

## **Grafton Budget Committee Minutes October 24, 2023**

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

Others present: Maureen O'Reilly, Jake Abuhav, Paul Vogt, Roger Prentice, Russell Poitras, and Leif Hogue

The meeting was called to order by Ed at 6:11pm. Minutes from the October 19, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Bonnie made a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by Ed. All in favor.

The remaining department managers, excluding Emergency Management, Fire Warden, Planning, and Supervisors of the Checklist, met with the Budget Committee at this meeting (10/24/23) to review their proposed budgets for the 2024 fiscal year. The Budget Committee's recommendation for all budgets will be determined at the November 9, 2023 meeting and department managers will be notified of the Budget Committee's appropriations shortly thereafter.

In addition to a review of the Selectboard's budget, the board members were asked to clarify and discuss some questions Budget Committee members had after meeting with the Highway Department manager in order to make prudent decisions for that budget.

### Selectboard

The 29% increase in the Selectboard's proposed budget was predominately attributed to increases in liability insurance and health insurance coverage for additional employees. Other companies were investigated for less expensive options without success. In addition, a contingency fund of \$5,000 is being reinstated. Other line item requests remained the same or with negligible increases. The heating fuel rate per gallon has been locked in at \$3.39.

### Fire

The increase in the department's proposed budget consists of two high ticket items. Firstly, Roger is in the process of properly outfitting firefighters according to code. It costs close to \$4,000 for each firefighter, hence, the \$12,000 for gear/clothing in 2024 for three firefighters.

Secondly, tires need to be replaced on the tanker and engine 2. A total of \$12,000 for the tires is proposed. A couple of old tires will be kept as spares for the Fire Department and the remaining tires will be given to the Highway Department for their equipment. Bonnie asked if the Ladies' Auxiliary might contribute funds for these purchases.

The training budget is also increased for those firefighters pursuing Level 1. Ed suggested a revolving account for the Fire Department.

Roger feels a budget of \$30,000 is adequate to run the department once the gear and clothing is upgraded.

Parks & Recreation

Nominal line increases for this budget. Since the Independent Day Activities was overspent for 2023 an addition of \$176 is requested.

Tax Collector

The proposed budget was discussed line item per line item. An additional \$1,000 is requested above last year's appropriation for a total of \$19,300.

Town Clerk

The majority of proposed increase in the town clerk's budget is due to five elections in 2024 (this number includes the deliberative session) for a total line item of \$8,900.

Jennie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:59pm; seconded by Ed. All in favor.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandy Griffin