

Appleton Budget Committee 2021 March 18, 2021

Committee Members present:

Bob Bocko

Fred Bucklin

Ed Carroll

Rebecca Diaz

Bill Fiegener

Jane Jordan

Mary Kate Moody

Gary Sukeforth

Walter Esancy- not present

Meeting called to order by Bob Bocko at 6:10

Minutes from 3/15/21 amended to read: Corrected spelling of negations to negotiations and statement from SS that funds for flooring and tree were NOT used.

Motion to accept as amended, 2nd

Bob Bocko Yes

Fred Bucklin Yes

Ed Carroll Yes

Rebecca Diaz Yes

Walter Esancy

Bill Fiegener abstained

Jane Jordan joined after the vote

Mary Kate Moody Yes

Gary Sukeforth Yes

Select board members present:

Peter Becket, John Fenner and Charlie Garrigan commented on the Mill Rate conversation from last week that 10% of land evaluation is in 501c3 non-profits equaling about 3,000 acres.

Community members: Lizzie Dickerson

General Gov

Year to date # added to spreadsheet as requested by B/C.

Line 7 Contracted assessor fees per tab A, is he in the office once per month? JF explained that \$525 is not right it should be a higher daily fee. Unexpended, what does it mean? JF said we just paid him, PB said he has not been paid this quarter. Budget includes an extra day. This is a 3-year contract and in the final year (21-22). Need a town warrant to renew. Would you negotiate with current assessor for new contract? yes

Line 9 only half expended and prior year was almost all, explain. Alarm system and oil.

Was this cost center unanimous with select board? Entire budget was a lump vote.

Line 6 compared salaries from last year, raises since they started? Annual raise expected? Started in Nov and no raise since, nothing expected until new budget year in June. 21-22 raise? 3%.

Why is the total down \$250? Line 8 is down

Motion to recommend \$258,593, 2nd

Bob Bocko-Yes

Fred Bucklin-left

Ed Carroll-Yes

Rebecca Diaz-Yes

Bill Fiegenger-Yes

Jane Jordan-Yes

Mary Kate Moody-Yes

Gary Sukeforth-Yes

All in favor

Protection & Safety

Line 41 EMA is a carry forward, Do C/F stay within the line item. JF No objection from auditor on this. Money is never wasted. Potential new Jaws of Life to be purchased.

Are there caps on C/F? No

Motion to recommend \$202,945, 2nd

Bob Bocko-Yes

Fred Bucklin-left

Ed Carroll-Yes

Rebecca Diaz-Yes

Bill Fiegenger-Yes

Jane Jordan-Yes

Mary Kate Moody-Yes

Gary Sukeforth-Yes

All in favor

Highways & Bridges

Line 63 auditor does not want revenue from the grant in this line.

Line 64 should it include the \$57,933? Expended to date is more accurate, well maybe not.

Line 61 Winter is snow plowing? Contract to plow including sand/salt. Is it negotiated? Three-year contract with an additional year option. Does this include dirt road repair due to mud? No that is in line 59

Is department year to date total known 19-20? No. BB said it is in the town report.

Sand/salt is purchased in the fall, how do we know how much to get if we have leftover? Bulk purchase with the county. How is out sand shed holding up? Seems solid.

Motion to recommend \$514,500, 2nd

Bob Bocko-Yes

Fred Bucklin-left

Ed Carroll-Yes

Rebecca Diaz-Yes

Bill Fiegenger-Yes

Jane Jordan-Yes

Mary Kate Moody-Yes

Gary Sukeforth-Yes

All in favor

Sanitation

Motion: to recommend \$42,200, 2nd

Bob Bocko-Yes

Fred Bucklin-left

Ed Carroll-Yes

Rebecca Diaz-Yes

Bill Fiegenger-Yes

Jane Jordan-Yes

Mary Kate Moody-Yes

Gary Sukeforth-Yes

All in favor

Community

Line 77 please explain plus interest notation. Library has funds invested in the towns name. Why \$7,000 unspent? Paid upon request. Comment that the \$3,000 may be a one-time thing.

Line 78 due to storm damage, can it be addressed by volunteers?

Motion to recommend \$32,470, 2nd

Bob Bocko-Yes

Fred Bucklin-left

Ed Carroll-Yes

Rebecca Diaz-Yes

Bill Fiegenger-Yes

Jane Jordan-Yes

Mary Kate Moody-Yes

Gary Sukeforth-Yes

All in favor

Provider Agencies

Skipped last week.

Did we get letters, and will they be in town report? Yes.

Methodology in the past for recommendation? No recommendation made in the past and discussed at town meeting. Last year was a poll vote.

Do residents benefit from all these agencies and are there any agencies that the select board does not present? All letters received are in the town report. Comment no screening process noted. History shows that the town has approved all of them each year. Comment about Penquis and the healthy homes program and money raised that was not distributed. Comment that a town taxes each citizen to make charitable contributions to these agencies. It is about the concept not the amount as we are taxing the people who need this support. Support noted in favor of all agencies, but we need a vetting process. Maybe the B/C should be vetting before next year? Comment that we should look at direct services versus administration costs.

Motion to recommend \$7,075 2nd

Bob Bocko-No

Fred Bucklin-left

Ed Carroll-Yes

Rebecca Diaz-Yes

Bill Fiegenger-Yes

Jane Jordan-Yes

Mary Kate Moody-No

Gary Sukeforth-Yes

Yes 5-No 2

Capital Projects

No recommendation necessary

Comment that the select board voted this week to approve \$300,000 from surplus/unassigned funds to offset taxes. Most of this comes from excise tax. Can the select board share revenue projections? Excise taxes, property taxes, homestead reimbursement from the State and State revenue sharing are our revenue sources. Estimated \$700,000 available. If State share is higher than projected does it go to surplus? Yes & No, State allows us to spend it a certain way. Is there a town policy on reserve funds? No.

Motion to recommend \$300,000 from surplus/unassigned funds to reduce tax burden, 2nd

Bob Bocko-Yes

Fred Bucklin-left

Ed Carroll-Yes

Rebecca Diaz-Yes

Bill Fiegenger-Yes

Jane Jordan-Yes

Mary Kate Moody-Yes

Gary Sukeforth-Yes

All in favor

Concern about the 2% discount for paying tax bill in a timely manner discussed. Appleton seems to be the only one who offers this in the area. Amounts to approximately \$38,000-\$40,000 each of the past few years. Comment that this is an inequality issue. Comment that it is not good fiscal policy. This is a warrant article. Comment that there are other communities in Maine that offer discounts.

Motion: Budget Committee to make a recommendation to **not** offer the 2% discount.

Comment that only a small percentage of residents show at town meeting. This can be seen as a reward. Select board has not yet made their recommendation.

Bob Bocko- Yes

Fred Bucklin- No

Ed Carroll- No

Rebecca Diaz- No

Bill Fiegenger- No

Jane Jordan-No

Mary Kate Moody- No

Gary Sukeforth- Yes

Total **6 no**-2 yes B/C is in support of continuing the 2% discount.

Can the total discount amount from last year be listed in the town report? Select board issue.

Article regarding % fee for late taxes discussed. State has a minimum requirement.

Does the town have a policy to collect overdue taxes? Cannot foreclose on personal property tax. Could do small claims court.

Next meeting date Monday March 25 6pm for AVS. May need an additional AVS Budget Committee meeting. TBD

Motion to adjourn at 8:48 all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Kate Moody