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**Budget Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, February 1, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Meeting Held at the Bristol Consolidated School and by Zoom Video Conference**

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***Committee Members Present:*** Rob Davidson, Charles Hanson, Paul Leeman III, and Harry “Terry” Lowd. ***Via Zoom:*** Alfred Ajami, Alex Beaudet, Sandra Brackett, Paul DiMauro, Sandra Guibord, Kelly Harvell, Karl McLetchie, and Patricia Porter

***Also present:*** Chad Hanna (Selectboard Chair), Kristine Poland (Selectboard), Paul Yates (Selectboard), Christopher Hall (Town Administrator), Jessica Westhaver (Treasurer), Paul Leeman Jr (Fire Chief), David Poland (Transfer Station Manager), Rebecca Cooper (via Zoom), David Svens (LCTV), Evan Houk (LCN)

**Voting Capacity for the meeting – 12 voting members**

**The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.**

**New Business – Discussion of Bristol/South Bristol Transfer Facility Budget, Bristol Fire and Rescue Budget, and Town General Government Budget**

- **Bristol/South Bristol Transfer Facility Budget – David Poland (Transfer Facility Manager)**
  - The Board invited David Poland to discuss his proposed budget for 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic made for an extremely busy year, with many summer residents residing in Bristol for the entirety of the year. No major repairs were completed in the past year. Poland shared the final audited numbers were not completed as of this meeting; however, the 2021 budget will remain the same as 2020, with the request to the Town remaining at \$240,690.00.
  - **VOTE on Bristol/South Bristol Transfer Station Facility Budget:** Ajami made a motion to approve the Bristol/South Bristol Transfer Facility budget request of \$240,690.00 to the Town as presented; Leeman seconded. Approved 12-0.
- **Bristol Fire and Rescue Department Budget – Paul Leeman Jr (Fire Chief)**
  - The Board invited Paul Leeman Jr. to discuss his proposed budget for 2021. Leeman reminded the Board the functions of the department also sharing the Towns which they cover for mutual aid agreements. He shared that a majority of the department members have received their first of two vaccinations. 14 of these members have received their second vaccination. 2020 also saw the development of the Lincoln County Emergency Task Force, which Leeman is the Board of Directors Chair. The department responded to 407 calls, with EMS calls remaining the majority of response with 239 calls. The pandemic has changed the way the department handles meetings, trainings, and response to calls. Leeman confirmed that effective the end of April 2021; he will be retiring from his position as Fire Chief. He shared it has been a true honor to serve this department.
  - Before questions from the committee commenced, Lowd wished to extend his gratitude to Leeman for his many years of service.

- Questions from the committee:
  - Ajami stated the increase for the BFR budget from 2019 to 2020 was an increase of 6.4%. The increase for 2020 to 2021 was only 5%. In a year of a pandemic, especially for a Fire and Rescue Department, it was remarkable there was such a small increase.
  - Hanson asked what the highest rate of pay was? Leeman stated everyone received a \$0.50/hour increase this year and the highest hourly rate of pay is \$18.50 and is based on 30 or more years of service.
  - Hanson also asked about the salary increase on the Chief's line, if this was in anticipation of the new chief? Leeman stated he requested no increase to his salary this year and this amount was added as a place holder. Hall added to the statement this amount estimated was a cushion for any potential candidates, though currently Bristol is on the low end for Fire Chief salaries.
  - McLetchie asked if future Fire Truck loans were anticipated? The budget showed one loan paid off in 2018 and the amount for this loan went towards the chief's salary and benefits. He questioned if there were plans/need to acquire a new truck soon? Leeman stated trucks typically have a life of 25 years. The current truck is a 2003. He does not believe holding onto a truck until the end of its life is the right decision. The current fleet is in great shape and there is funding set aside over past few years budget to go to the Fire Truck capital reserve fund for when such a time arises.
- **VOTE on Bristol Fire and Rescue Department Budget:** Ajami made a motion to approve the Bristol Fire and Rescue budget in the amount of 441,875.40 as presented; Porter seconded; Leeman abstained. Approved 11-0-1.
- **Town General Government – Selectboard & Town Administrator:**
  - Hall presented the board with the Town General Government budget. It was shared with the board the 2021 warrant has been condensed and many articles combined in order to limit the number of paper ballot pages. He moved through the articles in the 2021 warrant with the following explanations (*note a change in the article numbers due to an article being removed from the school on the following night*):
  - **Article 22 (referred to as Article 23 at meeting) – General Government for \$628,500.00**  
**VOTE: (12-0)**
    - Payroll Line - Payroll was essentially flat in 2020, however, after a suggestion from the auditor, the line was raised by \$20k and a salary structure is under review. The line increase allows for more competitive salaries and structure for the Town. Increasing this line allows for an adjustment in salaries without having to have a special Town Meeting later in the year.
    - IT Line - An increase due to software licensing costs with TRIO.
    - Building Maintenance and Repairs Line – The budget allows for repairs/replacement of the roof for the storage building at Hanna Landing.
    - Assessment Line – Increased by \$1,500 due to increased construction and the need for review by the assessor.
    - Legal, Audit and Professional Fees Line – This is a combined item this year to also include any professional fees if a review of the Comprehensive Plan is passed. Legal fees are a varying category based on unexpected situations.
      - Questions from the committee:
        - Hanson wanted to verify there were no increases to the Health Insurance within payroll, as he knows many companies have raised their premiums in 2021. Hall confirmed there were no increases to premiums for health insurance for the current year under the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust.

- Hanson also asked if the new Fire Chief and the Parks Director will be added to the same policy. Hall confirmed this to be true.
- Ajami made a motion to approve article 22 as presented; Harvell seconded. Approved 12-0
- **Article 23 (referred to as Article 24 at meeting) – Capital Reserve Accounts for \$85,000.00 VOTE: (12-0)**
  - Hall stated there were no changes to the amounts planned for capital reserves for 2021 with the exception of \$20,000 or balances carried for the Town Harbor & Landing capital reserve.
    - Questions from the committee:
      - Davidson asked about the cost of a current mooring. It was shared current mooring fees are \$25 every 2 years.
  - Hanson made a motion to approve article 23 as presented; Porter seconded. Approved 12-0.
- **Article 24 (referred to as Article 25 at meeting) – Town Roads and Bridges, Highway Equipment and Town Garage for \$1,001,089.23 VOTE: (12-0)**
  - Roads & Bridges Line – The budget resumed its normal level of funding in 2021. In 2020 funding was taken from this line item to help fund the fish ladder project.
  - Snow Removal Line – This line sees an increase over 2020 due to the new contract with Hagar. The previous contract with OW Holmes was an extreme bargain. It was also noted the payment cycle was slightly off in 2020, with the November payment invoiced from Hagar in December. This provided a balance carried of \$80,842.32 from the previous year.
  - Streetlights Line – Was lowered by \$1,000 in hoped the expense with the new LED streetlights would reduce the cost.
  - Hanna shared the expected maintenance on the roads in 2021. The past 2 years we have reduced our normal paving maintenance schedule. In 2020 we only paved about 3 miles and hope to pave up to 4.5 miles in 2021. Roads hoped to be paved are Carl Bailey, Benner Rad from Partridge Bridge to Damariscotta Town line, and Southside Rd from the boat landing to end. Other projects would be the paving the first mile of Poor Farm Rd, installation of a culvert on Old County Rd (received a grant due to the stream) and we would need to match it at \$80,000.
  - Porter made a motion to approve article 24 as presented; Ajami seconded. Approved 12-0.
- **Article 28 (referred to as Article 29 at meeting) – Ordinance Administration for \$16,500.00 VOTE: (12-0)**
  - Hall stated Ordinance Administration is mostly funded by fee revenue from building and plumbing permits. 2019 and 2020 showed a surplus, however the board agreed it is best to continue to fund a portion of the Code Enforcement Officers salary from surplus. A few projects with substantial fee income are expected in 2021.
    - Questions from the committee:
      - Davidson asked when building permit fees were last increased and if it is time the fees be raised. Hanna stated he could not remember when fees were last increased, but it has been quite a while. He agrees that our fees are very modest, and it is time for a review.
    - Hanson asked to verify if the CEO is paid by salary or commission. He is paid by salary.
  - Hanson made a motion to approve article 28 as presented; Leeman seconded. Approved 12-0.
- **Article 30 (referred to as Article 31 at meeting) – Bristol Mills Dam and Fish Ladder for \$547,634.43 VOTE: (10-2)**
  - Fish Ladder Line - Hall shared with the committee the near completion of phase 1 of the Fish Ladder, with a balance carried of \$180,634.43 to complete the \$550,000 contract.

- The phase in the project will be active for the migration of Alewives for the 2021 season this spring. Phase 2 will then commence with donations carried from 2020 of \$86,043.00. A firm quote of \$240,000 has been received to complete phase 2. This phase will see the focus on the public park aspect such as completing cosmetic masonry stonework on the ladder, handicap pathways, a viewing platform, and a picnic area.
- Dam Line – Along with the Fish Ladder, work is needed on the dam. Some of this work is in conjunction with the Fish Ladder, while other aspects are stand alone. The dam will see construction of a new footbridge to the Fish Ladder and new metal water control gates. The contract for this work will be with Knowles Industrial Services, who has been the contracted vendor for past dam repairs.
- This article will be funded by \$175,000 in additional donations already received in 2021, \$14,200 from the Dam Capital Reserve fund, and \$91,756.60 from surplus. Any additional donations received will reduce the draw from surplus.
  - Questions from the committee:
    - Beaudet questioned since phase 2 is being declared the “park” aspect, does phase 1 allow the Fish Ladder to be fully active with no further construction. Hall stated yes, phase 1 will have a fully functioning ladder, though the operators of the Damariscotta Fish Ladder shared feedback to anticipate modifications after review of an active season takes place.
    - Beaudet also questioned if the revenue received are from Federal Grant programs or if they are private donations? Hall stated so far, all revenues received have been from private family foundations grants/donations. The Town is pursuing applying for a LCFW grant, which is the same grant received to complete the Pemaquid Beach Pavilion. This will require a matching expense from the Town. If this grant is received there will be no draw from surplus. In addition, the Fish Committee would like to see harvesting of Alewives return to Bristol, which would require the addition of a harvesting pool. Maine Department of Marine Resources would need to see a certain number of Alewives migrate over the Fish Ladder over a specified number of years to allow this to happen.
    - McLetchie questioned the cost for the entire project, with the original estimate being approximately \$320,000 and is now approaching \$1million. He calculated close to \$500k from surplus/taxation so far. McLetchie wanted to know if this will complete the project, or will we see another request next year to complete more work? Hall stated if we use the budgeted amount from surplus in 2021, the amount from surplus would be approximately \$400k. While these are taxpayer dollars, it is an indirect cost to the taxpayer for the current tax year as it comes from surplus and not current taxation. Amounts used from capital reserves are \$138,000, which were originally pulled from taxation. These figures do not include the generous donations received.
    - Hanson questioned who would maintain the Fish Ladder park once completed? Hall shared there will be a 5 to 6 year gap in when harvesting could potentially take place. In this time, there will hopefully be minimal upkeep of the area, outside of the current mowing, trash receptacles, and portable toilets, which are services currently maintained by the Parks Department. If/when harvesting takes place, the revenue from sales of Alewives will go towards repair and upkeep of the park.
- Porter made a motion to approve article 30 as presented; Davidson seconded.
  - Approved 10-2.
- **Article 32 (referred to as Article 33 at meeting) – Animal Control for \$10,000.00**  
**VOTE: (12-0)**

- Hall shared this article has decreased from previous year as the amount paid to the Lincoln County Sheriff's office has never exceeded \$5,100.00.
- Davidson made a motion to approve article 32 as presented; DiMauro seconded. Approved 12-0.
- **Article 38 (referred to as Article 39 at meeting) – Contingency for \$25,000.00 VOTE: (12-0)**
  - Hall stated the amount requested remained the same as the 2020 budget.
    - Questions from the committee:
      - Davidson questioned how much of the contingency had been used for 2020. Westhaver shared approximately \$5,000 had been used.
  - Ajami made a motion to approve article 38 as presented; Davidson seconded. Approved 12-0.
- **Housekeeping –**
  - The board will meet again on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to meet with the School, and Parks & Recreation Departments to present their budget. Due to the impending storm, this meeting will be held entirely remote through Zoom.
- Town Meeting to be held on March 15<sup>th</sup> by secret ballot.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Jessica Westhaver  
 Staff Liaison