

**Auburn Budget Committee Meeting**  
**October 10, 2019**  
**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Peter Miles, Chairman; Mary Beth Lufkin, Vice Chair; David Wesche, Paula Marzloff, Dan Carpenter, Kevin Downing, Alan Villeneuve and Keith Leclair

**Others Present:** Finance Director Adele Frisella, Town Administrator William Herman and Recording Secretary Nancy Hoijer

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

**Election of Committee Chair & Vice Chair**

**Mr. Villeneuve nominated Peter Miles as Chairman, Seconded by David Wesche. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Mr. Villeneuve nominated Mary Beth Lufkin as Vice-Chair, Seconded by David Wesche. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.**

**Presentation of Overall 2020 Budget – Bill Herman and Adele Frisella**

Mr. Herman presented the proposed 2020 Town Budget as submitted by all departments. Mr. Herman noted the Board of Selectman have worked through about half of the requests which are overall up by 3.2% from last year. The remaining departments to present their budgets to the Board of Selectmen are Police Department, Griffin Free Public Library, Parks & Recreation and the Road Agent. He indicated the Board of Selectmen is working towards a close to a level funded budget as possible.

Mr. Herman noted the overall budget does not include funding for a COLA or step increases for 2020. That proposal will come from the Joint Personnel Board comprised of the Board of Selectmen, Library Trustees and Police Commissioners who are meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup>. The health insurance rate increase in the budget was estimated at 4.5%, but the Town was noticed today the rate increase has been set at 0.09%. Mr. Herman believes the lower than expected rate increase is in part due to the Town's more traditional selection of a health insurance plan where the non-traditional plans with higher deductibles and potential health savings accounts where a large number of entities moved to saw an increase of 8 to 10%.

Mr. Villeneuve asked whether the Board of Selectmen were taking into consideration the tax rate. Mr. Leclair noted he had asked for the larger items come where there was more discretion in terms of funding to come last in the process, specifically Parks & Recreation improvements and road reconstruction.

Mr. Carpenter questioned the fourth paragraph in the cover report of the budget which indicated no changes had been made to department requests. Mr. Herman noted that is in reference to the column showing department requests. In providing the whole budget, no changes were made in the department requests to enable the Selectmen and the Budget Committee to see all

requests that were made. The Board of Selectmen has made some adjustments to the requests they have acted on to date, and the Budget Committee may make adjustments as well.

Chair Miles asked about the valuation increase? Mr. Herman noted it was double what was anticipated, up \$15-16 million to \$860 million town-wide, which will result in the tax rate not increasing as much as first anticipated. The school also turned back \$550,000, which is about \$150,000 more than anticipated. The overall revenue increases have also been higher than anticipated. In March, the tax rate was estimated to increase a total of \$2.25, and it is now believed it will be \$2.00 or less. Mr. Carpenter noted residential real estate prices took another healthy jump in recent months, and he thought the school improvements are being reflected in the price per sale. Mr. Herman also noted a number of commercial properties have sold at higher than assessed values, which will be reflected in next year's valuation.

### **Presentation of Updated 2020-2026 Capital Improvement Plan**

Mr. Herman noted the Board of Selectmen has not acted on the CIP items yet, but they are all included in the overall budget package the Budget Committee was provided. The CIP has been approved by the Planning Board. A few departments have requested higher amounts of capital funds than what is included in the Capital Improvement Plan, and ultimately, the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee will have to determine what amounts they will recommend.

Mr. Villeneuve noted the legend for the ranking system should appear on the CIP document. Mr. Herman reported the Committee was only provided the one overall spreadsheet, but the key does appear in the full CIP. He indicated the key is: U-Urgent; C-Committed, N-Necessary, D-Desirable, F-Deferral, R-Research and I-Inconsistent.

### **General Committee Discussion on Approach to 2020 Budget**

Mr. Villeneuve asked about the potential of insulation for the Safety Complex. Mr. Leclair noted there was an initial estimate of \$12,000 for the required work, but it now could be nearly \$18,000. The Selectmen are looking at this and other capital items that could be funded by approximately \$43,000 in unanticipated municipal aid funds to be received from the State this month. He said the Board has agreed these funds could be used on one-time capital items, but haven't decided on what, except to complete the police addition. He noted the Pingree Hill Station has a \$56,000 list of repairs; the highway garage doors need replacing and there are many other projects which have no funding sources. Mr. Herman also noted an additional \$43,000 will also be coming to the Town next year from the funding source.

Chair Miles asked where the undesignated fund balance stood. Mr. Herman noted he will verify the exact amount but he estimated it is approximately \$1.7 million. Ms. Frisella noted there are four separate accounts totaling \$2.5 million, with three committed funds and fourth is the undesignated balance.

Mr. Villeneuve discussed the Auburn Village School addition and recommended the Board take a tour during its November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting to see what the Town got and didn't get. Potentially there could be a ribbon cutting the morning of the deliberative session so that some non-school related residents can view the addition. Mr. Villeneuve noted there will be no outside of the box

warrant articles for Auburn School District. The teacher contract is in negotiations, so there will be some cost there assuming agreement is reached. In the last few years teachers have taken less of a salary increase knowing the addition was anticipated. He also indicated the School Board may have to add a teacher next year as enrollment is up in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade to 77 students with three teachers. The younger grades are getting larger than before, with the total school enrollment at 643 students including Kindergarten.

Mr. Villeneuve indicated he was happy with student performance. Auburn is always putting forward some of the top students at Pinkerton, including the Valedictorian and Salutatorian for 2018 being from Auburn. Last year there was a double digit percentage increase and they do not anticipate that this year.

Mr. Villeneuve discussed some of the renovations for which the School District spent \$14.4 million dollars renovating bathrooms and windows; being able to renovate five additional classrooms and the hallway. There is a large 1,000 sf closet where the voting booths will be stored. There have been issues with water storage for the sprinklers. Manchester Water Works has allowed us to pull water from the brook for the irrigation of the athletic fields. The emergency generator status is upgraded. The HVAC is computerized. Nearly all of the sinks have been removed from the hallways and placed in the bathrooms. There are science labs for 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grades. Mr. Villeneuve noted the cafeteria is a larger, bright open space, while they have retained the character of the front of the old school building.

Mr. Villeneuve discussed some of the new athletic fields including baseball (no fencing) and soccer and softball with irrigation. One field will have sod installed so it can be used in the spring and another will have hydroseed. There will be a savings not regularly busing kids to Eddows Field for their home games. There is a U-shaped back yard and basketball court with patio, stairs, and a wide area to the school field and a paved walkway path to the field. There are still some things to work on with Manchester Water Works and NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) concerning drainage. There is the unique archeological issue with the Calef burial causing some things to go through the Bureau of Historical Resources and the old Griffin building and barn foundation, which will be buried but not destroyed.

Mr. Leclair asked about the fire suppression system's existing tank, and Mr. Villeneuve said it was not large enough for the expanded building and may require a second tank. The 1988 code requires one-hour rating in areas such as a kitchen and we only have 35 minutes with all heads going off. Although approved by the local Fire Chief at the time, a formal waiver was never filed with the State at the time. An option is drawing down the use requirements or install a double size tank or move water off different areas and separations. The Fire Chief is working with the School District on solutions. Mr. Villeneuve reported \$200,000 is being held within the construction funds of the project to ultimately address this issues, and the School Board will not be coming back looking for more money for that item.

Mr. Villeneuve noted the Auburn School District budget will be completed by the administration by November 7<sup>th</sup> and presented to the School Board at their November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**

## **Adjourn**

**Chair Miles moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 PM. Seconded by Mrs. Marzloff. A vote was taken; all were in agreement, the motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer,  
Recording Secretary