

**TOWN OF JAFFREY
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2024**

Members Present: Norm Langevin, Bob Schaumann, Charles Turcotte, Patty Farmer, Peter Maki, Mike Nork, Kathy Batchelder

Staff Present: Town Manager Frederick, Selectman Chamberlain, Finance Director FitzGerald, Department Heads, Administrative Assistant Zola

Others: Ashley Saari (Monadnock Ledger), John Stone

Meeting opened: 9:00 am

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Schaumann, meeting minutes from December 7, 2023 were approved (7-0).

Budget

TM Frederick complimented Department Heads for their efforts to keep their requests reasonable and thanked Finance Director FitzGerald for her hard work during the budget season.

The proposed total operating budget of \$7,299,920 is a \$142,956 (2.0%) increase over 2023's adopted budget. However, collection bargaining pay increases are not reflected in the budget, rather as warrant articles. The 2024 budget maintains capital reserve funding at necessary levels, including the 10-year paving plan initiated in 2021. A new capital reserve fund in the amount of \$100,000 is proposed to address the deficient condition of our sidewalks. The overall impact of the total budget and warrant articles is a 4.95% increase with a \$.51 increase in taxes.

The \$142,956 increase in the proposed budget can be attributed to the following areas: \$47,917 health/dental/workers compensation insurance; \$31,616 firetruck lease debt service; \$15,500 firefighter clothing and equipment; \$13,644 library; \$10,480 four elections; \$5,790 property and liability insurance; \$5,000 legal and \$13,009 for salaries and other operational needs.

Our statutory fund balance is \$2,482,889 as determined by NH DRA in November, and represents 9.68% of operating expenses. DRA recommends maintaining between 5% and 17%. We utilized \$435,000 from UFB in 2023 and set a tax rate of \$10.31 for the municipal operation. The overall tax rate was \$33.35, due largely to a \$1.67 increase in school tax.

This proposed budget was reviewed by the BOS and approved on December 19, 2023.

Departmental Budgets

The Budget Committee will be taking a tentative vote on all of the departmental budgets today. After the Public hearing, the Budget Committee will meet in a work session to take a final vote. Both Budget Committee and Select Board votes will be presented to Town Meeting.

Water – Water Fund Increase of \$39,965(3.6%)

2024 Changes were reviewed.

There will be no rate changes this year.

Sewer- Increase of \$91,051 (4.3%)

2024 Changes were reviewed.

Equipment Maintenance was increased \$43,000 to cover contract prices to cover chemicals to treat sewage.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Water Budget of \$1,146,884 and the Sewer budget of \$2,185,085 were tentatively approved (7-0).

JRMA Ambulance- Increase of \$1,500 (3.3%)

Rindge is asked for the same amount.

Increase due to increased capital costs.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, The JRMA budget of \$46,500 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Fire Department- Increase of \$20,520 (4.0%)

2024 Changes were reviewed.

Increase is due to the addition to the per diem budget. Because of regional lack of volunteers, having per diem employees ensures staffing during the week. They are able to respond to calls as well as routine equipment checks/maintenance. The positions haven't been completely filled, but this increase will fund the full coverage.

On a motion by Schaumann, seconded by Nork, the Fire budget of \$516,929 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Emergency Management- Increase of \$2,194 (3.5%)

2024 changes were reviewed.

Increase due to mutual aid costs.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Emergency Management budget of \$68,681 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Executive- Increased \$4,220 (1.7%) due to salaries.
2024 changes were reviewed.

Rental line was increased due to costs for storage units, copiers, postage meter & shredding.

On a motion by Schaumann, seconded by Maki, the Executive budget of \$254,629 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Election & Registration- Increased \$15,111 (17%) due to salaries and 4 elections in 2024.
2024 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Nork, seconded by Batchelder, the Election & Registration budget of \$104,014 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Finance- Increased \$6,588 (2.2%) due to salaries and IT costs.
2024 changes were reviewed.

IT has been on catch-up mode, but all computers are now in maintenance mode, which should be consistent at 3% yearly for upkeep.

Maki showed concern for cybersecurity in light of the Peterborough incident. TM Frederick explained that staff is trained about cybersecurity attacks and know the procedure if a suspicious email comes in and IT company is very responsive.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Maki, the Finance budget of \$303,070 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Judicial/Legal- Increased \$5,000 due to anticipated costs with ongoing cases.
2024 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Judicial/Legal budget of \$25,000 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Personnel Administration- Increased 7.0% to cover 2024 changes.
2024 changes were reviewed.

Health Insurance is paid 80/20.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Nork, the Personnel Administration budget of \$730,905 was tentatively approved (7-0).

General Government Buildings- Decreased \$2,800 (7.7%) due to reductions in electricity and heating.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the General Government Buildings budget of \$33,400 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Prosecution- Increased \$3,479 (2.8%) due to rent, salaries and supplies.
2024 changes were reviewed.

Rental contract was signed in October 2023 and is for 3 years.

On a motion by Schaumann, seconded by Maki, the Prosecution budget of \$127,620 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Police- Decreased by \$8,444(-.5%) due to CBA salaries being moved to a warrant article.
2024 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Schaumann, The Police budget of \$1,552,254 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Animal Control- This budget is level funded at \$625.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Schaumann, the Animal Control budget of \$625 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Insurance- Increased \$9,493 (9.0%) due to total insurance bill increases.
2024 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Insurance budget of \$70,133 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Building Inspection- Increased \$2,346 (2.7%) due to salaries.
2024 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Schaumann, the Building Inspection budget of \$89,656 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Health- - .2% decrease due to retirement.
2024 changes reviewed.

On a motion by Schaumann, seconded by Batchelder, the Health budget of \$2,196 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Social Service Agencies – This is the second-year of having the agencies meet with the Social Services Committee. Selectman Chamberlain feels this is a streamlined process that works well. He also noted that many of these agencies are funded by the county also. 2 requests were altered to reflect the actual usage of services by Jaffrey residents.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Social Service Agency requests for \$68, 151 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Welfare- Increased by \$1,804 due to Salaries. Carrie works more than the hours she is paid for, so her salary was increased.

On a motion by Nork, seconded by Batchelder, the Welfare budget of \$119,729 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Recreation Department- Decreased \$8,334 (-3.3%) due to Life Guard Removal.
2024 Changes were reviewed.

Due to the difficulty finding lifeguards and retention during the season, it was decided to make the beach “Swim at your own Risk”. Liability speaking, as long as it’s posted, we are not liable. Summer camp counselors will be lifeguard certified, which is the only requirement for camp programs. They are using Milford’s van until theirs arrives.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Farmer, the Recreation budget of \$243,324 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Patriotic Purposes- Level Funded.
This budget is for flags and memorials.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Schaumann, the Patriotic Purposes budget of \$4,000 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Conservation- Increased \$274 per the Commission’s request.
This is used for subscriptions and fees. Last year there was a shortage of funds.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Maki, the Conservation budget of \$750 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Debt Service- 5.1% Increase.
2024 Changes and schedules were reviewed.

On a motion from Batchelder, seconded by Nork, the Debt Service budget of \$652,538 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Library- Increased \$13,644 (3.8%) due to 3% COLA and utilities/maintenance costs of the aging building, rising costs for standard library services and recovery from past budget cuts. 2024 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Schaumann, the Library budget of \$369,003 was tentatively approved (7-0).

The meeting was recessed from 10:15am to 10:33am

Highway- Decreased \$10,396 (-.9%) due to salaries being removed for a CBA warrant article. 2024 changes were reviewed.

Sidewalks will cost \$2M to fix/replace. The plan is to make a CRF and use \$189,000 now for Stratton Road, then fund \$100,000 per year for 10 years.

On a motion by Schaumann, seconded by Maki, the Highway budget of \$1,184,132 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Bridges- This budget is level funded at \$7,001.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Bridge budget of \$7,001 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Street Lighting- Level funded at \$12,000

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Street Lighting budget of \$12,000 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Parks & Commons- Increased by \$1,048 due to Contracted Services for mowing and landscaping.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Farmer, the Parks & Commons budget of \$27,546 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Transfer Station/Recycling- Decreased \$852 due to salaries being incorporated in the CBA Warrant article. 2024 Changes were reviewed.

To date, \$11,920 is the income of residents paying for disposals.

Within a year, the reconfiguration of the Transfer Station should happen.

On a motion by Nork, seconded by Batchelder, the Transfer Station/Recycling budget of \$375,915 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Cemeteries- Increased by \$2,205 due to anticipated increases in contracted services.

On a motion Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Cemeteries budget of \$51,815 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Capital Outlay- Level funded. \$25,000 was added to Road Reconstruction in 2022 following the paid off debt in 2021. Level funded in 2023 and 2024.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Schaumann, the Capital Outlay budget of \$25,000 was approved (7-0).

Property Records- Increased 9% due to merit increase in 2023.
2024 Changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Schaumann, seconded by Farmer, the Property Records budget of \$91,814 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Planning/Zoning- Increased by \$2,877 (3%) due to salaries.
2024 Changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Maki, the Planning/Zoning budget of \$98,077 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Economic Development- Increased by \$882 (2.1%) due to salaries.
2024 Changes were reviewed.

Discussion regarding a mailing about school budget increases explaining what is being voted on. Also discussed was the need for growth in town to decrease the tax rate and the abundance of current use properties.

On a motion by Nork, seconded by Batchelder, the Economic Development budget of \$43,513 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Downtown TIFD-

Elite Laundry is increased by \$10,000 for PFAS testing. Infrastructure improvements are funded through a \$150,000 warrant article and not this budget.

On a motion by Schaumann, seconded by Maki, the Downtown TIFD budget of \$181,286 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Stone Bridge TIFD- Decreased \$1,474 due to debt pay down.

Infrastructure enhancements in the district are funded at \$60,000 through a warrant article and not this budget.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Stone Bridge budget of \$67,163 was tentatively approved (7-0).

Warrant Articles -The final vote on these will take place at the next Budcom Meeting. 2024 requests were reviewed.

- Jaffrey 250th Fund won't be funded.
- Level requests are for Cemetery trees and gravestones, Retirement and the Meetinghouse. Additional funds into the Meetinghouse are the fees received throughout the season.
- Road paving is level request at \$575,000
- DPW Equipment is level at \$200,000
- Fire Equipment is level at \$60,000
- Facilities schedule included 2 HVAC at the Town Office, still need siding, roof & window.
- Police Cruiser replacement is level at \$40,000
- Sidewalk Paving – 10-year schedule for non-202 project sidewalks is \$100,000 request
- Retirement Buyout is level at \$15,000
- Police CBA is being negotiated
- DPW CBA is firm
- Letourneau Drive funding may change from FEMA 90%/10% to NH DOT 80%/20%
- Squantum Road Water Main Replacement
- WWTP Lagoon Closure is 100% funded

Revenues

Revenue sheet was reviewed. Of note, income from departments was increased due to the Meetinghouse fees being added. Bank interest was increased to CD's.

Discussion

The next meeting on January 18, 2024 will be to go over the final warrant article amounts. Batchelder may have to Zoom in and Nork is not available.

Chairman Langevin may not be able to attend the Budget Hearing on February 10th due to travel. If he is unable to attend, Schaumann will be prepared to cover for him.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Schaumann, seconded by Nork, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35am

Public Budget Hearing is Saturday, February 10th 9am at the Fire Station.

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