

**Town of Seabrook
Budget Committee
Tuesday, November 14, 2023**

Members Present; Chris Leclaire, Steve Mower, Barbara Mower, Don Hawkins, Justin Packard, Theresa Kyle and Jim Diburro

Chris Leclaire opened the meeting at 6:30PM with the pledge of allegiance.

Leclaire had a moment of silence and recognized the passing of past committee member Dick Maguire that served on the budget committee and many other committees and board for many years.

Reorganization of the Board and Filling of Vacancy

Leclaire stated that there is an open vacancy for the budget committee and have three letters of interest which include Michael O'Connor, Ella Brown and Mary Messina. As a result of this, Michael O'Connor's request came in March of this year before the two others.

-To approve Michael O'Connor's request for the vacancy on the Budget Committee

Motion: T Kyle

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

Leclaire opened the floor for nominations for chairman and vice chairman.

-To nominate Chris Leclaire as Chairman

Motion: T Kyle

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To nominate Jim Diburro as Vice-Chairman

Motion: T Kyle

Second: S Mower

Unanimous

Budget Overview

Chairman Leclaire called town manager Bill Manzi to the table to go over the budget overview with the committee. Manzi stated that this year's budget book and format looks different and believes that this book produces better product and more information. Manzi went over some of the key changes in the budget, as the budget went up roughly 4% and the water and sewer department are transitioning into their own enterprise. On Monday the Board of Selectmen voted

to change the sewer rates similar to the water rates, with that being said the water and sewer revenue will fully fund the departments budgets. Manzi stated that these rates will be affective January 1st of 2024, but next year the revenues will only be 3/4th as one of the bills will have 2023 rates on it, as it was the last quarter. He said that if revenues go over the expected budget, the extra revenue will go to additional capital or offset water and sewer bills. Packard asked if the warrant articles for water and sewer would be separate. Manzi stated that the water and sewer warrant articles will be on the traditional warrant, but if approved by voters, you would see the increase in the water and sewer bills.

Manzi said that another big change this year is all the health insurance will now be in fund 700, and waters will be in fund 720 and sewers in fund 721. In the past few years, the budget committee and the board of selectmen have asked for a catchall account for health insurance. This allows to get a good look of the health insurance increase/decrease as a whole, and to go through the increase/decrease in the budgets with out the health care in it.

Manzi went over some of the highlights in the departmental budgets. The assessing budget has an increase as there is going to be a town wide revaluation, which was put out to bid and got an offer for \$76,000. The election budget has increased as there are going to be four elections in 2024. The debt line has decreased as the water tank project came in underbid and had an extra \$1,000,000 and per state law that money was able to be paid to the principal of the bond.

Packard asked if the NextEra tax number is a fixed amount, Manzi stated that yes, it is a fixed dollar agreement approved by the DRA. Manzi stated that the agreement was for 2021-2023, which in 2021 they paid 12 million and in 2022 and 2023 they paid 15 million each year. Manzi stated that it is difficult to come up with an agreement with NextEra but they do have an electrical assessor, Skip Sansoucy and are hoping to come up with agreement for next year before they have to go to the tax card.

Default Budget

Chairman Leclaire asked Manzi to describe the process of the default budget as there were many questions last year during the budget process. Manzi stated that the default budget is based on the statue language and the governing body which is the Board of Selectmen. The budget books now have the default budget number in them right next to the proposed budget number.

Packard asked if there was a conflict for sitting on the committee if their great grandfather was an employee of the town. Kyle stated that there is an ethics law, and believes it only for close relationships, such as a mom, dad, sister, brother, child, or spouse. She recommended looking up the law/definition in the book..

There were no other questions or comments from the committee or public.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:07PM. Minutes were taken by Kelsey Johnson.