

Canaan Budget Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 19, 2017
Canaan Fire Station, Canaan, NH

Attendees: Budget Committee members: John Bergeron, Ellie Davis, Patty Duszynski, Stephen Freese, Jamie Jukosky, Al Posnanski, Mike Riese, Denis Salvail, Philip Smith Jr., Sadie Wells;

Public attendees: Canaan Town Administer Mike Samson, Sam Frank, Cindy Neily, Amy Thurber; Dave McAlister; recorded by Roger Lohr (not in attendance).

Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Ellie Davis called the meeting of the Canaan Budget Committee to order at 7:00 PM and took attendance.

A. Police Department

Sam Frank said that budget has remained the same in the last few years besides salary increases and some minor adjustments. The union contract is being negotiated and it expires on March 31. The police salary increase will be equivalent to other town staff (3%). The electricity line shows a large difference in the actual-vs-budget amount because the building is much more efficient but the town administrator wanted to keep the energy budget the same for two years for the new building. The oil and propane is currently under bid but is expected to be about the same. The staff benefits (FICA, Medicare) will be updated soon.

The Canaan police have many more calls compared to surrounding towns. The Committee discussed police activity background in Canaan. Mr. Frank explained officer overtime and traffic enforcement with the state reimbursement.

B. Emergency Management

There is a budget increase in the dispatch service for police, fire, and ambulance, which is anticipated at 9-10%. The salary line incorporates a correction to an error last year. There are three people associated with emergency management and they attend meetings, command local emergency activities, update the emergency plan and manual, and represent the town on the Public Health Council.

Mike Samson spoke about the budget saying that the town has kept the budget increases down for seven years and the tax base has increased to help keep the budget flat over the years. Each town department reviews their respective budgets and it is not one department against another.

C. Fire Department

Mike Samson reviewed the fire department budget citing the increase in the salaries. Mike Samson referenced the increase in the fire chief salary so that it becomes more competitive with other towns. There is a substantial decrease in the equipment line.

D. Trustees of the Trust Funds

Cindy Neily discussed the trust funds and how the flow works taking money from the funds and using it for items from other accounts such as legal. There are only three line items in the trust fund budget area and the legal line item is a placeholder.

E. Canaan Budget Committee Meeting Schedule

Mike Samson stated that there will be a revision to the Highway Department that will impact the overall budget. Other issues that will happen soon include the Selectboard's budget and the health insurance expense. The Committee decided to schedule the next meeting for November 2 (replacing November 16) devoted to revisions to the Highway Department and the following meeting (revenues, default, warrant articles) is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 7 or 21.

F. Library

Amy Thurber distributed a document of library-related statistics and reviewed highlights of the document. She noted the Friends of the Library support that is outside of the Canaan budget. She noted programs such as the one intended to encourage families to help their student children. Program participation numbers were in the data. Circulation has declined at the library but the number of cardholders has increased. Some periodicals have been discontinued. There is reciprocal usage with residents from Grafton and Enfield. There is a volunteer at the library.

G. Mechanic

The Mechanic salary is significantly higher (\$10,000). The mechanic is working well with the other departments that rely on him and there is a placeholder to hire an assistant mechanic. Some backlogged projects have been completed. The mechanic supplies line is declining by \$5,000 and the petroleum products line items may be lowered, too. The subscriptions for diagnostic software are expensive but they are important to maintain.

H. Highway

Town Administrator Mike Samson spoke about the Highway Department superintendent salary issue in comparison to the mechanic salary, who earns overtime on top of salary. It is difficult to find people to fill these positions at present salary levels. Samson supported a \$2,500 increase in the Highway Department superintendent salary as well as the 3% increase. The Highway staff has done a good job responding to town needs and in emergency situations. Some of the highway employees are volunteer firefighters. The Committee was asked to weigh in on the superintendent/mechanic salary issue and a discussion ensued. The Committee requested information about the job descriptions and general job evaluations. A statement was made regarding the role of the Budget Committee and the Selectboard with regard to such hiring and budget issues.

2. Meeting Minutes Approval

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Sadie Wells made a motion which was seconded by Denis Salvail to approve the March 31, 2017 Canaan Budget Committee meeting minutes as submitted and amended. The motion passed with one abstention 9-0-1 (Smith).

The changes included name spellings and Chair Davis would finalize the minutes since the Minutes Taker was not requested to cover the meeting.

Sadie Wells made a motion which was seconded by John Bergeron to approve the September 21, 2017 Canaan Budget Committee meeting minutes as submitted and amended. The motion passed 9-0-1 (Salvail abstained). The changes included the dates on the document and the in the headings.

3. Adjournment

Sadie Wells made a motion which was seconded by John Bergeron to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 10-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 PM.