



BUDGET COMMITTEE

Town of Hollis

Seven Monument Square
Hollis, New Hampshire 03049
Ph. 465-2209 Fax 465-3701

Minutes of January 7, 2019

Meeting was held in the Community Room, Hollis Town Hall. The Budget Committee was called to order by Tom Gehan at 7:02 PM.

Members present: Tom Gehan, Mike Harris, Chris Hyde, Mike Leavitt, Mark Ledoux – Selectman, Tom Jambard, Darlene Mann, Tammy Fareed – School Board Rep

Others present: Paul Armstrong – Selectman, Peter Band – Selectman, Tom Dufresne – Conservation Commission Chair, John MacLean – Interim Town Administrator, Deb Padykula – Finance Officer, David Petry – Selectman, Rick Towne – Fire Chief

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of minutes:

Mark L. moved to accept the minutes of 12/10/18 and 12/11/18. Mike L. seconded. Vote was 8-0-0. Minutes were accepted.

Chris H. inquired about a question he asked during the 12/10/18 meeting regarding the minimum acreage required to qualify for the Elderly Exemption.

Deb P. replied that town counsel Attorney Drescher had reworded the article to incorporate the relevant RSA.

Mark L. read the revised portion of the article:

In addition, the taxpayer must have a net income in each applicable age group of not more than \$53,000 or, if married, a combined net income of not more than \$60,500 and own net assets not in excess of \$165,000; excluding the value of the person's actual residence and the land upon which it is located up to the greater of 2 acres or the minimum single family residential lot size specified in the local zoning ordinance.

There was a discussion about assessment processes and procedures.

Town Report:

Mark L. stated that the proposed FY19 budget is under guidance. He added that the unassigned fund balance increased during FY18.

Deb P. stated while the December numbers are not yet complete, there will be ~\$550K in unexpended FY18 funds. \$200K of this is from the Howe conservation easement and \$220K from unspent health/dental/retirement benefit costs due to open positions.

There was discussion as to whether the USDA would approve grant funding for the Howe conservation easement during FY19 and if the original article is non-lapsing.

Mark L. asked for town clerk revenue.

Deb. P. replied that while she does not yet have December's figures, she anticipates a \$20K surplus.

Mark L. stated that FY18 revenues will exceed projections by \$450K - \$600K. This does not include the \$200K Howe easement.

Tom G. asked if BOS intended to present a warrant article for the Howe easement.

David P. replied that there would be a placeholder for it in the event it is needed.

Mark L. added that there should be an article that could either be tabled at Town Meeting if there is no further information from the USDA, or the article could be made contingent on receiving the USDA grant. He stated that the initial warrant article is no longer valid because the USDA grant was not received in the time stated in the original article.

Budget Committee Minutes January 7, 2019

Tom G. confirmed that there have been no other changes to the proposed FY19 budget or warrant articles since the December 10, 2018 meeting.

Hardy/Baxter Road Forest Acquisition:

Tom D. reviewed the location of the property. It is almost entirely surrounded by town forest and is close to numerous other protected and undeveloped land parcels. It can be accessed through 75.9 acres of surrounding properties. The current owners propose that the parcel can be subdivided into 15 developable house lots. He reviewed the parcel's proximity to the Pennichuck aquifer and existing hiking trails. He added that most people who walk the trails are unaware that they are on private property. He stated that the parcel is highly rated for wildlife habitat. Proposed funding for the purchase is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Conservation Commission | 450,000 |
| Town Unassigned Fund Balance | 200,000 |
| Town Forest Committee | 20,000 |
| Taxation and/or Private Donations | 80,000 |
| Total | \$750,000 |

Tom D. said they are waiting for clarification pertaining to the legality of comingling funds from both the Conservation Commission and Town Forest Committee. Donations and funds from taxation are allowed if they are approved at Town Meeting.

Tom D. said an appraisal and environmental study are in process and will be available in the next few weeks.

Tom D. said the land would be incorporated into the Town Forest, with the caveat that it will be a conservation parcel with permanent protection. Other parts of town forest may be removed from protection if approved by a 2/3 majority vote at Town Meeting.

Tom D. reviewed several grant options.

Chris H. asked if the conservation easement was required because conservation funds would be used.

Tom D. replied that the land must have a protection if conservation funds are used. The only way the land could be removed from protection is if the Town repurchased the land back from the commission at full value.

Tammy F. asked if it was possible to permanently protect land from development.

Tom D. replied yes but it was difficult.

Mark L. stated that the BOS supported the acquisition, and that while it would be managed by the Town Forest Committee, they did not want to incorporate it into the Town Forest to prevent the potential for future development. It also solidifies a green belt area in one of the highest habitat valuations in New Hampshire.

There was a discussion about how the total donation amount would be determined at Town Meeting.

Tom G. requested that the Conservation Commission hold a public hearing prior to BudCom's public hearing on February 4, 2019.

Tom J. asked where the access to the Town Forest is located.

Tom D. replied that there are trails located behind the parking lot at Silver Lake and at the end of Patch Rd.

There was a discussion about how the land is accessed, adding additional parking at trail heads, and adjacent privately-owned properties.

Public Input:

Peter B. (Buttonwood Dr.) stated his support for the acquisition and asked BOS to ensure the proper restrictions are put in the deed to ensure permanent conservation.

Upcoming Meetings:

January 8, 2019: 2nd Review Hollis School Budget / HSTEP
January 29, 2019: Hollis School District Collective Bargaining Agreement
February 4, 2019: Hollis Town Budget Public Hearing
February 5, 2019: Hollis School District Budget Public Hearing
February 6, 2019: Coop Budget Public Hearing
March 18, 2019: Hollis Annual Town Meeting

Budget Committee Minutes January 7, 2019

Other New Business:

Tom G. asked if BudCom should take a position on non-appropriating articles.

Chris H. stated that BudCom should take a position on any article that has a present or future financial impact.

Mike H. and Mark L. agreed.

Mark L. moved to adopt that BudCom will vote to recommend/not recommend non-appropriating warrant articles that have financial implications. Mike H. seconded. Vote was 8-0-0. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn was made by Mark L. Mike H. seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Winsor, Tax Collector