

Town of Groton
Select Board Work Session Minutes
November 05, 2019

In attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert and Sara Smith (Administrative Assistant - AA)

Absent: Ron Madan

John called the meeting to order at 5:03pm.

Grafton County Tax Bill

The Town of Groton has received the County Tax bill for 2019. The amount is \$256,260 and is due by December 17, 2019. In the past we have put a freeze on unnecessary spending until the taxes started coming in. Sara asked if the Select Board wanted to do this again. They agreed so she will create a memo. Sara will also hold the county tax bill until taxes start coming in, in December. In the past we have contacted the Windfarm to see if they will be able to pay the invoice early. Sara said she can send them a letter again.

MS-434R

The DRA made some changes to our MS-4. The only changes were that they changed the amount of the PILOT payment to show actual 2019. They removed the money from Capital Reserve Funds since it was not actual revenue. They also moved the money around from the grants/FEMA funding.

Tax Rate

The Town received the preliminary tax rate so the Select Board wanted to go over options to lower it for the Town. Without adjusting the Town's portion, the tax rate would have gone up \$6.51 making the tax rate \$20.51 with the Town portion being \$5.75, the county being \$3.14, the local education being \$8.00 and the state education being \$3.62.

The Board reviewed options, by applying from \$75,000.00 to \$300,000.00 from the unassigned fund balance to bring the rate down. Applying \$75,000.00 from the unassigned fund balance, with the \$5,000.00 overlay it would make the tax rate go up \$5.59 to \$19.59 with the Town portion being \$4.83. Applying \$200,000.00 from the unassigned fund balance like we did last year, with the \$10,000.00 overlay would make the tax rate go up \$4.13 to \$18.13 and the Town portion would be \$3.56. Applying \$250,000.00 from the unassigned fund balance, with the \$10,000.00 overlay would make the tax rate up \$3.51 to \$17.51 but the Town portion would be \$2.75. Applying \$300,000.00 from the unassigned fund balance, with the \$10,000.00 overlay would make the tax rate go up \$2.90 to \$16.90 and the Town portion would be \$2.13. Applying \$300,000.00 from the unassigned fund balance, with the \$5,000.00 overlay would make the tax rate go up \$2.83 to \$16.83 and the Town portion would be \$2.06.

It was agreed to use the overlay of \$5,000.00 and apply \$300,000.00 from the unassigned fund balance to bring the tax rate to \$16.83. **John motioned use the overlay of \$5,000.00 and to apply \$300,000.00 from the unassigned fund balance to the tax rate, to approve the submission of the final tax rate to the DRA, and to come in and sign the tax warrant when it is ready, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

Dry Hydrant update

Tony mentioned the hydrant is all installed and working. Sara sent the thank you card to Groton Wind/Avangrid and posted in on Facebook and our website with a big thank you. 620 gallons a minute

Mike Ethier- email from attorney

We are waiting to hear from the attorney with guidance on how to proceed. She reached out to Mike's attorney asking for an agreement be signed that he wouldn't do anymore work so we are waiting for this draft from his attorney and Laura's recommendation on how to proceed.

Building permit and guidelines

Deb just emailed that she is starting to feel better and will be working on these.

Budget Meetings

Highway Budget

Robert Ellis met with the Select Board to discuss the Highway Budget.

Highway Administration

Wages

There was a proposed increase of \$3,640.00 making it \$45,500.00. This is bringing Bubba to the \$25/hr. that was discussed previously. Bubba mentioned that this position is underpaid for what they are expected to do. The Select Board will keep it as it is for now but may want to come back to this.

Assistants

Bubba proposed an increase of \$1,000.00 making it \$31,000.00 which would be due to raises.

Telephone

Bubba proposed an increase of \$8.00 making it \$1,240.00.

Training/CDL Testing

Bubba proposed an increase of \$100.00 making it \$500.00.

Electricity

Stayed the same

Heating fuel

Stayed the same

Mileage

Stayed the same

Membership/Dues

Stayed the same

Supplies

Stayed the same

Highway Streets

Vehicle-Equip Maintenance and Repairs

Stayed the same

Contracted Services/Equipment Rentals

It was agreed to increase this to \$16,000.00.

Material

Stayed the same

Signs

Stayed the same

Uniforms

Stayed the same

Tools & Equipment Purchases

Stayed the same

Gas

It was agreed to decrease this to \$4,500.00.

Diesel

It was agreed to decrease this to \$8,500.00.

Salt, Sand, Deicer

Stayed the same

Hydrants

Stayed the same

Culverts

Stayed the same

Safety

Stayed the same

Tree Maintenance

It was agreed to increase this to \$3,500.00.

Utility Charges, street lights

Stayed the same

Other questions/concerns

- Bubba explained that he is getting some prices on backhoes and have been testing them out. This is for warrant articles. Bubba will look at possibly getting a used one that the state had that are only 5 years old. He will check on costs and if there are any extended warranty.
- Bubba is also getting some prices on new trucks. Grantham has a new freightliner and he has had good things on them so they want to go look at Grantham on Wednesday. He does have other options that he will be looking at as well.
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The Select Board was okay with the Highway budget as is.

Police

The Select Board reviewed the Police budget.

Police Chief Wages

The Select Board proposed a decrease of \$5,000.00 making this line \$45,000.00.

Full Time Police Officer

Stayed the same

Part Time Police Officer

Stayed the same

Telephone/Communications

Stayed the same

Dues & Subscriptions

Stayed the same

Equipment Repairs/Maintenance

Stayed the same

Office Supplies

Stayed the same

NH Special Ops

It was agreed to drop this to \$1.00.

Dispatch Service

Stayed the same

Prosecutor- Plymouth Law Center

Stayed the same

Vehicle Maintenance

It was agreed to lower this to \$500.00 since we will be purchasing a new vehicle.

Cruiser Equipment

It was agreed to increase this to \$2,000.00.

Uniforms

Stayed the same

Books/Periodicals

Stayed the same

Equipment (Guns, Ammo, Taser, etc.)

Stayed the same

Mileage

Stayed the same

Postage

Stayed the same

Gasoline

Stayed the same

Advertising

Stayed the same

Training

Stayed the same

Animal Control

Stayed the same

Special Detail

Stayed the same

SOU Stipend

Stayed the same

Other questions/concerns

The new Police Chief will need to review this as well.

Advertising Regional Association Dues

Sara met with the Select Board to discuss this budget.

Advertising

Stayed the same

Dues

Sara proposed an increase of \$25.00 making it \$1950.00.

The Select Board was okay with the Advertising budget as is.

Executive

AA Wages

The Select Board proposed an increase \$1,352.00 making it \$45,885.00 to have room for a 3% merit increase of \$0.65 for 2020.

Selectmen's stipend

Stayed the same

Moderator/Assistant wages

This was a different budget meeting but this was an increase by \$450.00 to \$600.00 because of more elections. We can look at this again to see about giving the ballot clerks, etc. an increase for this year or next year.

Other Town Meeting expenses

Stayed the same

Contracted services (web hosting)

Stayed the same

Workshops/Seminars

Stayed the same

Telephone/Internet

Stayed the same

Mileage

Stayed the same

Supplies

Stayed the same

Postage

Stayed the same

Furniture/Fixtures

Stayed the same

Office Equipment Maintenance

Stayed the same

Hiring expenses

Stayed the same

Computer/Computer software maintenance

Stayed the same

Other office expenses (CU recordings, etc.)

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the Executive budget as is.

Financial Administration

Financial Reporting (Town Report)

Stayed the same

Auditing

Stayed the same; waiting for costs

Assessing

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the Financial Administration budget as is.

General Government Buildings

Town Hall Repairs & Maintenance

Stayed the same

Town Hall Repairs & Maintenance Wages

Stayed the same

Town Garage Repairs & Maintenance

Stayed the same

Transfer Station Repairs & Maintenance

A decrease of \$700.00 was proposed since the staining if the building is complete.

Cleaning supplies

Stayed the same

General Supplies

Stayed the same

Contracted Services (security, elevator)

Stayed the same

Town House Electric

Stayed the same

Town Heat

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the General Government Buildings budget as is.

General Insurance

Property/Liability

Sara proposed an increase of \$795 making it \$9,633.00 due to the quote we received in the mail from Primex showing the increase.

Workers Compensation

Sara proposed a decrease of \$927.00 making it \$5,029.00 due to the quote we received in the mail from Primex showing the increase.

Unemployment Compensation

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the General Insurance budget as is.

Legal

Claims, Judgements and/or Settlements

Stayed the same

Attorney Fees- General Advice

Stayed the same; over this year due to Special Town Meeting and other extra issues that came up this year

Junkyard Dog

An increase of \$1,000.00 was proposed making it \$3,000.00 due to junkyard issues we have been experiencing.

The Select Board was okay with the Legal budget as is.

Other General Government

Exigent/Hazardous Circumstances

Stayed the same

Forestry

Stayed the same

Tax Mapping

Stayed the same

Grants

Stayed the same. It was agreed to change this to grants/engineering.

The Select Board was okay with the Other General Government budget as is.

Parks Recreation

Maintenance of Parks

Stayed the same

Maintenance of Recreational Facilities

Stayed the same

Porta Potty

Stayed the same

Advertising

Stayed the same

Tapply Thompson Center

Stayed the same

Electricity

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the Parks and Recreation budget as is.

Patriotic Purposes

Patriotic Purposes

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the Patriotic purposes budget as is.

Personnel

Benefits not allocated to department (NHRS)

Due to the Police Chief not receiving benefits, a decrease of \$13,750.00 was proposed making it \$10,000.00.

Life and Disability

Due to the Police Chief not receiving benefits, a decrease of \$100.00 was proposed making it \$1,100.00.

Medical Insurance

Due to the Police Chief not receiving medical and taking into consideration the 7.4% medical increase, a decrease of \$2,000.00 was proposed making this \$51,000.00.

FICA/Medicare

A decrease of \$800.00 was proposed making this \$11,000.00.

The Select Board was okay with the Personnel budget as is.

Welfare

Dues

Stayed the same

Direct Assistance

Stayed the same

Tri-County Community Action

Stayed the same

Grafton County Senior Citizens

Stayed the same

Other Vendor Payments

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the Welfare budget as is.

Health

Salary

Stayed the same

Supplies/postage

Stayed the same

Mileage

Stayed the same

Training

Stayed the same

Dues

Stayed the same

Water testing

Stayed the same

Legal

Stayed the same

Transport Central

Transport Central requested the same amount of \$20.00 for 2020.

CADY

CADY requested an increase of \$500.00 making it \$1,000.00 for 2020. Last year we increased from \$250.00 to \$500.00. It was agreed to keep it \$500.00.

CASA

CASA requested an increase of \$250.00 making it \$500.00 for 2020. They requested this last year as well and it was agreed not to increase it and keep it at \$250.00.

Mid State Health

Stayed the same; we haven't received the request for 2020 yet.

Pemi-Baker

Pemi-Baker requested an increase of \$38.00 making it \$2,823.00 for 2020. The Select Board is okay with the increase.

Voices against Violence

Voices Against Violence requested an increase of \$50.00 making it \$550.00 for 2020. They requested this last year as well and it was agreed not to increase it and to keep it at \$500.00.

Genesis

Stayed the same

The Select Board was okay with the Health budget as is.

Other Budget Items

- Other computer in Select Board office needs to be replaced. How do we want to do this? Take it out of the Capital Reserve Fund when it is needed.
- The Police Department computers need to be replaced. Should we try to do this out of this year's budget? It was agreed to see what Dave Switaj and the new Police Chief discuss and come up with for pricing.
- Should Old Home Day be on the budget? If so where should we put it? It was agreed to do under Parks and Recreation and to do \$750.00.

- Should Groton Historical Society and NLRA be added to the budgets since we do these every year or should we keep these as warrant articles? We should add under Advertising and Regional Associations and add two new lines.
- Email from Primex for garage items. We can reach out to security to see what we can do, start with signs over fire extinguishers and look into battery disconnect switches this year.
- Bridge House: This is a program serving veterans from housing through hospice. We have never donated to them before and they are asking \$2,000.00. Hold off this year.
- Day Away Program: This is a day care program for adults in the early stages of Alzheimer's or dementia. They are requesting \$500.00. The Select Board decided to hold off on this for this year.
- Forester request for Town owned lands: The Forester emailed and asked if the Town had any interest in sustainable maintenance and planning for the forests owned by the Town. It was agreed that the Town does not have any interest this year.
- The NH Lottery is requesting us to consider Keto. We agreed not to last year and agree not to this year as well. There is really no place in Groton for this to take place.
- The American Red Cross is also requesting money, but we have opted out the last few years. It was agreed to hold off again this year.
- We talked about the old library and tearing it down. The warrant article was approved to do this last year, but we didn't get to it with everything going on. We should get a new quote.
- It had been mentioned that eventually the Town House parking lot should be paved. It was agreed that this can wait so it will be revisited next year. We could put stone down in front of steps if needed.
- Carpet quotes- Sara did get quotes last year and we talked about taking the money out of the Town House CRF. Do we want to do this in 2020? Sara will reach back out for new quotes and take out of the CRF.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:00pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Smith
Administrative Assistant