



TOWN OF THORNTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Town of Thornton • 16 Merrill Access Road • Thornton NH, 03285 • 603.726.8168

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Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes January 27, 2021

3:00 PM Chairwoman Marianne Peabody opened the Thornton Board of Selectmen budget hearing.

This meeting was held via Zoom. The Zoom link was referenced on the posted agenda.

ROLL CALL: Chairwoman Marianne Peabody, Vice-Chairman Brad Benton, Selectman Roy Sabourn, Selectman Jack Gaite, and Selectman Joseph Monti.

STAFF PRESENT: Debra Shepard, Town Administrator

Present: Chief Miller, Road Agent Kubik Jr., TS Manager Steve Chiocca, Chief Defosses

Chairwoman Peabody opened discussion for the proposed 2021 budget.

TA Shepard stated that the posted draft budget was as presented by Department Heads and Committees. The following changes were discussed:

Executive Office - J. Monti suggested removing \$9,000 from the bottom line of this budget. He recommended that the department head determine the necessary cuts. Mr. Monti suggested cutting merit increases and only giving step and pay raises to contracted employees. J. Gaite, Roy Sabourn, Chairman Peabody and B. Benton agreed with the budget proposal as presented by the department head and agreed that all of the merit increases should be honored.

MOTION: "To approve the Executive Office budget as proposed by the department head in the total amount of \$296,990.00."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: J. Gaite

Discussion: J. Monti asked to see the recommendation to the Board of Selectmen for the merit increases. J. Monti does not feel there is a substantial reason to bring the finance position to a labor grade 10. He stated that he can support a step increase but not a labor grade increase. Chairwoman Peabody explained that the wage study program is outdated. She also stated that the TA researched the finance officer responsibility and pay with surrounding towns and the pay amounts were consistent with the range of pay that she is requesting for this position.

The other step increase proposals were requested due to an increase in work responsibility and merit.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – Yes, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – abstained, Jack Gaite - Yes.

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No

Abstained: 1

Town Clerk – The Town Clerk proposed an increase in the training budget of \$700. R. Sabourn recommended lowering this request by \$200 in review of training funds spent in previous years

and the likelihood that training availability may be less due to Covid-19. The board agreed to fund this line at \$500.

Financial Administration – J. Monti suggested cutting \$1,000 from the training and mileage line. R. Sabourn disagreed and noted that these training funds have been used every year other than last year due to Covid-19. The Board compromised at a \$500 reduction, leaving that line at \$1,000.

Tax Collector – J. Monti suggested reducing the professional services line by \$500 and training & mileage budget by \$500. The Board agreed to reduce the training & mileage budget by \$100 and a \$500 reduction to the professional services budget line.

Planning and Zoning – J. Monti explained that the 8 hours per week requested for the Zoning Assistant is necessary due to current cases. The Board continued to discuss the workload of the Zoning Board and the Planning Assistant. R. Sabourn suggested keeping the Planning Assistant hours to 4 hours per week and revisit next year if needed. The Board agreed to keep the Planning Assistant at 4 hours per week.

The Board discussed the training and mileage budget for Zoning. The Board agreed to leave this budget line at \$700.

Planning Board Chairman Steven Babin joined the meeting and budget discussion. He stated that the Planning Board does not believe an increase in hours for the Planning Director is needed but the PB Assistant hours may need to be increased for 2021. Discussion continued.

Cemetery – The Board discussed the cemetery budget and agreed to reduce the custodial line to \$6,000. J. Monti discussed the suggested \$2,500 stipend for the Trustee. He feels that residents in town run for positions knowing that these positions are not compensated. He feels that the Trustees knowingly ran for a volunteer position and should not expect a stipend. R. Sabourn agreed that many board members provide a civic duty in volunteering their time and providing a stipend may create more requests. R. Sabourn suggested that the Trustees keep track of their hours this year and if the hourly commitment warrants a stipend, the Board will reconsider a stipend next year.

Police Department – Chief Miller stated that the Board's suggestion for the reduced amount for overtime is concerning. He explained that holiday pay is expended from the overtime budget. Chief Miller and the Board agreed to reduce the line to \$28,500. The Board and Chief Miller discussed and made several other changes to the Police Department Budget.

Building and Code Enforcement – The Board agreed to reduce the legal line in this budget to \$2,500.

Highway – The Board discussed the Highway budget with RA Kubik. J. Monti suggested increasing the paving budget. R. Sabourn disagreed. Discussion followed.

Welfare – The Board agreed to reduce the direct assistance line by \$1,000.

Capital Outlay – The Board discussed the Zoning Compliance Officer position and the amount of hours expected to fulfill the position. The Board agreed to reduce the budgeted cost.

Minutes

MOTION: "To approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of December 30, 2020 as submitted."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – Yes, Brad Benton – abstained, Roy Sabourn – abstained, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites - Yes.

Motion Passes: 3 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 2

MOTION: "To approve the Board of Selectmen meeting minutes of January 13, 2021 as submitted."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – abstained, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites - Yes.

Motion Passes: 4 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 1

MOTION: "To approve the consent agenda dated 1/27/2021 as presented."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: R. Sabourn

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – abstained, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites - abstained.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

Consent Agenda for January 27, 2021

1. Certificate of Appointment for Maryellen Sakura for a 3-year term to the Conservation Commission. Said appointment to expire on December 6, 2024.
2. Certificate of Appointment for Julie Piehn to the Events Committee until such time as appointment is rescinded.
3. Certificate of Appointment for Barbara Lajeunesse to the Events Committee until such time as appointment is rescinded.
4. ZCA 2021-02, Valme, Ashley and Vanek, Nicolai, PID 13-8-16, Donna's Way
Description: 16x40 SF Home with Porch.
5. ZCA 2021-03, Blankenship, John and Darlene, PID 11-1-138, 165 Covered Bridge Road
Project Description: 30x30 Garage.
6. ZCA 2021-04, White Mtn. Escapes, PID 17-14-15-H5, Horizon Drive
Project Description: 30x40 SF 3-Bedroom Home.
7. ZCA 2021-05, White Mtn. Escapes, PID 17-14-15-H6, Horizon Drive
Project Description: 30x40 SF 3-Bedroom Home.

Manifests

MOTION: "To approve the payroll manifest dated 1/29/2021 in the amount of \$32,551.38."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – Yes, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – abstained, Jack Gaites - abstained.

Motion Passes: 3 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 2

MOTION: "To approve the vendor manifest dated 1/29/2021 in the amount of \$349,505.22."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – abstained, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – abstained, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites - Yes.

Motion Passes: 3 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 2

MOTION: "To approve the total 2021 Budget request amount of \$3,691,583 for Fiscal Year 2021 and motion to present at public budget hearing today at 6 pm."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – Yes, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites - Yes.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

Transfer Station Contracts

S. Chiocca discussed contracts with Waste Management and Casella.

The contract fees are comparable. Casella is more willing to accept all materials in their dumpsters which is a benefit to the town. S. Chiocca discussed the pros and cons of each company.

The total budget increase for the same services plus more versatility will be \$8,388.64. This amount was already factored into the 2021 Transfer Station budget. The Board reviewed the contracts.

MOTION: "To approve the waste disposal contract with Casella Waste for a three-year term."

Motion: J. Monti

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – Yes, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites - Yes

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No Abstained: 0

Town Administrator report

Concerned Citizen Report

TA Shepard presented two concerns from citizens relative to the proposed Vertex Tower. The Board agreed to send the citizens a response informing them that this issue is before the Planning Board at this time and that their concerns will be forwarded to the Planning Board.

Town Report Dedication

Fred Gunter is excited to be the recipient of the annual town report dedication. He will attend a Board meeting to receive the first 2021 Annual Town Report.

Zoning Enforcement Officer

TA Shepard presented a draft job description for the Zoning Enforcement Officer position. The job description was drafted by the TA and Selectman Sabourn. The Board will review this and discuss more at their next meeting.

Town Warrant

TA Shepard presented a draft town warrant. The Board will review the draft and the MS 636 form at their next meeting. Petition warrant articles are due by February 2, 2021. The town warrant will be complete after this deadline and will be reviewed and finalized at the BOS meeting on February 10, 2021.

Avitar - Appeal

TA Shepard provided information from Avitar relative to the Kent BTLA appeal. Dave Woodward from Avitar met with Mr. Kent to work out a settlement agreement. The Board reviewed the settlement agreement.

MOTION: "To approve the settlement agreement as presented by Avitar relative to the Kent BTLA action."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: R. Sabourn

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – Yes, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites - Yes.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No

Abstained: 0

6:00 p.m. Budget Hearing

Present via Zoom: Sally Davis, Bill DeLeo, Steve Medallia, Richard Baker, Julie Peihn, Matt Abear

Present in person: Wayne Charron, Chief Defosses

Chairwoman Peabody opened the 2021 public hearing at 6:00 p.m. and read the advertisement as posted in the Record Citizen, Town Website, and Thornton Central School.

The previous draft budget amount of \$3,761,139 has been revised today. The new budget amount is \$3,691,583.00.

The Board presented the new budget via Zoom.

Mr. Charron asked for clarification of the revenues that will offset the tax rate. The Board provided a revenue report to Mr. Charron.

Chairwoman Peabody reviewed the department budgets as follows:

Executive proposal \$296,990

Bill DeLeo asked why there are two lines for health, dental, and life insurance for the Executive budget. TA Shepard explained that one of the lines is for the town administrator and the other is for the other employees. She explained that the cost for insurance is dependent on the plan type chosen by the employee. Overtime and compensatory time were discussed.

Municipal Agent - \$29,379

Town Clerk - \$6,512 Julie Piehn asked why the wages were higher last year. TA Shepard explained that in 2020 there were 4 elections that required additional hours that will not be needed in 2021.

Elections - \$4,125

Financial Administration \$62,535

Bill DeLeo asked for details of the other professional fees. TA Shepard explained that the professional fees include:

- Accufund support \$1,500
- Accufund annual contract \$2,125
- Advertising \$1,000
- Avitar \$3,310
- Tax Map conversion \$2,000
- Appeals for BTLA for assessing \$3,000
- Civicware (website) \$4,500
- Grafton County Registry of Deeds \$600
- Lakes Region Computer \$9,750
- Lakes Region for computer replacement schedule \$2,000
- WB Mason copier contract \$1500
- Misc. \$500.

This budget line total is \$31,785

Tax Collector - \$22,836

Property Values - \$31,927

Legal Expenses - \$30,001

Personnel Administration \$4,500

Town Grants \$5,000

Planning & Zoning - \$60,912

General Government Buildings - \$51,301

Cemeteries - \$35,800 The Board discussed the offset revenue from the Trust Fund relative to proposed tree removal work.

Insurance - \$48,697 TA Shepard explained that in 2020 Primex had a premium holiday and funds were returned to the town. Last year, the town did not expend these funds due to a credit. The town does not anticipate receiving a holiday again this year.

Other General Government - \$11,601

Police Department - \$801,944

Bill DeLeo asked if the Police Department is fully staffed at this time. Chairwoman Peabody confirmed that the department is fully staffed but the newest officer is in field training.

Bill DeLeo asked what the basis is for the increase in overtime wages. Chairwoman Peabody explained that the overtime line includes overtime holiday pay for the officers. Discussion continued.

Bill DeLeo stated that in 6 years, the Police Department budget has more than doubled. Chairwoman Peabody explained that the department is fully staffed now. Selectman Sabourn explained that a mid-year salary adjustment was made for officer retention that was not

anticipated. Mr. DeLeo suggested that the budget should not continue to increase at this rate now that the department is fully staffed.

Mr. Piehn asked for explanation of the increase in the wage line. Chairwoman Peabody stated that the town has an additional full-time officer, 2% COLA and a merit increase. The part time budget was reduced due to being fully staffed.

Sally Davis asked for explanation for the Humane Society and Rotary Club. TA Shepard explained that the Humane Society houses stray animals as needed. The Rotary Club expense is a membership for Chief Miller and the Rotary Club does provide benefits such as free holiday meals for families in Thornton. This also includes equipment such as hospital beds and walkers for the residents.

Fire Department - \$478,828

Chief Defosses explained the Fire Department budget. Discussion continued. He explained on working towards having 24-hour coverage at the Fire Station. This will entail hiring two more full time EMT/firefighters. Bill DeLeo asked if additional personnel will be needed in the future to acquire a 24-hour department. Chief Defosses stated that he expects two more full-time officers will be needed in the distant future.

Building and Code Enforcement – \$2,952

Chairwoman Peabody stated that the Board is putting forth a warrant article for a part-time Zoning Enforcement Officer. This salary line is located in the Capital Outlay Budget because it is a new position - \$8,000 for six months.

Emergency Management - \$4,179

Highway Department - \$682,030

Pemi Baker Solid Waste - 2,760

Transfer Station - \$282,834

Chairwoman Peabody explained that Thornton raises the full budget, but is reimbursed by the Towns of Campton (53%) and Ellsworth (2%). Thornton taxpayers are responsible for (45%). The revenues from the Towns of Campton and Ellsworth will offset the impact to the tax rate. Discussion was held on the building addition at the Transfer Station.

Solid Waste - \$245,001

Chairwoman Peabody explained again that Thornton raises the full budget, but is reimbursed by the Towns of Campton (53%) and Ellsworth (2%) reimburse Thornton for their shares. The revenues from the Towns of Campton and Ellsworth will offset the impact to the tax rate

Monitoring and Closure - \$4,320 This budget is also reimbursed by the Towns of Campton and Ellsworth in the same percentage as the Transfer Station and Solid Waste budget.

Septage Disposal - \$100

Health Department - \$1,234

Health Agencies and Hospital - \$50,049

Agency Requests - \$14,875

Welfare \$17,262

Parks and Recreation - \$1,000. This amount was reduced to \$1,000 due to expected Covid-19 restrictions.

Library - \$89,824

Steve Medallia discussed the future of the Library related to the school. He is wondering if there will be two separate libraries in the future, one for the Town and one for School. The Board does not believe that there will be two separate Libraries in the future.

Steve Medallia would like to see the school and the Town work more closely to reduce the tax burden to the residents in Thornton.

Patriotic Purposes - \$550

Conservation Commission - \$725

Interest Tax Anticipation Notes - \$1,000

Capital Outlay – Other - \$8,000 (Zoning Enforcement Officer Position, if the residents vote to hire this position).

Capital Reserve Accounts - \$300,000

Total budget Proposed for 2021 - \$3,691,583.00

Bill DeLeo asked how much is owed in back taxes for the Town. TA Shepard stated that the town has a 96% collection rate.

Wayne Charron asked what the amount is in the fund balance. Selectman Sabourn read the amounts from the 2019 Town Report for Mr. Charron.

7:17 p.m. MOTION: "To close the public hearing."

Motion: R. Sabourn

Seconded: B. Benton

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – Yes, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites - Yes.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, – No

Abstained: 0

Chief Defosses asked the Board for a decision on the purchase of the cardiac monitors. He received a quote for \$75,000 for two monitors. The Town of Campton has the funds to purchase the monitors in their CIP. The Board discussed this expense as a major maintenance expense in their CIP. Chief Defosses expects the life expectancy of the equipment at over 5 years. Chief Defosses will meet with the Board to discuss further soon.

7:30 p.m. MOTION: "To adjourn."

Motion: B. Benton

Seconded: J. Gaites

Discussion: None.

Roll Call: Marianne Peabody – Yes, Brad Benton – Yes, Roy Sabourn – Yes, Joseph Monti – Yes, Jack Gaites– Yes.

Motion Passes: 5 – Yes, 0 – No

Respectfully submitted,

Jessi Fleury
Board Secretary