

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: _____
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
February 02, 2021
Live and Conference Call

Members Present: Dave Strauss (chair), Leo Racine (vice chair), Chuck Fuller (selectmen's rep), David Garceau, Tim Eldridge (via conference call), Theresa Swanick.

Members Absent: Ben Eldridge.

Others Present: Nate Fogg, Mike Cahalane (selectman), Tom Hart (selectman), Public via conference call: Erik Jones, Randy Burbank & Grace Fuller.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm. A roll call confirmed those present.

Minutes

The Budget Committee (BC) reviewed the minutes from the January 26th, 2021 meeting.

A motion was made by Dave Strauss to approve the January 26th, 2021 minutes as printed. The motion was seconded by Theresa Swanick. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Chuck Fuller- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye, David Garceau- aye. The motion passed (5-0).

Board Business

David Strauss noted that the MS-737 draft was being provided. The BC would discuss any updates to the form and how and when it would be signed after the public hearing this evening.

Currently it is looking as if the Town Meeting will not happen until May 15th. The BoS have not made a final decision on the date.

The BC will hold a meeting on May 18th regardless of the date of the Town Meeting.

All BC files will be copied to the laptop computer after the town meeting is held.

The BC met 13 times over the course of the budget year. The budget as being presented at the Budget Hearing this evening is \$18,216 less than the previous budget year.

Dave Strauss explained the process the BC would follow for the public hearing on the budget and then asked if the public had any questions. There were none.

Chair called the Budget Public Hearing to order at 5:15pm. Tim Eldridge entered the hearing,

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Public was informed that the budget sheets will be addressed one by one and they would have a chance to ask questions on any budget. Chair noted draft budget sheets/draft warrant articles that were going to be addressed had been available on the web and the town office weeks before the meeting.

Chairman also noted that the town budget as presented represented approximately a \$0.07 per thousand decrease for the December 2021 tax bill.

The BC reviewed the complete package of the individual budget sheets and the approved warrant articles. The public was solicited for questions/concerns on each page and if any questions/concerns were noted they were addressed. Each page was previously approved by the BC and the Board of Selectmen (BoS).

The BC presented the **(4130) Executive Budget** at \$162,500. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4140) Election & Registration- Town Clerk Budget** at \$43,067. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4141) Supervisors of the Checklist Budget** at \$2,156. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4150) Financial Administration- Tax Collector Budget** at \$37,894. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4150) Financial Administration- Auditing Budget** at \$12,500. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4150) Treasurer Budget** at \$3,300. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4151) Budget Committee Budget** at \$1,321. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4152) Assessing Budget** at \$7,750. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4153) Legal Budget** at \$30,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4155) Payroll Expenses Budget** at \$50,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4191) Historic District Commission (HDC) Budget** at \$0.00.

Mr. Fuller read a statement concerning the petition warrant which if approved as written it would abolish the HDC, he also noted the previously budget approved "0" funding.

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A motion was made by Theresa Swanick to reconsider the HDC budget. The motion was seconded by David Garceau. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- no, Chuck Fuller- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye, Tim Eldridge-no, David Garceau- aye. The motion passed (4-2).

Dave Strauss noted that the HDC had not functioned for the past 2 years and there is a chance that the HDC will be abolished, sending the duties to the Planning Board. The petitioned warrant article to abolish the HDC can still be on the warrant be put to the voters because the due dates have been moved out due to the Town Meeting being moved back until May.

If abolished the HDC budget would revert to the general fund of the town.

Theresa Swanick believes that if the HDC is abolished, the Historic District Regulations would also be abolished.

Discussion on upcoming permits that are expected and the need to keep the commission in place. A question was asked of the current Chair of the HDC if he would step down from Chair if new members were appointed. Mr. Jones acknowledged that is his preference.

A motion was made by Tim Eldridge to approve \$1 for the HDC budget. The motion was seconded by Leo Racine. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Chuck Fuller- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye, Tim Eldridge-aye, David Garceau- aye. The motion passed (6-0).

The BC presented the **(4191) Planning Board** Budget at \$5,961. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4191) Zoning Board** Budget at \$2,067. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4191) Zoning Officer** Budget at \$15,823. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4194) Municipal Buildings** Budget at \$74,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4195) Cemeteries** Budget at \$2,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4196) Insurance** Budget at \$76,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4197) Advertising & Dues** Budget at \$3,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4210) Police** Budget at \$232,913. Mr. Jones asked about the status of the chief hiring and staffing. Mr. Fuller replied the Chief will be part time and will be staffing the department.

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The BC presented the **(4220) EMS Contract Budget** at \$125,000. Mr. Burbank asked why our towns cost was so high. It was detailed the Action ambulance reports assigned 13% of the 2021 total amount to our town. It was noted that the Select Board had entered an agreement with the treatment center to offset some of the high usage by them. It is expected that they will provide the town \$13,000 this year to offset the total cost.

The BC presented the **(4220) Fire & Rescue Budget** at \$77,050. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4290) Emergency Mgmt Budget** at \$1,990. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4290) Forest Fire Warden Budget** at \$2,500. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4312) Highways & Streets Budget** at \$534,750. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4313) Bridges Budget** at \$1,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4316) Street Lighting Budget** at \$8,500. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4323) Solid Waste Collection Budget** at \$92,965. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4324) Solid Waste Disposal Budget** at \$73,200. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4325) Solid Waste Cleanup Budget** at \$7,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4414) Dog Officer Budget** at \$3,400. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4415) Health Agencies Budget** at \$21,064. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4442) General Assistance Budget** at \$12,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4442.2) Meals on Wheels Budget** at \$4,500. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4520) Parks & Recreation Budget** at \$10,000. Mr Jones noted that this service not only handles children activities it also provides services to adults.

The BC presented the **(4550) Library Budget** at \$62,035 . There were no questions.

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The BC presented the **(4583) Patriotic Purposes** Budget at \$700. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4611) Conservation Commission** Budget at \$5,455. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4619) Town Forrester** Budget at \$1,000. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4711) Debt Service** Budget at \$1.00. There were no questions.

The BC presented the **(4723) TAN Interest** Budget at \$1.00. There were no questions.

Dave Strauss asked if the public was able hear. All listening felt they were able to hear.

Chair detailed that all budget items covered to this point are the operating budget total which is warrant article 11 of the published package. This total is \$1,806,364

Warrant article numbers assigned were just for the budget committee hearing, the official warrant articles will be a different number. All warrants were discussed and the public had questions on the following warrants in the published package.

4901 Other Warrants

Article 18- Mr. Jones asked if this was inclusive of the Green Mountain road project. It was detailed that some of these funds will be carried over to next years Green Mountain road project as the next section will require more funds than one year of budgeted money. Some of the funds this year will be used to fix Pine river road bad areas which are affecting the plowing.

Article 24- Mr. Jones asked the tax impact if this passed. He was told the projected impact would be about \$0.18 per thousand impact. BoS chair noted they are inquiring about a USDA grant for this purchase.

Article 23- Mr. Jones asked the tax impact if this passed. He was told the projected impact would be about \$0.27 per thousand impact. It was noted this is just for three quarters of this year and the cost would be higher for a full year.

Budget committee noted Article 23/24 not approved due to the high delinquent property tax (\$800,000 plus) and the expected school increase of \$1 per thousand.

Article 19- Mr. Jones asked where the \$7,802 money came from. Mr. Fuller detailed that the money was part of another town hall repair project that was not spent and lapsed into the general fund.

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4915 Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) Warrants

Article 21- Mr. Jones asked how this amount compares to what the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) recommends. He was told it is significantly less due to the town's ability to fund this. It was understood by the budget committee if a fire truck was to be replaced it would have to be via a grant or loan.

Article 14- Mr. Jones asked how this amount compares to what the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) recommends. He was told it is in line with the CIP.

4916 Expendable Trust Fund (ETF) Warrants

Article 14- Mr. Jones asked why \$1000 in operating budget and also \$2000 in ETF. It was pointed out the ETF was underfunded and needed to be increased. Allowing money in the operating budget allowed the BoS to do the work this summer vice depleting the ETF.

The Chair noted at this point in the review including the operating budget the total amount approved by the budget committee is \$2,220,166.

A motion was made by David Strauss to close the public hearing at 6:39pm. The motion was seconded by Leo Racine. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Chuck Fuller- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye, Tim Eldridge-aye, David Garceau- aye. The motion passed (6-0).

Other Budget Committee Business

MS737 draft copy was updated from the hearing and members will be contact when to sign the official copy.

Next Budget Meeting

5/18/2021 @ 6pm

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tim Eldridge. The motion was seconded by Theresa Swanick. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Tim Eldridge- aye, Chuck Fuller- aye, Ben Eldridge- aye, David Garceau- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye. The motion passed (7-0). The meeting adjourned at 6:46pm.