

1 **Budget Committee**
2 **Town of Sandown, NH**
3 **November 8th, 2023**

4 **Meeting Date:** Wednesday, November 8th, 2023

5 **Meeting Location:** Town Hall, Upper Hall

6 **Members Present:** Chairman Leslie Kruithof; Vice Chair Steve Brown, Dave Solomon, Assunta
7 Ternullo; Amanda Knight, Leif Aubrey, Ben Sharpe – ex-officio

8 **Also Present:** Finance Director Gayle Hamel; Recording Secretary Barbara Kayyal

9
10 Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

11
12 There are 2 sets of minutes to review.

13 **Minutes from 9/13/23**

14 No Discussion

15
16 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the 9/13/2023 minutes as read

17 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

18 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,
19 Assunta Ternullo

20 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

21 **Minutes from 10/18/23**

22 No Discussion

23
24 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the 10/18/2023 minutes as read

25 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

26 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,
27 Assunta Ternullo

28 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

29
30 **Town Clerk - #4140-02**

31 Dawn Nicolaisen, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, presented this budget. Dave Solomon
32 questioned why there was an 8% increase to the payroll line as the town wide increase was set at
33 4%. Gayle Hamel explains that because the matrix was adopted last year, and some positions
34 needed a bigger increase to bring them up to their matrix level, but last year only went into effect

35 April 1st. There is still 13 weeks of pay that has to be accounted for, otherwise they will fall out of
36 the matrix. After this year, all positions will only have the universal COLA + year of service increase.

37 Leslie Kruithof asks if the deliberative line is going to be enough, and Dawn answers it is a
38 guess based on previous years. Leslie confirms this is for the recording secretary for the
39 Deliberative Session. Telephone line is fairly even.

40 Software support went down because last year we bought the program and now we're just
41 paying for support. Dawn mentioned seminars are up because the cost to go to these seminars are
42 up, but there are RSAs that we must budget for these seminars. State mailouts are zeroed out
43 because they're now included in the software support. Dues are down. One of the programs we use
44 called Price Digest is now included in the software program, although the software program for that
45 portion is more expensive. However, because it was such a lengthy transition from the old software
46 to the new, they gave us a discount for it this year. We'll see what happens next year but we are
47 likely to go back to the Price Digest next year. This program pulls up tractor trailers, motorcycles,
48 campers, everything. Helpful to pull up GVWs or MSRPs.

49 The dog licenses line is for the dog tags and the shipping. The supplies line is up because the
50 price for everything has gone up. Supplies are for all the office supplies needed to run the office. Leif
51 asked if this supply line is across different departments or if this pooled altogether. Dawn answers
52 that each department puts their own orders in, but Paula and Andrea will let all the departments
53 know "I'm putting in an order for Staples or Amazon, what do you need?" We try to get the best
54 prices we can.

55 Bank mileage is for reimbursing going to the bank. We don't really use the book line item,
56 but Dawn was told to keep \$50 in there to keep the line item open. Leslie asked why the actuals for
57 the bank mileage are about half of the budgeted amount. Dawn answered that she needs to keep her
58 schedule of traveling to the bank private for safety reasons.

59 The office equipment includes a folding machine which is under a lease. Dawn says this
60 folding machine is the best thing they've ever invested in. Because of all of the renovations
61 downstairs, there is going to be a third window in the town clerk office, this line item is going to get
62 a third printer. This printer needs to meet state specifications for registrations and titles.

63 Ben Sharpe asked where the dog license revenue goes. Dawn answered that a certain
64 portion goes to the state and the rest goes to the town clerk revenue. In the town report, it lists how
65 many licenses were issued. Dawn mentioned in the conference she went to, she was asked why
66 we're still charging what we're charging. The state sets a maximum we can charge and we're below
67 that. Ben mentioned people were talking about how it changed from there being a third notice.
68 Dawn states there are two courtesy notices and notices in the town sign, the town webpage, etc.

69 Leslie asked what is included in the \$1.4 million revenue line. Gayle answers UCC filings,
70 vehicle permits and registrations, dredge and fill, poll licenses, dog licenses (town portion),
71 marriage licenses, vital statistics, town fees, election and registration filing fees, election recount
72 fees, dog late penalty fees, marriage services, copies for town clerk, return check.

73

74 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the Town Clerk (#4140-02) budget with gross expenses of
75 \$95,047, revenue of \$1,400,000 and net expenses of -\$1,304,953, pending further review.

76 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

77 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Assunta Ternullo

78 **Opposed:** Dave Solomon

79 **Motion passes 6-1-0**

80

81 Dave states his “no” vote is to represent the 45% of voters who voted no on the budget. He
82 will vote against large increases to payroll lines or things that are absolutely necessary for us to get
83 by next year. He reiterates it has nothing to do with this specific position or person. Dave would like
84 this increase to not be fully adopted in one year. Ben suggests making a motion to reduce the line
85 item.

86 **Tax Collector - #4150-07**

87 Dawn Nicolaisen, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, presented this budget. Dawn mentions the tax
88 lien expenses line item is down a little bit because there was a decrease in tax liening. The tax
89 program support line item is down because the purchase has been made and we’re now just paying
90 for support. Seminars are required by RSA to be budgeted for. Dawn has never been to one of these
91 seminars and next year her team wants to go because there are a lot of changes coming to liening
92 and deeding. Tax bill printing is for the paper we print out the tax bills on. Dues are for the NH Tax
93 Collectors Association. Supplies are for office supplies such as toner, envelopes, etc. Copier lease
94 maintenance contract is what we have to pay for our leased copier, along with the \$300 contract
95 that comes with it.

96

97 **Motion by** Dave Solomon to reduce the elected payroll line of the Tax Collector (#4150-07) budget
98 by \$2,040, giving a new total of \$73,608.

99 **Seconded by:** Assunta Ternullo to listen to the discussion.

100 **Discussion:** Dave clarifies this amount represents a 4% increase. Lynne Blaisdell, Town
101 Administrator explains why it is not actually greater than a 4% raise. Leif Aubrey asks about the
102 scheduling of pay raises to alleviate this confusion. Gayle answers that we set the pay raises to come
103 after the election because we don’t know if the new year’s budget is going to pass. Gayle reiterates
104 the matrix is something the town’s been working on for years and was approved by the Budget
105 Committee and Board of Selectmen last year. Gayle mentioned the hardships the town faced in
106 trying to keep and recruit employees due to not having competitive wages.

107 **In Favor:** Dave Solomon

108 **Opposed:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Assunta Ternullo

109 **Motion fails 1-6-0**

110

111 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the Tax Collector (#4150-07) budget with gross expenses of
112 \$85,090, revenue of \$65,000 and net expenses of \$20,090, pending further review.

113 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

114 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Assunta Ternullo

115 **Opposed:** Dave Solomon

116 **Motion passes 6-1-0**

117 Finance #4150-05

118 Gayle Hamel, Finance Director, presented this budget. The payroll line is in the same boat as
119 the tax collector/town clerk positions. The seminars line and the computer software/hardware line
120 are up because those costs went up. Dave declines to make a motion, he restates he will be voting
121 no due to the payroll line exceeding the 4%.

122

123 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the Finance (#4150-05) budget with gross expenses of \$104,550,
124 revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$104,550, pending further review.

125 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

126 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Assunta Ternullo

127 **Opposed:** Dave Solomon

128 **Motion passes 6-1-0**

129 Assessing #4150-06

130 Lynne Blaisdell, Town Administrator, presented this budget. We used to pay upfront the
131 year the assessments are due, but because our vendor also does reevaluations, we can now pay a
132 more even amount every year instead of having a \$50,000 spike every couple of years. This contract
133 started back in 2022, and each year of this 5 year contract has a small increase and is partially tied
134 to the CPI. Every 5 years this contract is shopped around for.

135

136 **Motion by** Amanda Knight to accept the Assessing (#4150-06) budget with gross expenses of
137 \$87,626, revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$87,626, pending further review.

138 **Seconded by:** Steve Brown

139 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,
140 Assunta Ternullo

141 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

142 Treasurer #4150-08

143 Gayle Hamel, Finance Director, presented this budget. The payroll line has the 4% increase
144 and the other two line items, supplies and mileage, are level funded.

145

146 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the Treasurer (#4150-08) budget with gross expenses of \$4,545,
147 revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$4,545, pending further review.

148 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

149 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,
150 Assunta Ternullo

151 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

152

153 Budget Committee #4150-09

154 Gayle Hamel, Finance Director, presented this budget. This budget was gone over during the
155 Budget Committee's first meeting. The committee discusses the seminar line item, with Assunta
156 stating this will be her last year, so there will be at least one new member next year. Gayle
157 emphasizes that it is a very helpful workshop, especially for new members.

158

159 **Motion by** Ben Sharpe to accept the Budget Committee (#4150-09) budget with gross expenses of
160 \$1,271 revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$1,271, pending further review.

161 **Seconded by:** Steve Brown

162 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,
163 Assunta Ternullo

164 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

165 Police #4210

166 Joe Gordon, Police Chief, presented this budget. Payroll is down because we lost officers to
167 other towns. Raises and payroll changes will come through the police union negotiations and a
168 warrant article. Payroll may be down, but overtime is up because we need other officers to take
169 extra shifts to make up for the lost employees. The Chief struggles to get new officers, even with a
170 \$20,000 sign-on bonus, which comes out of the payroll line. This bonus is not a lump sum but given
171 out over several years. Assunta asked about grants to help the towns retain officers, and there
172 aren't any. The Chief stresses the police union warrant article is going to be greater than 4% for
173 some positions, as he is struggling to bring in lower level officers.

174 Witness fees are for the time the officers spend in court. Additional duties are for going to
175 court as a prosecutor, doing field training, firearms training, and over the past year it's been
176 blended into the regular work schedule. Callback hours is determined by the union contract. Shift
177 differential is \$0.50 for evenings and a \$1 for overnights, and this is in the contract. Bereavement
178 leave and grievance pay are level. The incremental sick days line is down 27%. Steve Brown asks
179 why the incremental sick days line is set so much higher than it's ever been used. The Chief
180 answered that the officers can roll those hours over, and if they all decide to use those days, they
181 need the money to support that.

182 The tuition reimbursement line item is up, despite not really using it in the past. John Sable
183 retired, and he ran the IT system at the station for about 23 years. He still comes in to do per diem
184 work. With his absence, we're training Artimovich to do Sable's job. It's been very beneficial and
185 cost effective to use someone in house for this work. This project is covered by a couple line items.
186 Tuition reimbursement covers the classes and books. Paying for outside support could cost around
187 \$8,200 a year, so this is a great cost saving endeavor. Educational incentive is a union benefit to pay
188 employees to further their education, \$0.50 for an Associate's degree and \$1.00 for a Bachelor's
189 degree. Ben asked why the Education Incentive line was \$1 for the past two years, the Chief
190 answered because they didn't have anyone using this incentive. The \$3,592 is for any new hire with
191 a degree.

192

193 **Motion by** Ben Sharpe to reduce Educational Incentive line item in from the Police (#4210) budget
194 from \$3,592 down to \$1.

195 **Seconded by:** Steve Brown

196 **Discussion:** The Chief clarifies one of their new hires does have a degree and doesn't know if the
197 other new hire will have one. It is also clarified that the educational incentive has been used
198 recently, but it was taken from the payroll line for paysheet purposes.

199 **In Favor:** Steve Brown, Ben Sharpe

200 **Opposed:** Leif Aubrey, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

201 **Motion fails 2-5-0**

202

203 Prosecution rate has been the same for many years. Communications and telephone lines
204 are level funded, we have a really good cell phone rate for municipal rates. The health line is for
205 polygraphs and psychological evaluations needed for hiring.

206 The training for this year is for regular annual ethics/bias/etc. training and annual firearms
207 training, mandated by law. It also contains \$5,000 for one officer to take S. NH Special Operations
208 Unit training. This individual is likely to leave if this training isn't offered, and the Chief feels they
209 are likely to stay if we can support them in this training. The Chief says this is a great asset to the
210 town and they will be able to support the state and area as well.

211

212 **Motion by** Ben Sharpe to reduce Training line item in from the Police (#4210) budget from
213 \$19,687 down to \$14,687.

214 **Seconded by:** Steve Brown

215 **Discussion:** The Chief states this is a matter of retention, and says he has lost officers because he
216 hasn't supported their interests in the past, and he thinks he's going to lose this officer if he can't
217 support this training. This training will also provide value to this town and region and state. Steve
218 asks if the Chief cannot find \$5,000 in his \$870,000 budget. The Chief responds that he only asked
219 for what he needed and nothing more, so no he could not.

220 **In Favor:** Steve Brown, Ben Sharpe

221 **Opposed:** Leif Aubrey, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

222 **Motion fails 2-5-0**

223

224 Dues are paid to NH Chiefs Association, N.S.P.I.N., and Rockingham County Chief of Police.
225 Supplies are up because the cost of supplies are up a little bit. While ammo is level funded from last
226 year, it's up from previous years, due to the rise in cost. The equipment maintenance line item
227 includes updating their Microsoft licenses for Excel, Word, Powerpoint, and email. This line item
228 also includes a copier agreement, radio tuneups, flashlight batteries, AED batteries and electrodes,
229 IMC updates and support, body camera lease and maintenance. The gas line is the Chief's best guess
230 on what gas is going to be using last few year's numbers and projections. The Chief is debating
231 between the hybrid and non-hybrid version of the Explorer. Next year we should have a clearer
232 picture of the savings this will bring. The vehicle maintenance line is detailed in the packet. Leslie
233 asked about the ACO Jeep, and the Chief says they use it for multiple purposes as well as Animal
234 Control purposes.

235 Books need to be updated periodically. It can be digital versions as well as physical books,
236 and the Chief likes physical books. Uniforms are part of the union contract, including their 5 sets of
237 uniforms along with vests and carriers. There are grants for the kevlar part of the vests, but the
238 outer carriers are supported by the town. Steve asked about anticipated grants for this year. The
239 Chief states they are always looking for grants when they're available, and lists some of the grants
240 the town gets such as training grants, selective enforcement grants (gets officers out to monitor
241 problem areas), DWI grants, and grants updating the mobile units. Will Sable goes out and looks for
242 grants and is currently waiting back on one. There are no grants for police cruisers. Some of these
243 grants are only reimbursements, so we still need to budget for these line items. Gayle mentioned
244 the OHRV grants, but the Chief says the judge doesn't always find the person guilty so it's not very
245 helpful. Assunta mentions just because we apply for grants doesn't mean we always get them.

246 The photography line item is for thumb drives, and phone dumps for investigations. The
247 community service line is for firearms safety courses, OHRV safety courses, promotional stickers to
248 give to children, and flowers.

249 Dave asked about when the Chief plans to purchase firearms this year, and the Chief
250 answered they are in order, they are just waiting for federal guidelines to be approved. The
251 equipment purchase line item went down for next year because the firearms will be bought with
252 this year's money. This line item covers various replacements needed throughout the year,
253 including desktop computer, Imc mobile software and upgrade. Brand new tasers are too
254 expensive, so we're getting middle grade, refurbished, but comes with cloud based cameras. For the
255 cruiser line, we are at the end of the lease for the cruiser. The Chief found out the \$36K-39K vehicle
256 jumped up to \$53K. They are trying to charge the Chief lot fees. The Chief is struggling to find cars
257 available, and needs money available when he can find one, so he can buy it outright or at least get a
258 lease payment on it. The charger is predicted to need to be swapped out, it's starting to cause larger
259 problems. There is also the detail revolving fund, which has about \$28K in it right now. The \$25K in
260 the cruiser line item along with the revolving fund are still not enough to purchase and outfit a
261 vehicle. Gayle says we can encumber the money if the Chief is able to find a car by the end of year.
262 Ben asks which other funds are available to the police budget, in addition to the detail revolving
263 fund. There is only an OHRV safety fund, which is used for OHRVs.

264 The personal time allotment is something all departments have, it's money to pay out upon
265 an employee's departure. Gayle states it's a fourth quarter expenditure. It was not included for a
266 long time, and made it difficult for budgets such as the police department to be bottom-line.
267 Revenue comes from licenses to carry, pistol permits, accident reports, incident reports, witness
268 fees, parking tickets, court fines. Leif asked about speeding tickets, and the Chief said it all goes to
269 the state and it pays for the police academy. Leslie asked why we pay for our officers to attend the
270 police academy, and the Chief clarified we pay the officers their hourly rate to attend. Money from
271 speeding tickets do not go to the town, we do not have quotas. The OHRV side does bring 60% of
272 that money to the town and the state gets the other 40%. The detail revolving fund is funded by
273 doing police details which is billed to the vendor, and this money is only for police cruisers. Ben
274 asked about Animal Control, and the Chief said that used to be its own budget but it's been ceased,
275 and is incorporated into the police duties.

276

277 **Motion by** Amanda Knight to accept the Police (#4210) budget with gross expenses of \$870,344
278 revenue of \$1,790 and net expenses of \$868,554, pending further review.

279 **Seconded by:** Dave Solomon

280 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

281 **Opposed:** Steve Brown, Ben Sharpe

282 **Motion passes 5-2-0**

283

284 Steve clarifies that he thinks the Chief put together a great budget with great
285 documentation. His only issue was with the two line items.

286 **Patriotic Purposes #4583**

287 The Fireworks line item is set at \$5,000 and the wreaths/flags is set at \$250. Dave said he
288 would not support this budget with the fireworks line.

289

290 **Motion by** Dave Solomon to reduce Fireworks line item in from the Patriotic Purposes (#4583)
291 budget from \$5,000 down to \$0.

292 **Seconded by:** Amanda Knight

293 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Dave Solomon, Assunta
294 Ternullo

295 **Opposed:** Ben Sharpe

296 **Motion passes 6-1-0**

297

298 Ben said the town voted for the fireworks on the warrant article, and the tradition is to put
299 it in the budget after it passes. This keeps going up to warrant article and keeps being a yes vote.
300 Dave mentions we can fundraise to do the town hall lighting and oktoberfest, we can fundraise for
301 fireworks. Assunta mentions this might be the year this doesn't pass, as our taxes are up, even
302 though \$5,000 doesn't make a huge difference.

303

304 **Motion by** Leslie Kruithof to accept the Patriotic Purposes (#4583) budget with gross expenses of
305 \$250 revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$250, pending further review.

306 **Seconded by:** Assunta Ternullo

307 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,
308 Assunta Ternullo

309 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

310

311 **Motion by** Leslie Kruithof to adjourn the meeting.

312 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe seconded the motion.

313 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,
314 Assunta Ternullo

315 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

316 The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55pm.

317

318 Submitted By:

319 Amanda Knight