

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Town of Hollis

Seven Monument Square

Hollis, New Hampshire 03049

Ph. 465-2209 Fax 465-3701

Final minutes of May 17, 2021

Meeting was held in the Community Room, Hollis Town Hall.

The Budget Committee was called to order by Tom Gehan at 7:00PM.

Members present: Tom Gehan, Chairman; Mike Harris; Mike Leavitt; Chris Hyde; Carryl Roy, School Board Representative; Mark LeDoux, Select Board Representative; Darlene Mann

Members absent: Lorin Rydstrom

Officials present: Jacob Fitzgerald, Hollis Finance Director;

Election of Budget Committee Officers

MOVED by M. Harris and seconded by C. Hyde to elect T. Gehan as Budget Committee Chairman. The motion PASSED 6-0-1 with T. Gehan abstaining.

MOVED by D. Mann and seconded by C. Hyde to elect M. Harris as Budget Committee Vice Chairman. The motion PASSED 6-0-1 with M. Harris abstaining.

MOVED by M. Harris and seconded by C. Hyde to elect M. Leavitt as Budget Committee Secretary. The motion PASSED 6-0-1 with M. Leavitt abstaining.

Review/Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Draft Budget Committee Minutes – February 8, 2021 and February 9, 2021

MOVED by M. LeDoux and seconded by D. Mann to accept the minutes. The motion PASSED 7-0-0.

No public input.

Town Report

M. LeDoux introduced the new Finance Director, Jacob Fitzgerald.

The audit report came back as an unqualified opinion, which means there were no negative comments.

M. LeDoux mentioned that the Unassigned Fund Balance grew to \$4.4 million due to unexpended funds, staff vacancies, bond refinance, and fixed labor contracts. J. Fitzgerald stated that the Unassigned Fund Balance \$4.527 million due to the voted articles, but does not take into consideration the closing year end revenues and expenditures.

M. LeDoux stated that he would like the Budget Committee to revisit how the funds from Land Use Change Tax is being solely given to the Conservation Commission since they have a large amount of money and they are not spending. Vehicle registrations are also up from last year, at approximately \$170,000.

M. LeDoux mentioned that when the reevaluations are done next year, residents can expect a 20-37% increase in the underlying asset value of the homes in the community.

The board believes a solution needs to be found to lower the cost of pensions and health care. While no immediate action can be taken, T. Gehan believes a discussion of future possibilities should happen.

Federal funds are set to be released, but M. LeDoux is unsure how much the town will receive. The money would give the schools a large amount of money, which D. Mann stated that that would help the free and reduced lunch program.

J. Fitzgerald stated Joan Cudworth, DPW Director, raised concerns that, with the amount of houses being built currently and within the past year, the budget for trash removal cost will be significantly higher than what is budgeted, and will also need additional compactor or an engineering study to keep up with capacity.

School District

The last day of school is Friday, June 18th. A decision will be made later in the summer to see if a remote option will be offered or if the schools will be back in person completely.

C. Roy updated the board on upcoming events within the school district.

Debrief of Recent Budget Cycle

M. LeDoux stated that he believes energy costs will be going up substantially so the town should be looking at heating, cooling, and fuel prices. He also stated that Capital Expenditures will be on hold for the most part for the next 18 months. A report showing the conditions of the roads was requested to J. Cudworth to see if any issues will be coming up.

T. Gehan noted that with HSTEP at the school district, it was hard to fully calculate the energy cost savings. M. Leavitt stated that the Energy Committee is trying to determine the actual savings. Oil tanks will be replaced with propane tanks at HPS. C. Roy mentioned that the school district received a rebate check for \$99,000 for the energy efficient lights that will be put towards the other pieces of the project.

T. Gehan suggested that instead of giving back the excess money from the Unassigned Fund Balance, perhaps we use it towards the DPW project. M. LeDoux agrees that this would make the most sense in order to pay off the project and still be able to return some to the taxpayers.

Adjournment: *Motion to adjourn* by M. LeDoux and seconded by M. Harris. The motion PASSED unanimously 7-0-0.