

North Yarmouth Budget Committee
Minutes of April 27, 2023, Meeting
Wescustogo Hall & Community Center, Merrill Room

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p. m. by Chair Andy Walsh. Committee members present were Secretary Linc Merrill, and members Sandra Falsey, Steve Palmer, Darla Hamlin, and Jay Fulton. Member Bill Young was at work. He notified the Chair that he would be absent.

Also in attendance were Town Manger Diane Barnes, Public Works Road Commissioner Clark Baston, Wescustogo Hall & Community Center Assistant Director Jackson Humphrey, Planning Board Chair Paul Whitmarsh, ZBA members Kevin Robinson and Mike Mallory, Parks Committee Chair Scott Kerr, Select Board member Paul Hodgetts, EDSC member Rich Parenteau, and residents Judy Potter and Jeff Candura.

Barnes introduced Baston and asked him to present his Public Works budget. In response to a question, Barnes said that the budget is broken out between summer and winter expenses. The Maine State Statute allows a municipality to go over the appropriation for the winter budget by 15% since winter storms make expenses unpredictable.

Baston said his budget is basically the same as last year. He began with the summer budget. He does not budget for the payroll himself. In response to a question, Barnes said there is overtime budgeted for both summer and winter.

Account 5130-00 is for cell phones and crew uniforms. There is a crew uniform contract with Unifirst. Last year, some cellphones were budgeted in a different department. Merrill inquired about the helmets with the communication ability and headphones in them that were purchased last year. Baston said that they work well and have a maximum range of 2,000 feet, or line of sight. The cellphones are necessary when you need to reach across town to talk with a crew member. The cost for cellphones is a monthly stipend paid to employees who are using their personal phones. Barnes was not certain what the cellphone reimbursement rate is but will find out and let the committee know.

5216-00 for \$12,600 has \$1,500 for the software to diagnose what the lights that come up on the panel of the trucks mean. This software reduces the need to have a service person come from the dealer and our mechanic can read it in our shop instead. Baston explained that you must buy the upgrade every year because if you buy a new truck, they make you buy all the past years' software anyway. Hamlin said the cost was reasonable. Fulton asked how much cost is avoided by having the diagnostic software. Clark gave an example of how the charges work. A service person might be paid to drive from Bangor to North Yarmouth just to tell what the light means. He said between the Public Works and the Fire Department, it is used a couple times a week.

The account includes \$1,000 for the fuel island software. This tracks what trucks are fueled, with how much fuel, who the user is, and it won't let you overfill a truck. It generates a report each month for the Public Works and the Fire Department.

The largest item in this account is for a new software program. It is specifically geared to Public Works. It has an asset management capability. It creates work orders, tracks materials, and men and hours on a

job. It can be done on the phone. Photos can be taken before and after a job and recorded. Calls made to Public Works can go directly into a system and tracked. If there is a problem with a piece of equipment they are using on the job, they can transmit that to the shop so it can be set up to repair.

Hamlin asked if the Fire Department could use this software. Baston said the Fire Department has one, but it is not geared to Public Works. Hamlin asked if there would be two separate software packages. She said maybe you can use it for both. Baston said maybe the fleet management but the Fire Department one is not geared to Public Works.

Baston said the software also inventories culverts, catch basins, and drains. It will have a history to remind Public Works to look at these items based on when they may need to be repaired or replaced. He said it records the locations of signs, what they are and when they were put up, and where they are in case they are stolen. It will have information on when roads and sidewalks were paved. Baston currently uses a free software from the State to track the roads. The new software will also track salt and other items like when cutting edges were installed.

Baston said he would like to get this information out of his head and into a record system before he retires. Depending on which software product is selected, it will cost \$8,000 to \$10,000 to purchase it and \$6,000 a year to update it going forward. Walsh asked if Baston would take the annual update cost into consideration when choosing the product. Baston said he would.

A question from Palmer directed Baston to give a breakdown of costs for various portions of the software. Hamlin asked where the software was hosted. Baston said it is in the "cloud". Palmer asked Baston if once it was chosen, was the Town in a long-term commitment because our data was in it. Baston said yes. Baston also said the company would transfer any data the Town has and will put it into the new system.

Baston said the monthly reports can be generated by pushing a button. That will make his monthly reports to the Town Manager easier. He stated he is not too computer literate.

Barnes said when the public calls about a problem it goes to Public Works right away. Baston said currently these messages go to an answering machine. In the new system, a call will generate a work order. Barnes said that requests can be sent through email, too.

Fulton asked to confirm that the cost is \$8,000 a year ongoing expense. Baston said yes.

Account 5224-00 Baston will order his own office supplies rather than take them from the Town Office. Palmer asked how they would account for it if they did take it from the Town Office. Barnes replied that it would be a journal entry.

Account 5241 is in case they need to hire an engineer for something. Nothing is planned.

Account 5317 includes a permit to cross the railroad tracks at Chandler Brook Park. Baston commented about the need to get a permit to cross a track the train had not run on in several years.

Account 5512 is the cost to trap beavers. It is to set the traps, check them, remove, and transport the beaver to another location. This keeps the culverts open. During a conversation with Merrill, Baston said that sometimes the public trips the traps so they can't catch the beavers.

Account 5514 includes the contract for the rug service provided at Public Works. Baston proposes that the contract should not be renewed when it comes up again. Mary does the vacuuming there and she keeps the rugs in good condition.

Account 5516 is the supplies like toilet paper.

Account 5517 includes cleaning the furnace. Baston also talked about the waste oil that was left at the Public Works garage and burned in the waste oil furnace. He said that they have not purchased fuel for two years because of the supply. However, he said some folks leave material that the furnace cannot burn, and they have to pay for that to be disposed of as hazardous material. It costs about \$1,500 a year for the material to be picked up in 55-gallon drums and removed.

Account 5518 is to bushhog the old dump on West Pownal Road.

Account 5540 is for radio repair and to purchase one new radio this year. Baston said the radios they have been using can't be repaired any more. A new radio is \$800, and he hopes to replace one each year. Fulton asked if cell phones are needed if they have radios. Baston said yes, they need them. One reason he cited is that radio traffic is very heavy during storms.

Account 5542 is to rent a lift to change lights in the garage.

Account 5543 is a new account. It is for items under \$10,000. \$5,500 is for a leaf vacuum that will allow them to pick up leaves and blow them into a truck. The quote is from Hall Implement in Windham.

Account 5544 is all the little items like a paint brush, a tube of silicone, etc.

Account 5550 is for tires. They take them off and have them recapped. The rims have all been changed to aluminum, so they don't rust, and it is easier to change them. Merrill said the Fire Department said they give their old tires to the Public Works Department to use on vehicles. Baston said most of the fire truck tires won't fit his trucks. Baston said the used tires from the Fire Department can be returned for credit.

Account 5551 is budgeted for no expenditure for disposal of wood waste. Baston has identified a business in Durham that will not charge for the disposal if we truck 15 loads to them. That is his intent for this year. We would have our trucking cost with our crew.

Account 5552 Signs. This is to replace signs that are damaged, worn out, or stolen. The cost is up because the cost of aluminum that they are made from has increased. Baston also said the standard size of the street name signs has increased so they will need to be replaced over time.

Account 5554 is for culverts. The Town only replaces culverts that they want to, not ones across a resident's driveway that has lifted up and made a bump. If the Town replaces one and the old one is in decent condition, it is given to the snowmobile or ATV clubs to use on their trails.

Account 5558 is to crack seal roads. Baston would like to do more this year to help hold the roads together. He also mentioned that the names of the Public Works employees are written on the crack seal on Mountfort Road. He is not sure how that happened.

Account 5562 is a broom for the sweeper.

Account 5568 is to hire a crusher to make gravel from our pit. We are out of gravel. Baston is hiring Gorham Sand & Gravel to do 7,000 yards this year and will do another 7,000 yards next year. The cost over the two years is \$42,000 and if the material had to be purchased, it would cost over \$100,000.

Account 5570 purchases cutting edges for the loader, excavator and flail mower.

Account 5580 is up \$25,000 from the amount the Budget Committee saw previously. Barnes explained that was because of a mistake. Baston explained the roads to be paved this year are North Road from Rt. 231 to the railroad tracks and a skim coat on Milliken Road from North Road to the railroad tracks. The North Road product would be the same as was put down on Mill Road. He said it has held up well.

Account 5900 Capital Projects. The decrease from the 2024 Initial is because Barnes recommended not funding the fire suppression system at Public Works. The \$23,000 in the account is for a waste oil furnace and a new roof. Baston discussed trading in the 2011 John Deere tractor for a new one. He said that this was the time to do it before other vehicles needed to be replaced. Falsey said we should not replace it because we can but if we have a need. Walsh said it should be replaced when it was not practical to use it. Baston said we can keep it until it is junk. He said there are no issues with it today.

The winter budget was then discussed.

Account 5543 has \$6,500 to buy a new plow for the F550 truck. It is a straight plow and looks like the ones on the large plow trucks. Baston said we have a light plow currently that can't scrape roads well enough, so he wants this heavier plow instead.

Account 5574 This is not actually liquid calcium. It is a molasses mix and referred to as ice melt. Barnes said she will change the description of this account. Walsh asked how the salt shed repair was going. Baston said it is good. The only thing left is a cosmetic piece on the bottom of the doors.

Hamlin asked if we still had gravel roads. Baston replied we have Sweetser Road and The Lane.

Barnes stated that there is now a Public Works/Parks account to keep the work that is done for them separate from the other work.

Account 5420 is for water at Veterans Park and "Fountain Park" which is what Public Works calls the fountain across from the Purple House and the Red House in Walnut Hill Village.

Account 5635 is for Park Maintenance. Barnes said dog waste bags cost \$660 a year. Kerr said the Park Committee wants to stop buying them. Baston said Public Works dumps the trash barrels which also contain the bags on Mondays and more often during the summer.

Poor behavior is exhibited by some users. Not all waste bags are disposed of in the barrel. Some are thrown around the park. Palmer said the logistics of placing the barrel further in the Chandler Brook Park is not a good use of time. You would have to stop, open the gate, drive across the tracks and down to the field to a barrel. He feels we dismiss the bad behavior of those dog owners. Kerr asked how long the bags last in the dispensers before they have to be refilled. Baston was not sure as he does not fill them.

Hamlin said the bags are in the budget now. Barnes said port a potties are not in the budget and have not been since COVID.

Baston said he needs to put a new metal roof on the cemetery shed at Walnut Hill. They store lawnmowers. It is currently asphalt and it leaks. There is no power in the building. Walsh asked if the perpetual care account could pay for the roof. Barnes said only the interest can be used and there is not enough, so we need to raise it.

Barnes then referred to Dept/Div 150-01 Solid Waste. She said the increase charged by Casella is due to the new trash pickup service with automated trucks. On a positive note, the Ecomaine tonnage went down. Baston said there will be a Swap Day at Wescustogo Hall on Cleanup Day which may cut down on the disposal amount. Residents pay for tires, roof shingles, e-waste, batteries, and bulbs. There is also a cost to pump freon out of old appliances.

Walsh asked how often we negotiated with Casella. Barnes said we just did. She said Falmouth, Windham, and North Yarmouth all negotiated our contracts together. The intent is to get other communities on the same contract date as we are so in 2028, we can negotiate with more power by being larger. Waste Management said that they would not quote a price as we were too small. Hamlin said it is expensive. Barnes said it was dictated.

Merrill asked when the start date for the new automated service is. Barnes said November. She said we have no options. There seems to be no reason to have the trash bags as everything would be under the honor system. She said the tote purchase price came in lower than budgeted by about \$50,000. It will be the best brand of container, too.

Walsh asked what we do about people moving and taking their bins with them. Barnes said the Select Board needs to come up with a policy. The Town is buying a trash bin and a recycling bin for each home. There are larger and smaller trash container sizes. Questions were raised like who pays for replacements and what happens with roads the trash truck cannot go down.

Baston said that they cannot go down one lane roads. He also said residents of those private roads may not want that heavy trash truck driving on it every week (it could damage the road). Barnes said that everyone will be communicated about their options before the changeover to the new system.

Merrill asked about Sweetser Road and the new culvert since part of Bill Young's property is needed to do the work. Merrill wanted to confirm that no additional money is needed for the project. Barnes said it was all contemplated in the bid.

Merrill also asked about Parsonage Road and said he has brought this up several times. It is not completely located within the road boundaries and there is a survey pin in the pavement for the abutter's property. He wanted to know if money was needed in the budget to correct this. Barnes said it will be done in a bit and she can report out.

Barnes reported there is \$9,875 to do the first phase of the dredging at Baston Park. It will come from the Park's reserve account.

Palmer said \$1,000 could be taken out for the fence. Barnes said it was coming out of reserves, so we don't need to reduce it in the budget; we just won't spend it. Walsh, Barnes, and Baston all said there are no duplicates in the Parks and Public Works budgets.

Barnes referred to Tab 11 and the Reserve Accounts. She said Public Works does not pay for this from their budget. Fulton asked if any signs were needed for the Parks. Palmer said there is money in the current fiscal year to finish the work so none is needed.

Barnes said that \$95,000 of the total paving budget of \$221,073 for fiscal year 2024 is coming from the Capital Reserves.

Barnes then went to Tab 12, the ARPA funds. She recommended that the entire remaining balance be used to fund the AV upgrades in Wescustogo Hall & Community Center and the LUCAS device for the Fire Department. There was significant discussion on this.

Barnes said Connectivity Point won't do the sound in the gym unless the acoustic panels are installed. Palmer asked to schedule the gym better, so we don't have to set up and take down right away for another event. Barnes said they blocked off all June Saturdays until the Town Meeting was set to prevent that from happening.

Palmer asked Barnes to explain the sound panels and the sound system again. Barnes did. Palmer said he was recommending that we only pay for the padding on the architectural supports rather than the sound panels. Fulton said he thought more about the padding, and it is a safety issue and needs to be protected. Barnes offered to use the ARPA money for padding and take money from the Fire Department reserve to buy the LUCAS device.

Walsh restated the ARPA money could be \$12,500 for the gym and \$16,000 for the Merrill Room. He also said he would rather do the safety first rather than the sound system. Barnes said the Select Board already signed the contract for the extra sound system work after Brian Sites met with Connectivity Point and toured the building. We are obligated to do it.

Palmer said he wants the sound system but is not in a hurry to do the walls and beams in the gym. Walsh said he agreed with Palmer. He said do the beams, but the walls can wait. Palmer said leave the ARPA money for the LUCAS device.

Barnes referred to Tab 13 TIF Expenses.

Account 6101 will pay a portion of Administration expenses and GIS mapping.

Account 6102 will pay a portion of an assessing software upgrade.

Account 6104 will pay \$15,000 to a planner to work with the Planning Board, GPCOG dues, \$50,000 for a sidewalk study, and \$11,748 to complete the Fire Station study.

Account 6105 will pay for speed limit signs.

Account 6106 will spend \$200,000 on new sidewalks. Merrill asked where the sidewalks would be located. Barnes said that they received the engineer's proposal today and she and Baston would review it tomorrow. Barnes said the Select Board would decide where the sidewalks will be built. The public will see the plan at the Select Board meeting where it is discussed.

Barnes said \$250,000 will go into the TIF fund from taxes this year. She said there are lots of sidewalks to build. Merrill said that all the TIF taxes could be eaten up by the sidewalks.

Palmer asked a question about the Planning money. It is for the Planning Board.

Chair Walsh adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p. m.

Lincoln J. Merrill, Jr., Secretary

Approved: May 4, 2023