

Pownal Budget Committee

March 4, 2021 Public Proceeding Minutes Approved

Members Present:

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

Guests:

Town Administrator Melissa Porter; Heidi Curry, 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 6:34PM.
2. Mr. Wyatt provided draft minutes of the February 18, 2021 meeting. Mr. Chesney moved to approve them as written. Mr. Roy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. The Public Comment period was skipped as no members of the public were in attendance.
4. When the chair requested comments from the Select Board, Ms. Curry opened a discussion on stipends for the Select Board, and requested that this committee consider increasing them. The Select Board stipends are part of the General Government budget to be reviewed in this meeting. This prompted discussion with participation from many of the meeting attendees.
5. Chairman Green presented an updated version of the Budget Working spreadsheet including department budgets reviewed to-date. The trend toward exceeding the committee's goal of 1.4 percent over fiscal 2019 continues.
6. Mr. Wyatt presented the proposed budget for Solid Waste and Recycling.
 - The projections for tipping fees of Municipal Solid Waste and Recyclables are both up due to recent trends toward increased tonnages, perhaps due to changes in consumer habits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the tipping fee for MSW is increasing from \$75.50 per ton to \$76.50.
 - The Solid Waste Hauling line is increased by 3.00% in accordance with to the Town's contract with Casella Waste. The upcoming budget year is the second year of that three-year contract.
 - The expense for production/distribution of pay-as-you-throw bags is increased from \$8,500 to \$9,234, based on recent usage patterns and on-hand inventory at the supplier's warehouse.
 - The pay-as-you-throw revenue line is increased from \$26,000 to \$35,000 based on recent trends for sales of these bags.
 - This budget proposal represents a 4.36% (\$4,718) increase in expense over current year. Net change, considering the anticipated revenue increase from PAYT trash bag sales is -4.98%.
7. Town Administrator Melissa Porter was in attendance to present budget proposals for two departments: General Government and the compensation and insurance portion of the Public Works budget.

General Government:

- Under Professional Services the Tax Maps line is increased from \$1,500 to \$4,500. Ms. Porter noted that subdivisions are being added and more frequent updates are required.

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

- The Supplies lines collectively are increased from \$5,720 to \$8,500, due to increased use of paper, ink, checks, W2 forms, etc. The use of the copier is increased by all departments that use it. Costs for election supplies are expected to be up as well.
- The Town Expense lines collectively are increased from \$11,700 to \$12,810, driven primarily by increases in postage, advertising and miscellaneous expense. Current year expenditure on the 'miscellaneous expense' line was for appreciation of Scott Seaver's recent coverage of town clerk duties during Ms. Porter's absence. Mr. Chesney suggested changing the name of this line to be 'Recognition'.
- Professional Services/Technology is up from \$23,793 to \$35,825 due to increased cost of the TRIO municipal software and a \$15 per month cost of a Zoom virtual meeting account.
- The Animal Control line is reduced from \$200 to \$100, since there is only one Animal Control Officer now.
- The Planning Board expense line is doubled from \$5,000 to \$10,000 due to the ramp-up of the use of the Town Planner and other planning board expenses.
- The Compensation lines had a few notable changes:
 - o The Part-time Clerk is unfunded, as Scott Seaver's services will not be needed next year.
 - o The Code Enforcement Officer line is increased from \$21,632 to \$32,448. This position now requires 24 hours per week, instead of the current 16 hours. Ms. Porter said that the current hourly rate is less than it was when Pownal shared a CEO with North Yarmouth.
 - o The line for Secretary is increased from \$250 to \$500. Ms. Porter said that this is for the secretary of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 - o The Deputy ACO line is unfunded since there is only one Animal Control Officer now.
 - o The Full-time Clerk line is increased from \$ 36,358 to \$72,039. Ms. Porter proposes adding a second full time clerk position to cover the increased workload in the Town Office, and to ensure continuity of services if one of the two current office staff are absent. Mr. Stornelli asked if the excess workload could be handled by a part-time position. Ms. Porter responded that there are currently a number of projects that are not being done, due to shortage of time. She also noted that recent experience has indicated that there are few qualified candidates interested in part-time work. Mr. Chesney asked the Select Board for their perspective. Mr. Morris said that they had not yet formed an opinion, but they will discuss this at the next Select Board meeting on March 8. This committee will compose questions for the Select Board to consider at that meeting.
 - o The FICA, Medicare, Unemployment Insurance and ICMA Retirement lines collectively are increased by \$5,809, primarily driven by the addition of the Full-time Clerk position.
- This budget proposal represents a 29.64% (\$100,505) increase over current year.

Public Works Compensation:

- Ms. Porter presented the compensation and insurance portion of the Public Works budget. (The other portions of the Public Works budget had been presented by Road Commissioner Dick Clarke in a previous meeting.)
- Due to recent staff changes in the department, that the Town has more junior employees now.
- The proposed compensation and insurance portion of the Public Works budget, is reduced by 1.00% (\$2,746) over current year
- The complete Public Works budget proposal, including the non-compensation components reviewed in a previous meeting, represents a 3.88% (\$28,149) increase over current year.

8. Chairman Green mentioned that the Select Board had been discussing the option of having the County Sherriff's office provide a patrol officer and he asked how this would be funded. Mr. Morris said that no firm commitment has been made and that this will not be pursued for this next budget year.

9. The next meeting is set for Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 6:30 pm. The Capital Improvement Plan Committee will attend to present their proposal. Chairman Green will provide the agenda and a URL for the meeting.
10. Chairman Green made a motion for adjournment. Mr. Chesney seconded. The motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Wyatt