

**Auburn Budget Committee Meeting
December 21, 2023
Stritch Meeting Room
Approved Minutes
7:00 PM**

Members Present: Chairman Peter Miles, Dan Carpenter, Vice-Chair David Wesche, Kevin Downing, Joanne Linxweiler, Paula Marzloff, School Board Representative Alan Villeneuve, and Selectman Representative Keith Leclair

Others Present: Road Agent Michael Dross, Parks & Recreation Coordinator Amy Lachance, Mary Royer and Patrick Kelly, Finance & Budget Administrator Mimi Friolet, Town Administrator Chris Sterndale, and Nancy Hoijer, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

Chairman Miles called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. Introductions

Chairman Miles introduced the members who were present.

III. Approval of Minutes

- November 30, 2023

Mr. Villeneuve recommended edits to page 4.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve the November 30, 2023 meeting minutes, as amended. Mr. Downing seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

- December 14, 2023

Mr. Carpenter recommended edits to page 7.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve the December 14, 2023 meeting minutes, as amended. Mrs. Linxweiler seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

IV. Town Budget Proposals

A. Highway

Road Agent Michael Dross presented the proposed FY 2024 budget for Highway. He noted the original request for highway shimming was for \$250,000 and was cut to

\$225,000 by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Dross reported plans for FY 2024 included work on Wilson's Crossing, Coleman and cul-de-sacs, Matthew and Sonja Drive, if there were enough funds. He noted the price of asphalt, striping, salt, and painting were up from last year. The cost of salt has increased \$5,000. There is an increase of \$15,000 in the winter subcontractor's line.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 Highway budget in the amount of \$1,233,836. Mr. Downing seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

Road Agent Dross presented the proposed FY 2024 budget for Road Reconstruction which he noted was reduced by the Selectmen from \$600,000 to \$500,000 because of unused state funds an additional \$47,000 received. He noted that the work this year from Dearborn to Copley did not have as much ledge as he thought. He noted that he plans to do Depot Road next year if the engineering is done, Hunting Road and Calef.

Mrs. Marzloff motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 Road Reconstruction budget in the amount of \$500,000. Mr. Carpenter seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

B. Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Coordinator Amy Lachance presented the proposed FY 2024 budget for Parks & Recreation. She explained that the line for senior trips had been reduced by the Selectmen from \$16,000 to \$12,000 as she had proposed to increase the number of trips from two to four and the Selectmen recommended three.

Mrs. Linxweiler asked if she had considered increasing the fee for the senior trips and Mrs. Lachance indicated she has increased the fee from \$20 to \$25.

Mr. Villeneuve asked if the trips were a full day with transportation, event and meal and she indicated they did.

Mrs. Marzloff asked if seniors could come in their own vehicles when there is no more room and Mrs. Lachance indicated finding a restaurant to serve more than 55 is already a challenge.

Mr. Leclair noted Parks & Rec are trying to work something out so that everyone has a chance.

Mr. Carpenter recommended having people who did not go on the last trip be able to sign up on Monday and those that had gone on the last trip to sign up on Wednesday.

Mr. Villeneuve questioned whether the same people apply. or they are seeing new faces. Mrs. Lachance indicated the online app doesn't enable her to profile the users but there are some regulars. Mrs. Lachance noted a confirmation letter is sent to their Auburn address to verify they are residents.

Mrs. Lachance noted that music licensing fees have increased.

Mrs. Lachance noted that maintenance is adding playground chips this year.

Mrs. Lachance reported that 20% of the costs of the programs at Severance School will be paid out of the Revolving Fund account. Mr. Carpenter asked what the revolving funds is and Mrs. Lachance explained the account is where user fees are deposited when people sign up for classes. Mr. Leclair asked how much revenue the account has and Mrs. Lachance indicated \$8,000 through October and that may be higher next year.

Mr. Villeneuve motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 Parks & Recreation budget in the amount of \$169,677. Mr. Downing seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

Mrs. Lachance presented the proposed FY 2024 Recreation Improvements budget. Mr. Leclair noted that they are trying to get Advanced Paving to donate some of the work, as they have in the past.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve the proposed FY 2024 Recreation Improvements budget in the amount of \$7,000. Mrs. Linxweiler seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

C. Remaining expense line items

Police Cruisers (Line 153)

Mr. Leclair noted this item of the FY 2024 Police budget was tabled to see if one of the two cruisers could be purchased with remaining funds from FY 2023 budget which reduced the number of cruisers to be purchased in FY 2024 to one.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve Line 153 (Police Cruisers) of the proposed FY 2024 Police Department budget in the amount of \$48,362. Mrs. Marzloff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

Election Expenses (Line 24)

Mr. Villeneuve asked if the Town were getting new voting machines in FY 2024 and Town Administrator Sterndale indicated that the Town would not be purchasing them in the foreseeable future because the state must certify them and have not yet done so.

Town Administrator Sterndale noted that the Town Clerk requested poll pads for check-in however the Selectmen passed on that.

Mr. Carpenter asked why the election line had risen from \$3,000 in FY 2023 to \$18,000 in FY 2024 and Town Administrator Sterndale explained there were a primary and general election in 2024.

Mr. Wesche motioned to approve Line 24 (Election Expenses) of the FY 2024 Elections, Registrations and Vital Statistics budget in the amount of \$18,000. Mr. Villeneuve seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

Elderly Exemption

Mrs. Linxweiler asked if there were an update to the requested change to the Elderly Exemption and Mr. Leclair reported that he expected Option A to be recommended.

Library

Mr. Leclair noted that while it hasn't been voted on by the Selectmen to recommend or not recommend the consensus seemed to be that a new fund would be created and that \$100,000 would be requested to come from taxation with a sunset clause in 2028.

V. School Budget Proposal

A. Electricity (Line 5622)

The proposed line 5622 of the School Budget for Electricity was presented at the last meeting at \$125,000 and tabled to get actual usage figures. Mr. Sterndale provided the Committee with a handout showing actual kwh and billing rates for FY 23 and FY 24, from 5/25/2021 through 09/21/2023.

Mr. Leclair motioned to approve Line 5622 (Electricity) of the proposed School Budget in the amount of \$100,000. Mr. Wesche seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 8-0-0.

VI. Adjourn

The next meeting is on January 4th, 2024 at 7:00 PM.

Mrs. Marzloff moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM, seconded by Mr. Wesche A vote was taken; all were in agreement, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy J. Hoijer,
Recording Secretary

Note: Any person with a disability who wishes to attend this public meeting and needs to be provided a reasonable accommodation in order to participate, please call the Town Hall (603) 483-5052, or contact the Committee Secretary so that arrangements can be made.