

TOWN OF SEABROOK

SELECTMEN'S BUDGET MEETING

OCTOBER 31, 2023

Harold F. Eaton
Theresa A. Kyle
Srinivasa "Ravi" Ravikumar
William M. Manzi, III

Mr. Eaton opened the meeting at 9:00AM.

160 - Assessing

There was discussion on reducing the PT Employee line where only \$7K has been expended this year. The board agreed to leave as is.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request for
Unanimous budget 160 at \$331,998.

131 - Treasurer

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Theresa A. Kyle Manager's request for
Unanimous budget 131 at \$68,756.

Revenues - Treasurer

There was discussion on the "P" card program and the 1% that comes back to the town.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve the revenues
Second: Harold F. Eaton at \$207,000.
Unanimous

130 - Finance

Carrie Fowler was present for her budget. The increase in other professional services is to prepare the annual audit. There was discussion on the capital assets and the preparation of the audit. The federal grant for the pier will require a single audit next year. This also includes the OPEB report that needs to be done every year.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request for
Unanimous budget 130 at \$209,801.

~~150 - Tax Collector~~

Michele Knowles was present for her budget. The phone & communication line increased due to a stipend for the tax collector who has not received this up until this year.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request for
 Unanimous budget 150 at \$169,440.

Revenues - Tax Collector

MOTION: Ravi To approve the revenues
Second: Harold F. Eaton at \$135,000.
 Unanimous

110 - Selectmen

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request for
 Unanimous budget 110 at \$33,992.

112 - Budget Committee

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request for
 Unanimous budget 112 at \$1,807.

120- Town Manager

The increase in other contract services is for the HR software package currently in place. Mr. Manzi discussed the benefits of having the Bamboo software. He explained how it will make the department more efficient but not necessarily cut down on manpower.

Ravi stated that non-union employees should have performance reviews and it would be helpful when they are negotiating individual contracts.

There was discussion on having a payroll system that would help to eliminate errors.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request for
 Unanimous budget 120 at \$799,986.

Revenues - Town Manager

MOTION: Ravi To approve the revenues
Second: Harold F. Eaton at \$719,740.
 Unanimous

121 - Risk Management

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton
Second: Theresa A. Kyle
Unanimous

To approve the Town
Manager's request for
budget 121 at \$753,941.

122 - Legal

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Harold F. Eaton
Unanimous

To approve the Town
Manager's request for
budget 122 at \$230K.

There was discussion on the costs associated with legal. Next year is a contract year with Next Era which will affect the expenditures in this account.

There was discussion on the iodine pills for a nuclear exposure and putting the application online, so the residents have access to this information.

135 - Trustee of the Trust Funds

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Harold F. Eaton
Unanimous

To approve the Town
Manager's request for
budget 135 at \$653.

Revenues - Trustee of the Trust Funds

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Theresa A. Kyle
Unanimous

To approve the revenues
at \$400.

172 - ZBA

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton
Second: Ravi
Unanimous

To approve the Town
Manager's request for
budget 172 at \$8,250.

Revenues

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Theresa A. Kyle
Unanimous

To approve the revenues
at \$3,800.

430 - Conservation

MOTION: Ravi
Second: Theresa A. Kyle
Unanimous

To approve the Town
Manager's request for
budget 430 at \$3,618.

510 - Town Hall

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request for
Unanimous budget 510 at \$166,386.

Revenues - Town Hall

There was discussion on the insurance dividends & reimbursement and the sale of municipal property & tax deeded property. Ravi asked if by not projecting those revenues will it affect the tax rate. Mr. Manzi explained the projected amount would not, but the actual amount collected does. Carrie Fowler explained that revenues only come in to set the tax rate at the end of the year when she gives DRA the total amount brought in. The budgeted amount is then reduced by the total amount of revenue.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the revenues
Second: Theresa A. Kyle at \$16,960.
Unanimous

800 - Debt

Mr. Manzi said this budget has been reduced due to the water tower project coming in less than what was bonded and the remaining \$900K to be applied to the principal. Mr. Manzi said there is a legal obligation to pay this debt, so it does remain in the default budget. There was brief discussion on how bonds work.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Theresa A. Kyle Manager's request for
Unanimous budget 800 at \$677,948.

230 - Fire Department

Chief Bill Edwards was present for his budgets. There was discussion on the line items that have increases.

There was discussion on the lease purchase for the truck that was approved at 2023 town meeting and how the lease payments are raised and appropriated.

Mr. Eaton feels the equipment maintenance line should be the \$10K based on the expenditures this year. Mr. Manzi commented that line 442 was not calculated correctly and it should be budgeted at \$175K rather than the \$150,912 as stated.

Chief Edwards said the OT expenditure as of today is \$1,031,000. He feels the recommendation is going to be short for 2024. He recommended \$1.3M but the town manager made cuts to this line.

Ravi stated he would prefer to stay with the recommended amount from the town manager.

MOTION: Harold F. Eaton To increase line 140
OT Line to \$1.2M.

Mrs. Kyle said they should go with the department head's recommendation of \$1.3M as they cannot cut the calls for service. If they adopt the department head's recommendation for line 140, they will see a 4.41% increase.

There was discussion on how the service calls impact the amount of the OT as the fire station needs to be staffed every time they go out for a call. They also have to staff when an employee takes time off and that is also covered with OT. Ravi stated that if they approve this increase, he will actually lobby against this budget.

Chief Edwards said Hampton has a lot more staff than Seabrook and that they are doing the same number of calls. He said if they had budgeted this account as he recommended last year than the increase would only be half of what it would be this year. He commented they keep cutting the budget and has provided information but because it was not given to him "Ravi" as he would like it and in the right format then he "Ravi" feels he hasn't been given the information. Ravi commented he is not convinced with the information provided to him that this is the best way to spend taxpayer money. Chief Edwards said it is a really harsh comment from him "Ravi" that he would lobby against the budget as a representative for the entire town. Ravi stated he didn't care about the Chief's opinion.

Mrs. Kyle stated they should be lobbying for more employees in the fire department not against them. Mr. Eaton said when they start doing, they are meddling with safety, and he is not going to compromise the safety of residents.

Mr. Eaton asked how much a study would cost to go through the data and make recommendations as to whether or not there is a need for additional staffing. Chief Edwards asked if other departments are providing this type of information. He has not heard that DPW needs to give this type of information to increase the budget. Mrs. Kyle commented they are trying to save money but now going to spend money to have a study because they are not trusting the department heads. She understands Ravi is data driven but you also need to use common sense. Chief Edwards said that he doesn't value his "Ravi" opinion on analyzing the numbers just as Ravi indicated he doesn't value.

his opinion as a department head, so having a third party do the work would be beneficial.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve department
Second: Harold F. Eaton head's request of \$1.3M
Opposed: Ravi for line 140.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve increasing
Second: Harold F. Eaton line 510 to \$45K for
Opposed: Ravi a study.

There was discussion on not having the \$5K in the budget so they can look at doing the study in 2023. Mr. Manzi explained why he would want to leave the money in the 2024 budget.

Mr. Manzi said once the Selectmen are done with this budget and before the vote on the bottom line there would be additional increases.

Chief Edwards said line 142 was cut and his asking to keep it at \$350K. They are currently at about \$166K with 2 months remaining in the year. There was discussion on where the year will end and keeping the town manager's recommendation of \$250K.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve department
head's request of \$350K
for line 142.

There was discussion on the injuries in the department and why it was broken out this way. Mr. Manzi said an increase in this line would also increase FICA and NH Retirement.

Second: Harold F. Eaton
Opposed: Ravi

Line 220 FICA will need to increase to \$86,266
Line 230 NH Retirement will need to increase to \$1,223,203

Ravi stated that the fire budget has increased by 7.72% or \$439K.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve the fire
Second: Harold F. Eaton budget at \$6,129,378
Opposed: Ravi with all increases.

Revenues - Fire Department

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve revenues at

Second: Harold F. Eaton \$53,500.
Unanimous

Board took a break at 12:34PM. Board reconvened at 1:01PM.

Chief Edwards said the OT line was considered contractual by the previous board and would like to know if this is still the same with this current board. There was discussion as to what happened previously when the town manager had to break the contract and not allow employees time off. Ravi doesn't believe that OT is considered contractual as there is nothing that says you are going to get a set number of hours as OT. Ravi would like a legal opinion on this based on what the contract says and if it comes up for approval, he will vehemently oppose it. Chief Edwards asked if the board has discretion as to what is considered contractual or not. The board by statute determines what is and what is not contractual. The legal opinion has to be on arbitrary OT increases and it is included in the default budget. Mrs. Kyle said when they seek legal opinion, they cannot divulge this information unless the full board agrees to release it. Ravi said the specific question should be whether or not the OT in the contract is considered contractual and if so then the next question would be how it would be calculated.

MOTION: Ravi To seek legal opinion
Second: Theresa A. Kyle on the inclusion of the
Unanimous OT budget as contractual
obligation with
subsequent inclusion of
that in the default
budget. If it is, the
second question would be
what is the right way to
calculate it in the
default budget.

Mrs. Kyle would add "for an interpretation of the clause that is in the fire contract".

231 - Fire Hire

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Theresa A. Kyle Manager's request of
Unanimous \$13,061 for budget 231.

Revenues - Fire Hire

MOTION: Ravi To approve the revenues

Second: Harold F. Eaton at \$15,542.
Unanimous

235 - Fire Station

Mr. Manzi said this budget is underfunded annually and he froze this account about 3 months ago as they were going to exceed the budgeted amount by year end.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request at
Unanimous \$62,152 for budget 235.

240 - Emergency Management

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Harold F. Eaton Manager's request at
Unanimous \$118,650 for budget 240.

241 - RERP

The PT employees are principally for the emergency management drill and exercises.

MOTION: Ravi To approve the Town
Second: Theresa A. Kyle Manager's request at
Unanimous \$25,760 for budget 241.

Revenues - Emergency Management

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve the revenues
Second: Ravi at \$25,760.
Unanimous

Fund 18 - Ambulance Revolving Fund

Mr. Manzi explained the difference between the revolving funds and the capital funds. There was discussion on line 741 that is to replace an ambulance. The funds for ambulance revolving are for a specific purpose and cannot be used for something else without coming back to the board who are the agents for the fund.

There was discussion on how the ambulance operators were put into place using the ambulance revolving fund. There was discussion on the balance billing for ambulance services. There was discussion on how the money would be put into the general fund and the cost of items for the ambulance would be in the budget. This would be by vote of the people and would affect the tax rate based on what money goes into the general fund. Ravi feels the revolving fund has a backdoor of making things

happen that wouldn't necessarily be approved by the voters. The accounts are limited by statute, but all are setup the same way with a source of revenue not being tax dollars.

MOTION: Ravi To approve expenditures
Second: Theresa A. Kyle at \$136,750 for Fund 18.

The lifepacks are outdated and need to be replaced at a cost of \$40K per unit. The chief would like to put it in this budget if the board agrees. The budget to use money from the revolving fund can be done anytime during the year so it can be addressed at any time. Chief Edwards said the only rush is the fact that these are failing now. The board would like additional information and Chief Edwards will provide on Monday at the regularly scheduled meeting. Ravi asked that the be disposed of properly and bring any money back to the taxpayers that can be.

Unanimous

There was discussion on the change in the fee structure the board made earlier this year. Mr. Manzi said he can get more updated number for Monday's meeting.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve revenues at
Second: Harold F. Eaton \$630,200 for Fund 18.

Warrant Articles - Fire Department

SCBA/Turnout Gear Capital Reserve Fund - \$90K Warrant Article
The chief is recommending this article be changed to \$125K. There was discussion on how long this gear is good for and when they need to purchase it. The current balance in the fund is \$136,142. The gear costs about \$150K for 28 employees and the SCBA is about \$250K for 22 packs. The pack stays with the truck, but each employee gets their own mask. Ravi would like to see if there is a way to level fund this capital reserve fund, so they have the money to but the gear. After looking at the fund balance it was determined they only need to request the \$90K.

Replace Insulation - \$100K AARPA Funding

This is where they house the vehicles and equipment. The chief is looking to have a spray insulation which will help with the heating efficiency as well. There was discussion on how many times they have had to make repairs. Mr. Eaton said the specification should be closed cell for the spray insulation.

Ravi asked what do they say to the taxpayer who asks why they are doing it under another source of funding when the vote was no. This source of funding is not taxpayer money so when they vote no it is with taxpayer money.

There was discussion on what happens if the bid comes in it at a cost higher than projected.

MOTION: Theresa A. Kyle To approve using AARPA
Second: Ravi funds for \$100K to
Unanimous replace the insulation.

MOTION: Ravi To approve a warrant
Second: Theresa A. Kyle article for \$90K for the
Unanimous SCBA/Turnout Gear
Capital reserve fund.

Ravi said he spoke to a lot of people about the beach walkways, and they are extremely upset they cannot find a way to put aside some money to repair the walkways. Mr. Eaton said the answer wasn't no it was to address the major concerns first to be sure they have the money secured for those first and then if funds are available, they can set aside money for the walkways. Mrs. Kyle said there is a problem with the walkways but there are a lot of problems in town. She said they should explore the situations and fund the other priorities first and then look at funding for the walkways. She just wants to see what all the other issues cost.

MOTION: Ravi To adjourn the meeting
Second: Harold F. Eaton at 3:07PM.
Unanimous

Minutes taken by Kelly J. O'Connor.

Approved and endorsed:

Srinivasan Ravikumar,
Clerk

Date: _____