

Budget Meeting
February 17, 2021
6:30 p.m.

Present: Nick Smith, Mary Ellen DeBenedictis, William Carrow, Jonathan Burnett, Town Foreman Jeff Hurlock, Chief Carl Hutson, and Recording Secretary Sue Muncey were in attendance.

Mr. Smith brought the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the final outcome of the 2020 income and expenses.

Mr. Smith stated that on transfer tax for new homes we fell short on anticipated. He doesn't expect this for 2021. On transfer tax for existing homes we went over. Electric sales were right on. He discussed secondary electric. Should we raise this? Mr. Hurlock stated this is new home driven. It is \$700 for each new home. Mr. Hurlock also stated a lot of permits were issued in November and December which drove this number up. Mr. Smith stated the late charges fell short. This was due to COVID. Mr. Smith asked why the Verizon number was different. We need to look into this. The sewer is spot on. Mr. Smith asked about the SRO grant. Why did it fall short? Mr. Hutson stated the officers were not in the school from March through December. He was trying to help the schools out. Mr. Hutson stated he cut them a break. He stated the 2021 number should be good. Mr. Smith asked about fines. Mr. Hutson stated we are in good shape so far this year. We are at 11% already. Mr. Smith stated he does not want to set a quota. Mr. Smith stated the public safety tax was short \$2000. We need to look into.

Mr. Smith moved on to the non-budget income accounts. He stated this is income going into the other checking accounts. These do not go into the General Fund. Mr. Smith stated the Plan Review Fee needs to come out of the non-budget area. Mr. Smith asked what Local Police Technology was. Mr. Hutson stated this is actually the CJC Grant income. This needs to be moved out of the non-budget area.

Mr. Smith moved on to budgeted expenses. He asked why the internet line was down. Mrs. Muncey stated this was over budgeted. Mr. Burnett stated it will go up because we had to increase the bandwidth at Town Hall and the Shop. Mr. Smith stated PS Admin Salary is over along with the Officer line. Mr. Hutson stated this is probably because of the sick cash out. Officers can cash out up to 80 hours. It is paid the first check of the New Year. Mr. Smith asked why it isn't paid out in December. Mr. Carrow asked when sick and vacation is accrued. Mr. Hutson stated sick is given at the beginning of each new year. Vacation is given on the employee's anniversary date. Mr. Smith stated we need to try to implement paying out sick in December. Mr. Smith stated PS Miscellaneous Expenses was over. He asked Sue to print out that account for Carl to review. Mr. Carrow asked if we need to adjust Maintenance in the budget. Do we have a plan? Mr. Hutson stated he upped the number in 2021. Mr. Hurlock stated he is pushing Gary Everage and Kevin Crews to learn to do oil changes and brakes. Mr. Hutson stated he and Shawn can do oil changes and brakes. Mr. Smith asked about IT Technology. Mr. Hutson stated he raised this up in 2021. It was increased to \$20,700. Mr. Smith stated we blew out the signage account. We had a lot of signs made last year. Mr. Smith stated Electric Current is right on the money. Engineering Fees over but was expected. Chemicals are a little over. Mr. Smith asked if we were taking the correct steps. Mr. Hurlock stated yes. Mr. Burnett stated they were changing the media so more chemicals were used. Mr. Smith stated the engineering fees for Ovations were over. Mr. Hurlock stated he is not sure if they will open another phase this year.

Mr. Smith asked why Electric Capital Reserve non-budget was so high. Mr. Hurlock stated they changed the 4kV to 25kV. Mr. Smith asked if anyone had any questions. Mr. Burnett stated the few that he had were already asked. Mr. Hurlock stated the grand total says \$501,000 positive outflow. Is this correct? Mr. Smith stated this includes the non-budget income and expenses. Mr. Burnett stated the non-budget totals \$138,046. This would leave a positive \$363,125. Mr. Smith stated the town looks good. We are going in the right direction. We do need to set up a reserve for the building to offset the loan we will need to get. We will have to go into debt to fix the building.

Mr. Smith stated he wanted to propose a COVID package for the employees. We could name it COVID Compliant Compensation. Mr. Smith stated in his opinion the employees deserve it. Mr. Smith stated he has been thinking about this for a while. He stated we were unable to have the Appreciation Dinner, Committee Dinner, or Christmas luncheon. We saved money on these expenses. He was looking at \$20,000. Mr. Carrow stated the only thing we did were the hams and turkeys. Mr. Smith stated we have 20 full time employees, 1 part time employee, and 1 crossing guard. He stated Tom falls under full time employee. He would like to give \$1,000 to full time employees, \$500 to the part time employee, and \$100 to the crossing guard. This would total \$20,600. Mr. Smith stated this is his proposal. He would appreciate feedback. Mr. Carrow asked if this would be one time. Mr. Smith stated yes. Ms. DeBenedictis stated she will be the bad person. The police and Jeff worked; others did not and were paid. The office has the glass up. Mr. Smith stated he does not want to split hairs. You are evaluating risks. Ms. DeBenedictis stated some worked more than others. Mr. Smith stated he wants the town to work as a whole and work as a team. He asked Jeff and Carl what their thoughts were. Mr. Hutson stated he will be honest. Some of the officers questioned the pay. That was the original mindset. Moving forward, if you did something it would be appreciated. He stated this is the job that they chose. Mr. Hutson stated he doesn't want anything. My time has been flexible. Mr. Smith asked if his guys would have animosity if they were paid the same amount as the girls. Mr. Carrow stated both departments have limited their contact with the public. Mr. Smith stated each department mitigated their work. Mr. Burnett stated the masks are a pain in the butt. Mr. Hurlock stated no employee ever lost a paycheck this whole time. He doesn't feel right taking extra money. There would be no animosity in Public Works. Mr. Hurlock stated there are people out there who cannot pay their bills. Mr. Smith stated any employee can put money into the kitty to help people. Ms. DeBenedictis stated they won't do that. Mrs. Muncey stated the Admin Department was told to have two people on and two people off. That was not my idea. That was Council's orders. Mrs. Muncey stated she doesn't ask for anything. Since Jeff and Carl are against it, you could put the money into the building fund. Mr. Carrow stated Sue brings up a good point. We mandated that to employees. How can you punish them for that? You could have someone come into the office with COVID. They handle all the cash and envelopes. Mr. Burnett stated cash is filthy. Mr. Hurlock asked if the payment was a bonus for the risk being taken. Mr. Smith stated yes. Mr. Hurlock stated you have managers pulling meters. How could we take a payment and people can't pay their bills. Mr. Hurlock stated all his guys could have gotten their COVID shots and only a couple did. They are not taking COVID seriously. Mr. Smith stated he was getting everyone's thought. Mr. Carrow asked if any of our employees were struggling. Mr. Hurlock stated one employee's wife was laid off. Mr. Hutson stated some people would want it. What I stated is my opinion. Mr. Carrow stated you know your employees. Maybe right now isn't the right time. Mr. Hurlock stated maybe we could have a nice dinner. Mr. Carrow stated we could do cold cuts a few times. Mr. Smith stated doesn't each department have a meal expense account? Mr. Smith stated on disconnection day we had two girls that stayed until 9:00 p.m. I asked them what they were going to do for dinner. They said I don't know. Mr. Smith stated he told them to order something and use the town's credit card. Mr. Hurlock stated why don't we revisit

this. Mr. Smith stated let employees know Council's appreciation for what they do. Our employees could work for a larger municipality and have more opportunities. I am trying to keep the emphasis on working for a small town.

Mr. Smith stated for the next budget meeting he would like to discuss: (1) a municipal capital reserve account for the building and how we can generate money into that fund. Ms. DeBenedictis stated we can take the expense bills and round them up and take the change and put into an account. Mr. Burnett stated that would be an accounting nightmare. (2) A citizen economic relief program. This would be an ongoing fund. It would have to be set up with the proper policy.

Mr. Smith adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Sue Muncey