

**Town of Auburn
Board of Selectmen
Stritch Meeting Room
Town Hall
November 28, 2022
Approved Minutes
7:00 PM**

Selectmen Present: Keith Leclair, Michael Rolfe and Tom Carroll

Others Present: Fire Chief Michael Williams, Police Chief Ray Pelton, Lil Deeb, Parks & Recreation Coordinator Amy Lachance, Library Trustees Nancy Mayland, Marilyn Cavanaugh and Elizabeth Michaud, Daniel Szczesny, Library Director, Finance Director Patricia Rousseau, Assistant Finance Director Mimi Friolet, Mike DiPietro, Town Administrator Chris Sterndale, Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary and other persons unknown to the recording secretary

I. Call to Order

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

II. Public Comments

III. Appointments with the Board

A. Fire Chief Mike Williams – Monthly Report

Chief Williams presented the Fire Department's monthly report for the month of October 2022 noting 64 calls for service and two retones. Chief Williams noted the Department participated in Fire Prevention Week with activities at Auburn Village School. Station 2 hosted an open house.

Mr. Leclair asked what a Good Intent Call was (there were 16 of these) and Chief Williams explained that one example is someone calls in a sighting of smoke in the area and other calls such as a fire alarm activation that require a response and checking on.

Chief Williams reported training on Boat Two and software training with the fire simulation software. Chief Williams reported that two new call firefighters were hired and two left.

Chief Williams reported Ladder One was sent for repairs after some failures from the annual ladder test. Work is being done to update the ISO rating paperwork which helps with insurance premiums. Work is being done on the Local Emergency Operating Plan with the State of NH, which is grant funded.

IV. Manifest – Highway Department \$38,200

Mr. Carroll motioned to approve the Highway Manifest in the amount of \$38,200. Mr. Leclair seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Rolfe abstained, Mr. Leclair voted aye, and Mr. Carroll voted aye. The motion passed 2-0-1.

V. Consent Agenda – November 28, 2022

A. Payables Manifest - \$980,264.99

Mr. Leclair motioned to approve the Consent Agent for the Week of November 28, 2022. Mr. Rolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

VI. New Business

A. Fire Department Expense Requests

Chief Williams presented expenses to be covered by reserve funds. An invoice from AAA Energy Service dated October 14, 2022 in the amount of \$3,257.30 for heating system problems was provided to the Board and an invoice from Greenwood Emergency Vehicles dated October 12, 2022 in the amount of \$7,139.51 for repairs to Ladder One.

Mr. Rolfe motioned that the Board approve a \$3,257.30 withdrawal from the Town Building Rehabilitation Fund for heating system repairs at the Safety Complex. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rolfe motioned that the Board approve a \$7,139.51 withdrawal from the Fleet Maintenance and Repair Fund for repairs to Ladder One. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

VII. FY 2023 Town Budget

A. Salaries and Benefits – Patricia Rousseau

i. Salaries

Finance Director Rousseau presented the proposed FY 2023 budget for salaries in the amount of \$2,786,542 which includes:

Proposed Salaries \$2,131,815
Contributions (SS, Medicare, Retirement) \$114,083
Fire Department Stipends and Per Diem Personnel \$94,754
Fire Department Contributions (SS, Medicare, Retirement) \$80,098
Police Department Contributions (SS, Medicare, Retirement) \$322,577
Police Department Shift Differential and FTO Differential \$16,473

Library Contributions (SS, Medicare, Retirement) \$26,742

Finance Director Rousseau noted this amount includes the proposed full-time positions for Parks & Recreation, the Library and the two firemen as well as the 2% step increase and 7.95% COLA increase approved by the Personnel Board. The union portion is not included but the NH Retirement change is included from July. The firefighter positions would begin in July and run through the end of the year. Parks & Recreation will see the increase from April 1st on.

Mr. Leclair noted the budget is up by \$216,000 and \$172,000 is the cost for the additional positions. Ms. Rousseau noted \$135,792 is the cost for the two firefighter positions for the first half of year one, not including health benefits. Year two would be \$260,000 plus benefits.

Chief Williams noted every fire department is struggling to get help. The department has had two full-time firefighters for 15 years working Monday through Friday. He indicated rotating shifts, starting July 1st, would make the position competitive with other towns and someone would be on call 24/7. Chief Williams reported the department struggles to get coverage at night between 11 PM and 6 AM with one member going to most of those calls.

Mr. Rolfe asked what would be needed to get the building ready for staff to stay overnight at the Safety Complex and Chief Williams indicated he had Mr. Jenkins come out and he will provide an estimate for a wall would to be built in the front area. Station Two can already handle overnight stays.

Mr. Leclair asked the contingency if only one full-time firefighter could be hired or two or hired and one leaves, and Chief Williams indicated he would do he best to make sure these is the least impact on the rotating schedule but is confident the rotating schedule would attract more firefighters.

Mr. Leclair asked if other towns were putting this on their warrant articles and Chief Williams noted Chester is sharing a guy or two with Candia. The Board discussed the possibility of future sharing of personnel in equipment. Chief Williams noted the south does county-wide fire departments.

The Board discussed concerns Chief Williams shared with response times, especially with building fires and asked the impact if this were pushed off by two to five years. Chief Williams indicated the existing problem would increase and he can see the new 55+ communities having more service calls for EMS. Mr. Carroll noted public safety is critical.

Mr. Leclair asked if the proposed salaries were competitive and Chief Williams noted they are close to Manchester's starting pay.

Mr. Leclair asked if the Department felt they would be back in the near future requesting to hire more full-time firefighters and Chief Williams indicated the two full-time firefighters should satisfy the department's current needs.

Finance Director Rousseau reported the Parks & Recreation Coordinator position would be moving from 30 hours to 40 hours, a cost difference of \$15,503.06. Mr. Leclair noted the programs at Severance School will be adding to the position's responsibilities. Mr. Carroll agreed that with the new building one person can only do so much.

Finance Director Rousseau reported the library position is currently averaging 34 hours which are increased from 24 hours since the Library Tech position was eliminated and won't be filled. The Library Tech position paid \$12,000/yr. Mr. Carroll noted the position will be moving up by one hour, to 35 hours and benefits will start. Mr. Leclair asked if the position has moved from 24 hours to 34 hours if the budget was over expended and Ms. Rousseau indicated the Library Director position went unfilled for four months and the Technician position worked 12 hours. Mr. Sterndale clarified that one position decreased and another went away.

Mr. Carroll asked if the library were adding programs or keeping up with needs and Library Director Szczesny indicated the hours were shifted to the children's librarian position which allowed programs to increase. Circulation has increased 19-23% and there is better coordination with the school.

Chief Pelton expressed his support for the new positions being requested. He noted the Town has grown and all departments have stepped up. He noted the 15 minutes is a tough wait time with the Fire Department response.

Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the FY 2023 budget for salaries in the amount of \$2,786,542. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

ii. Health, Dental & Disability - *Tabled*

Finance Director Rousseau presented the proposed FY 2023 budget for Health, Dental & Disability in the amount of \$544,909 which is a 28% increase from last year.

Finance Assistant Friolet reported on the research she has done thus far on health insurance options that would lower premiums for both the Town and employees such as changing plans with the current provider or using an HRA toward 50% of deductibles and changing to another provider. She reported the same plan using Interlocal would save \$21,000. Other options include changing to 85% or 80% coverage with a \$27,000 savings. A higher deductible with HealthTrust would save \$56,000. She reported there are 26 employees and 19 are on the zero deductible plan. Mr. Sterndale noted the zero deductible plans are really expensive and probably not sustainable, meaning the Town would probably have to do something else in a couple of years.

Mr. Leclair asked if there were any guidelines in the Personnel Policy as to the split and whether this would need to go to the Personnel Board. Mr. Sterndale will look at those.

Mr. Rolfe made a motion to approve the FY 2023 budget for Health, Dental and Disability seconded by Mr. Carroll. Mr. Rolfe withdrew his motion and motioned to

table approval pending investigation of other insurance plans. Mr. Carroll seconded the amended motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

iii. Longevity Pay - *Tabled*

B. Capital Reserve Deposits

i. Revaluation Fund

The Board noted there is a balance of \$25,000 with interest and a Revaluation coming next year which will cost over \$100,000. Mr. Leclair recommended putting \$25,000 per year into the fund annually for the five years until the next revaluation. Mr. Leclair noted the Fund Balance is approximately \$2.8-2.9 million (15%) and is recommended to be between eight and 17%. Mr. Leclair noted in the past there has been a single warrant article for the Capital Reserve deposits but for the coming year they should be done separately.

ii. Fleet Maintenance and Replacement Fund

The Board noted there is a balance of \$36,916.08 and recommended putting the proceeds from the sale of the AVS land of \$185,000 into this account with expensive fire apparatus purchases coming up. The Board agreed there should be \$210,000 in total transferred to this account for the coming year, given all the repairs.

iii. Accrued Benefits Fund

Finance Director Rousseau reviewed recent retirements and the Board recommended putting \$10,000 into this fund for the coming year.

iv. Town Facilities Rehabilitation Fund - *tbd*

VIII. Old Business

IX. Committee Reports

Mr. Leclair noted the Budget Committee meetings are wrapping up with a couple more meetings before the public hearing to accept the full budget in January.

Mr. Role reported the Planning Board had an application to put foundations in for a proposed storage facility. The Daycare facility put its application on hold to do engineering.

Mr. Carroll reported Parks & Recreation are meeting next week.

X. Other Business

Town Administrator Sterndale reported that the Tree Lighting has been postponed to tomorrow at 6 PM due to weather.

Town Administrator Sterndale reported that the library is looking for bids for architectural work and the deadline is Wednesday afternoon. Mr. Szczesny reported that one bid has been received and invited the Selectmen to review the bids on Friday. Interviews will be on December 8th and December 12th.

Town Administrator Sterndale reported the Pit Agreement with Manchester Water Works will be reviewed on December 5th. The land swap is not ready yet but will be ready by the end of the year to be on the Warrant Article.

XI. Upcoming Meetings

- A. Mon. Dec 5, 2022 – Warrant Articles and tabled Operating Budget items
- B. Mon. Dec 19, 2022 – Year End Encumbrances

XII. Minutes

- A. November 14, 2022

***Mr. Rolfe motioned to approve the November 14, 2022 Public Meeting Minutes.
Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

XIII. Adjournment

Mr. Rolfe motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 PM. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary