

Budget & Finance Meeting
Wednesday, December 2, 2020 via Zoom
3:00 PM

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Pat Harvey, Frank Severy, Greg White, Barb Dehart, Nancy Woolley, Lois Bond, Vic Ribaud, Rob Gardner, Julie Smith, Kristin LaPell, Robert Meagher
Absent: Becky Klein, Jim Bowen **Guests:** Terry Severy, Fire, Water, Sewer; Kathryn Schenkman, High School building information
Zoom Meeting recorded by Doon.

Agenda: Fire, Water, Sewer, Office

Barb reported that she has additional material regarding the Water/Sewer Reserve Funds, and will get that information to Julie.

Julie will follow up with Nathan Hawley, Auditor, on separating amounts in the General Fund to the Water/Sewer Reserve Funds.

Kristin reported that she has material on Finance charges (Bonds/Leases, etc.) and will send to Barb.

Fire: Terry reported that there are 17 members of the volunteer Fire department. As approved in FY21, the Fire department was authorized to pay an annual “bonus” to firefighters reporting to fires and attending meetings 50% of the time \$100; 75% of the time \$150. This accounts for the increase in the **Salary** line item.

In the **Air Compressor** line, the FD has been looking for someone to repair their air compressor. In the meantime, the FD is using Hancock FD’s compressor. We should be setting aside capital reserve money for a new compressor. *Are there grants for air compressors?*

Air Pac: 2021 is the year to complete an inventory and determine just what is needed for replacement – this could be \$1500-1600.

Truck Maintenance: Maintenance is up due to the age of 2 trucks. The pickup is 21 years old.

Public Safety: Starting this year the Dept. of Public Safety will be proportionately charging back to users the cost of dispatch services over a period of 4 years. Currently the cost is \$54 per call and is based on 35 calls this year.

Dues: For schooling and training and State Firefighters Association life insurance: \$16.00 per person.

Meetings & Education: Weekend education.

Hoses: Current inventory of hoses is quite old. FD has to start upgrading/purchasing new hoses.

Clothing: The cost to minimally outfit a firefighter is \$3,000-\$4,000. With increases in backcountry skiing and biking, the FD is being called to perform more rescues. These rescues require more specific and warmer gear. Gear lasts not more than 10 years, and most of the FD gear is expired. *Lois suggested looking at a VLCT grant for helmets and gloves.*

Supplies/Repairs: New nozzles for hoses (\$800 each) are needed.

Radios/Pagers: Radios are \$1,000; pagers are \$600.

Robert Meagher commented on deferred maintenance.

Water Utility Department:

The Operator is paid an hourly salary, as is the Assistant Operator. The new Assistant, Cody Bowen, needs to become licensed. Terry indicated that Dana Spalding will continue as an Assistant. To properly reflect line item charges, Kristin is working with NEMRC to separate salaries and type of work being performed. The Reservoir is to be cleaned in 2021, and the cost should come from the Reserve Fund. (\$3,000-\$3,500). *There has been no transfer of monies to the Water or Sewer Reserves. Julie will discuss with Nathan Hawley.*

Water Testing: State requiring more testing for PFAS.

Water Equipment Maintenance: Where was the \$2,000 new hydrant in 2020 charged?

Water Supplies: The FY20 increase could be from the State mandate of adding chlorine and subsequent sampling due to COVID-19 and the increase in soda ash pricing. *It would be helpful to know what was charged for chlorine and testing during the mandated time.*

Sewer Utility Department:

Assistant Operator expense line up due to new assistant. His shots are up-to-date.

Sewer Testing: Keep at \$3,500.

Telemetry: All 3 fields are being tested. Leave at \$1,200

Sewer Tanks Maintenance: New Pump-out Operator - Wind River. Can pump 8,000 gallons at a time. Terry will consult with Kingsbury's in Waitsfield to determine if they could pump for less.

Sewer Education: Why so high? Move to \$100. Salary line has been increased.

Sewer Billing: Why is Sewer billing higher than Water billing? Move to \$500.

Sewer Supplies: If a new pump is needed, take from Sewer Reserve Fund.

Discussed the need to increase rates.

Discuss with Nathan Hawley.

Office:

Julie reported that Pace & Hawley, **Auditors** will contract FY22 for \$8,950 if it is a regular audit. If a Single audit is needed, it will be more.

Julie is working with Becky Donnet on Website Management and what could likely be taking a different approach to cyber security and the Cloud. Could be in the \$7,000 vicinity.

No new computer equipment needed.

Quick discussion on the FEMA project on Cushman Rd, and ongoing discussions with property owner, Judith Bonn.

Legal: Move to \$5,000.

Mapping: Upgrades to Tax Mapping will be \$1,750. Confirmed with the new company.

Electricity: May go down when it was discovered that a fan had been on in the Constables space.

Heat: Julie to review with CV Oil.

Greg recommended looking at the work Jeff Gephart is doing on efficiency measures.

Computer Disaster: Julie has to review where NEMRC charges are being booked.

Office Equipment: Julie has to review, and also determine what printer charges (cartridges and number of copies) are given the number of mailings regarding COVID-19. This will also apply to the postage charges and paper supplies. *Reimbursement from the Cares Act?*

Granville 1st Response: Julie has talked with Dan Sargeant who hopes to have information for the 12-9 meeting.

Emergency Generator – School: Tom Schnabel has offered to oversee maintenance of the generator - \$1,200.

Kathryn Schenkman reported on happenings with the high school building which the school board is preparing to offer to the Town of Rochester for \$1.00. If the Town should accept the offer, there would be no Bond debt. She also indicated that expenses on the building seem to be \$20,000 rather than \$40,000 as previously reported. Because there is a charged heating system, the building will require minimal heating. The school maintenance crew would need access to the washing and drying machines. Group is proceeding with possibilities for uses of the building.

Some discussion as to what the Town risk would be if the building was acquired. It could be mothballed for a short period of time. There is discussion with Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation on how to assist Rochester with considering a use or uses for the building. A business plan and cost estimates need to be developed. Doon commented that the Town would likely have better access to grant money. Pat feels that if the proposal does not work, the Town would be in a better position to sell rather than the school. A comment was made on how many non-taxed parcels does the Town want to consider.

The school de-merger petition presented to the Town of Stockbridge by Stockbridge taxpayers was discussed. B&F feels that the Selectboard should sooner rather than later make a statement to Rochester residents on the future of the high school building, at a meeting separate from Town Meeting.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, December 9, 2020 – 3:00 ZOOM
Adjourned: 5:40 PM

Nancy Woolley