

Town of Stoddard  
Monday, March 14, 2022  
Town Hall – 7 PM

## **BUDGET HEARING**

Attendees include Robert Fee – Chair, Christopher Madden – Selectmen, Stephen McGerty – Selectmen, Michelle Pong – Town Administrator and Vickie Williams Secretary.

Guests include Harry Power, David Vaillancourt, Karen Bell, Trevor Anderson, Joe Traniello, Carol & Dave (Zoom), Alana C (Zoom), Terri LaRoche, Margo Santoro, Diane Latimer, David Dahlberg, Jane McOsker, Jason Kovarik, and Russell W Chisholm.

Pledge of Allegiance

## **BUDGET HEARING**

Article 1 – Elections to choose by ballot Town Officers

Article 2 – General Municipal Operations - \$634,608.00

- There was a \$1,500.00 correction for the fire truck principal
- Property evaluation and Health seem to be off between the actual budget and the MS636 report for the state.
- The health is actually divided into 7 separate parts
- You are comparing 2 completely different documents. The State figures are figured differently than the Town numbers. Would be happy to go over that separately in the office.
- There is an overall 11.52% increase in the entire warrant article.

Significant Budget Increases \$5,000.00 and Over:

Fire - \$38,000.00

BOS Payroll - \$22,000.00

Assessing - \$7,000.00

Police Payroll - \$36,120.00

Ambulance Service - \$24,000.00

Software Fire Department - \$5,700.00

Fuel, Heat & Electric across all Depts. - \$13,600

All Other increases - \$16,285.00

Fire – For the payment of the new truck.

Bos Payroll – for Bookkeeper and succession training.

Assessing – The Assessor will be leaving – someone must be trained to take over this job. M & N Assessing will pick up site visits. Need an office person for Assessing to do the daily work and handle the phone calls.

Police Payroll – Number of people saying there is not enough Patrol. At the time we have a Police Chief and 1 Officer at part-time. This would include hiring an additional part-time officer.

Ambulance – Diluzio is selling their business. The County is looking to purchase this business and has told the Town if they do so the Ambulance fees would increase by as much as 3 times the contract now held with Diluzio. Diluzio will honor the contract while in business, the County will not. Setting the money aside based on what we are being told by the County. Why can't this be put in a separate warrant article for the next year. It can but you would not be able to spend the money for a year due to how the reserve funds are set up by State law. If not funded for this year and the sale goes through we will not be able to pay the bill when it comes in and the Town of Stoddard will have no ambulance service.

THE DRA REQUIRES THE TOWN RESERVE FUNDS BE BETWEEN 11 – 14% - THE LOWEST 7% - WE AS A TOWN ARE CURRENTLY AT 5.7% PERCENT IF THIS IS NOT RAISED A LITTLE THE STATE COULD RAISE ARE TAXES TO MAKE THIS UP.

Software for Fire Dept – Trevor Anderson – Deputy Fire Chief spoke to this item. The system now used is being phased out. So this consists of 3 different areas. Spotted Dog is \$700.00 a year for responding software. You can see who is responding to the calls, the times, keeps track of the department who is off at the moment and who can respond to the calls. 2<sup>nd</sup> is Cad Integration called Fire House which works with the government has the fire dept is required by law to report all fires and calls to the government. Computer server for the Fire Department, at this time everything is kept on paper. There would be a 3<sup>rd</sup> party IT person with service to the cloud server network is \$200.00 per month. It will also have a greater firewall to protect the hipaa laws of patient files.

Fuel, Heat & Electric – Can this not be decreased, I know prices are rising but if you go over the line items they don't seem to spend the money already allocated to them. Don't we have a contract for Propane, that contract is for this year only. Next year will be a new contract. The Fire Department still runs on oil. This is based on increases for all gas, heat, oil, and electricity for all Departments within the Town of Stoddard.

General Operating Budget Specifics:

Executive Budget – Increase in the office & data equipment, there is a request for 1 new laptop. Need 1 more desktop computer, can possibly get a good deal on another file server (can possibly hold off 1 year on this item but no longer). Includes all updating of the system upgrades. \$3,000.00 for BSMI upgrade (system is 25 years old) and Direct Deposit Implementation for \$1,500.00. Payroll has been discussed the need for a Bookkeeper to balance the books monthly, Training of Treasurer & and Assessor Training. Treasurer training can this not be reduced? The Treasurer should be able to balance the books. The Treasurer is an elected position at this time there is no requirement that the elected Treasurer has knowledge or training in bookkeeping or accounting. Why would you want the same person who writes the checks also reconciling the checks. The Bookkeeper portion could be reduced to \$7500.00, then \$2,800.00 for Assessor Training and \$7,000.00 to train someone for tax collector, town clerk and treasurer so that there is someone who could fill in. Asking for an additional \$17,308.00 for the Executive Budget for the Bookkeeper, Assessor Training, and Training in Treasurer, Town Clerk and Tax Collector for

training of another person in these departments so that someone could fill in if needed or someone is on vacation or sick.

**Stephen motioned to accept the additional \$17,308.00 for the Executive Budget for these new positions. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All Agreed.**

Election Salaries were asked for by the Town Moderator (was not present at the budget hearing), for Ballot Clerks, Counters, Deputy Moderator and Moderator. There are 3 elections this year. \$3,000.00 for the Moderator and Deputy. \$800.00 additional for training of Moderator & Deputy. 3 Selectmen at the polls is \$2,725 for this year. Ballot counters are \$25.00 each there are 9 counters. 3 Ballot Clerks – each Town election is \$750.00 and State election is \$1,100.00 This doubles the salary. The Town Moderator is the person you need to talk with for more of a detailed explanation. The data line item is for calls/problems with machines and internet access for the TYL line required by law.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector – Increases in salary for Town Clerk and Tax Collector assistants. Increase in Vital statics & animal licensing. Comes back to the Town on the income side during the year. Hard to project these types of things. Babies, Marriages, Deaths, Animal licensing. Will cut down from \$1,000.00 to \$800.00 dollars. Dues – are for being a member of NH Tax Collector Association & New England Tax Collector Association – It helps have a lot more information and resources to rely on for the job. Dues have still not been paid this year that is why the money is still there for this year. Looks like certain items have been removed from the Tax Collector side of things. This is due to the Town Clerk/Tax Collector becoming one position. By next year all items will disappear from the Tax Collector to one Department being under the heading of Town Clerk/Tax Collector. 1 job, 1 department. Can the cost of lien research be looked at too, does not seem to have spent anything in the past 2 years on this line item. This will be used this year, the only reason not be used is due to Covid and the town decided not to lien people during this time. The process has already been reinstated this year and being worked on, this money will be used.

Treasurer – Salary increased to reflect her actual pay, Deputy Treasurer from \$200.00 to \$400.00 a year with additional training on system. Will look at the Treasurers budget. What is the Treasurer travel allowance – paid by mileage to go to the bank – must make deposits every week or a certain amount of money by State law. The Treasurer charges 1 fee over the year for all travel.

Liability insurance increased as it does every year.

Will adjust salary and other items in executive budget as decided with certain items.

Assessing will cost more because the Town Assessor is leaving and some one needs to be trained to take over.

Auditing is the increased price of the actual contract.

Planning Board changed \$4,000.00 why? Planning Board is working on updating the Master Plan as request by the town at last years Town Meeting. Cost for printing colored maps and

Master Plan booklets. Why was the payroll increased for the Secretary? She has been working extra hours on the Master Plan and organization of file system, maps, property records. What is the \$1,000.00 dollars for contracted services. Southwest Planning Commission to assist the Planning Board with work on Master Plan, CPO. This has gone from \$10,000.00 to \$1,000.00 dollars in the past several years.

Building/Ground – Has gone down this year. Most increases are for heat due to pricing. Last year was higher due to the work needed on the Old Fire House. Then why is it budgeted for \$5,000.00 for the old Fire House if this has been repaired recently. Want to use the building for other things and if something does happen want to make sure the building can be maintained. The Fire Station usually goes over budget every year on this line item.

Cemeteries were reduced this year.

Public Safety/Fire/Police – Ambulance increase. Increase in payroll for Police to fully staff the department. Increase overall for fuel and gas as discussed.

Fire Department up on protective gear but down on physical.

Highway biggest increase is for gasoline.

Tree/Bush Removal – people would like to see more of this done so budget increased.

Most of your Tax Money is going to 3 departments. Highway/Solid Waste/Executive they are 51% of the total budget. The Highway and Executive are understandable and should be most of your cost. Work must be done on the Solid Waste to bring this figure down.

Emergency Management – added a cell phone during covid cost \$1,000.00 per year. They also asked for a \$1,500.00 misc line added to their budget for incidental that can not be expected such as Covid for an example.

Article 2 – General Municipal Operations - \$624,608.00 (This is subject to change right up to and including Town Meeting)

**Chris motioned to recommend this article. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 3 – Winter/Summer Town Road/Bridges (including Culverts) operating budget - \$271,300.00

**Chris motioned to recommend this article. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 4 – Stoddard Waste Disposal operating budget - \$226,750.00

**Chris motioned to recommend. Stephen Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 5 – Stoddard Fire & Rescue Department operating budget - \$124,301.00

**Stephen motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 6 – Stoddard Police Department operating budget - \$111,781.00  
**Chris motioned to recommend. Stephen Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 7 – Davis Public Library operating budget - \$47,061.00  
**Chris motioned to recommend. Stephen Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 8 - Lay Monitoring/Lake Host programs operating budget - \$17,250.00  
**Stephen motioned to recommend. Chris Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 9 – Cemeteries operating budget - \$14,345.00  
**Chris motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 10 – Ambulance Service operating budget - \$36,001.00  
**Chris motioned to recommend. Stephen Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 11 – Stoddard Zoning Board of Adjustments operating budget - \$8,550.00  
**Stephen motioned to recommend. Chris Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 12 – Stoddard Planning Board operating budget - \$11, 611.00  
**Bob motioned to recommend. Chris Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 13 – Conservation Commission operating budget - \$1,440.00  
**Chris motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 14 – Emergency Management operating budget - \$6,400.00  
**Stephen motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 15 – Fire/Rescue Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. - \$25,000.00  
**Stephen motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

NOTE: ARTICLES 16 - 21 ARE AMOUNTS ASKED BY THOSE SERVICES

Article 16 – Home Healthcare & Hospice & Community Services - \$800.00  
**Stephen motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 17 – Monadnock Family Services - \$1,439.00  
**Bob motioned to recommend. Stephen Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 18 – Community Kitchen - \$600.00  
**Chris motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 19 – NH Region of American Red Cross - \$1,000.00  
**Chris motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 20 – Southwestern Community Services - \$1,173.00  
**Stephen motioned to recommend. Chris Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 21 – Hundred Nights Inc - \$1,000.00

**Chris motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 22 – Building Capital Reserve Fund established 2013 - \$10,000.00

**Bob motioned to recommend. Chris Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 23 – Bridge & Roadway Capital Reserve Fund previously established - \$20,000.00

**Bob motioned to recommend. Chris Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 24 – To See if the Town will amend the optional adjusted Elderly Exemption  
WILL LOOK AT THE AMOUNTS AGAIN BEFORE MAKING A FINAL DECISION

Article 25 – Emergency Capital Reserve Fund (for emergencies over \$5,000.00) - \$10,000.00

**Bob motioned to recommend. Stephen Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Article 26 – To Appoint Treasurer by Selectmen instead of being an elected position. Current  
Treasurer to fill out the elected term (2024).

**Stephen motioned to recommend. Bob Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

Veteran Exemption – We have a \$250.00 exemptions of taxes. State increased the option to  
\$750.00. If raised to \$500.00 will cost the Town an additional \$12,000.00. If raised to \$750.00  
will cost the Town an additional \$24,000.00.

**Bob recommended drafting an Article to increase the Veterans Exemption to \$500.00.**

**Chris Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor. Michelle will draft Article.**

Different Exemption for Active duty Members of Combat for up to \$500.00 by the State.

**Bob recommended drafting an Article for this active duty combat service exemption for  
\$500.00. Chris Seconded. Motion Carried. All in favor.**

**Budget hearing adjourned at 9:11 PM**

Submitted

Vickie Williams  
Selectmen Secretary

Robert Fee\_\_\_\_\_

Christopher Madden \_\_\_\_\_

Stephen McGerty\_\_\_\_\_

