

Town of Eliot

Budget Committee Meeting

February 21, 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).

Call to Order:

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

Public Comment:

- One member of the public present.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Noah Lemire to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2018 as amended, 2nd by Denny Lentz. Vote 7/0 to approve.

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

Jim stated the Town Manager still owes an answer to the question, Is the Town planning to increase the fees to offset costs of the CSD programs? Janie asked if the cost of the programs in Eliot are comparable to other towns. Noah stated South Berwick soccer was cheaper and he sent his children there. Ed stated that Kittery was higher. Noah suggested cutting the costs for Kid's Play that is making money. Janie agreed with Noah. Jim suggested reviewing and discussing at a future meeting. Reviewed the Budget Committee Worksheet. Janie asked what the new planner's salary is. Bob Pomerleau stated started in the fourth or fifth step. Jim, summer maintenance numbers were different by \$10,200, The new sheets had added numbers that added up to the \$10,200. Apparently, they had left some numbers off. Jim stated he would also would like to talk about the salaries. The total is \$83,828.00. There were no new revenue sheets. Jim passed out a list of possible questions. Summer Employee Positions. (see #2) Noah questioned if the pay scale was due to negotiations. Ed said no. Agreed that the Town Manager needed to justify the increased hours and pay for the part-time positions. Ed asked if the Select Board has come up with any reductions. Jim stated there was a meeting scheduled last night that was cancelled. No explanation was given. Discussed storm water and the recommendation for budgeting \$200,000 per year. Jim stated the Town Manager seems reluctant to reduce his recommendation to \$200,000. The Budget Committee did not agree to any percentage increase. Jim stated if there is justification that there is something that must be done it needs to be provided. Jim stated if this is not the case then he is staying with the \$200,000. There has not been any discussion of setting up the reserve account. Noah stated that the Town Manager has had the opportunity to provide a compelling reason and he has not. Jim stated he seems that he just wants to spend money. Discussed dog at large fees for Creature Comforts. Creature Comforts charges \$75 and the Town Ordinance can only charge \$50 for first offense and \$100 for subsequent. This is on the Select Board agenda for tomorrow night's meeting. Jim talked about fees for the purple bags. It was only a suggestion for raising revenue. Jim stated that at some point the fees will need to be raised. The Town just signed a

contract for ten years for solid waste disposal. Jim stated with the fees it is bring the Transfer Station down to \$150,000. The new sheets appear to have eliminated the lease for the skid steer. One of the suggestions was to cut the DPW repair budget. DPW, page 3, under repairs and maintenance. 20-01-24-10, 20-01-24-15, and 20-01-24-78. This is all equipment and vehicle repair. Janie stated that is why she asked the question about buying new equipment and reducing the repair and maintenance. The Town Manager suggested reducing it by \$40,000. Denny stated it was in the letter dated 12/19/2017. Are we proposing to cut by \$40,000? Noah asked if this total included the \$20,000 the Town Manager reduced from the requested amount. Jim stated the Town Manager seemed wishy-washy about this. Should ask the question. Denny asked about the striping on 236. Ed stated the Town of Eliot requested the lights. The State put up the light and the Town is responsible for the cost. Any further questions regarding the budget. Steve no, Ed no. Janie asked about the Town Manager's reduction for the library and the basis for this. Noah stated it was just a reduction. Janie asked if we wanted to discuss the response from the library. Jim would like to establish a more collaborative relationship with the library. Does it make sense to send a couple of members to meet with Lydia? Jim referred to the ROI calculation sheet and stated the numbers are not consistent with the prior reports. The library staff spoke about the addition and stated that it wouldn't cost much more. Noah stated he contacted Elizabeth Bouvier, head of archives, regarding the trust. Elizabeth will send a certified copy for \$6.00. Noah will pay for this and share this information with the Committee. Janie is curious about sustainability. It seems they are hoping someone will leave an endowment. Discussed increases over the last few years. Discussed charging user fees. Per Lydia the trust prohibits this. Does charging through taxes constitute a fee? Do they nickel and dime for every program? Bob Pomerleau spoke as a citizen. He stated the most critical factor is the sustainability of the trust fund. Bob spoke about going back to the original intent of the library as opposed to what it is now. Had they not escalated services the trust may have sustained the original intent. It doesn't seem that the library trustees have a plan. When they decided to expand where was the plan to pay for this. Their only solution is to go to the Town. Ed stated when they expand and hire new employees the benefits expand. Donna stated that they are not Town employees and do not get benefits. ROI there is no return. They are a nonprofit. When they focused on expenses they only focused on the Town portion. What is the total cost and value for their dollar. The Committee agreed that Donna, Jim, and Janie would reach out to Lydia Goodwin to discuss a more collaborative relationship and gather information on their long-term plan for sustainability. Jim stated he would be happy to sit down and help them have a plan. Their investments are low risk. Jim stated that the group that came this year seemed defensive. Jim proposed scenario for increased mooring fees. There is a misprint for fees not to exceed \$200 in parenthesis (\$300). It is not going to cover all the costs but it is an improvement. What is the reluctance to fully cover? Jim is going to add the DPW repair costs and adding an item for the summer employees. Jim will send out a copy. Ed asked if the Town Manager is going to propose the increase in mooring fees? It needs to go to the Select Board. Jim stated that the new ordinance deleted the exact fees. Noah has a concern with the Town Manager memo about a way to sneak around LD1. Noah stated that historically taking money from undesignated fund to artificially lower the amount raised by taxation. It was horrific before and is now. Bob Pomerleau asked about the use of contingency funds and is it subject to LD1. Bob's belief was that any spending over the cap is a violation. This went to the attorney and they felt different. Bob stated the last information he saw from the Town Manager is that he left the \$75,000 in the budget. Jim attended a recent School Board meeting. The Superintendent was going to present her budget proposal to the school board. Next meeting Janie will be out of town. Jim asked if the Select Board had a meeting on the budget. They have not met yet. Bob stated that there have been no major issues. The Town Manager sends all the

questions to the Select Board. Reviewed the calendar. Jim questioned if we ask for the final sheets by the 23rd? Donna stated that the 23rd is in two days. Further discussion on upcoming meeting dates and member availability. Next meeting date is February 27, 2018. If all the requested information is available will conduct the vote on the final recommendations to submit to the Town Manager.

Questions for the Town Manager

Summer Maintenance

The 2017-2018 budget funded the following summer positions:

CSD for 1 employee at \$14.28 per hour for 40 hours per week for 31 weeks.

DPW for 1 employee at \$18.00 per hour for 28 hours a week for 30 weeks.

This is a total of 68 hours per week and a total salary of \$28,797.

The 2018-2019 budget includes 2 employees for DPW.

2 employees at \$17.08 per hour for 40 hours per week for 30 weeks.

This is a total of 80 hours per week for 30 weeks and a total salary of \$40,992. (The Town Manager's recent response reduced hours to 38 per week)

Please provide justification for the increase in hours and wages.

CIP

Why was the line item for the Cat 232 skid steer eliminated? (\$15,000)

DPW

Repair and Maintenance. The Town Manager suggested a reduction of \$40,000 at a recent meeting. Does this amount include the \$20,000 reduction reflected in the Town Manager's recommended budget?

Please provide justification for the \$5,000 request for sidewalks. What maintenance is needed? It appears that the sidewalks that run from Beech Road to the Library are not in need of repair. Are there additional sidewalks in Town in need of repair?

Revenue

Is the Comcast income still reflected in Revenue?

Administration

Have the bids come in on the auditor?

Adjournment:

- Chair called for a motion to adjourn. Motion by Noah Lemire, 2nd by Steve Furbish. Vote 7/0 to adjourn.

Next meeting date: February 27, 2018 at 6:00, Budget Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Murphy, Chair

Date Approved: February 27, 2018

Dennis F. Lentz, Secretary