

**Auburn Budget Committee Meeting
November 9, 2023
Stritch Meeting Room
Approved Minutes
7:00 PM**

Members Present: Chairman Peter Miles, Dan Carpenter, Vice-Chair David Wesche, Kevin Downing, Paula Marzloff, Joanne Linxweiler, School Board Representative Alan Villeneuve (@7:27 PM) and Selectman Representative Tom Carroll

Others Present: Tax Collector Susan Jenkins, Planning Chair Ron Poltak, Finance & Budget Administrator Mimi Friolet, Town Administrator Chris Sterndale and Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

Chairman Miles called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. Introductions

Chairman Miles introduced the members who were present.

III. Approval of Minutes

- October 26, 2023

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve the October 26, 2023 meeting minutes. Mrs. Marzloff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Ms. Linxweiler and Mr. Carroll abstained. The motion passed 5-0-2.

IV. Town Budget Proposals

A. Elections (Line 20)

Mrs. Friolet discussed Line 20 Checklist Supervisors in the amount of \$9,838 which is increased 417% due to there being four elections next year. The hourly rate of checklist supervisors is at \$17/hr. up from \$13/hr. Extra hours were added for training. There are two deputy checklist supervisors to be trained and their hourly rate is \$10/hr.

Mrs. Linxweiler recused herself.

Mr. Downing motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Line 20 of Elections in the amount of \$9,838. Mr. Wesche seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 6-0-0.

B. Planning & Zoning

Mrs. Marzloff recused herself and sat with the public.

Planning Chair Ron Poltak presented the proposed budget for Planning and Zoning. Mr. Poltak indicated there were no new requests and he would be maintaining the legal expense line at \$16,000 due to a couple of major proposals the Board would be reviewing next year. A national trucking company had an informal meeting with the Planning Board. The property has a major groundwater aquifer in the middle of the property. The Board expects to see the 55 and over community at Tanglewood developed and there are two dead end roads which cannot exceed 1500' so there will likely be road construction needed. Mr. Poltak noted that the legislature made some changes and those changes will require the regulations to be reviewed to be in compliance.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Planning and Zoning in the amount of \$31,651. Mrs. Linxweiler seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 6-0-0.

Mrs. Marzloff returned to the meeting table at 7:11 PM.

C. Executive & Financial Administration

Tax Collector Susan Jenkins reviewed the proposed budget for line 32 (deed research), line 34 (tax bill printing) and line 35 (tax collector education) of Financial Administration. Mrs. Jenkins indicated deed research was lowered as there are not many properties in tax lien. Tax bill printing increased somewhat (7.58%) and tax collector education is increased by 22% so that the deputy can go to workshops in the spring and get certification.

Mrs. Friolet reviewed the other lines of the Financial Administration budget which consisted of salaries and stipends which are increased by COLA and Step increases. She noted line 33 for assessing includes the five-year contract and a portion of the revaluation.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Financial Administration in the amount of \$128,492. Mrs. Marzloff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

Town Administrator Sterndale reviewed the proposed budget for the Executive Department. He noted that compensation for the Selectmen was previously divided up and now is put together so that the line includes payment for elections and mileage and those two lines will decrease. The salary and stipend lines will include COLA increase. Line 14 voter guide increased due to printing and mailing costs.

Mrs. Linxweiler asked about the number of copies made of the town report (line 13) and Mr. Sterndale indicated there were 250 copies printed.

Mr. Villeneuve arrived at 7:27 PM.

Mr. Carpenter motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for the Executive Department in the amount of \$287,739. Mrs. Linxweiler seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

D. Elections (continued from above)

Mr. Sterndale indicated approval of Line 24 Election Expenses (\$36,000) was on hold concerning the proposed expenditures for the two new ballot counting machines (\$13,000) and poll pads (\$11,000). He noted the Selectmen are hopeful that the ballot counting machines can be purchased with funds remaining in the budget at the end of the year. He noted the Selectmen were having difficulty deciding on the need for poll pads for election check-ins. Mr. Villeneuve questioned the \$4,000 expense of the annual warranty on the poll pads.

Mrs. Linxweiler asked when the ballot counting machines would be purchased and Mr. Sterndale noted the new machines can't be used until Town Meeting. The machines won't be certified for use by the state for the primary in January.

Mr. Sterndale noted books are available online now and they are no longer binding minutes but plan to use binders.

Mr. Sterndale indicated the Deputy Town Clerk position has changed to a full-time position this year. Mr. Villeneuve asked if the Deputy Clerk would have other duties. Mr. Sterndale indicated the hours would be expanded, and the position can be combined to support the Tax Collector. The position was also changed to full-time in order to attract and retain personnel.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Elections in the amount of \$129,695. Mrs. Marzloff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Villeneuve indicated he was opposed. (Mrs. Linxweiler was recused). The motion passed 6-1-0.

E. Health Agencies

Mrs. Friolet noted this budget item was tabled at the last meeting to get more information from those agencies requesting funding and to show how many Auburn residents were being served by those agencies. Mrs. Friolet provided a handout of that information.

Mrs. Linxweiler asked about the line for Visiting Nurse and whether this was affiliated with insurance. Mr. Sterndale noted the VNA was independent although associated with Elliot Hosp.

Mrs. Marzloff motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 budget for Health Agencies in the amount of \$6,000. Mrs. Linxweiler seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

V. School Update

Mr. Villeneuve reported Pinkerton Trustees have not informed the School Board what the tuition increase will be but it will be somewhere between 5%-7%, The School budget is waiting for Board review and a 9% increase is proposed. He indicated some drivers of the budget at SPED and preschool. Auburn does not have preschool so if there are preschool age students identified with need Auburn pays to have the service somewhere else and pays for aides and transportation as well as tuition costs. Mr. Villeneuve indicated there will be an impact seen next year for the teacher contract approved last year.

VI. Adjourn

Mrs. Marzloff moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 PM, seconded by Mr. Wesche. A vote was taken; all were in agreement, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy J. Hoijer,
Recording Secretary

Note: Any person with a disability who wishes to attend this public meeting and needs to be provided a reasonable accommodation in order to participate, please call the Town Hall (603) 483-5052, or contact the Committee Secretary so that arrangements can be made.