

October 17, 2023

Budget and Finance Minutes

Present: Nancy Woolley, Pat Harvey, Kristen LaPell, Julie Smith, Greg White (absent), Frank Severy, Doon Hinderyckx, Robert Meagher (absent), Barb Dehart (absent), & Lois Bond, Daniel Sargeant, Rob Gardner

October 10, 2023, B&F minutes were approved.

Draft Audit is now finalized. Nathan sent a final draft in an email to Julie and Doon. She will post it to the website and include it in the Office Friday Email.

Review of the Audit: Discussion about the Audit findings. The board will consult about the Trustee Policy to bring into compliance once they have reviewed with Trustees and Town Attorney for his input as discussed by the auditor.

Julie handed out the health insurance policy rates for 2024 with a comparison sheet to 2023. She said the final decision would need to be determined the week of Thanksgiving to get the rates updated in the system in time for December payroll. Nancy said there is a merger with Michigan and BC/BS and wondered if there will rate changes due to the merger and whether we will be able to participate. Julie will reach out and ask Kelly from VLCT.

Review Updated Variance: Kristen populated the current variance. This is the baseline. She did the previous year's budgets and the current 3 month up to date budget is included. Kristen explained that any notes from the department's budgets were also included for us to review. Nancy explained that we keep the variance that Kristen printed out for us today to use as a worksheet through the department budget review process and once we have finished all the departments we can update and receive a new variance at that time. Kristen will email the updated variance weekly after each meeting.

Office Budget: Julie reviewed the budget for the office. The outside audit will require a single audit this year because of the West Hill Bridge project. A single audit would cost \$16,000. She received a concrete number for the Tax Mapping cost, so the number changed from \$1975.00 to \$2,100.00. Meetings/Education would need to increase as we are attending more trainings. Doon suggested \$750 from \$600. Supplies have been level funded for many years so that was increased to \$2,800 from \$2,500. Julie explained the telephone line item should come down some with the removal of the third line for faxes. She said with the recent Comcast phone increases it only made sense to remove it. Faxes can still be sent from the other two lines. Printing and advertising were increased from \$4,000 to \$4,500 to cover town reports and other printing needs. Fuel was prepaid in 2024. Frank shared with a smaller tank installed we should have a better idea this year how much fuel the town office building is using. He said that the office building will be going through the Municipal Energy Resilience Program to lower costs of energy use. Increased postage line item to \$3,200. IT services include the zoom subscription, and adobe acrobat. NEMRC has increased with cloud services. Equipment line items increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per Brians suggestion. The elevator costs this year will be \$424 for maintenance and \$150 for state inspection. Julie requested money for a map cabinet. Pat said

Granville has a nice one. The cabinet costs were around \$2500 for a cabinet that would hold 200. We have about 10 new surveys to record in a year. A suggestion to use the restoration fund to pay for the map cabinet was made. The survey maps need to be preserved. Julie will look into putting a price together for the office needs and present a request to the selectboard as well as making a trip up to Granville to look at their cabinet. Julie is also concerned about vault space. She will need to do more organizing and rearrange. Under general town expenses, Julie spoke with Bushee about submitting a proposal for the maintenance of all the 5 town generators. She will bring that number once he sends it along. He currently maintains 3 of the 5 generators through the fire department and water/sewer and the repeater.

Julie submitted the information to VLCT for property insurance. She said they will be sending out the numbers for that.

Parks Expenses Budget: Frank and Nancy went through the line items for the park. They still have many trees to be dealt with. They will look at submitting a new Park Grant for this year. The proposed amounts look good. Discussion about the mulching and if they will do that every year around the trees in the park or every other.

Planning and Zoning Budget: Doon shared Maya is doing a great job with the minutes. The numbers looked great. All happy with the proposed budget.

Granville First Response: Dan shared the Granville First Response had changed their name to Valley Rescue Squad. Kristen will update the budget. He shared their intended plan to create a backup ambulance service. This would mean they would respond the same as WRVA does to any medical emergency. He said if for whatever reason WRVA could not make it over to the mountain, that would mean it would be handled by an outside entity. This happens with 10% of all calls on this side of the mountain. He shared in a years' time; 12 -20 calls would require a longer wait for the next ambulance service to respond. He is hoping to create a second option here locally. They would transport if that scenario came into play. He said another situation that would be beneficial would be with a critical patient; to start transporting and meet WRVA in route. Nancy asked if we have ever had people from South Royalton or Middlebury come to the Valley. Dan said they are the outside entities that respond when WRVA cannot. He said Middlebury is typically called to Hancock. Mad River is called for Granville and South Royalton is called out typically for Rochester. He said the budget has increased. He stated his numbers next year would increase \$3,400 over what was asked last year. His budget amount is \$10,137. Pat asked what the insurance program would be. He said it is an added insurance if WRVA cannot make it over. Nancy asked if they were using census figures and if they are the same ones WRVA is using. Dan said the census figures are being used. He said if you look at the per capita figure, its \$9.22. Currently he believed we are at \$7.34. He said looking at the big picture for emergency medical services for the valley we are paying \$72/per capita for WRVA and not sure what their budget will look like but adding in our amount it comes to about \$82 per capita currently. He believed when Valley Rescue closed, we were at \$124 per capita. Kristen asked if certain people would have to be qualified to drive for the second ambulance. Dan said it would look like a two-person crew, one would be an EMT and the other a First Responder. The First Responder requires a weekend course training. He said the personnel have all been through that training. He said half are qualified EMT or higher. He said they have 3 currently enrolled in the

EMT course over at Mad River, one of which is himself. He said when they put this plan together, they wanted to build their roster up to 28 people. The goal is to evenly distribute First Responders with EMT's so they can break up a 12 hour shift evenly for full coverage. He said if they don't meet the 28 personnel, currently he has 24 potentially once they are certified, they can apply for the license and perhaps do weekends and night transport services. Nancy asked if they were working their budget with WRVA as well. Dan said they are not working their budgets together. Dan said he has a meeting scheduled with Matt more about the operations than budgeted items. Pat asked if there would be always at least one person on the schedule during the day. Dan said the schedule would require a 2-person crew for the ambulance for transport. He said they would still use the ambulance as a first response vehicle but couldn't transport it unless they had a two-person crew. He said there are two major purchases that would restrict them from obtaining their license to transport. The first is a cot and the other is a cardiac monitor. He said both refurbished would be around \$40,000. His goal is to raise the funds to cover the costs from public support. The question was then asked if there were extra funds that could cover the costs of these two items. Dan said currently if there is a surplus in any area of the budget, left over funds are then saved in a capital fund to be earmarked for that purpose. Nancy asked if this is in the bylaws of the fire department and rescue? Dan said they don't have bylaws, but they do have financial practices. Nancy said the town would need to have approval to establish a reserve fund. He said they have done that themselves but the vote at the board meetings would include the town representatives. Lois said this is just an internal document. Pat asked if the Valley Rescue Squad has permanently separated itself from the Granville Fire Department? Dan explained the Valley Rescue Squad is a subsidiary of Granville Fire Department. He said funds coming in for Valley Rescue would never touch the Granville Fire Department funds. Pat said last year they were lamenting over the radios and asked if that had been resolved. Dan said they are still using the same radios that they have had. Rob spoke as a representative for the Town of Rochester attending Valley Rescue meetings that he felt having an ambulance on this side of the mountain is very important was impressed with the amount of work Dan and his team has done moving this ahead faster than he thought it could. He said he attended a meeting with Valley Rescue and WRVA, who is aware of what is going on. He said from his own point of view, everyone in the room is a leader of some sort and in the end the community will have to decide if they want to get on board with this plan. He said as a leader it's important to get behind it and ask all the questions and doubts you are having. It's a worthy service for our community. Nancy asked if there were any members from Rochester who are members of Valley Rescue. Dan said that there has not been any additional participation since the announcement of Valley Rescue, only the existing members. He hoped that members from Rochester Fire would join as well as those who express any interest. Nancy asked in the past if anyone was interested, if they were responsible for the cost of their training, is that still the case. Dan said the training is paid for through Valley Rescue. Dan said the main thing is time. He said the Basic First Responder Program is 8 hours (First Aid and CPR). There are also driving classes for ambulances. The EMT course is calculated at 160 hours. They meet every Wednesday for 3 hours and one weekend day, every other weekend for 6 hours. His course started in October, and he should be licensed in April. Pat asked if his services in the budget increased, would there be a need for less services from WRVA? Dan said he would caution against looking at this to separate from WRVA. He said they will be offering a BLS service (Basic Life Service). He said WRVA is at a Paramedic Level Service. For major medical service calls you will want a paramedic to show up. He said they do not want to separate from that in any way. He shared, his service is only meant to be a backup for

any reason that WRVA can't make it. Rob shared the positive integration between WRVA and Valley Rescue is going to be extremely important. The positive integration between the two groups is essential. Nancy asked, going back to the question of whether this is totally volunteer or do you anticipate compensating for time. He said they did try a stipend program and that turned out to be ineffective. The volunteers have turned their stipend back in. The budget Dan shared is their preliminary budget. Nancy would like to see him send in a budget with a letter for the Town Report.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Julie Smith