

**Auburn Budget Committee Meeting
December 8, 2022
Stritch Meeting Room
Approved Minutes
7:00 PM**

Members Present: Dan Carpenter, Joanne Linxweiler, Paula Marzloff, Kevin Downing, School Board Representative Janice Baker and Selectman Representative Keith Leclair

Others Present: Finance Assistant Mimi Friolet, Town Administrator Chris Sterndale, and Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary

Mr. Leclair called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- December 1, 2022

Mrs. Marzloff motioned to approve the December 1, 2022 meeting minutes. Mrs. Linxweiler seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 6-0-0.

Budget Presentations

- Health, Dental & Disability – Mimi Friolet

Ms. Friolet presented the proposed FY 2023 budget for Health, Dental & Disability in the amount of \$455,367.

Ms. Friolet provided an updated proposal on the health insurance plan removing the zero deductible plan, which had a projected increase of 17.9% next year, and replacing it with a \$1,000 per person deductible plan with a \$500 FSA beginning July 1st and includes the new full-time employees, three of whom have elected to get insurance. Mr. Leclair indicated there would be a savings to both the Town and employees with the savings to the Town projected at \$70,000.

Mrs. Baker asked if there were still three plans and Ms. Friolet indicated there would only be two, the \$1,000 per person deductible or the \$3,000. There is one retiree on the zero deductible plan which could be grandfathered, however retirement pays for that.

Mrs. Baker motioned to approve the FY 2023 budget for Health, Dental & Disability in the amount of \$455,367. Mrs. Linxweiler seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

- Financial Administration (Annual Assessing)

Mr. Leclair presented the proposed FY 2023 budget for the Annual Assessing Update in the amount of \$87,000. Mr. Leclair indicated there were \$25,000 in funds, together with interest accrued, set aside years ago toward the revaluation, offsetting the estimated budget.

Mr. Leclair indicated \$25,000 would continue to be budgeted annually to prepare for the FY 2028 revaluation.

Mrs. Baker asked if the \$25,000 with interest would be depleted and Mr. Leclair noted there would be approximately \$500 remaining.

Mrs. Marzloff motioned to approve the FY 2023 budget for Annual Assessing Update in the amount of \$87,000. Mr. Downing seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

- Proposed Salaries
 - Longevity Pay

Ms. Friolet presented the proposed FY 2023 budget for Longevity Pay in the amount of \$11,050. She indicated Longevity Pay is in the Personnel Policy based on a scale of the number of years of employment with the Town.

Mrs. Linxweiler motioned to approve the FY 2023 budget for Longevity Pay in the amount of \$11,050. Mr. Carpenter seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

- Proposed Fire Apparatus Fuel

Mr. Leclair presented the proposed FY 2023 budget for Fire Apparatus Fuel in the amount of \$20,000. He indicated the line was being held awaiting new numbers for fuel from the State, however at this time that still hasn't happened. The estimate is based on \$5.29/gal.

Mr. Downing motioned to approve the FY 2023 budget for Fire Apparatus Fuel in the amount of \$20,000. Mrs. Baker seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business:

- Draft 2023 Warrant Articles

Town Administrator Sterndale presented drafts of the proposed 2023 Warrant Articles for:

- Operating Budget
- Police Contract

- Fleet Maintenance Fund
- Accrued Liability Fund
- Elderly Exemptions
- Social Health Fund
- Revaluation
- Manchester Water Works Land Swap
- Veteran's Tax Credit

Mr. Leclair indicated the Police Contract was in year two of five with an increase of \$36,744 for salaries and benefits in accordance with the terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Mr. Leclair indicated the proposed appropriation to the Fleet Maintenance Account is \$210,000 from unreserved fund balance. The funds from the sale of the school land would be used toward the purchase of fire apparatus in 2023 (tanker) and remaining funds would be used for major unplanned repairs to other apparatus.

Mrs. Marzloff asked if there was a plan for replacing apparatus and Mr. Sterndale indicated there is a five-year rotation. Mr. Carpenter noted some equipment cannot be certified after 20 years.

Mr. Leclair indicated the article for Accrued Liabilities is to add \$10,000 to this fund which has been in place for years for buyout of unused paid time off when employees leave. Ms. Frisella left a couple of years ago and Mr. Herman unexpectedly this year. There are a couple more coming the year after.

Mr. Leclair indicated that last year one article was done for all of the additions to fund balances but this year the Selectmen decided to do them separately.

Mr. Sterndale presented the proposed article to increase the exemption amounts for Elderly Exemptions. He noted with the revaluation coming next year there are about 12 families that receive the exemption that would have difficulty with the projected 50% increase in property values. Mr. Leclair noted the Selectmen reviewed the proposal at their last meeting and will act on the draft at their next meeting.

Mrs. Baker asked if there was a written policy behind this and Mr. Sterndale noted the application process is comprehensive and reviewed regularly. The language of the article is boilerplate and comes from the DRA. The Town is allowed to set the amount of the exemption by age bracket.

Mr. Leclair indicated the Social Health Fund was established many years ago to be used in the case of a pandemic or similar outbreak and did not need to be used during COVID as the federal government awarded funds for this use. As the language of the fund is limited to this purpose it can't be used for other programs. The article would abolish the fund and the funds, with interest, would transfer to the Town's general fund.

Mrs. Baker asked about a dollar amount and Mr. Sterndale noted as the fund is accruing interest, currently \$15,400, it would be difficult to forecast the exact amount to publish it in the article this soon. Mr. Carpenter recommended stating “principal plus interest.”

Mr. Leclair indicated the land swap article concerns the agreement with Manchester Water Works the Selectmen have been working on for the past four or five years. The Agreement will be going before their Board tonight for approval. The Town would acquire land for cemetery expansion and a parcel at the corner of Hookset and Depot Road to move Depot Road southbound and make it safer.

Mrs. Marzloff asked how it would affect the frontage of some of the owners and Mr. Leclair noted Stantec drew preliminary plans, and 2-3 homes would be impacted positively with no traffic, dead end. More engineering would be done to address drainage and retention pond runoff. That engineering would be done next year from the Road Reconstruction budget and the project would hopefully begin in 2024. The Town had the land appraised and appraised the lands they considered swapping for it to have equal value. The 84-acre Conservation property is not developable but MWW could harvest timber. Depot Road was appraised at \$175,000 and while it is a buildable lot would not be developed. Mr. Leclair noted the article would be addressed more specifically in the voter guide.

Mr. Leclair noted the Veteran’s Credit article language reflects the change by the State legislature which requires the article in order to continue offering what the Town has been offering for a credit.

Mr. Sterndale noted the committee will meet next at the public hearing potentially scheduled for January 12th and they can vote on the final warrant article language before the public hearing. The articles will pass by legal first. So far there have been no petitioned warrant articles filed.

Mrs. Baker will follow up with the school on the date for the deliberative session. Mr. Sterndale noted he believed the Town goes first this year.

Adjourn

Mrs. Marzloff moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 PM, seconded by Mrs. Baker. 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.