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Sanbornton Municipal Budget Committee

Meeting Date and Time: Monday August 21 2017, Sanbornton Town Offices

Present: Chair Ralph Rathjen, Craig Davis, Earl Leighton, Justin Barriault

Absent: John Vorel, Craig Weisman, Selectmen Representative Karen Ober

Chair Ralph Rathjen and called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of draft minutes of 5/22 – Craig Davis made a motion to approve the draft minutes of 5/22. Earl Leighton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

a. Review of FY17 expenditures – Chair Ralph Rathjen explained that he met with the Town’s finance officer about FY17 expenditures, and she stated that the report does not show \$9,500 for tree removal, \$1,680 for gravel, or \$61,000 for the Lower Bay Road project. Chair Rathjen noted that he will ask about the \$84,000 savings showing in the Personnel line, though he thinks this may be related to insurance changes. The overspent DPW line for truck repair in the amount of \$23,000 was due to a truck that has needed extensive repairs.

Earl Leighton stated that he has reviewed the Expected Revenues document and mentioned that it would be helpful for the Budget Committee to see how many residents are behind on paying taxes. Craig Davis responded that the Tax Clerk has received taxes from all residents at this time. Craig Davis also stated that property has been selling quickly in Sanbornton and the houses that are being built are often large and owned by retirees, so that is an added benefit to the tax base.

Chair Rathjen stated that the revenue for the Transfer Station is at \$91,000, but the cost to operate is \$150,000, so taxpayers are tasked with making up the difference. The Committee agreed to ask the BOS about increasing bag tags to \$2 so that the Transfer Station is self-sufficient. Craig Davis also noted that there is no line item for metal recycling, even though the return on metal is nominal, so the Committee will also ask to see a line item for this. Earl Leighton noted that a scale should be purchased so that construction waste is charged for appropriately.

Earl Leighton asked if the Recreation department is mandated by warrant article to return 50% its revenue to the Town or if this is part of an informal agreement, and Craig Davis said that he would check. Earl Leighton suggested increasing the reimbursement to the Town to 60%. Earl Leighton also noted that the DPW has been using a lot of salt on the roads and asked if that department’s employees will be attending a State course on appropriate salt use. Craig Davis stated that the DPW director was using up the remainder of his budget at the end of FY17 (\$49,000) by buying sand and salt.

Chair Ralph Rathjen explained that he is concerned about hiring for unfilled positions, as the Town has been down on headcount for the past year but has still been able to run adequately. Craig Davis stated that subcontracting can help save money for seasonal tasks, while day-to-day tasks are better handled by Town employees.

b. BC Member absences - Craig Davis read a section of the NH State Municipal Budget Law that states Budget Committee members can be removed if they miss 4 meetings. Chair Rathjen

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will email John Vorel letting him know that he has missed 3 consecutive meetings. Craig Davis also noted that the Committee should look at adjusting the Committee's bylaws so that a member can only have 3 unexcused absences rather than 4.

c. Staffing changes at Sanbornton Police Department – Chair Ralph Rathjen explained that the Police Department is reducing its staff to 5 full-time officers, the minimum needed for 24-hour protection. The salary for a 6th officer will be distributed among the 5 employees, but the Town voted on having 6 officers to offer 24-protection in a warrant article years ago. The Town's attorney has stated that this is an old warrant article so does not apply, but the Budget Committee does not agree as warrant articles do not have expiration dates. Earl Leighton stated that the benefits for that 6th officer do not need to be paid, so that is a savings to the Town. He noted that using part-timers to fill in gaps for vacation and sick time would be a cost-savings as well, but Craig Davis noted that the SPD did have part-timers but they were not showing up to cover shifts.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15. The next meeting is scheduled for **Monday, September 11th at 5:30 with the BOS.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Audry Barriault, Budget Committee Secretary