# Grafton Budget Committee

# Meeting Minutes

# December 9, 2021

**Members present**: Ed Grinley (Chair), Catherine Mulholland, and Pam Curran.

**Also present**: Cindy Kudlik (Select Board ex-officio pro-temp (non-voting) and minute taker),

Paul Vogt, Maureen O’Reilly, Sharon Clark, Heather Hunter and John Babiarz

Meeting called to order by Ed Grinley at 18:02. Ed moved to approve the 12/2/21 minutes; Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ed announced that he talked to the NHMA regarding the Town Clerk’s request to increase her stipend by $500 within the budget rather than having a warrant article. They told him either way was legal so long as the legislative body is aware of it. There was some discussion about the comparison having been made between the Town Clerk’s stipend and the Road Agent and Police Chief who are required to work a 40 hour or more work week. Maureen O’Reilly said she felt it should be a separate warrant article as has been historically done; Catherine agreed. Ed said he will call the NHMA again and clarify and this will be revisited at next Monday’s Budget Committee meeting.

# Budgets Reviewed

***Welfare****:* Heather Hunter, Welfare Director, came before the committee to discuss the Welfare Budget of $15,000. Pam stated that it already had been passed as requested. There was some discussion about raising it $5,000 due to fuel costs but Ed mentioned that state and federal aid have increased so this should offset any increased need in Grafton. **Catherine moved to keep the Welfare budget at $15,000; Pam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

***Ambulance Department****:* Heather Hunter, Grafton Volunteer Ambulance 1st Lieutenant, came before the committee to discuss the Ambulance Department Budget. Pam commented that she doesn’t understand the reasoning behind moving the Dispatch fees from the Operating Budget to the Revolving Account Budget. Discussed the increase oof the per run incentive pay of $5 for each category and that with Medicaid runs we barely break even. John Babiarz commented that the company that would do the reboxing of the ambulance is reluctant to offer a quote without having stock to fulfill an order. **Catherine moved to approve the Ambulance Budget as submitted at $51,994** ($22,100 from taxation and $29,894 from the Revolving Account); **Ed seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

***Fire Department:*** John Babiarz, Fire Chief, came before the board to discuss the Fire Department Budget. Pam questioned the Selectmen raising the Fuel line item by $200. John explained the increase in the Training line item in that he has two new members that will be sent to the Fire Academy and it costs $680 each. He also has 10 old air tanks that need to be replaced and has to purchase new bunker gear for the two new members he mentioned. Pam mentioned that there is a $50,000 GOFERR grant available for equipment. John stated that there were 35 fire calls this year and all but one brake can on the tanker is rusted and needs to be replaced. Repairs will cost more next year because the Highway Department will no longer be able to work on other equipment after Bob Bassett retires. Further discussion regarding dispatch fees and items that were deferred to next year because of already being over budget. **Catherine moved to approve the Fire Department Budget as submitted by Selectmen at $38,267; Pam seconded the motion. Pam and Catherine voted in the affirmative; Ed voted no. Motion passed.**

***Selectmen:*** Cindy Kudlik, Select Board Chair, came before the committee to discuss the Selectmen’s Budget. Discussion regarding the Budget Committee wanting to lower the TAN line item from $4,000 to $500 because we never use it. Cindy and Ed explained that if we did need to use it, $500 wouldn’t cover the interest payment. Pam suggested lowering the Heating Fuel from $8,000 to $7,000 as the weather forecasters that had previously said it would be a bitter cold winter are now saying it will be a very mild winter. It was also suggested to increase the Street Lights line item by another $100 to $3,300. Cindy thanked the committee for catching the error in the Postage line item under the Executive portion of the budget and correcting it from $130 to $1,300. Also discussed changing the Electric Bills line item under General Government Buildings from $4,500 to $3,500, increasing Health Agencies from $8,000 to $9,000 and the reason for Wages increasing under General Government Buildings. **Pam moved to approve the Selectmen’s Budget at $316,307; Catherine seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

***Highway Department:*** Ed suggested lowering the Fuel line item from $30,000 to $26,000 and raising the Phone line item from $450 to $550. Pam suggested lowering the Sand and Gravel line item from $60,000 to $50,000 but Ed and Catherine disagreed. **Ed moved to approve the Highway Department Budget at $390,750; Catherine seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

Other items discussed before the meeting adjourned were a letter from Pam regarding Gross Basis Budget reporting, the need for an Investment Policy, dog licenses, reinstating the Property Valuation Capital Reserve Account, and the Planning Board budget as well as board members’ need for training.

Ed announced that the Budget Committee will meet again on Monday, December 13th at 6pm at the Town Hall to review the answers from the NHMA regarding stipends.

Catherine moved to adjourn the meeting at 21:27; Ed seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Kudlik