

Hancock Budget Advisory Committee
November 5, 2013
Minutes

Present: Lauren Carney, Matthew Hale, Ron Mack, and Pat Payne, with Kurt Grasset attending on behalf of the Highway Department.

The meeting was called to order at 6:09.

Kurt indicated that most lines in the BUILDING MAINTENANCE budget request are flat with the exception of the following lines:

#390 SECURITY SYSTEM - \$4,850, an increase of \$2,500, due to the need to update the alarm systems in the town buildings ("The one in the Fire Station came over on the Mayflower.").

#400 FUEL - \$10,600, a decrease of \$2,590 due to the conversion of the town office to heating with wood pellets and propane. Kurt dropped his #2 heating fuel line item by 2,000 gallons, based on the new heating systems in place.

#412 WATER UTILITY – Use charges will be going up in 2014 (for all water system users); The current annual charge is \$505. The new rates are not yet reflected in 2014 budget request.

#530 POLICE DEPARTMENT - \$5,100, an increase of \$4,700, is due to need to re-floor half of the Police Station. Current flooring is aged tile and the plan is to replace it with ceramic tile. The tile reflects a slightly higher initial cost but with a 3 year payback, due to lower maintenance/upkeep costs.

Exclusive of payroll the HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION budget remains flat in comparison to the existing budget. The only line items that note any changes are:

#341 - Phone costs are down slightly due to switch from US Cellular to

Verizon providers. Kurt feels that the lower cost comes a decrease in cellular coverage (more dropped calls).

#HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION-OTHER – reflects a request for eight (8) hours of administrative support per week, at a cost of \$5,578. Kurt requested this support last year, but it didn't make the final budget request put forth by the select board. Kurt feels that there is a need/benefit to having administrative support with bookkeeping, payroll, clerical work, and the like that keep him from getting out of the office.

#430 MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS – at \$28,750, reflects an increase of \$750 over the present budget. This increase is based on actual expenditures and previous budgetary activity in this line item (over spending). While the Highway Dept. tries to do as much in-house maintenance and repair work as possible, given the increase in the use of electronic controls in equipment, at times, there are no other options available other than to use outside vendors for work.

#645 - BUILDING MAINTENANCE – at \$5,720, an increase of \$4,500, is due to the need to replace the siding on the Highway Garage with vinyl siding. (estimated cost is 4,500).

TRANSFER STATION / RECYCLING BUDGET:

The Transfer Station / Recycling Budget request for 2014 is up slightly over existing levels, due to the need for a second baler (estimated cost of a used baler at \$4,000), a slight increase in phone costs and trash hauling fees.

Line item #397, RECYCLING EXPENSE, is at \$10,355, and reflects that \$4,000 increase. Having a second baler devoted to baling just cardboard will allow the transfer station operation to keep up with the cardboard baling. Kurt indicated that he is looking for grant opportunities to cover a significant portion of the cost of a used baler.

Ron Mack asked Kurt if he felt that his 2013 budget was on track; "Are there any surprises or concerns facing you for the remainder of this budget cycle." Kurt responded that he feels that the bottom line totals on all his various budgets are on track for the year.

Kurt indicated that with administrative support he can better spend his time evaluating each town owned building and develop comprehensive programs to help plan out maintenance, upkeep and special projects. Putting the time into planning will pay off in the long run in saved costs and help to eliminate surprises and spikes in budgets from year to year.

When asked about any potential warrant articles Kurt indicated that yes, he'd just gotten board support to put in a warrant article to rebuild the highway department backhoe. He estimates the rebuilding cost will be in the neighborhood of \$30,000. This figure is significantly lower than purchasing a new backhoe and the \$30K figure is also low for a rebuild in large part because much of the work can be done with in-house talent, saving the town a considerable amount of money. Kurt credits having a versatile and talented staff helps the town greatly in work of this nature.

The next meeting of the HBAC will be on Tuesday, November 19th, 2013, at 6 PM.

Ron Mack will ask Chief Andrew Wood to attend to review the Police Department budget request for 2014.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Hale