

# Pownal Budget Committee

## February 18, 2021 Public Proceeding Minutes Approved

### Members Present:

Bo Chesney, Gennifer Giuliano, John Green, Matthew Roy, Brian Stornelli, Andy Wyatt

### Guests:

Town Administrator Melissa Porter, Jon Morris and Andy O'Brien of the Select Board

1. A quorum was established (all committee members logged in). The meeting was called to order by Chairman Green at 6:46 PM.
2. Mr. Wyatt provided draft minutes of the February 11, 2021 meeting. Chairman Green moved to approve them as written. Mr. Chesney seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. The Public Comment period was skipped as no members of the public were in attendance.
4. The Select Board Comments period was skipped as the Select Board members in attendance did not have any comments.
5. Chairman Green presented an updated version of the Budget Working spreadsheet including department budgets reviewed to-date. It was noted that the current trend is toward increases greater than the committee's goal of 1.4 percent over fiscal 2019.
6. Chairman Green shared that he had had a conversation with Duane Snow of the Cemetery Commission. Mr. Snow was unable to attend this evening, but expects to be able to attend via telephone for our next meeting.
7. Town Administrator Melissa Porter was in attendance to present budget proposals for three departments: Human Service, Mallett Hall and Debt Service.

### Human Services:

- The Town Expense line is increased to \$5,000 from \$4,000, due to recent increases in general assistance requests that appear to be related to the pandemic.
- Other budget lines in this department are unchanged (i.e., Freeport Community Services, Family Crisis Center, Compensation for the Health Officers, etc.).
- Ms. Porter explained that the Utilities line records monies that the Town paid to Central Maine Power on behalf of residents requesting general assistance.
- This budget proposal represents an 8.81% increase over current year.

### Mallett Hall:

- The Professional Services line, previously unfunded, is budgeted at \$600. This is to cover a \$50/month fee for pest control services.
- Mr. Wyatt noted that the Janitorial line is significantly underexpended for current year, but the proposed budget is unchanged. Ms. Porter explained that since Mallett Hall has been minimally used during the pandemic, the need for janitorial services has been reduced. We expect Mallett Hall usage to shift closer to 'normal' in the coming year.
- Mr. Wyatt questioned the need to fund the Elevator Repair line, since the 2022 Capital Plan includes a substantial upgrade to the elevator control systems, which should come with a

warranty. Mr. Chesney pointed out that we may need to have monies available in case repairs are needed between the time of Town Meeting and the elevator systems upgrade.

- Ms. Porter noted that Maine law states that an elevator that is in service must be kept updated/maintained.
- The rest of the lines on this proposal are unchanged from current year.
- This budget proposal represents an 2.65% increase over current year.

Debt Service:

- Due to a data input error, the Interest line for the 2007 Road Bond was underbudgeted for fiscal 2021. This line will be overexpended at end of year, as payments will be made per the bond terms. Because of this error, this line shows a \$1,987 increase over last year.
- Ms. Porter also noted that in fiscal 2022, the Town will make its last payment on the Grader Lease. Next year's budget will not include this \$21,378 expense.
- The 2022 Capital Plan includes a new bond for the Poland Range Road multiplate culvert project. We can expect to start making payments on a new \$250,000 bond in the next budget cycle.
- This budget proposal, as presented represents an 0.79% decrease over current year. Correcting for the data entry error, this budget proposal represents an approximately 1.95% decrease over current year actuals.

Ms. Porter also shared a draft of the Cemetery Commission budget. Interesting discussion ensued:

- Selectman Morris indicated that the Cemetery Commission operates separately, and is not part of the municipal government. "An arcane system set up by archaic state law enacted in 1812." The state requires that Towns provide financial support for expense beyond what is covered by funds from cemetery lot sales and perpetual care fund interest.
- Ms. Porter related that the majority of Town expense is labor to do the mowing and weed whacking at the cemeteries.

8. Chairman Green solicited emergent comments, questions or concerns from the committee. Ms. Giuliano asked about how we could provide more clarity as to what types of expenses are associated with each account on the budget worksheets. The account descriptions on the budget worksheets are somewhat terse, due to constraints in the description fields provided by TRIO municipal software. Mr. Wyatt noted that several lines on the Mallett Hall budget worksheet have notations associated with them. Ms. Porter will examine that to determine whether or not that's suitable for this purpose.
9. The next meeting is set for Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Chairman Green will provide the agenda and a URL for the meeting.
10. Mr. Wyatt made a motion for adjournment. Chairman Green seconded. The motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andy Wyatt