

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
SELECTBOARD / SEWER COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF SELECTBOARD/BUDGET MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2020

Draft

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by Lynne Bertram, Chair

Present: Norman (Nope) Martin, Brian Bontrager, Vicky Young and Nancy Robinson
Hank Smith, Trustee of Public Funds

Addition to agenda: None

David Green from the Woodstock Ambulance Department came to the board to explain the new rate change for ambulance services. The rate in past years has been approx. \$30-34.00 per capita or \$31,842.00. This year's rate has increased to \$70.00 per capita or \$65,520.00. This new rate will cover 24/7/365 service with paid staff augmented by volunteers. This rate increase will have a big impact on the town's overall budget and tax rate. All towns are seeing this increase as department needs to pay to have qualified staff for ambulance coverage. Woodstock voters will have a ballot article to approve \$600,000 to provide the 24/7/365 staff. If article is defeated, appropriation amount to Woodstock from area towns will be re-calculated comparable to amount from last year. Discussion of impact on towns, lack of volunteers, future reorganization changes and legislative changes.

Board reviewed General Account, Highway and Wastewater Treatment Facility budget line items. Increases to general account are to salaries, insurance, computer/cyber security, recycling, ambulance assessment and first payment of new fire station building interest. If bond passes, interest payments will be due in November and May of the next fiscal year. Sheriff's Dept. will continue at 84 hours per week x \$56.00 per hour x 52 weeks. Sheriff's income/expense line has had a deficit for the past couple of years. May be due to time off the road to do back road patrols and attendance at "safety events". Often Deputy is only responder to medical calls as the town rescue squad volunteers are working and out of town. General account budget and amount to be raised in taxes is up primarily due to the ambulance and bond interest payments. Overall highway budget has increased due to salary increases and increase in material line. Amount to be raised in taxes is down this due to significant surplus of over \$52,000. Wastewater Treatment account is level funded, only increase is due to the operating contract. Annual user rate is expected to remain at \$530.00 per year.

Nancy gave the board a draft of the 2020 Town Meeting warning. Usual articles for social services, budget and town officers. Final warning will be reviewed and signed at next week's regular board meeting. Highway Report is being done by the Selectboard this year due to changes in personnel. Selectboard Report is being drafted and will be approved at next week's regular board meeting.

Discussion of town meeting location; Hank reported that the Bridgewater Community Center is getting a one-day waiver so that town meeting can be held there. Lynne and Brian voted to hold town meeting at the community center.

Being no further business, the motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 6:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Robinson, Clerk