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GEORGIA

VERMONT

Selectboard Special Budget Meeting

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

Chris Letourneau Meeting Room and via Zoom

Minutes

Zoom Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6165843896?pwd=STduU2JzTmpiVmE1MXZSaWZWLzVadz09>

Meeting ID: 616 584 3896 | **Passcode:** 5243524

Dial by your Location: 1 929 205 6099 (New York)

PRESENT: Carl Rosenquist, Jamie Comstock, Devon Thomas, Nick Martin, and Shannon Jenkins

STAFF: Cheryl Letourneau, April Edwards, Doug Bergstrom, Keith Baker, and Todd Cadieux

PUBLIC: Suzanna Brown and Ken Minck

1. **CALL TO ORDER at 4:04**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**
4. **SELECTBOARD MINUTES AND WARRANTS**
 - A. Approval of Selectboard Budget Meeting Minutes for 01/03/2024 at 1/17/2024 meeting
5. **BOARD BUSINESS (Public comment on agenda items limited to 5 minutes)**
 - A. Budget

Public Works/ Highway Department: Discussed Highway budget with T. Cadieux. Todd reviewed the highway and public works budget with the Selectboard, and it looked ok. Discussed how the loan payments for equipment and trucks would change. All loan payments will now be paid out of another line item and not the reserve fund. The board agreed to put \$125,000 into the reserve fund to purchase a new highway truck. If a new truck is ordered now, it will not be available until 2026.

The hiring of two seasonal workers for mowing and other duties for the summer will be included in the budget.

32 **Fire Department:** K. Baker discussed its budget with the Selectboard and how the Fire
 33 Department uses the money from impact fees to purchase new gear when needed. The
 34 Selectboard also explained how the reserve fund and loan payments would work this year.
 35 Keith explained that the Ladder Truck payment does not come out of the reserve funds. The
 36 Selectboard agreed to put \$20,000 into the reserve fund for the Fire Department for 2024. Keith
 37 and Todd also explained that the fire department water holding tanks have been leaking for
 38 years and he is worried that a sink hole could potentially happen as it is a large amount of water
 39 that is leaking. The tanks are underground and will need to be dug up to see if the tanks are
 40 leaking or the piping. Todd had to add 18,000 gallons of water to the tanks for the low water
 41 alarms to shut off. Keith would like to request a portion of the ARPA funds to fix this issue.
 42 Cheryl will check to see if insurance will cover the cost.

43 K. Baker would also like to increase his salary budget for the Firefighters and Officers. This is
 44 due to the minimum wage increase.

45 **Conservation:** K. Minck and Suzanna Brown spoke on behalf of the Conservation budget. Ken
 46 questioned the American Tower money that is supposed to in the Conservation and Parks n'
 47 Recs budget every year. This is normally 5% of the revenue received from American Tower for
 48 each department. The accountant would like to see this done at the end of the year after all
 49 revenue has come in and should not be a budgeted line item. This will be managed just like the
 50 impact fees.

51 Suzanna Brown says she can raise the \$1,000.00 for the flags instead of budgeting for them.

52 S. Jenkins stated that Valerie's pay is not acceptable and Valerie's not content getting \$16.00
 53 per hour right now. S. Jenkins would like to allocate money to the library, so Valerie gets
 54 \$21.00 per hour. N. Martin states the library submitted a revised budget that raises the pay to
 55 \$18.00 per hour. S. Jenkins states this is still not enough. N. Martins responds with the board
 56 agreed to more funds for the library, but it is up to the library trustees to decide where the
 57 money will be distributed in their budget.

58 The budget discussion was set around the increase being 16.56%. This will allow the reserve
 59 fund to be funded correctly for future purchases and repairs that are needed.

60 This rate does not include, if approved, the bond to fix the bridge on Mill River bridge.

61 Suzanna Brown suggests selling the budget at 16.56% because the town budget is a small
 62 portion of the tax money compared to the school.

63 **ARPA:** The available balance of ARPA funds is \$1,009,287.13. J. Comstock presented a
 64 spreadsheet with a breakdown of how the ARPA funds could be used to offset the 16.47%
 65 increase.

66 \$178,000.00 for paving

67 \$300,000.00 for bridge repair

68 \$250,000.00 for a New Highway Truck and not fund the reserved fund this year.

69 \$30,00.00 for Library carpet

70 \$44,000.00 for Fire Department tanks and turnout gear

71 \$30,000.00 for heating and well at the town office

72 \$22,000.00 for Conservation fix bridge and wetlands at town garage

73 \$14,773.00 for Historical Society (\$20,000 total)

74 \$80,000.00 for Rec Fund for Building

75 \$ 60,514.00 for proposed community projects

76 This will bring the budget increase to 11.34% instead of 16.56%

77 Motion to adjourn at 9:40 by C. Rosenquist, seconded by N. Martin all in favor.

78

79 **Posted to the Town website.**

80 **Signed: Cheryl Letourneau, Town Administrator**

81 **Phone: 802-524-3524 | Fax: 802-524-3543 | Website: townofgeorgia.com**

Approved