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Date

Mr. Morris
Select Board Chair
Pownal Maine

Dear Mr. Morris:

Having been a long-time resident and former Chairman of the Select Board for Pownal, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the up-coming budget for the Town. I have watched the latest video of the Selectmen's meeting and found it concerning that the Board is not considering a freeze in spending for the coming year considering the current global circumstances.

I understand the compelling reasons for an increase in spending. I realize that department heads and community groups have been making plans for next year, for some time now, and I understand that it is an instinct of a community leader to foster these ideas and move them forward. I also know that department heads can be convincing of the need to increase their budget, sometimes it is to create a more efficient department and occasionally it is to cover past underfunding.

However, I strongly believe that this year's budget should have no increased spending. Considering the number of property taxpayers that have been out of work, or otherwise financially effected due to the Covid-19 pandemic - this is not the time to be adding to the Town's spending. The State is sure to cut the revenue sharing to Towns due to revenue shortfalls, as well as people not buying as many new vehicles this year to fund the excise account – creating a deficit in revenue from other sources.

There are ways to fund new or underfunded projects without increasing spending...

- Take a close look at the fund balances for each separate expense account and possibly find some un-expended funds that could be moved within a budget line or to another.
- Push back or cancel projects that are not essential currently to fund those that are.
- Delay planned purchases of capital equipment in the coming years to reduce funding of the Capital Plan Budget.
- **Definitely** institute a hiring freeze for all new positions.
- Nothing should be left off from the table – all alternative options should be exhausted before an increase in spending

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I encourage you and the Board to do the responsible thing as Pownal's town leader's and cap, or even cut spending for this year.

Its not an easy thing to do but it is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Tim Giddinge