

Rindge Budget Advisory Committee
MINUTES
December 5, 2024

PRESENT

Budget Advisory Members: Phil Motta, Roberta Oeser, Tina Sbrega, Bob Hamilton (Ex-officio), Dan Whitney, Casey Burrage
Also attending: Tom Coneys

Phil called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance at 7:07 pm

Bob had requested copies of the current contracts for department heads to determine if they were eligible for the COLA. They were not the current ones and the language was not consistent. Varied from 'shall be eligible' to 'shall be considered eligible'. Dan thought they should all be boiler plate. It was suggested to not call it a 'COLA' but another term as it appears the portion for the department heads is around \$24k.

Consensus is that the budget is too high. Tina suggested asking all department heads to look for a 5% decrease. Problem with that is most of increase is due to wages and benefits not the operating side. Discussion about trying to get budget to withing 200k of default.

Dan was concerned about the DIP requests and asked if there would be money left in this years budget to cover at least half of the requested \$550k. Bob didn't think there would be that much left. Should have a good idea by Deliberative Session.

Bob made a motion to approve the minutes of November 21, 2024. Second by Tina. Approved 6-0-0.

Discussion of many items took place in rapid order: PD overtime to remain flat, shift differential seemed excessive as when applying for police work it is generally assumed newest hires get the night and overnight shifts. It's part of the process. Raise numbers don't make since, but cant figure exactly how they are determined. Staff development seems high and it was discussed that the BOS should have a policy about paying for hotels only if the conference is further away than Concord. Also questioned the need for copper line for phones since all buildings have generators now.

The BOS will be having a 'work' meeting on the budget on Monday. Roberta said she would get the minutes done and have the list of suggested cuts ready before that meeting. If others had suggestions, they should be sent to be added to the list.

Roberta suggested the BAC give a budget recommendation on range with a list of suggested cuts to the BOS. Different amounts were discussed.

Dan motioned to recommend a range of \$5,611,000 to 5,650,000. Second by Casey. After discussion, Dan withdrew and Casey withdrew the motion and second.

Dan made a motion to recommend the budget not to exceed \$5,625,000. Second by Tina. Vote 6-0-0.

Next meeting with the BOS is December 11. Next BAC meeting is January 23 to vote on the warrant articles and budget. Meeting will have to be in the Planning Office as ConCom is scheduled for the meeting room.

Adjourned at 9:07 pm.

/Roberta Oeser