



Board of Selectmen's Meeting

Rindge Town Office

Date: December 9th, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Selectmen: Chairman Karl Pruter, Vicechair Bob Hamilton, and Select Board Member Tom Coney. Also present were the Town Administrator Lori Rautiola, Finance Director Laurie May, and members of the public.

The meeting opened at 12:05 pm.

2025 Budget Work Session:

Bob stated the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) did not come up with all the specific cuts they would recommend but the recommended total they voted on is \$5,625,000. This is a \$204,509 cut from the version 4 2025 budget proposal. The increase for the 2024 budget to the version 4 2025 budget proposal is \$476,775 or 8.91%. The increase for the 2024 budget to the BAC-recommended 2025 budget is \$272,266 or 5.1%. All these numbers include COLA and step increases. The increase for the default 2025 budget to the version 4 2025 budget proposal is \$390,747 or 7.2%. The increase for the default 2025 budget to the BAC recommendation is \$186,238 or 3.4%. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for New England is 3.5%. From the 2024 budget, this total increase of 3.5% would be \$187,345. Tom stated that the default budget is not a viable option.

Tom presented what he saw as the fixed and variable expenses added to the 2024 budget. The total fixed expense increase was \$189,677 leaving \$82,589 from the BAC's recommended increase. The total variable expense increase was \$60,830. Adding both expense totals together is \$250,507, leaving \$21,259 from the BAC's recommended increase. Tom stated none of these numbers include COLA or a step increase and the COLA is about \$60,000 with benefits. Bob stated the BAC recommended a raise, not COLA, because it extends to all employees. Bob asked Laurie what the difference is cutting the raise by percentage points from the 3%. Laurie stated the difference between 3% and 2.5% is \$9,760, 3% and 2% is about \$19,000, and cutting the COLA entirely is \$58,516.

The board discussed the Fire Department Succession line item and wanted to cut at least \$20,000. There was a discussion about the Fire Department Wages. Bob stated the BAC wants to cut the Police Department's overtime increase and \$10,000 of the shift differential. Lori stated that the Police Chief is willing to cut \$5,775 from the weapons and ammo line and \$3,000 from the IT budget. Lori recommended starting the shift differential midway through the year and only cutting \$7,500. The board agreed to cut \$10,000 from overtime and the cuts Lori recommended.

The board briefly discussed cutting \$20,000 from the executive secretary's position as it is currently part-time. The BAC recommended moving \$12,000 of the recreation department's hourly wages to revolving and leaving \$100. There was a discussion of the use of the revolving fund and the increase in the program fees. The board agreed to move the \$12,099 to Rec Revolving and cut \$200 from the Halloween line item. The board agreed to cut \$500 from the town office staff development line. There was a discussion about the wages for maintenance of the parks and cemeteries, using the perpetual care fund, and billing the trustees. For the planning board budget, they agreed to cut \$11,252 from wages – hourly. Roberta suggested moving \$100 from staff development into contracted services in the planning board budget. The board agreed to cut \$1,000 from the Street Lights budget. The board discussed assessing hourly wages. Tom stated that if the board cannot find a consensus on the budget, then the town will end up going default. Bob stated that Tina Sbrega recommended meeting with all the department heads to request a 5% further cut. Karl asked Lori to do this at

the department head meeting on Thursday. The board scheduled a meeting for Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Stenersen

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Executive Secretary