

**TOWN OF JAFFREY
BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
February 6, 2021**

Members Present: Norm Langevin, Bob Schaumann, Frank Sterling, Sam Greene, Kathy Batchelder, Peter Maki

Members Excused: Charlie Turcotte

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

Residents Present: There were many residents attending via Zoom

Meeting opened: 9:01 am

Chairman Langevin asked the public to be respectful and mute their microphones. When wishing to speak, he asked that they “raise” their hands via the Zoom and wait to be recognized by him and then to identify themselves for recording purposes.

The annual budget process was then explained to the public. TM Frederick met with all department heads to review their budgets before coming to the Budcom with the final proposed budget.

2021 Operating Budget Review

Operating Budget requested is \$6,494,493 which is decreased 1.48% from last year.

There are less retirement buyouts this year, along with decreases in Health and Dental insurance premiums. This is a good, tight budget.

Some issues that affected the Operating Budget were:

- New Hampshire Retirement employer contribution rate increases
Police - 28.43% to 33.88%
Fire - 30.09% to 32.99%
Employees - 11.17% to 14.06%
- \$575,000 requested for the 10-year paving plan

Water and Sewer Budgets are separated from the General Operating Budget. They share operating expenses based on users, and receive money from the property tax base.

Strategic Goals

- **Operating Budget-**
 - The Budget Committee directed the Town Manager to review operations after the reconstruction and the budget impacts of 2020 with the goal of keeping budget recommendations stable.

- **Incorporate long-term road paving plan without debt.**

- **Water & Sewer Utilities are self-funded with rates adjusted as needed to maintain operations and adequate fund balances-**
 - Cold Stone Springs alternate water source in 2020
 - Sewer budget maintained to replenish fund balance
 - Sewer rates increased 5% in October. Water rates remain steady.

Budget Summary

TM Frederick was complimented on his presentation to the Budget Committee. There was a decrease of \$97,392 (-1.48%) in this year's budget.

The 2021 budget including Operating Budget, Warrant Articles & Petitions with revenue offsets would increase the tax rate \$.91 to \$10.46 per thousand (+9.56%).

Departmental Budgets

The Budget Committee has taken a tentative vote on all of the departmental budgets. After this 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.

Executive: 3.3% Decrease.

No questions or comments from the public.

Election & Registration: .27% Decrease.

No questions or comments from the public.

Finance: .64% Decrease.

No questions or comments from the public.

Judicial/Legal: This budget is level funded.

No questions or comments from the public.

Personnel Administration: 12% Decrease.

No questions or comments from the public.

General Government Buildings: 19% Increase due to the new cleaning contract.
No questions or comments from the public.

Insurance: General liability increased by 7%.
No questions or comments from the public.

Building Inspection: .2% Decrease.
No questions or comments from the public.

Health: 21% Increase.
No questions or comments from the public.

Welfare: .3% Increase.
No questions or comments from the public.

Patriotic Purposes: Level Funded.
No questions or comments from the public

Conservation: This budget is level funded.
No questions or comments from the public.

Debt Service: Decreased by .9%.
No questions or comments from the public

Recreation Department: This budget is increased 3.9% due to program wages.
No questions or comments from the public.

JRMA Ambulance: 2.5% Increase.
No questions or comments from the public.

Fire Department: This budget is increased by 2.9% due to vehicle maintenance and equipment replacement.
No questions or comments from the public.

Emergency Management: This budget is increased by 5.5% due to mutual aid dispatch.
No questions or comments from the public.

Library: This budget is increased by 3.1% due to salary changes. The Library is open for more hours each week and requires more staffing.

No questions or comments from the public.

Planning/Zoning: This budget has an increase of 1.5%.

No questions or comments from the public.

Economic Development: This budget has an increase of 14.86%.

No questions or comments from the public.

Property Records: This budget has a 1.8% increase.

No questions or comments from the public.

DPW: Overall budget had a decrease of 2%

Highway: This budget is decreased by 4.7%.

No questions or comments from the public.

Bridges: This budget is level funded. These funds are used for bridge inspection and repairs.

No questions or comments from the public.

Street Lighting: This budget is decreased 25% due to the LED light conversions in town.

No questions or comments from the public.

Transfer Station/Recycling: This budget is increased 1.2% because of landfill closure/cleanup fees.

No questions or comments from the public.

Parks & Commons: This budget has a 11.4% increase due to grounds maintenance.

No questions or comments from the public.

Cemeteries: This budget is decreased 39% due to Conant Cemetery paving not being included.

No questions or comments from the public.

Police: This budget is increased by 3.5% due to retirement and part-time officer pay.

No questions or comments from the public.

Prosecution: This budget has an increase of .11%.

No questions or comments from the public.

Animal Control: This budget is level funded. Is used for stray cats and dogs.
No questions or comments from the public.

Capital Outlay: \$0 - All capital projects are incorporated in the Warrant Article with proposed funding through Capital Reserve Funds.
No questions or comments from the public.

Water Department: This budget has an increase of 3.9%.
No questions or comments from the public.

Sewer Department: This budget is decreased by 19.07%.
No questions or comments from the public.

Warrant Articles

\$5,246,271 was tentatively approved by the BOS and Budget Committee.

Broadband: This is for a \$2,500,000 bond. The bond would have no tax impact on the tax payers. The funds would be raised by new subscriber fees charged by the broadband company. Resident Grace Fleischer asked if this would improve existing service. TM Frederick explained that this bond would cover all under-served residents, bringing them up to 25 down/3 up service.

Nutting Road Bridge: \$1,100,000 cost would be an 80-20 split between the State and the Town. There would be no impact on taxes. Resident Joanne Buck asked if the new bridge would be wider or the same size as the existing one. The answer was it will be the same as the existing bridge.

Road Paving CRF: \$575,000 is the steady amount that needs to be deposited every year to keep with the 10-year paving plan. TM Frederick explained that paving was done late last year, due to the postponement of Town Meeting, so there is \$700,000 still remaining in the paving budget. If we adhere to the paving plan, which is strongly endorsed by the Select Board, the grading of the road system will improve from a 68 “grade” to an 80 “grade”. Both Selectmen, Sterling and Chamberlain stressed the fact that the road budget has always been cut and it’s critical to fund now to make up for lack of maintenance. Chairman Langevin also commented on how money has always been taken out of the road fund for other projects.
No questions or comments from the public.

Highway Equipment CRF: \$200,000 is required to maintain steady funding. There is a 20-year plan in place to help the Town purchase equipment without incurring debt.
No questions or comments from the public.

Highway Equipment (Dump Truck, Plow, Sander): \$225,000 - This would be used to add wing plows to increase the efficiency of the plowing. Selectman Sterling added that this would be from the Capital Reserve Fund, that would have a \$300,000 remaining, causing no tax impact on residents.

No questions or comments from the public.

Highway Compressor: \$20,000 - This would be a portable unit that was on the schedule to be replaced. Funds would come out of the Capital Reserve Fund with no tax impact on residents.

No questions or comments from the public.

Town Office CRF: \$50,000 – This has been the annual contribution since 2017 for the design and acquiring property for the new Town Office.

No questions or comments from the public.

Fire Department CRF: \$60,000 – This is the annual contribution toward the 30-year plan of replacing equipment.

No comments or questions from the public.

TIFD CRF: \$60,000 - This money is used for improvements/enhancements to the Route 202 downtown area that are outside of the project itself. This comes from the TIFD, with no impact on taxes.

No questions or comments from the public.

Land Acquisition Capital Reserve: \$5,000 - This is used for buying conservation property.

No questions or comments from the public.

Cemetery Trees/Gravestone/Meetinghouse: \$ 9,000 - is the total request with the following breakdown:

Cemetery Trees: \$5,000 is needed due to many tree removals.

Gravestone Repair: \$1,000 Level request.

Meetinghouse: \$3,000 Level request.

No questions or comments from the public.

Municipal Building Maintenance Trust: \$150,000 - This is needed to maintain municipal buildings.

No questions or comments from the public.

Bridge Rehabilitation: \$120,000 – This will be used for the Nutting Road bridge and Letourneau Culverts.

No questions or comments from the public.

Police Cruiser CRF: \$50,000 – There is a 10-year plan being followed with a cruiser replaced every 2 years. This would be an off-year with no cruiser, however the 2020 cruiser was late in coming and will be arriving soon.

No questions or comments from the public.

Jaffrey 250th Celebration: \$7,500.00 - This is a level request. The 250th celebration will be held in 2023. To help support, the website is jaffrey250.org.

No questions or comments from the public.

Recreation Equipment CRF: \$25,000 is needed to establish the fund. The current van will not pass inspection and will need to be replaced in 2022.

No questions or comments from the public.

Retirement Buyout Expendable Trust: \$10,000 is needed for the next 5 years to fund this fund, so that the General Fund will not have to be used to fund retirement buyouts. 6 retirements cost the town \$150,000 last year.

No questions or comments from the public.

Jaffrey Police CBA: \$5,739 is needed to fund the 2nd half of 2021.

No questions or comments from the public.

Jaffrey DPW CBA: \$4,520 is needed for the 2nd half of 2021.

No questions or comments from the public.

Petition Articles

Chairman Langevin explained that the Petitioner process of getting signatures and presenting their petitions to the Budget Committee.

Home Healthcare & Hospice: \$ 17,000 - No questions or comments from the public.

MCELC: \$ 8,000 - No questions or comments from the public.

Community Kitchen: \$ 9,750 - No questions or comments from the public.

Monadnock Family Services: \$ 6,821 -No questions or comments from the public.

SWCS: \$ 5,413 – No questions or comments from the public.

Jaffrey Civic Center: \$ 4,000. No other questions or comments from the public.

CVTC: \$ 2,000: No questions or comments from the public.

The River Center: \$ 1,500 - No questions or comments from the public.

Hundred Nights: \$ 5,000 – No questions or comments from the public.

Reality Check: \$12,278 – No questions or comments from the public.

Selectman Sterling noted that these are essential and necessary services provided to the Town of Jaffrey that don't have to be paid out of the operating or welfare budget.

Future Planning

- Road paving and gravel road rehabilitation
- Route 202 dogleg reconfiguration project
- WW Cross remediation and development
- Cold Stone Springs well development
- Broadband expansion
- Funding of Capital Reserve Funds to reduce future debt.

There were no additional questions or comments from the public.

Selectman Belletete thanked the Budget Committee for all their hard work.

Voting

Operating Budget: Motion was made by Schaumann, seconded by Greene to approve the Total of the Operating Budget as presented (\$6,494,493). Vote was taken – All in Favor (6-0)

Water Budget: Motion was made by Sterling, seconded by Batchelder to approve the water budget amount of \$1,084,898. Vote was taken – All in Favor (6-0)

Sewer Budget: Motion was made by Greene, seconded by Turcotte to approve the sewer amount of \$1,819,322. Vote was taken – All in Favor (6-0)

Warrant Articles

Motion was made by Batchelder, seconded by Greene to approve all the warrant articles totaling \$5,246,271. Vote was taken – All in Favor (6-0)

Petition Warrant Articles

Motion was made by Batchelder, seconded by Greene to approve the Citizen Petition Articles in the amount of \$69,512. Vote was taken – All in favor (6-0).

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL

On a motion by Sterling, seconded by Maki, meeting minutes from January 14, 2021 were approved (5-0). Batchelder Abstained

On a motion by Greene, seconded by Sterling, meeting minutes from January 19, 2021 were approved (6-0).

On a motion by Batchelder, seconded by Schaumann, meeting minutes from January 21, 2021 were approved as amended (6-0).

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Batchelder, seconded by Maki, Vote was taken - All in favor (6-0)

Meeting adjourned at 10:23am.

The next meeting will be Town Meeting on April 24, 2021 at 9:00am

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