

**Town of Seabrook
Budget Committee
Tuesday, November 16, 2023**

Members Present; Chris Leclaire, Ed David, Steve Mower, Barbara Mower, Don Hawkins, Justin Packard, Theresa Kyle, Mike O'Connor and Jim Diburro

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

140- Town Clerk and 142- Elections

Shayna Merrill, Town Clerk was present for the budget review for the town clerk's office and elections. She stated that the changes for the budgets consist of auto allowance was completely cut from the budget as this was for a contract obligation for when she was deputy, as of now the current deputy does not receive the allowance due to contract dates changed. She said that they receive milage that is the federal rate, to do bank runs or conferences, this cost comes out of the mileage and tolls line. Merrill stated that a few things increased in her budget, like printing and binding, do to having 4 elections, two new batteries for the voting machines and the software they use called Clerk Works has gone up on price.

As for elections, Merrill stated that there are four elections next year and that is why the budget increased so much as this year there was only one.

-To approve budget 140 Town Clerk, \$327,386

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve Revenue 140 Town Clerk, \$1,997,310

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve budget 142 Elections, \$45,823

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

150-Tax

Michele Knowles, Tax Collector was present to review her budget. Knowles stated that there are no changes in her budget besides contractual obligations, she did request for a reimbursement for her phone bill, as all department heads either have a town phone or get paid a stipend monthly. She stated that she uses her phone for answering phone calls and email around the clock. Diburro

asked if the town sells tax liens, Knowles stated that we do not sell tax liens, but we do deed and auction off town land.

-To approve budget 150 Tax, \$169,440

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve revenue 150 Tax, \$135,000

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

131-Treasurer

Bill Manzi, Town Manager presented the budget to the committee, he stated that there is a 0% increase and only one elected employee in this department. Packard stated that he researched surrounding towns, and the treasurers are part time and make half the amount as Seabrooks, he asked why we have a full-time treasurer. Manzi stated that about 10 years ago the board of selectmen voted the position to be full time, since then the treasurer has had the same set pay and has not requested a pay increase. Manzi went over the revenues, which consists of interest from the p-cards and payments from The Brook for scholarships.

-To approve budget 131 Treasurer, \$68,756

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Yes: M O'Connor, J Diburro, S Mower, B Mower, C Leclaire, E David, T Kyle

No: J Packard

Motion Passed

-To approve revenue 131 Treasurer, \$207,000

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

470-Welfare Admin and 471-Welfare Dept.

Bonnie Armentrout, Welfare Direct was present for her budget review. She stated that department 470 is for the administration to run the department and 471 is for the needs of the town people if they need assistance. Armentrout said she runs the department by herself and there has been a 1% increase due to contractual items in the 470 and no increase or decrease for 471. She stated that she helps the town people that need help apply for assistance through her office, and other programs around the area, to reduce the cost of using taxpayers' money. Packard asked what

human services programs she uses, she stated that she uses community action, red cross, crossroads, meals on wheels, community table, lions club and some others. There were no other questions or comments.

-To approve budget 470 Welfare, \$79,520

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve budget 471 Welfare Dept, \$88,500

Motion M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

-To approve revenue 471 Welfare, \$1,500

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

210-Building and 410-Health

Lacey Fowler, Building and Health Officer was present for her department's budget reviews. Fowler stated that both departments are split by two full-time employees, which is herself and her full-time secretary. She said that she has a part-time employee Gino which he focuses on building inspections, and a 3rd party electrical contractor, Jeff, that inspects the electrical for the town. Fowler stated that she did increase lines meeting/conferences and dues/memberships, so Gino could attend conferences, classes and memberships that will benefit his work for the town. There were questions about whether the revenues should be increased as this year so far, the town has taken in \$161,826 and last year was \$93,575, and the estimated revenue for next year is \$68,900. Fowler stated that she spoke to the town manager and the board of selectmen about the revenue number and would really like to stay at \$68,900. She said that with approval from the BOS her department did go up on all the fees for the building and health permits and that we will see the change next year. The increases in the 410, are contractual obligations and an increase for the health computer program upgrades that need to be done. There were questions amongst the committee about the other professional services line in both budgets if they were accurate. Fowler stated some of the bills may have been paid out of another line item accidentally, or some of the bills don't get sent out until the end of the year. She said she will communicate with the finance department and her secretary to make sure they are correct.

-To approve budget 210 Building, \$123,620

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve revenue 210 Building, \$96,400

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve budget 410 Health, \$102,929

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve revenue 410 Health, \$10,000

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

180-IT and 181-Channell 22

Brian Murphy, IT Director was present to the review his budgets for 180 and 181. Murphy stated that the major things that are driving his budget increase is the growth in hosted services and hardware elements. He said for the past years the staff has managed to continue using a old version of Microsoft office but as of now everyone has been upgrade or in the middle of being upgrade and the old version of Microsoft is no longer functional, as a result of that the sot has gone up for subscribers. Ed David asked if it was cheaper to look into an enterprise license for the subscriptions, Murphy stated that we already have that. He also stated that we have had to increase the server space for our three website domains which are .info, org and pd.com. Ed David asked if the town insurance has cyber insurance and if that is something we are already enrolled into, or can be. Manzi stated that he will look into with our insurance company, Primex, and touch base with the deputy town manager.

Murphy stated that there has been an increase for channel 22 as he is expecting to upgrade the camera and sound system to HD, as Xfinity has upgraded our broadcast to HD, but the equipment is not up to date to film in that capacity. Murphy stated that he can start doing the work this year, with the funds he still has available, but will need to hire a programming expert to help him install the new system. Packard as about the comcast franchise fees, and if the treasurer still handles them to use for scholarships. Manzi stated that, that use to be the case, but the town treasurer has nothing to do with where the comcast fees are appropriated too as that was a board of selectmen decision years back. The revenue is no longer used for scholarships as there were legal disputes and the auditors stated the town couldn't use that revenue for that use.

-To approve budget 180 IT, \$290,136

Motion: M O'Connor

Second; J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve budget 181 Channel 22, \$156,941

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve revenue 181 Channel 22, \$140,000

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

Bill Manzi, Town Manager presented and answered questions for all the budgets below.

110-Selectmen

Packard asked why the selectmen get paid more than surrounding towns. Manzi stated that the board gave themselves an increase back in 2021, but other than that, there has been no increases in about 10 years, as they use to receive benefits like health insurance and the budget has decreased sustainably since. Kyle stated that the board of selectmen for Seabrook hold a lot more responsibility than other towns, and their services are required to keep up with that responsibility.

-To approve budget 110 Selectmen, \$33,992

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Yes: M O'Connor, J Diburro, S Mower, B Mower, C Leclaire, E David, T Kyle

No: J Packard

Motion Passed

112-Budget Committee

-To approve budget 112 Budget Committee, \$1,807

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

120-Town Manager

Manzi presented his budget to the board, stated that the increases were mostly contractual, and the other contracted services went up \$17,000 due to the new HR system that is in place. The HR system is called Bamboo, and it is used for electronic time sheets to clock in and out as paper was used before. This system also allows to put all of the HR documents that the employees use can be reached to along with the availability for the employees and public to apply for jobs.

Diburro asked why the rooms and meals revenue dropped, Manzi stated that he doesn't know why it dropped. Carrie Fowler, Finance Manager stated that the rooms and tax revenue is project

and estimated, and don't get it until December. Packard asked if the rates change, Carrie stated that she isn't sure what formula the state uses for it. There were no other questions of comment.

-To approve budget 12 Town Manager, \$799,986

Motion: J Diburro

Second: E David

Yes: J Diburro, S Mower, B Mower, C Leclair, E David, T Kyle, J Packard

Abstain: M O'Connor

121-Risk Management

Manzi stated that this department is for workers comp and property liability insurance from Primex. Ed David would like to see the back up for this budget regarding cyber insurance. Manzi stated he will get that information for the committee.

-To approve 121 Risk Management, \$753,941

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: Ed David

Unanimous

122-Legal Services

Manzi stated that this budget is for legal services for the town, there are two different firms that are at use, one for personal and the other for land appeals, town meetings, NextEra and other town legal consultation they may need.

-To approve 122 Legal Services, \$230,000

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

130-Finance

Carrie Fowler presented her budget; this budget has two full-time employees herself and a full-time clerk. She stated that the increases include contractual obligations, and an increase in other professional services for the audit services.

-To approve 130 Finance, \$209,801

Motion: J Diburro

Second: E David

Yes: J Diburro, S Mower, B Mower, C Leclair, E David, T Kyle, J Packard

Abstain: M O'Connor

135-Trust Fund

-To approve budget 135 Trust Fund, \$653.00

Motion: J Diburro

Second: E David

Unanimous

-To approve revenue 135 Trust Fund, \$400.00

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

510-Town Hall

Manzi stated that this budget is for the Town Hall and there is one employee that handles the maintenance for the hall. The increase in the budget is all contractual and an increase in overtime. Ed David asked why the overtime is so high for this year already, Manzi stated that we have had a few problems with the town hall. There was a big leak in the town clerk's office, which required moving the office around, along with getting rid of the mold problem the leak created. Manzi also stated that there have been issues with the double boiler, which one of them is out, the warrant article for the boiler passed this year, and is almost ready to put out to bid to be replaced.

There were concerns regarding the revenue lines, insurance/dividends and Miscellaneous/Copier, the committee would like clarification and will table the revenues.

-To approve budget 510 Town Hall, \$166,386

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

800-Debt

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.

-To approve budget 800 Debt, \$677,948

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

160-Assessing

Manzi stated that 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. There were comments made amongst the committee about if the revaluation could wait or even placed as a warrant article on the budget. Manzi said the town ratio is currently at 84%, which is a low number, and the state is strongly recommending that number needs to be increased and that why the evaluation needs to happen as soon as possible.

There is currently no assessor, as the past assessor is no longer working for the town, and they are in the process of filling the position.

-To approve budget 160 Assessing, \$331,998

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

170-Planning Board

Manzi stated that there has been a substantial decrease in the planning board budget, as the part time position has been cut more than in half. The position is now done in house by an employee at the town hall.

-To approve budget 170 Planning Board, \$48,477

Motion M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve revenue 170 Planning Board, \$95,000

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

172-ZBA

-To approve budget 172 ZBA, \$8,250

Motion: M O'Connor

Second: J Diburro

Unanimous

-To approve revenue 172 ZBA, \$3,800

430-Conservation Commission

-To approve budget 430 Conservation Commission, \$3,618

Motion: J Diburro

Second: M O'Connor

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33PM. Minutes were taken by Kelsey Johnson.