

Town of Eliot

Budget Committee

February 6, 2018 Meeting

Budget Committee Members: Donna Murphy (Chair), Jim Tessier (Vice-Chair), Dennis Lentz (Secretary), Steve Furbish, Noah Lemire, Janie Wang. Ed Strong (via Skype). Dennis Lentz excused from meeting at 6:44 to attend the Planning Board meeting.

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order @ 6:00 pm by the Chair (video streaming was used)

Public Comment:

- No members of the public present.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Jim Tessier to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2018 as amended, 2nd by Noah Lemire. Vote 7/0 to approve.
- Motion by Jim Tessier to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2018 as amended. 2nd by Noah Lemire. Vote 6/0 to approve. Ed Strong abstained having been absent.

Review of Town Manager's proposed budget for FY 2018-2019.

The Committee reviewed the answers to the questions for January 9, 2018. All agreed that the responses are better than last year. Discussed Storm Water. Are we going to stick with the \$200,000? Denny questioned the \$208,000 with a increase. Denny, Jim, Ed, Noah, Steve, and Donna agreed to the \$200,000. Noah stated that there is no set amount that needs to be spent as long as we are making progress. Janie asked for clarification on the \$200,000. There is a project list. MS4 is up this year and needs to be renewed. Janie stated she was only capping it at \$200,000 but not in perpetuity. Need to look at inflation. Jim stated there is a new permit coming out and the regulations may change. Jim stated it is just the Budget Committee's recommendation. There is a question on what part is the Town's responsibility and what is the Homeowner's Association as it is their septic system. The Town Manager agreed with the reduction on the police cruiser. We agree with the Town Manager's explanation on it being appropriate to keep in CIP rather than operational. Legal fees, we are halfway through the year. He is going to be dipping into the reserves for this year and is looking to replenish. Jim stated he wasn't looking at the way Janie was looking at it. Jim stated the Town Manager's number seems reasonable. Questioned the pay rate for the new planner? Denny stated he did not know but that she starts on the 20th. Jim stated the next page he agrees with the Budget Committee except for the purple bags. Dana stated that the cost of purple bags is covering the expenses. Jim stated the purple bag fee is covering the cost of hauling the material to Portland.

Review of answers to questions from January 23, 2018. Dana agreed with the recommendation for striping. Janie's suggestion of putting in the same amount every year. Noah appreciated his

answer on salt and sand. Jim thought he did a good job. Jim would like to talk about number six, summer hours. Janie asked about Jim's concern. Tab 1, Master Wage, 1C, they are going to pay that person \$17.08 per hour based on 30 hours for 40 weeks. Class 1 step 5 is \$15.21 per hour. Go to the orange sheet behind the pay scale. He is not paying the hourly rate specified. Donna stated he is also extending the weeks. Last year we had two part-time 28 for 30 weeks. They are increasing to 38 hours per week for 30 weeks. Last year the part-time in CSD they made \$14.14 per hour. Jim would be comfortable if they used the wage they specified. There was talk last year they cancelled two positions in error and they added a part-timer. Donna stated she would support what they had last year. Janie feels that the explanations are reasonable. Why is it budgeted for \$17.08? Janie questioned who decides to raise the mooring fees? Jim stated the new Harbour Ordinance does not have specific fees and the Town Manager could propose fees to the Select Board. Noah asked if we really want the information on the recycling fees. Jim stated that he was interested in getting some consistent numbers to show that we are getting reasonable numbers and getting the appropriate amount of revenue. (7:10) Jim stated if the Budget Committee does not feel it is needed he can ask through the Solid Waste Committee. Are we properly accounting. For example, the purple bags there was a difference of \$20,000. Jim stated look at purple bags. \$20,000 a year is a lot of money for purple bags. The number surprised him and didn't feel right. Jim stated it is a committee and he will go with what the Committee wants. Noah doesn't feel strongly about it. Janie stated it feels like something for an audit not a budget. Jim stated he feels frustrated that the Solid Waste Committee. Consensus that Jim will speak with the Town Manager and bring back information to the Committee. Noah stated that the explanation on the reserve officer was good. Ed stated he is looking to get a reserve officer back on. He can only use the reserve officer if the officers turn it down. Ed stated he had to get permission from the union to use long term. The only reason he was able to use is because it was third shift. Ed stated he doesn't see where they are understaffed. Ed stated when we had a half-time Chief, he is now counting that as a full position. Noah stated that we used to have a reserve officer. Ed stated we haven't had a reserve since they formed a union. Steve stated the only problem is you don't have one on staff. Ed stated that the Chief wants to use him as a supplemental. Discussed training required for full and part-time officers. Ed doesn't have a problem to use for training. Ed stated that if we do it this year then do what you can with the \$5,000. Next year he will want more. Jim stated he doesn't have any big issue. Steve stated he did not either. Ed stated he is not going to support a reserve unit in the future. Ed stated it wouldn't be bad if you could use him but you can only use him if the other officers turn it down. Noah stated the rest of police is good answers. Jim addressed the repair fees. Once they get to the point that they have four Explorers. Looks like the Town Manager is good with raising mooring fees.

CIP answers. Jim liked the way he answered but if you look at the statement that overall the amount went down. If you start with the number 1.06 million and take out what is there it is \$132,754. Dana stated he consolidated the police numbers. Jim stated if you look at all the figures. Says \$28,000 and started at \$43,000. CSD didn't change. Fire Department changed. If you flip to next page the Police is \$77,500 not \$67,975 and go to Town hall \$99,700. All the

numbers that are two numbers off the new sheets are correct. Noah stated they could ask him to clarify where he got the numbers from. There is a total of \$132,000 which is difference from the first sheet. Noah asked Ed's opinion of the radar sign and trailer. Do we need both? Steve stated the pole sign seems a target for vandals. Ed stated the mobile trailer is fine and doesn't see why we need the pole sign. Jim stated they made some changes to the CIP. Jim stated there were some additional changes. They didn't just increase by one, they made other changes. Jim stated the new number columns are in agreement with the new sheets. The old numbers are not in agreement with the old sheets. Janie stated cited the Transfer Station numbers. The CAT 32 lease was eliminated. Janie stated they deleted. Jim stated the CAT 32 lease for \$15,000 went away. The roll off truck stayed. Doesn't know if they came up with they don't need the lease anymore. Ed stated it looks like he took out the request for the trailer and the sign. He is recommending zero on the new one. Noah thinks he is saying we don't need to fund it now. There is money there and they don't need it for five years. In Fire Department they took out \$3,500 for interior painting. Jim stated the bottom line is there is a difference of \$132,000. Jim stated we want to have it identified and get it down to the LD1 numbers. Noah stated the Solar buy out was a reasonable answer. The only other thing is the library. Steve asked if the transcription is verbatim. Jim said no. Jim cited the typed for "the founding of a free public library". Jim could not find it in the trust. They say the document is what a library was in that time. Donna questioned if they are not able to charge fees does assessing a tax on taxpayers violate the trust? Jim stated before we answer that, and it is a valid question is does the trust say they can't charge. Steve spoke to the statement about "free books". Janie questioned why the concerns. Donna, Steve, and Ed spoke to it being a private library, last year they received \$5,000 less than the request and when they raised the money they increased fees. Steve, Donna, and Jim stated they were supporters of the library. Jim stated they have been spending down the trust and eventually the Town will be fully supporting. If fees were charged they could build it up. Noah asked if it was missing a page. Janie stated the staff was passionate about how they were underfunded. Janie stated she agreed with Jim about drawing down the trust. Has the conversation occurred about sustaining? Jim stated he raised the concern last year about drawing down the trust and charging a fee. They said oh no we can't do that the trust prohibits it. It is about getting the information. The Budget Committee has supported the library. Jim stated the balance between the trust and Town is good. Steve talked about user fees and cited the purple bags. Janie would like to see the library come up with a plan. Has anyone asked the long-term plan for the library? Is there a risk of the trust running out of money and what is the plan? If you are raising funds for an addition, can the trust support this? Discussed format of questions. They have requested a 6.7% increase. Janie talked about asking a broad question and then follow up. Jim stated asking for the long-term plan makes sense. The total budget is \$240,000. The Town of York is spending much more. It was noted that York is much larger. Janie stated one thing she took away from the meeting and the Conservation Commission was that they going to be defeated. Janie talked about needing to think about how to pose questions. Noah stated that when he was on the Budget Committee they were flat funded. Steve talked about the hierarchy like the fire department. CSD offsets with user fees. Steve talked about the library being resistant and wouldn't even provide the trust until they

had to. Jim stated that it is important that we let them know the library is important. They have seen increases over the last few years. We compromised last year. It is important to have communication. Steve stated they a call to arms for the Citizens Option meeting. Steve stated the communication goes both ways. The document they provided doesn't say what they said it says. Janie asked is the issue about whether they can charge fees. Noah stated if there is a page missing does that missing page talk to the charging of fees. If it doesn't then it opens up the discussion about charging fees. It can make a difference about how much is being drawn from the budget. Noah has requested a full copy. Jim stated the library must have a complete copy. Jim stated there is definitely a page missing. Noah would like to discuss the Conservation Commission. Steve agreed with the Town Manager of doing it in small increments. Noah in the past was adamant that he was not supporting putting money in there. Noah felt the explanation was much better than in the past explaining getting matching grants. Noah feels \$5,000 is adequate. The Town needs to approve spending. Janie felt they were worried it would never be replenished. Noah stated they still have \$30,000 and change in there. Years ago, they used to put in money each year. Noah stated he questioned it years ago and was told it was to buy property. Janie stated she would support capping it at some point. The Conservation Commission Chair stated she would happy with \$100,000 balance. The Chair spoke about purchasing the Libbey property. Jim spoke about picking up land locked parcels near the Town Forest. Noah stated any purchase would have to be approved by the Town. Janie cited the comment about conserving 10% to 20%. This seems a lot. Haven't talked about Town Committees, Storm Water. Discussed finishing up tonight and not having a meeting next week. Town Committees. Ed questioned what the Aging in Place Committee is. An explanation was given. Questioned the lack of an itemized request. Jim pointed out they were given a donation. Outside Agencies. Southern Maine Agency on Aging. Noah not a huge fan of Red Cross their overhead is high and the CEO makes a large salary. Consensus to agree with the Town Manager's recommendation. Agreed to no meeting next week. The Town Manager still owes some answers. Consensus to cancel the meeting on the 13th and meet on the 21st at 6:00 PM.

8:32 Budget Committee Member Reports and Comments

Jim has two things. Key Bank and Storm Water are on the Select Board agenda. It might be interesting. Jim updated the information on potential savings.

Questions for the Town Manager

The Master wage level one, step five \$15.21 per hour. Why is it budgeted for \$17.08 per hour?

In the current fiscal year 28 hours for 30 weeks. This year 38 hours for 30 weeks. What is the purpose for the increase.

Is there a plan to increase the mooring fees for the 2018/2019 budget?

What is the library's long-term plan for financial stability and long-term growth?

Given that you are fundraising to expand, what is the financial plan for to sustain the growth?

It appears that the trust is incomplete and pages may be missing. Please provide a complete copy.

Adjournment:

- Chair called for a motion to adjourn. Motion by Noah Lemire, 2nd by Steve Furbish. Vote 6/0 to adjourn.

Next meeting date: February 21, 2018 at 6:00, Budget Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Murphy, Chair

Date Approved: February 21, 2018

Dennis F. Lentz, Secretary