

## **Grafton Budget Committee Minutes October 19, 2023**

**Members present:** Ed Grinley (Chair), Catherine Mulholland, Bonnie Haubrich, Sandy Griffin, Jennie Joyce (*ex-officio*)

Others present: Maureen O'Reilly, Jake Abuhav, Diane Burrington, Rick Jackson, Mitchell Briggs, Kami Hammond, Andrew Cushing, Deb Clough, Karen Johnson, Geoffrey Joyce, Steve Kudlik, and Kathy Lund

The meeting was called to order by Ed at 6:03pm. Minutes from the September 7, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Bonnie made a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by Catherine. All in favor.

Requests were sent to department managers with a deadline of September 29, 2023 for scheduling a review of their proposed 2024 budgets with the Budget Committee. The following departments met with the Budget Committee at this meeting (10/19/23): Cemetery, Recycle Center, Police, Welfare, Library, Highway, and Ambulance. The remaining departments will review their budgets at the next meeting scheduled (10/24/23). The Budget Committee's recommendation for all budgets will be determined at the 11/9/23 meeting.

### Cemetery

Diane felt comfortable maintaining the cemetery budget at the same level as 2023 (\$12,250 minus \$1,000 gross basis = \$11,250). Due to a shortage of manpower for mowing, the YTD expended wages for 2023 was significantly less than the appropriated amount. The wage line item will remain as appropriated in 2023 (\$8,750.00) anticipating hiring staff. The cemetery trustees will continue to advertise for hired help with an increase in hourly wages.

### Recycle Center

The Recycle Center requested an increase of \$7,050 over the 2023 budget. The majority of the increase is being appropriated for training so that Rick (department manager) can obtain his CDL for the Recycle Center's hauling.

Fees are received for specific items brought to be disposed of (TVs, tires, computers, etc.). These funds in the center's revolving account are used to offset expenses. Currently, the account has a balance of \$17,584.

### Police

The Police Department has purchased a new police cruiser. The old vehicle is being given to the Fire Department for transport to a fire for the fire chief and level 1 firefighters. Mitchell has planned to start a rotational vehicle purchase averaged by a 6 year life expectancy per vehicle.

A Law Enforcement Wage Survey of surrounding towns was conducted by Greenland Chief Tara Tucker. Grafton police are underpaid according to the findings. Mitchell has included in the Wages line item an increase for both Police Chief and Officer to meet pay standards and a 3% annual increase. Wages for adding a part-time secretary have also been included. Mitchell



noted that the part-time police academy is becoming obsolete, therefore, only full-time police officers would be available for hire in the future.

Overall, the proposed budget increase for 2024 is \$5,139 or 2.4% greater than the 2023 appropriation.

Ed suggested a revolving account that can be used for police work outside of Grafton so that the funds go back to the Grafton Police Department.

### Welfare

The upper valley area and surrounding towns have seen increases for rentals with an average in our area of approximately \$1,800 per month. The proposed welfare budget is \$15,800 (10% increase) which includes a \$500 increase for the welfare deputy.

Ed commented that grants are available for burials on a case-by-case basis. Kami, welfare deputy, agreed to investigate the possibility.

### Library

In the upcoming year, the library director, currently Sandi Pierson, will be initiating several new programs for families with children which include educational, outdoor activities, and fun events. Aligning with the strategic plan, the trustees' focus is expanded library hours, employee retention, and circulating media. Improvements to the library building include scraping and painting the outdoor portico ceiling. A \$1,060 increase over last year's budget has been proposed.

### Highway

Higher costs for materials/supplies, such as, culverts, chloride, sand/gravel, and salt, contribute to the increase in the proposed 2024 budget. A major line item increase in the proposed highway budget is Repairs, Parts & Supplies (\$73,000). Geoffrey commented that he has a lead on a 2012 grader for \$95,000 replacing the antiquated grader. Two employees are slated to attend classes for their CDL (approximate cost = \$5,000 per employee). Mandatory line items affecting the budget include: DOT Testing, Retirement (town paid), and state required employee re-certification. The department's proposed budget is 28% greater than the 2023 appropriated budget.

### Ambulance

The ambulance department's proposed budget is relatively flat - requesting an increase of \$100 over last year's budget. Between the ambulance capital reserve (\$166,179), the balance in the ambulance department's revolving account (approximately \$108,000), a trade-in of \$5,000 for the current ambulance and an approved grant, there are adequate funds to pay for the new ambulance being built for Grafton.

Currently, there are 2-1/2 active ambulance members. Certification is required every other year for members.



Ed made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:12pm; seconded by Sandy. All in favor.

**Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 @ 6pm at Town Hall**

**Next Meeting Date: Thursday, November 9, 2023 @ 6pm at Town Hall**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandy Griffin