

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Board of Selectmen Budget Work Meeting Minutes November 29, 2023

The budget work meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 10:15 AM on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, by Chair Peter Garland. The Board met in the Grantham Town Building, Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room, 300 Route 10 South, Grantham, NH.

Present: Chair Peter Garland, Selectman Warren Kimball, Selectman Constance Jones, Town Administrator Melissa White.

Administrator White reviewed the following budgets with the Selectmen:

Administration: White said most of the increases were due to inflation. The stipend for the Selectmen was discussed. Their participation on many boards and committees in addition to Selectmen meetings and elections has increased, so it was increased to \$4,000 per year. White said that many towns our size pay their Selectmen \$5,000 per year. Chair Garland asked White if she thought COVID supplies would be needed again. White said no.

Supervisors of the Checklist: White said the increases were due to three elections in this budget year and the associated time and expenses to run them.

Accounting: White said the Trustees of the Trust Funds have not received an increase in the stipend in over 16 years, despite their workload increasing. She said she requested an increase to \$2,000 per Trustee.

Assessing: White stated she increase assessing services by \$1,000, however, the budget might have to be changed depending on what the Town receives for bids for assessing services.

Legal: The Board discussed the legal budget and felt an increase of \$7,500 was needed; \$5,000 for general legal services and \$2,500 for code enforcement.

Planning: White stated the Planning Board requested an increase for Other Services for updating their policies, procedures, and regulations.

Zoning: Advertising and postage increased due to increased applications. However, these costs are recouped and paid by the applicant.

Building: White said this budget increased due to inflation and costs associated with the safety components of town hall (fire alarm, sprinkler system, burglar alarm system, etc.).

Cemetery: Selectman Kimball said the Cemetery Trustees requested \$6,000 for outside services so that trees can be removed when required.

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Inspection: White said she increased the salary due to hours increasing. Chair Garland asked if we were going to advertise for a Building Inspector “In-Training” person. White said she would connect with Greg and start advertising for it in a month or so when permits start to increase.

Health: White said she would contact Health Officer Howarth to see if any monies are needed for the Health Officer budget. The Selectmen discuss a stipend of \$1,000, but requested periodic reports so they have a better understanding of the work involved in the position.

Community Agencies: The Board added the Grantham Food Pantry’s request of \$500 to the budget. They also requested additional information from Newport Food Pantry. White said she would contact them.

Capital Outlay: White informed the town parking lot across from the library needs paving at a cost of approximately \$20,000. White said the Capital Reserve Fund could be used for this.

White asked if the Board wanted to request a new Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase of property. She said that as the town grows and services increase, buildings will need to be expanded or relocated to accommodate adequate size and space and creating a CRF now for this purpose would allow the town to save money and be in a position to buy property when it becomes available.

White suggested adding an Expendable Trust Fund for the equipment needs of the Police Department. She said this would allow current equipment to be replaced as needed or when it is at its end of life.

Wages for employees were discussed and recent salary surveys were reviewed. The Board discussed the duties of the staff of the Selectmen’s Office and questioned the need for an outside service to conduct a study for reorganization.

The Board said they want better communication from all department heads, such as monthly reports and for them (department heads) to provide Administrator White with news items for the weekly e-news.

White said that at the next budget work meeting they should review the energy audit suggestion and see what monies will be needed to complete those improvements.

There being no further business, Selectman Jones moved to adjourn, seconded by Selectman Kimball; by unanimous vote, the Board adjourned at 3:22 PM.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on **Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 5:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa White
Town Administrator