

## **BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Wednesday February 22, 2023 - 3:00 PM via Zoom**

**PRESENT:** Bob Gniadek, Chair; Steve Patterson, Finance Cte.; Bob Youdelman, Finance Cte.; Pat Callahan, Finance Cte.; Eileen Martin, Finance Cte.; Roger Manzolini, Chair Selectboard; Neal Pilson, Selectman; Alan Hanson, Selectman; Steve Parsons, Cemetery Superintendent; Danielle Fillio, Town Admin.; Jodi Hollingsworth, Treasurer/Tax Collector; Angela Garrity, Accountant

Bob Gniadek called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes of December 6, 2022 and February 1, 2023:** Danielle asked that they hold off on the December 6<sup>th</sup> minutes as they need further work. Bob G. asked about the Trash Removal contract – Danielle said she will look into quotes from Roger Trucking and a company in New York in order to find a lower cost, if possible.

Bob G. moved to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2023, meeting. He was seconded by Pat and the motion passed by unanimous consent.

**Distribution of Updated Materials:** Color coding changes as requested were made as well as some other minor changes in the numbers.

### **BUDGET REVIEW:**

**Cemetery – Steve Parsons:** Steve was requesting an increase of the Cemetery budget to cover an increase in his workload and responsibilities associated with winter burials and “green” burials. Steve explained what the additional work consisted of including the need for him to be available for burials during the months from late December to mid to late April. Those are three months that he was not previously available, but now the job requires his presence year-round. He calculated three months of his current salary, added a small percentage above that to represent the expected yearly raise and submitted that new figure to represent what he felt was a fair increase.

Steve Patterson asked for an explanation of what the job entails. Steve Parsons provided an overview of his responsibilities that included dealing with the funeral home and the contractor who will be doing the digging.

Green burials require more physical labor. He has to be more precise as to where he places the markers for the grave. He did not, however, consider the extra physical work involved, when asking for an increase.

Neal noted that the Town has brought the regulations for a green burial up to date to accommodate the year round need in the Jewish religion for a burial within 24 hours of death.

Alan suggested, as an aside, that at some future meeting it might be advisable to discuss acquiring more property as the current cemeteries will begin to get filled.

**Treasurer / Collector Budget – Jodi Hollinsworth:** Danielle noted that she has removed \$6,000 from Treasurer/Collector Expenses intended to pay for software and moved that amount to a new line, Tech/Hardware/Software (line 29). She suggested that, instead of taking software expenses out of several various lines every year, that she create a new, single line (Tech/Hardware/Software) to budget for those items.

Bob G. asked her for a schedule of software costs and payments, which she is currently in the process of preparing.

**Tax Title Expenses:** (Line 13 - \$5,000). Danielle said that there are expenses included in this line that have never previously been budgeted for. In the past two years, there was a significant amount of money spent, keeping it in the negative. Last year or the year before, \$25,000 had to be raised and appropriated because Tax Title work had been done, but never budgeted. Currently, we are at -\$7,000 for tax title expenses that have carried over and three additional ones are in the process that Paul began before he left. Danielle suggested creating a Tax Title Revolving Fund. Since that concept is new to Jodi, they are working together to figure out the best way to move forward. The length of time between spending and reimbursement can be several years and she feels that the constant spending of money the Town does not have is not fiscally responsible. Therefore, Jodi would like to have \$5,000 in that account. When the reimbursements are received, they will be credited back to the line, creating a “revolving” account.

Jodi noted that her budget includes \$6,500 for an Assistant, which did not make sense to her as she has never had an assistant and does not feel that she needs one. She suggested removing that amount from her budget.

**Town Clerk Budget – Elections and Voter Registrations (line 21):** The additional \$8,000 requested in this budget was due to a miscalculation of the number of elections coming up in 2024. That amount was taken out of the line.

Bob G. had a question about the Capital Request for \$9,500 for preservation of old Town Records. The question of having them digitized after repair was raised and a request was made to determine the costs, separately, for repair and digitalization or just direct digitalization. Neal suggested that the Town develop a comprehensive program for preservation of all important records to be done over several years. Danielle raised the issue of the extensive records being kept off-site. They need to be gone through to identify what they are and which of them need to be preserved. In the meantime, it is important to move forward with preserving the records that Angela has to hand.

**Meeting Dates and Times:** After some discussion of individual availabilities and other factors, the following schedule was agreed upon: March 1<sup>st</sup> – Highway / Ambulance / Fire; March 8<sup>th</sup> – Richmond School; March 15<sup>th</sup> – Library. Information will be received in advance of the meeting and the library will be expected to speak about future operations.

March 21, March 22, March 23 – These dates are open. It is anticipated that at least one of them will be a second session with the school. Bob confirmed with Danielle that she is hoping to be able to wrap up these discussions on March 29<sup>th</sup>, depending on how the process with the school goes.

Steve Patterson asked for a clarification of the Offset of \$3,500 for the Public Library. Danielle explained that it is State Aid and goes to the Library, not the Town. The Cherry Sheet Offset line is how that is recorded.

A clarification of how School Choice Funds (both outgoing to other districts and incoming to Richmond through School Choice) are recorded and distributed. Bob G. asked Danielle to prepare a spreadsheet of all the changes she will be making and to send it out before next week. Danielle will do that and she will also send a breakout of the I.T Software expenses. Bob G. also asked for a Schedule of Anticipated Expenditures that totals and agrees with that line and her schedule.

There being no further business before the Committee, Steve Patterson moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 PM. He was seconded by Pat and the motion carried by unanimous consent.