

CONWAY MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Professional Development Center

Kennett Middle School, Conway, NH

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. The following Budget Committee members were present: Chair Peter Donohoe, Vice-Chair Frank Jost, John Colbath, Bob Drinkhall, Jim LeFebvre, Dave Jensen, Randy Davison, Bill Marvel, Quentin Lewis, Ellin Leonard, and Stacy Sand.

Absent: Kit Hickey and Terry McCarthy

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Donohoe.

Chair Donohoe provided opening remarks:

- A representative from the airport will speak first this evening.
- Changes to the schedule include moving part of the Town presentation to January 23rd with the remainder being on January 30th.

3. Approval of Outstanding Minutes (1/4/2023 and 1/9/2023):

Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Mr. Jensen to approve the minutes from January 4, 2023 As amended. Motion Carried. (10-0-1 [Mr. Colbath])

- **Mr. Drinkhall** stated line 77 should read 10,450,000 and line 370 should read, 8 times Littleton revenue did not come close to revenue projections for Conway.
- **Mr. Marvel** stated line 246 should read, parking benefit district.
- **Mr. Lewis** stated the date on both sets of minutes should be 2023.

Mr. Drinkhall moved, seconded by Ms. Sand to approve the minutes from January 9, 2023 As amended. Motion Carried. (8-0-3 [Mr. Colbath, Mr. LeFebvre, and Mr. Davison])

- **Mr. Marvel** stated his inaudible question was to the Center Conway Fire Precinct Commission, if they absorbed Redstone and East Conway, would they be the largest fire department geographically and the answer was yes. On line 245, Mr. Lewis' question to Mr. DegliAngeli was if the building inspection department currently pays for itself and the answer was no, but it will with the proposed reorganization. On line 260, Mr. DegliAngeli's answer to Mr. Jensen should read if the footprint was changed it would require a site plan. On line 300, Mr. Marvel's question should read if the town would have two engineers at the end of the process, and the answer was no.
- **Mr. Lefebvre** suggested utilizing a handheld recorder for use by the transcriber. Chair Donohoe stated he would check with Ms. Day on the availability of one.
- **Mr. Colbath** stated the distance in the gymnasium was during COVID and he has asked for the seating arrangement to be condensed. There is also a concern about the microphones not working with Valley Vision's equipment.

43 4. Town Review:

44 A. Government Buildings

45 **Andrew Smith**, Public Works Director, stated the biggest increase in the budget is for the
 46 electricity at the new Town Hall which is not part of the contract that incorporates other town
 47 buildings. He is working on negotiating a sidebar agreement until he begins negotiating the
 48 current contract that expires in fall 2023.

49

50 Questions / Comments:

- 51 ▶ In response to a question from Vice Chair Jost, **Mr. Smith** stated he was not aware the
 52 Town Hall had not been added to the existing contract, but he is working on negotiating a
 53 side bar contract specifically for the Town Hall.
- 54 ▶ In Response to questions from Ms. Sand, **Mr. Eastman** stated the selectmen allocated
 55 ARPA funds to cover expenses related to the public restrooms. The selectmen have not
 56 taken a position at this time on utilizing Whitaker for public restrooms again. **Mr. Smith**
 57 stated an infrared study has not been done. **Mr. DegliAngeli** provided an overview of the
 58 building construction and utilities, noting when the bank owned the building, they spent
 59 \$88,000 on electricity and the town only spent \$43,000. The plan is to replace mechanical
 60 equipment when it reaches the end of its life with more energy efficient ones.
- 61 ▶ In response to questions from Mr. Marvel, **Mr. Eastman** stated selling the Annex has not
 62 been a thought, but it can be investigated. Additionally, he has been tasked with
 63 researching all the land owned by the town. Currently, there are four pieces of land that
 64 the selectmen approved for sale, one that is owned outright by the town. **Ms. Sand** stated
 65 \$8,000 was received in revenue from the Annex, but in 2024 \$15,000 is budgeted for a
 66 ramp and steps, therefore anything “extra” is being used for infrastructure maintenance.
 67 **Mr. Colbath** explained three years ago steps were taken to locate Eastman heirs and the
 68 expensive legal process that would need to be undertaken. **Mr. Davison** stated he was
 69 surprised the town would acquire property and hold onto it when it could generate
 70 revenue. **Mr. Colbath** stated the process is overwhelming and the outcome gets lost.
- 71 ▶ In response to a question from Mr. Drinkhall, **Mr. Smith** stated he is unable to tell where
 72 the \$25,000 was predicated from.
- 73 ▶ In response to questions from Mr. LeFebvre, Mr. Smith stated a new elevator will be
 74 installed at the Annex once it arrives. The Supervisors of the Checklist also use office
 75 space at the Annex that would have generated \$550/ month in rental revenue. **Mr.**
 76 **Colbath** explained the RSA requires the town to provide an adequate publicly accessible
 77 space with a vault. Mr. Smith stated thermostats were changed, windows replaced, and
 78 they are working on installing LED lighting to reduce energy costs. The only anticipated
 79 expenditure that has been added to the capital reserve is replacing the roof.
- 80 ▶ In response to a question from Mr. Davison, **Mr. Smith** stated the town does not belong to
 81 a co-op. A discussion ensued.

82

83 B. Highway

84 **Andrew Smith**, Public Works Director, stated there are three line items that have significant
 85 increases to them.

- 86 ➤ Wages: with four petitions for the town to take over new roads that meet town standards,
 87 there is a proposal for a new truck driver for \$43,680 annually with benefits and overtime.
 88 The additional increase is related to annual raises and COLA agreed to as part of the union
 89 contract.

- 90 ➤ Fuel: where the cost of diesel fuel is volatile, the proposed cost is based on the average
 91 annual usage, which is a \$116,000 increase.
 92 ➤ Salt: the quoted price increased by 10%.
 93 ➤ Striping: the cost of the paint increased to \$100+ for five gallons and the proposed cost
 94 includes the contract for long lines.

95 **Mr. DegliAngeli** stated any adjustments that come up between now and the deliberative
 96 session will be made at that time.
 97

98 Questions / Comments:

- 99 ▶ In response to questions from Mr. Marvel, **Mr. Smith** stated at the end of a snow storm
 100 the highway department goes out and scrapes the roads so they can sand/salt the roads.
 101 The total mileage added over the past 49 years can be obtained and will be provided to
 102 Chair Donohoe.
- 103 ▶ In response to questions from Ms. Sand, **Mr. Smith** stated he didn't know the total
 104 mileage for the petitioned roads but identified the roads as Royal View subdivision,
 105 Sargent Rd and Nickel Road, Barnes Extension and Common Court /Settler Green Drive.
 106 We have gotten to the point where each route is 2+ hours for an average of 10 miles,
 107 which is the tipping point. **Mr. DegliAngeli** stated that in 1974 the highway department
 108 had 13 employees, the same number of employees now. Back then they had two people in
 109 a truck as the plow controls were manual. In 1974 then the dump didn't have solid waste,
 110 parks and rec, sidewalks, and no new roads were petitioned for.
- 111 ▶ In Response to questions from Mr. Drinkhall, **Mr. Smith, and Mr. DegliAngeli** explained
 112 the reason the highway department goes out to treat the roads with minimal snow, cold
 113 weather, and rain. The sparks seen are coming from the carbides not the cutting edge that
 114 cost less than \$1,000 to replace. The cost of snow removal is approximately \$5,500
 115 depending on the size of the storm and any foreseeable storms. The cost includes hired
 116 trucks from L. A. Drew, two staff serve as traffic control, mechanic, and utilizing our own
 117 trucks and drivers. An actual cost analysis can be put together. The pavement line was
 118 overspent and will be paid back with the Highway Block Grant funds. The roads
 119 scheduled to be paved in 2023 fit into the \$504,000 budget based on the current pricing.
- 120 ▶ In Response to questions from Mr. LeFabvre, **Mr. Smith** stated the highway department
 121 has 10 employees and a foreman, Parks and Rec have 3 guys that come over to the
 122 highway department in the winter, and the landfill foreman plows as well. A brief
 123 discussion ensued.
- 124 ▶ In response to questions from Mr. Lewis, **Mr. Smith** stated they have not received a final
 125 bill from the striping company for 2022. The cost of the striping paint increased by 10%.
 126 **Mr. DegliAngeli** stated due to the constraints of the previous software many line items
 127 were combined but the new software allows all items to be broken out and captures the
 128 smaller pieces. The tool supply line item is up to cover the purchase of a plate compactor.
 129 IT used to be under the Finance Department and last year it was taken out and put into
 130 individual departments and there is one computer budgeted for.
- 131 ▶ In Response to questions from Chair Donohoe, Mr. Smith confirmed the new truck driver
 132 would be for 8 months only this year and if the proposed new roads were not accepted the
 133 new driver would not be hired.
 134

135 C. Solid Waste

136 **Andrew Smith**, Public Works Director, stated the only increases in the Solid Waste budget
 137 are related to wages (annual increases and COLA), an increase to the equipment lease for an
 138 excavator to fix slops, ditches, and drainage, and an increase for landfill materials, such as
 139 gravel.

140

141 Questions / Comments:

- 142 ▶ In response to questions from Ms. Sand, **Mr. DegliAngeli** explained the duties of the
 143 contracted landfill engineer. **Mr. Smith** stated the hours at the transfer station have not
 144 been reduced as two hours have been added to Tuesday and Saturday. Most of the
 145 overtime comes from the landfill hauling water. The water is transported to the North
 146 Conway treatment plant.
- 147 ▶ In response to a question from Mr. Jensen, **Mr. Smith** stated nothing has changed
 148 regarding budgeting for the landfill expansion. At some point the landfill engineer should
 149 resurvey and advise when we should start on phase 4 of 5.
- 150 ▶ In response to a question from Mr. LeFebvre, **Mr. Smith** stated the transfer station crew
 151 has slower days, typically Wednesday and Thursday, but they never sit around and wait
 152 for people to show up. It was suggested to investigate the slow and busy days to better
 153 fine tune the schedule.

154

155 D. Capital Reserve Funds

156 **Andrew Smith**, Public Works Director, reviewed the Capital Reserve warrant articles.

- 157 A. Infrastructure: the ask is \$500,000 and the project(s) are forecasted for five years. This
 158 year they will continue with the brick sidewalk replacement in North Conway and paving
- 159 ▶ In response to questions from Mr. Marvel, Mr. Smith confirmed concrete would be
 160 significantly less than replacing the pavers. The initial installation of the pavers was
 161 paid for by the Streets..... To preserve the life expectancy of the pavers, they are
 162 going to be sealed to prevent salt getting into them. Life expectancy of the current
 163 pavers was 20 years and we got 15+ out of them. Although the replacement of the
 164 pavers was discussed with the selectmen, we did not discuss replacing them with
 165 straight concrete. A brief discussion ensued.
- 166 B. Highway Equipment: the ask is \$425,000 and part of that would be used to purchase a new
 167 wheeler and the necessary equipment if the new roads are added.
- 168 ▶ In response to a question from Ms. Sand, Mr. Smith clarified the wheeler purchased in
 169 2020 was leased and the amount noted is for the last two payments and then we will
 170 own the truck.
- 171 C. Solid Waste: the ask is \$225, 000 and the three payments at the bottom are for the lease on
 172 the Cat Compactor.
- 173 D. Landfill Expansion: the ask is \$100,000 in preparation for when the landfill expansion
 174 occurs.
- 175 E. Government Buildings - owned: the ask is \$125,000 with many of the projects listed
 176 being used as place holders.
- 177 ▶ In response to a question from Chair Donohoe, Mr. Smith stated the paint shed is an
 178 estimate for labor and materials as it is a place holder at this time.
- 179 F. Government Buildings - leased: the ask is \$75,000 part of which will be used to replace
 180 the elevator. A brief discussion ensued regarding the pump at the bottom of the elevator.

- 181 ▶ In response to a question from Ms. Sand, Mr. Smith explained the renovations that are
 182 anticipated at Town Hall are to provide privacy for the Finance Department and Town
 183 Manager, along with providing space for the reorganization of the building
 184 department.
- 185 G. Parks Maintenance Vehicles: the ask is \$25,000 to purchase lawn mowers and trucks.
- 186 H. Police Vehicles: two vehicles are purchased every year as part of the replacement cycle.
 187 Any questions will be asked of the Chief when he presents the police department budget.
 188
- 189 E. Warrant Articles
- 190 Eastern Slope Regional Airport: **Allison Navia**, Airport manager for Eastern Slope Regional
 191 Airport and Sanford Seacoast Regional Airport, provided some background on her experience
 192 and noted she was hired at Eastern Slope in March 2022 as they were lacking such
 193 professional service. The airport serves all MWV and Western Maine with multiple
 194 contributors including Conway, Fryeburg, other municipalities, the Federal government, and
 195 the Maine and NH DOT. The airport is a complex hub the provides economics, education, and
 196 a portal for emergency services. Businesses make decisions based on the airport and the
 197 services it provides. The airport offers both full and part-time employment that gets
 198 individuals exposed to aviation. The airport hosts the Kennett High School and Fryeburg
 199 Academy STEM Aviation program. EMS services through the airport include life flight,
 200 DART, organ transplants, Angel Flights, law enforcement, and military training. Many of
 201 these services may not land at the airport but use them to make flights happen. Some
 202 examples of the benefits of the airport include it being used as a staging area during the active
 203 the active shooter event and to supply jet fuel for a helicopter assisting to distinguish a larger
 204 fire. Upcoming projects include congressional funds to expand the runway by 800 ft to offer
 205 aircraft year-round and all-weather use of the airport, along with taxiways and lighting. The
 206 airport entrance and Lyman Drive will be redone utilizing matching funds from Fryeburg and
 207 Northern Borders.
- 208 ▶ **Chair Donohoe** stated the airport is seeking \$12,000 in funding from Conway.
- 209 ▶ In response to a question from Vice Chair Jost, **Ms. Navia** explained the Federal funding
 210 using the government Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Trust Fund, which is allocated
 211 to different public airports based on size and type. Eastern Slope is considered general
 212 aviation and receives a \$150,000 entitlement funding, which can be built up over four
 213 years as the 90% share of specific and justified CAP. Eastern Slope also competed for and
 214 was awarded discretionary funds within the northeast region
- 215 ▶ In response to questions from Mr. Marvel, **Ms. Navia** explained if the funding is not
 216 available items get deferred until the money can be raised; however, cost cumulates and
 217 then you reach a dire need. Raising hangar fees is a delicate balance as you can only do so
 218 much until you have empty hangars. I am not referring to box stores, rather incidental
 219 secondary economic impacts, such as someone flying here to ski, stay at a hotel, and eat at
 220 local restaurants. The increased size of the runway would allow the current aircraft to use
 221 the runway year-round and in all weather conditions as it allows for additional braking.
- 222 ▶ There are multiple jobs within aviation and the STEM aviation program can broaden their
 223 horizons.
- 224 ▶ In response to questions from Mr. Davison, **Ms. Navia** stated there are four communities
 225 within the region that have contributed money to the airport. The airport is unique and NH
 226 DOT funds it, which speaks to the nature of a regional airport.

- 227 ▶ In response to questions from Mr. Jensen, **Ms. Navia** stated there are no fees for takeoffs
228 and landings, only hangar fees which are competitive within the region, plus they offer
229 incentives. She explained how data is captured and noted 60-70% are visitors and there are
230 36 pilots that call Easter Slope homebase.
231

232 **Mr. Eastman** provided an overview of the remaining warrant articles.

- 233 ▶ In response to a question from Mr. Marvel, **Mr. Colbath** explained due to a change in the
234 RSA the next two articles are required so the language matches the current law.
235 ▶ In response to questions from Ms. Sand, **Mr. Colbath** explained how the Community
236 District came about and its purpose. **Mr. Eastman** stated if the union contract does not
237 pass it will revert to the prior contract without a COLA increase.
238 ▶ In response to a question from Vice Chair Jost, **Mr. Eastman** confirmed if Conway
239 Village Fire Department warrant articles passed but they decided not to fold at this time
240 but chose to down the road the warrant articles would have to be presented again.
241 ▶ In response to a question from Mr. Jensen, **Mr. Eastman** stated the voters don't get to
242 decide as the town is required to take over Conway Village Fire.
243 ▶ A discussion ensued regarding the Conway precinct's financial responsibility related to
244 the ambulance service and how the impact on the taxes.
245

246 **Mr. DegliAngeli** provided an overview of the warrant article related to the betterment of
247 Common Court and Settlers Green Drive. Noting Settlers Green being the only abutters would
248 be responsible for the principle and interest on a bond that will be taken out by the town to
249 cover expenses to bring these roads up to town ordinance. A discussion ensued.
250

251 5. Old Business: None

252
253 6. New Business:

254
255 **Vice Chair Jost** stated both meetings next week will be at the Marshall Gymnasium.
256

257 7. Public / Media Questions or Comments: None

258
259 8. Adjourn:

260 **Vice Chair Jost** moved, seconded by **Mr. Jensen** to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m. Motion
261 **Carries (11-0-0)**
262

263 Respectfully Submitted,

264 *Lisa E. Towle,*

265 Recording Secretary