminder in the summer to pursue a pre-buy on oil.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Government Buildings & Maintenance, lines 58-77, in the amount of \$151,216. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

e. Insurance (Liability, Unemployment, Worker's Comp and Claims

Mr. Sterndale presented the budget for Insurance in the amount of \$172,032 which is a 9.16% increase from last year.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Insurance, lines 90-93, in the amount of \$172,032. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

f. Advertising & Regional Association

Mrs. Friolet presented the proposed budget for Advertising & Regional Association in the amount of \$10,605 which is a 4.27% increase from last year. She noted the amount is population driven and represents a three percent increase on 2023 totals.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Advertising & Regional Association lines 94 and 95, in the amount of***

***\$10,605. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

g. General Government

Mr. Sterndale presented the proposed budget for General Government in the amount of \$140,325 which is a 7.69 percent increase from last year. He noted a 16.67% increase in overall contracts software and maintenance, line 98, which is townwide software and IT support. He noted a 42% vendor increase in line 99, tax map update, which is done once a year on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Leclair requested that Mr. Sterndale add detail notes for line 98 so that the Budget Committee can see the breakdown for costs of Interware, weather, Avitar, tax, Building Inspector, and web software contracts.

The Board discussed line 103 General Office Equipment and the request for router and switch replacement which will help improve streaming webinars, Zoom and Teams which are lagging. Mr. Leclair recommended leaving this budget line (\$8,000) as is but adding it to the list of possible end of year purchases this year if funds are available.

Mr. Leclair requested Mr. Sterndale keep a running list of potential purchases from funds remaining at the end of the year such as the Aircard for the cruiser, election purchases, and router. Mr. Sterndale indicated the balance could be looked at the end of October to make a more informed decision in November rather than waiting until December.

Mr. Leclair requested that Mrs. Friolet provide revenues for the Town Crier including last year and questioned whether a number of printed copies could be made available as are provided for the town report.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 General Government budget, lines 96-110 in the amount of \$140,325. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

h. Public Safety (Town Details) (400% Increase)

Chief Pelton noted the increase is for overtime pay for more elections.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Public Safety, line 205, in the amount of \$5,000. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

i. Public Street Lighting (7.41% decrease)

Mr. Rolfe noted that the change to LEDs for the street lighting has already shown a savings.

**Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Public Street Lighting, line 224, in the amount of \$7,500. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.**

j. Solid Waste Disposal

Mr. Sterndale noted a new line for dump stickers in 305 solid waste supplies of \$1,200.

**Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Solid Waste Disposal, lines 225-226, in the amount of \$21,100. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.**

k. Health Agencies & Hospitals (2.13% Increase)

Mr. Leclair asked Mrs. Friolet if each of the agencies requesting had provided a letter and she indicated they had.

**Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Health Agencies & Hospitals, lines 239-243, in the amount of \$6,000. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.**

l. Direct Assistance

Mrs. Friolet presented the proposed budget for Direct Assistance in the amount of \$15,001 which is a 50.01% increase from last year. She noted she has had requests for assistance from more people this year and a lot is rental assistance after the funds offered by the state dried up this year.

**Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Direct Assistance, lines 244 and 245, in the amount of \$15,001. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.**

m. Intergovernmental Welfare Payments

Mr. Friolet presented the proposed budget in the amount of \$4,471 which is level funded from last year. She noted most of the requests for fuel assistance can be sent to Rockingham and they are a great place to start for those seeking assistance for the first time.

**Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Intergovernmental Welfare Payments, Line 246, in the amount of \$4,471. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.**

- n. Patriotic Purposes (5.88% increase)

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Patriotic Purposes, lines 284-285, in the amount of \$7,200. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

- o. Tax Anticipation Note Interest \$1

***Mr. Leclair motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Tax Anticipation Note (Interest) line 294 in the amount of \$1. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

## II. Tax Collector

- a. Checklist Supervisor

Tax Collector Susan Jenkins presented the proposed budget for Checklist Supervisor in the amount of \$9,838 which is a 417% increase from last year. She reported that there are four elections and she is training two new people, adding 100 hours of training at \$10 per hour.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve line 20, the proposed FY 2024 Checklist Supervisor budget in the amount of \$9,838. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

- b. Deed Research

Mrs. Jenkins presented the proposed budget for Deed Research in the amount of \$500 which is a 28% decrease from last year. She noted yearly deed liens have dropped.

- c. Tax Bill Printing

Mrs. Jenkins presented the proposed budget for Tax Bill Printing in the amount of \$3,550 which is a 7.58% increase from last year.

- d. Tax Collector Education

Mrs. Jenkins presented the proposed budget for Tax Collector Education in the amount of \$1,100 which is a 22% increase from last year.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget line 32 Deed Research in the amount of \$500, line 34 Tax Bill Printing in the amount of \$3,550, and line 35 Tax Collector Education in the amount of \$1,100. Mr.***

***Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Mrs. Jenkins noted that residents will see an increase in their first half property tax bills as a result of the revaluation averaging \$600-\$700 or more, but that will go down when the second half bills are issued. Mr. DiPietro commented that the revaluation increases are explained nicely on the website.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to approve lines 26-33 as presented. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

### III. Town Clerk

Town Clerk Kathy Sylvia presented the proposed budget for Elections, Registrations and Vital Statistics in the amount of \$171,682 which is a 55.13 % increase from last year.

The Board agreed there are four elections this year but as the average is two, that number would be set for the Town Clerk as well in the stipend line adding two elections at \$250 each, \$500 total to line 17 stipend, increasing it to \$75,631 for budgeting purposes. Mr. Carroll agreed that would provide continuity and consistency. The Board noted the Deputy is paid her hourly rate for working at elections however the dues and conferences line is up by \$1,000 since the Clerk has not been able to go before and the Deputy is going to be certified.

Mrs. Sylvia proposed purchasing poll pads for voter registration check ins at the elections. This would enable voters to go to any ballot clerk and not have lines needing to be broken up alphabetically. There would still need to be a paper backup. She proposed purchasing four poll pads at a cost of \$7,650. Mr. Leclair questioned their life span and costs for enrollment, software and licenses. Mr. DiPietro expressed concerns about the layout of the gym, with running wires to keep the devices charged during elections, which would result in having to purchase extra devices to use while the others charge up. The Board agreed to table line 24 of election expenses, (proposed at \$32,650) to get more information and estimates on purchasing spare poll pads. Mr. Leclair recommended this purchase be considered from funds left in the budget if there are funds available.

***Mr. Leclair motioned to table approval of line 24 election expenses. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Mrs. Sylvia noted law books are available online now.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 Elections, Registration & Vital Statistics budget in the amount of \$129,695. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

## B. Assessing Contract Renewal

Mr. Sterndale provided the Board with a Memorandum dated October 19, 2023 concerning renewal of the contract for assessing services, which he also provided, with Avitar Associates which expires at the end of the year. He noted pricing is up by 3% per year but is locked for the next five years since the last contract.

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the five-year contract renewal with Avitar Assessing. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

## C. Memorandum of Understanding – Police Detail Rates

Mr. Sterndale presented the proposed MOU between the Town of Auburn and Auburn Police Union requesting an increase for payment for police detail rates from \$50.00 per hour to \$70.00 per hour.

Mr. Sterndale indicated that the Board could sign the MOU or make a counteroffer and then it would go to the Police Commission.

The Board discussed the rates charged by other communities. Mr. Carroll asked how often officers do details and Chief Pelton indicated once or twice a week. Chief Pelton said that he did not believe the rate needed to be as high as proposed, and that the town should counter-offer with a lower number. Mr. Leclair said that there would be no impact on Auburn taxpayers and that he was fine with \$70.00 per hour.

***Mr. Carroll motioned to make an offer for \$60 per hour. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Carroll voted aye, Mr. Rolfe voted aye and Mr. Leclair voted opposed. The motion passed 2-1-0.***

## VI. Old Business

## VII. Committee Reports

Mr. Rolfe reported that the Planning Board met on October 18<sup>th</sup> and reviewed:

- Informal with Historical Association for potential expansion of Tax Map 10, Lot 5-1
- Longmeadow Congregational Church Surety Reduction
- Public Hearing for Site Plan Review for proposed office and warehouse, Maine Drilling and Blasting, continued to November 15<sup>th</sup>
- M&M Ventures, 22 Dartmouth Drive, Site Plan Amendment for Industrial Repair Garage, to repair transmissions

Mr. Leclair reported that the Budget Committee will meet on Thursday. The Library Trustees met on Friday and there were about 50-75 people present. Mr. Szczesny will meet with Mr.



Sterndale this week to discuss the potential for a 30-year bond. Mr. Leclair noted he would not be in favor of paying for repairs to the expanded library while still paying on the bond. Mr. Leclair noted the proposed contributions toward the Trustee's goal of \$2,000,000 in donations will need to be committed to by mid-December.

Mr. Carroll reported that Highway Safety met on Wednesday and Sgt. Cashman raised concerns with an accident that happened on Hooksett Road. He reported Officer Huard was on the scene of that accident while witnessing another motorist exiting the 55 and over community while not appearing to notice or obey the stop sign coming onto Hooksett Road. Mr. DiPietro indicated it was difficult to see Hooksett Road and the driver could have been distracted. Chief Pelton recommended a flashing yellow or lit stop sign. The Committee requested that the intersection be looked at.

## **VIII. Minutes**

### **A. October 16, 2023 Public and Non-Public Meeting Minutes**

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the October 16, 2023 public and non-public meeting minutes. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 3-0-0.***

## **IX. Adjournment**

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 PM. Mr. Leclair seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary