

**TOWN OF JAFFREY
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 11, 2025**

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

Members Excused: Bob Schaumann

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

Others: Library Trustees, Bill Johnson (JRMA)

Meeting opened: 8:59 am

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Maki, meeting minutes from December 5, 2024 were approved (5-0). Nork abstained as he didn't attend the meeting.

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.

Budget Highlights and Overview

The proposed total operating budget of \$7,633,215 is a \$333,295 (4.6%) increase over 2024's adopted budget. DPW collection bargaining pay increases are reflected as warrant articles and not in the budget. The 2024 budget maintains capital reserve funding at necessary levels, including the 10-year paving plan initiated in 2021, and a 10-year reconstruction plan created in 2024 to address the deficient condition of our sidewalks. The overall impact of the total budget and warrant articles is a 7.0% increase with a \$.74 increase in taxes.

The \$333,295 increase in the proposed budget can be attributed to the following areas: \$111,837 (33.5%) for law enforcement salaries (police and prosecution); \$83,256 for public safety (fire salaries, dispatch and ambulance services); \$63,886 for additional personnel (planner and part-time building inspector); \$21,230 health/dental/workers compensation insurance; \$19,278 IT services and upgrades; \$11,137 library; and \$22,671 for salaries and other operational needs.

Our statutory fund balance is \$1,709,813 as determined by NH DRA in December, and represents 7.86% of operating expenses. DRA recommends maintaining between 5% and 17%. We utilized \$435,000 from UFB in 2024 and set a tax rate of \$10.57 for the municipal operation. The overall tax rate was \$32.80, a decrease of \$.55.

This proposed budget was reviewed by the BOS and approved on December 23, 2024.

Nork asked if the re-evaluation plays any part in these numbers. Frederick stated he uses last year's numbers in computing this year's budget.

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.

Highlights for this year would be the retiring of Economic Development Director Carr in July and the hiring of a part-time Building Inspector to assist with inspections.

Water – Water Fund increased \$150,935 (13.2%) due to salaries and capital outlay.

2025 changes were reviewed.

- Crew Wages increased \$70,283 with the addition of one Water Operator.
- Crew Overtime decreased \$4,800 with the addition of one Water Operator.
- Cold Stone Springs Operations \$69,500 was added to the budget in anticipated costs associated with the new plant. It should have a minimal yearly impact.

On a motion by Nork, seconded by Maki, the Water Budget of \$1,297,819 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Sewer- Increase of \$109,973 (5.0%) due to contract costs.

2025 Changes were reviewed.

- Contract Services increased \$152,750 to cover Veolia contract costs. The contract ends this year and the town will be looking to either go out to bid or try to manage operations in house.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Sewer budget of \$2,295,058 were tentatively approved (6-0).

Library- Increased \$11,137 (3.0%) due to salaries increased to include a 3% COLA. Hours have increased for staff since Covid.

2025 changes were reviewed.

Increased encumbered amount in the cleaning contract line was requested for floor stripping in addition to carpet cleaning. The Trustees have spent \$22,000 to assist with the cleaning contracts. The Library is back to full swing to include the added need of tech support for the elderly. Since Covid, many programs now have applications online only and Library staff has had to assist the elderly adapt.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Maki, the Library budget of \$380,140 were tentatively approved (6-0).

Recreation Department- Increased \$5,605 (2.3%) due to salaries.
2025 Changes were reviewed.

Due to the difficulty finding lifeguards and retention during the season, they have continued this year to make the beach “Swim at your own Risk”. This has worked well without issues. The decreased number of non-residents has played a major role also. The fence at Humiston Field has been moved away from the sidewalk to protect spectators. Community Field fence has also been repaired.

On a motion by Nork, seconded by Batchelder, the Recreation budget of \$248,929 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Highway-Decreased \$2,518 (-.2%) due to salaries being moved to a CBA warrant article.
2025 changes were reviewed.

Tree Removal was discussed, All Tree is a competitive company, costing less.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Maki, the Highway budget of \$1,181,614 was tentatively approved (6-0).

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

Woodbound Road bridge needs attention and Letourneau Bridge will go out to bid and be funded through a CRF.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Bridge budget of \$7,001 was tentatively approved (6-0).

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 (6-0).

Parks & Commons- Increased by \$6,170 due to Contracted Services for mowing and landscaping with the addition of the Library grounds. Bids will be opened on Monday 1/13/25.

On a motion by Nork, seconded by Maki, the Parks & Commons budget of \$33,716 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Transfer Station/Recycling- Increased \$4,548 (1.21%) due to salaries.
2025 Changes were reviewed.

- Revision Energy is still working with the town regarding the solar project.
- Transfer Station still has open positions for a full-time manager and a part-time operator.
- Swap Shop parking needs to be limited to ensure better traffic flow. Overall the transformation of the Transfer Station has had good reviews.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Nork, the Transfer Station/Recycling budget of \$380,463 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Cemeteries- Increased by \$4,631 due to anticipated increases in contracted services for mowing.
On a motion Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Cemeteries budget of \$56,446 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Capital Outlay- Level funded. \$25,000 was added to Road Reconstruction in 2022 following the paid off debt in 2021. Level funded in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Nork, the Capital Outlay budget of \$25,000 was approved (6-0).

Police- Increased \$96,686 (6.2%) due to police officer salaries per CBA.
2025 changes were reviewed.

Hybrid cruiser came in after a 3 year wait. The warrant article for \$40,000 cruiser replacement should remain constant.

They were down 2 officers last year. They are offering reasonable salaries for the area.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, The Police budget of \$1,648,940 was tentatively approved (6-0).

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

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Animal Control budget of \$625 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Prosecution- Increased \$15,151 (11.9%) due to salaries.

Salaries were increased due to bigger workload and more hours. The Prosecutor went from 27 to 30 hours per week and his Assistant went from 25 to 27 hours per week.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Nork, the Prosecution budget of \$142,771 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Fire Department- Increased \$39,797 (7.7%) due to salaries.

2025 Changes were reviewed.

Staffing is up to 18 on-call members, 5 per diem (+3 new), and 2 call per diem. It's currently budgeted for full time coverage Monday-Friday, including Saturday, but would like 7-day coverage.

Calls are up 214 due to mutual aid and ambulance coverage.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Nork, the Fire budget of \$556,726 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Emergency Management- Increase of \$4,959 (7.2%)

2025 changes were reviewed.

Increase due to mutual aid costs and adding an Assistant Director stipend. Todd Croteau will assume this position.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Emergency Management budget of \$73,640 was tentatively approved (7-0).

JRMA Ambulance- Increase of \$78,500 (168.8%)

The new Captain, Bill Johnson was in attendance to explain the increased request. They have lost a lot of personnel to the County ambulance due to the inability to pay competitive salaries. Increasing salaries and non-payment/underpayment of ambulance calls has contributed to a deficit. Although this is a significant increase, if Jaffrey contracted with Peterborough, it would cost \$558,000 and if with the County it would cost \$236,500 with a 30-minute minimum of response time. Presently, Peterborough is providing ambulance coverage at \$1,000 per event. This is being covered by JRMA, but isn't a long-term solution.

The Committee expressed much discomfort about the amount of increase and felt it would've been easier to ask for gradual increases. Bill agreed, but since he's new to the position, he wasn't here earlier to address the problem earlier. Moving ahead, he will keep a better eye on things. Even with this request, they will still have a deficit. They understand the situation this year, but hopefully this won't become a yearly request, because it's not sustainable.

Rindge has also been asked for the increased request.

It was suggested to divide the request into a general budget request of \$85,000 and a warrant article of \$40,000.

The committee was agreeable to this suggestion for now, but looking ahead a more permanent solution must be found.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Nork, The JRMA budget of \$85,000 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Building Inspection- Increased \$38,741 (43.2%) overall due to salaries and the addition of a part-time inspector.

Due to increased workload, some code enforcement was missed due to no time to do inspections.

Upcoming projects like St. Patrick's property, WW Cross and Stony Brook, an extra inspector is needed.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Building Inspection budget of \$128,397 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Health- - Increased \$300 to reflect COLA increases over an 8-year period.

2024 changes reviewed.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Health budget of \$2,563 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Downtown TIFD- Increased \$11,862 (6.5%)

Increase due to salaries (addition of a part-time project manager – Jo Anne Carr) and TEAM Jaffrey's \$5,000 increase per request of the EDC.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Downtown TIFD budget of \$193,148 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Stone Bridge TIFD- Increased \$7,135 due to salaries (addition of part-time project manager)

The Transfer Station improvements were taken from this fund.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Nork, the Stone Bridge budget of \$74,298 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Executive- Increased \$5,440 (2.1%) due to salaries.

2025 changes were reviewed.

Rental/Leases were reduced \$1,00 to reflect anticipated savings by moving to the TD Bank building and having additional storage for off-site records.

On a motion by Nork, seconded by Maki, the Executive budget of \$260,069 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Election & Registration- Decreased \$2,836 (-2.7%) due to one election in 2025

2025 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Nork, the Election & Registration budget of \$101,178 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Finance- Increased \$26,846 (8.9%) due to salaries and IT costs.
2025 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Maki, the Finance budget of \$329,916 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Property Records- Increased \$3,401(3.7%) due to salaries and assessing services.
2025 Changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Maki, the Property Records budget of \$95,215 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Judicial/Legal- Decreased \$5,000 due to anticipated costs and resolutions of previous cases.
2025 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Farmer, the Judicial/Legal budget of \$20,000 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Personnel Administration- Increased \$77,653 (10.6%).
2025 changes were reviewed.

Worker's Comp. increased \$10,690 and is based on injuries in previous years.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Personnel Administration budget of \$752,135 was tentatively approved (6-0).

The meeting was recessed from 11:57am to 12:22pm

Planning/Zoning- Increased by \$25,145(25.6%) due to staffing and salaries.
2025 Changes were reviewed.

Planning Admin & Zoning salary increased \$20,790 due to the addition of a Planning Director in July.
This assumes the annual salary of \$75,000 for 6 months.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Planning/Zoning budget of \$123,222 was tentatively approved (6-0).

General Government Buildings- Increased \$7,500 (22.5%) due to anticipated costs with the transition to the TD Bank building.

Town Office cleaning contract increased \$4,600 with anticipated move.

Town Office repairs/maintenance decreased \$5,00 to compensate for unknown increases in line items. Significant maintenance may be addressed using capital reserve funds.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Nork, the General Government Buildings budget of \$40,900 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Insurance- Increased \$10,348(9%) due to total insurance bill increases. 2025 changes were reviewed.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Nork, the Insurance budget of \$76,446 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Social Service Agencies – This is the third-year of having the agencies meet with the Social Services Committee. Members feel this is a streamlined process that works well. Hundred Nights request was altered to reflect the actual usage of services by Jaffrey residents and to be equitable with other comparable towns.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Nork, the Social Service Agency requests for \$68,992 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Welfare- Increased by \$521 (.4%) due to Salaries. Carrie works more than the hours she is paid for, so her salary was increased. The committee agreed that she does an excellent job.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Nork, the Welfare budget of \$120,250 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Patriotic Purposes- Level Funded.

This budget is for flags and memorials.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Nork, the Patriotic Purposes budget of \$4,000 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Conservation- Level Funded.

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Maki, the Conservation budget of \$750 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Economic Development- Decreased by \$12,883 (-29.6%) due to salaries.

2025 Changes were reviewed.

Salaries decreased by \$10,579 (-39.2%) with Jo Anne Carr's retirement.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Batchelder, the Economic Development budget of \$30,630 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Debt Service- 5.1% Increase.

2024 Changes and schedules were reviewed.

On a motion from Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the Debt Service budget of \$645,541 was tentatively approved (6-0).

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

- EPA Lead & Copper – Vacuum Truck covers cost of the truck needed to conduct EPA mandated lead pipe testing. As of now there are 1,400 houses to test. The truck can be used after the testing is done.
- Turnpike PFAS Supplemental covers the cost increases associated with installing PFAS filtration at Turnpike Well. Bid opening will be 2/3/25 and we will know if we need this additional funding by the time of the Budget Hearing on 2/8/25.
- DPW CBA covers salary and benefit increases from the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- Ambulance Supplemental ETF funds the difference between JRMA's request of \$125,000 and the budget amount of \$85,000. The Town will retain control of the funds in the event
- Road Paving CRF was established in 2021 for a paving capital reserve fund to maintain a 10-year paving schedule that will bring the town's road system to an 80% pavement condition index. We would be able to pave at \$650,000 per year utilizing this CRF and expired debt payments. \$575,000 was appropriated to the CRF in 2024. Current balance is \$319,174. Prices were buffered to factor in inflation. In addition, paving roads to the proper width has saved on materials.
- Highway Equipment CRF was established in 1997 for the purchase of new, or refurbishing existing, highway equipment. The Capital Improvement Plan calls for funding at \$200,000 to maintain sustainable funding levels. \$200,000 was appropriated to the CRF in 2024. Current balance is \$670,504. These funds will be used for a new roadside mower, pickup truck and a backhoe.
- Create Town Offices CRF was established in 2017 for the purpose of acquiring land, completing design and engineer and constructing a Town Office building. \$25,000 was appropriated to the CRF in 2024. Current balance is \$320,792.
- Fire Equipment Capital Reserve was created in 1996 for purchasing new or refurbishing existing firefighting and/or rescue equipment. \$60,000 was appropriated to the CRF in 2024. Account balance is \$219,853. There was discussion of whether Jaffrey can collaborate with neighboring towns and share equipment. Mutual aid does share staffing and equipment.
- Land Acquisition Capital Reserve was created in 2009 for the purpose of acquiring or assisting in the acquiring of land and conservation easements to conserve strategic open space for the Town of

Jaffrey in order to stabilize tax base and help maintain scenic views, wildlife habitat and water quality. \$5,000 was appropriated to the CRF in 2024. Account balance is \$81,511.

- Municipal Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund was created in 2010 for performing major maintenance on existing town buildings. \$150,000 was appropriated in 2024. Current balance is \$755,396.
- Bridge Rehabilitation Capital Reserve was created in 2017 for the purpose of design, engineer and rehabilitate bridges throughout Jaffrey. \$120,000 was appropriated to the CRF in 2023. Current balance is \$331,831. The Bridges Capital Improvement Plan requires a \$120,000 investment to maintain the bridge maintenance plan. This year will address the Woodbound Road and Letourneau bridges.
- Police Cruiser Capital Reserve was created in 2019 for the purpose of funding police cruiser replacement on a sustainable schedule. Schedule allows reduction of annual appropriation to \$40,000. \$40,000 was appropriated to the CRF in 2024. Account balance is \$108,907.
- Recreation Equipment Capital Reserve funds the replacement of the Recreation Department van. \$10,000 was appropriated in 2024. Maintaining \$10,000 per year will fund the next replacement vehicle in ten or more years. CRF balance is \$18,241.
- Sidewalk Capital Reserve Funds is a new request to fund \$100,000 annually to reconstruct and pave town sidewalks. The Town established a 10-year plan to address our failing sidewalks with the necessary funding being \$100,000 per year. \$100,000 was appropriated in 2024. Account balance is \$100,983. Stratton and Howard hill are scheduled for this year, Squantum is on hold.
- Cemetery Gravestones was increased due to repairs from vandalism last year.

On a motion by Maki, seconded by Farmer, Total Warrant Articles budget of \$4,375,615 was tentatively approved (6-0)

Revenues

Revenue sheet was reviewed. Of note, all were level. Rooms & Meals tax was increased.

On a motion by Farmer, seconded by Batchelder, the total Revenue budget of \$9,559,001 was tentatively approved (6-0).

Discussion

- Chairman Langevin may not be able to attend the Budget Hearing on February 8th due to travel. If he is unable to attend, Maki will be prepared to cover for him.
- The tentatively scheduled meetings for January 14th and 16th will not be needed.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Nork, the meeting was adjourned at 12:57pm

Public Budget Hearing is Saturday, February 8th 9am at the Fire Station.

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