

Budget Committee  
January 23, 2024  
Meeting Minutes

**Approved with Amendments: 1/30/24**

**Present:** Chair Paul Regan, Vice Chair Sue Sodano, Walter Waring, Janet Cavanagh, Charlie Therriault, Daniel Kenney, and Les Dion, Select Board Representative.

**Others Present:**

Christina Goodwin, Town Administrator; Jeff Chartier, Water/Sewer Superintendent; Mark Bucklin, Highway Superintendent; Victor Greenwood, Highway Foreman; Chuck Cullen, Transfer Station Lead Attendant; and Bill Dowey, Chair of Economic Development Committee.

**Call to Order:**

Mr. Regan called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

Mr. Dowey led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**New Business:**

**Review & Approve – Budget Sections:**

**#4651 Economic Development Committee**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4651 Economic Development Committee (EDC) in the amount of \$3,250 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Kenney. Mr. Dowey, stated that the Pemi-Path Sub-Committee, a sub-committee of the EDC, is in the process of applying for grants to fund the development of a path connecting Profile Falls to Bristol Falls Park. It is anticipated that this will attract hikers and snowmobilers, with the intent to promote and increase business revenue within the Newfound region. The Sub-Committee is looking at six (6) different grants, one in particular with Northern Borders. The project itself requires an Environment Assessment 2 (EA2) now that the first assessment was completed. Ms. Goodwin advised that \$1,000 was encumbered from the 2023 budget with the intent to pay some of the costs for engineering for the project. Motion to move the bottom line of #4651 Economic Development Committee in the amount of \$3,250.00 passed, 6-1.

**#4311 Highway Department Operations**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4311 Highway Operations in the amount of \$726,815.04 by Mr. Regan, second by Ms. Sodano. Mr. Bucklin stated he has worked to reduce his budget; however costs are up. Ms. Cavanagh asked about the contract for line #350 Plowing. Mr. Bucklin stated the line is budgeted for the contracted plowing of the Post Office parking lot. Ms. Goodwin reminded the Budget Committee that the budget year for 2023 has not been closed yet and there may be additional bills applied to budgets. It is anticipated to close the year within the next week or two. Ms. Cavanagh asked about line #346 Cell Phones in the amount of \$2,000. Mr. Bucklin noted they changed carriers and have three (3) phones for the Department: one for Mr. Bucklin, one for the Foreman, and one for those on call. Ms. Cavanagh asked about line #620 Office Supplies. Mr. Bucklin agreed that this line could be reduced as there are a number of supplies still in stock in their offices. Ms. Cavanagh motioned to reduce line 01-4311-620 from \$300 to \$100, second by Ms. Dion. The motion carried 7-0-0. Ms. Cavanagh inquired on line #640 Custodial Service. Ms. Goodwin updated the 2023 actual. Mr. Regan motioned to reduce line 01-4311-640 from \$4,800 to \$3,000, second by Mr. Waring. The motion carried 7-0-0. Ms. Cavanagh inquired on line #681 Catch Basins.

Mr. Bucklin explained that there is a list of proposed catch basins to be done in 2024 and that the list varies year to year. Mr. Therriault inquired on Line #682 Sand/Gravel. Mr. Bucklin reported that the line was overspent due to storm damage events in the year. With no further discussion, motion to move the bottom line of #4311 Highway Department Operations in an amended amount of \$724,815.04 passed, 7-0.

#### **#4312 Highway Projects**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4312 Highway Projects in the amount of \$260,541.00 by Mr. Regan, second by Mrs. Sodano. Mr. Bucklin stated reviews of road maintenance are in progress. He stated that overlays help extend the life of the road and delays in paving and road improvements will increase the costs over the years. With no further discussion, motion made to approve the bottom line of #4312 Highway Projects passed, 7-0.

#### **#4319 Streets/Bridges**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4319 Streets and Bridges in the amount of \$35,500 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Kenney. Line #430 Bridges was budgeted for \$500 to replace guardrails or any incidental or safety concerns that may arise. Ms. Cavanagh inquired about bridge money provided to the Town. Ms. Goodwin explained that the Town has received two amounts toward maintenance, repair or replacement of bridges only and if not used by 2026, the amounts will need to be returned. Mr. Kenney asked if the grants could be put towards bridge engineering. Ms. Goodwin stated that the preliminary engineering has been completed, however, she will review guidelines to determine if it can be used for final engineering without replacing the bridge immediately. Motion to move the bottom line of #3591 Streets/Bridges in the amount of \$35,500.00 passed, 7-0.

#### **#4324 Solid Waste Disposal**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4324 Solid Waste Disposal in the amount of \$402,835.49 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Kenney. Ms. Goodwin noted that line #110 was moved to line #121 Transfer Station Lead Attendant by payroll recommendation as 110 lines are full time employees, and the Lead position is part-time. Mr. Bucklin stated that there are two part-time positions open. Discussion centered around tipping fees, which are anticipated to balance out in comparison to revenues generated from disposal. Alexandria disposes of cardboard up to twice a week through Bristol and Hebron pays a flat rate quarterly for trash disposal. Mr. Kenney asked about line #410 Electricity. Mr. Bucklin stated that there are three pumps (3) along with other machinery that run constantly. Motion to amend line #365 Household Hazardous Waste from \$6,300 to an amount of \$5,805 by Mr. Kenney, second by Ms. Dion. This amount reflects the actual costs. Motion passed, 7-0. Motion to move the bottom line of #4324 Solid Waste Disposal in the amended amount of \$402,340.49 passed, 7-0.

#### **#4339 Fire Betterment**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4339 Fire Betterment is the amount of \$10,000 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault. Discussion followed on water hydrants maintenance, repair and replacement. Motion to move the bottom line of #3339 Fire Betterment in the amount of \$10,000.00 passed, 7-0.

Ms. Goodwin explained that the account numbers have been updated for the Sewer budget based on conflicts with the Department of Revenue codes.

#### **#4326 Sewer Operations**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4326 in the amount of \$548,185.98 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault. The Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) now requires testing to be completed by

those with a Wastewater Certification. This requirement is adding additional costs in on-call pay and updated certifications. Mr. Chartier is encouraging employees to complete the training available to maintain or obtain those required certifications and licensing. Motion to move the bottom line of #4326 Sewer Operations in the amount of \$548,185.98 passed, 7-0.

#### **#4327 Sewer Capital Projects**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4327 Sewer Capital Projects in the amount of \$60,000 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault. Mr. Chartier stated line #941 1-Ton Dump Truck is budgeted for the replacement of the 2008 dump truck with a similar vehicle. Motion to move the bottom line of #4327 Sewer Capital Projects in the amount of \$60,000.00 passed, 7-0.

#### **#4328 Sewer Surplus Transfer**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4328 Sewer Surplus in the amount of \$1 by Mr. Regan, second by Ms. Dion. The surplus is generated by revenues from the user fees throughout the year and normally the surplus is moved to Capital Reserves annually. The amount in the budget moved for 2023 includes multiple years. Motion to move the bottom line of #4328 Sewer Surplus Transfer in the amount of \$1.00 passed, 7-0.

#### **#4711 Sewer Principal L/T Debt**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4711 Sewer Principal L/T Debt in the amount of \$91,332.42 by Mr. Regan, second by Ms. Dion. Mr. Chartier and Ms. Goodwin noted that line #997 is an estimated placeholder for the combined Central Street Pump Station/Force Main and Lake Street Extension Projects. The estimate is based on multiple grants and a 30-year low interest loan. Ms. Goodwin explained the funding approved and the outstanding approval that is holding up the final calculation and numbers on the projects. She also noted that the Lake Street Expansion will not happen if the proposed funding isn't approved, but the Central Street/Force Main part of the projects will move forward in 2024. Mr. Chartier stated that the Central Street pumps and drives are in poor condition and are the most important to repair. Further discussion was held on priority of the Lake St. Extension, but no motion to amend was made. Motion to move the bottom line of #4711 Sewer Principal L/T Debt in the amount of \$91,332.42 passed, 7-0.

#### **#4711 Sewer Interest L/T Debt**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4721 Sewer Interest L/T Debt in the amount of \$25,523.33 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault. Ms. Goodwin reported that line #997 is interest for the loan payment for the Central and Lake projects and that the number can be corrected. Motion to amend line #997 Central St/Forced Main/Lake Street from \$24,000 to an amount of \$16,730 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Regan. Motion passed, 7-0. Motion to move the bottom line of #4711 Sewer Interest L/T Debt in the amended amount of \$18,253.33 passed, 7-0.

Ms. Goodwin reported that there are also account number corrections in the Water budget per Department of Revenue accounts.

#### **#4331 Water Operations**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4331 Water Operations in the amount of \$502,560.43 by Mr. Regan, second by Ms. Sodano. Mr. Chartier pointed out that the certifications that are affecting the Sewer budget are also affecting the Water budget. Motion to move the bottom line of #4331 Water Operations in the amount of \$502,560.43 passed, 7-0.

**#4332 Water Capital Projects**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4332 Water Capital Projects in the amount of \$60,500.00 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Waring. Motion to move the bottom line of #4332 Water Capital Projects in the amount of \$60,500.00 passed, 7-0.

**#4333 Water Surplus Transfer**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4333 Water Surplus Transfer in the amount of \$35,000.00 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Waring. Motion to amend line #900 Surplus Transfer to Capital Reserves from \$35,000 to an amount of \$1 by Mr. Therriault, second by Mr. Waring. It was agreed that the best way to budget these lines is to keep them at the \$1 amount. Motion passed, 7-0. Motion to move the amended bottom line of #4333 Water Surplus Transfer in the amount of \$1 passed, 7-0.

**#4711 Water Principal L/T Debt**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4711 Sewer Principal L/T Debt in the amount of \$55,173.33 by Mr. Regan, second by Ms. Dion. This budget includes the work on projects such as the storm center and booster station on South Main Street. Motion to move the bottom line of #4711 Water Principal L/T Debt in the amount of \$55,173.33 passed, 7-0.

**#4721 Water Interest L/T Debt**

Motion to move the bottom line of #4721 Water Interest L/T Debt in the amount of \$6,414.18 by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Kenney. Motion to move the bottom line of #4721 Water Interest L/T Debt in the amount of \$6,414.18 passed, 7-0.

**#4150 Financial Administration**

Motion to reopen discussion on #4150 Financial Administration in the amount of \$188,462.08 by Mr. Regan, second by Ms. Sodano. Discussion followed on line #620 Supplies. Motion to close discussion on #4150 Financial Administration in the amount of \$188,462.08 with no amendment made by Mr. Regan, second by Ms. Dion. Motion passed, 7-0.

**Discuss & Review Town Report Draft**

Mr. Regan handed out copies of the Town Report draft on behalf of the Budget Committee and asked members to review and give any feedback. Discussion followed. Mr. Regan stated that members are welcome to submit further comments or suggestions for the draft to him so that he can provide the submission to the Town Report.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:**

Motion to approve December 19, 2023, minutes as amended by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Therriault, Motion passed, 6-0.

Motion to open and reconsider minutes from November 14th, 2023, by Mr. Regan, second by Mr. Waring. Motion to amend minutes to state total of #4652 Outside Agencies to an amount of \$38,348 by Ms. Dion, second by Mr. Therriault with no changes to the bottom line of the budget. Motion passed, 6-0.

**Correspondence:**

Mr. Regan addressed the concerns of communication with the Committee. It was agreed that any communication that would damage a person's reputation should be addressed privately to the appropriate management. Other discussions included: emails being sent "reply all" through electronic communication and that any concerns regarding procedure, schedules, or review of any budget related

items should be communicated to the Chair and to the Town Administrator. Mr. Regan also reminded the Committee that any specific document requests should be requested through him, as the Chair.

Mr. Regan discussed email communication from a member inquiring on the delay in Revenues and Warrant Articles. Ms. Goodwin noted the Select Board will be voting on their recommendations of the Warrant Articles in February but a draft without the Select Board recommendations will be available for the Budget meeting on Tuesday, January 30, 2024. She will also have updated reports, and preliminary revenues for this meeting. Ms. Goodwin also stated that if the Budget Committee is looking for revenues and warrant articles earlier in the process, that they need to make that clear when the schedule is set.

Discussion continued around the upcoming All Committees Meeting on Thursday, January 25, 2024. It was explained that this was an opportunity for the groups to come together to discuss challenges, projects, plans for moving forward, etc.

**Member/Select Board Comments:**

Mr. Regan noted that there will be two (2) three-year terms and one (1) two-year term positions open for the Budget Committee. Mr. Therriault stated that his term is up and he will not be running for reelection. Mr. Kenney served on the Committee for just one year and is running for reelection. Mr. Regan acknowledged that Ms. Cavanagh had to leave during the meeting and that it was unknown if Ms. Cavanagh would run for reelection.

Mr. Regan asked the Committee if they would prefer to have the public hearing on the Budget on February 6 or on February 13. He explained that with Town Meeting being later in the month of March, the allowed dates shifted. When the schedule was created, it was based upon the normal schedule of the past few years. Discussion continued to finalize the date of the Public Hearing with no change, but should weather affect the next meeting then there is still an option.

**Staff Comments:**

Ms. Goodwin noted that the schedule for the Committee was created at the beginning of the budget season. If any Committee Member would like to see additional meetings or changes to the schedule, please reach out to Mr. Regan and Ms. Goodwin. Discussion regarding schedules continued.

Ms. Goodwin also noted that the Meeting Room is particularly hard to schedule this year with the Police Department, but she asked the Committee to consider changing the meeting night, if possible, in the future.

**Next Meeting:**

Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at 6pm in Town Office Meeting Room A.

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn at 9:39pm by Ms. Dion, second by Mrs. Sodano. Motion passed, 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Shannon Wharton