

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: _____
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee
68 School Street, Effingham
September 10, 2019

Members Present: Dave Strauss (chair), Leo Racine (vice chair), Theresa Swanick, Chuck Fuller (selectmen’s rep), Jory Augenti, & Tim Eldridge.

Members Absent: Tom Hart

Others Present: Nate Fogg, John Meisner (selectman)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

Minutes

The Budget Committee (BC) reviewed the minutes from the July 9th meeting.

A motion was made by Leo Racine to approve the April 9th minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Tim Eldridge. The vote was 6-0 in favor of the motion.

Town Fund Balance

Dave Strauss communicated with DRA and received approval for the three fund balance check points to be used throughout the year. Currently the total fund balance is \$561K with \$225K is reserved for the Elm Street bridge.

Budget Committee Process Instruction

The Committee reviewed the instructions and changes/ updates made by Dave Strauss. The Effingham (School) Enrollment letter was in the Table of Contents (TOC) but not attached to the document. The committee decided to leave it out of the document, and it will be removed from the TOC.

A motion was made by Dave Strauss to adopt the “Budget Committee Process Instruction” with the edits made. The motion was seconded by Tim Eldridge. The motion passed 6-0.

School Enrollment Verification

The school enrollment residency check was run by the Superintendent of GWRSD to make sure we were not violating any confidentiality rules. In November and December SAU 49 validates the student list. The SAU only checks on residency once when a child is enrolled in the school district. If a child’s residency changed from Effingham to Ossipee, the SAU might not know to change the district being charged. The SAU sends out a list of enrolled students on a yearly basis. Effingham will check out all students to verify their residence.

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Eversource Abatement

The abatement request could cost the town up to \$251K. They have offered a settlement of \$190K in 4 yearly installments of \$47.5K. This may be a good option for the town to avoid needing to obtain a bond. There is a 38-town lawsuit. Effingham is not part of the lawsuit. House bill 700 passed and became effective on 8/20/2019. This will unify the assessment of utility poles throughout the state.

School Tax Rate

The school tax rate is set to climb by \$3.00 this year and another \$1.50 in 2020. These jumps will greatly affect the overall tax rate in Effingham. The State Education Funding could give \$0.30 back to Effingham.

The Governor Wentworth Regional School District funding formula needs to be updated. The formula has not been updated since 1964.

Budget Requests

Department budget requests are due by October 7th. Last year the BC and the Board of Selectmen (Selectboard) agreed to a salary increase of 3%. The salary increase data for the Carroll County employees is 3.0-3.2%. Chairman Strauss feels that the BC should provide guidance to assist in budget preparation.

A motion was made by Theresa Swanick for the Budget Committee to support a recommendation, set forth by the Selectboard not to exceed 3% bottom-line salary increase. The motion was seconded by Tim Eldridge. Leo Racine made an amendment to add the “not to exceed 3%” of the motion. Jory Augenti seconded the amendment. The amendment was agreed to by a majority. The vote on the amended motion was 4-2 in favor, with David Strauss and Tim Eldridge voting against the motion.

Budget sheets and a letter have been mailed to the departments to be filled out and returned by October 7th.

Road Repairs

The Selectboard has suspended the grinding of Green Mountain Road due to the current fund balance and contractor availability.

Outside Agencies

The Red Cross has requested \$250 (the same as last year.)
Tri- County Community Action Program is requesting \$5,000 (last year \$3,000 was approved)
Northern Human Services is requesting \$716 again this year. A letter has been sent back requesting additional backup information for their request.

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Other Business

Committee Chair David Strauss noted that the BC should be represented at the Selectboard meetings. He expects to be able to attend for the BC, however, will contact other committee members to fill in for him if he is unable to attend. He welcomes other members to attend, when they are available.

CIP

Chuck Fuller noted that the CIP Committee is waiting for the draft of the CIP to review. Police, Fire, and Paved Roads will be present in the initial draft.

Budget Review

The BC reviewed the year-to-date budget (updated on 9/3/19) and discussed areas over and under spent on the spreadsheet.

Budget Committee Budget

The BC reviewed their budget request for 2020. A total of \$1,470 is being requested, which is a decrease from the current budget year (\$1,702).

A motion was made by Tim Eldridge to approve the Budget Committee proposed budget of \$1,470. The motion was seconded by Theresa Swanick. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Next Meeting

The next BC meeting will be on October 29th at 6:30pm. Draft copies of the budget requests will be sent out prior to the next meeting and posted online.

The BC agreed that due to the length of time between BC meetings, draft minutes will be posted until approved minutes are available.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Tim Eldridge to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Leo Racine. The vote was unanimous in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.