



**Budget-Finance Committee
Joint Meeting with Select Board**

Workshop Minutes

March 21, 2023, at 6:30pm

At Broadcast Studio & Via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Bob Gosselin - Chair, Karen Lockwood, Bob Jones, Denis Morse, Deanna Lee, Shawn McKillop

Committee Members Absent: Abigail Geer

Select Board Members Present: Joe Bruno, Rolf Olsen, Teresa Sadak, Sam Gifford, Lonnie Taylor

Select Board Members Absent: none

Town Staff Present:

Don Willard, Town Manager
Charisse Keach, Finance Director
Joe Crocker, Raymond Parks & Rec Director
Alex Sirois, CEO
Lee O'Connor, Deputy Fire Chief
Cathy Gosselin, HR
Sue Look, Town Clerk

1. Called to order at 6:30pm by Chair Gosselin

2. Approval of Minutes

a) March 16, 2023

Motion to approve as presented by Mrs Lockwood. Seconded by Mr McKillop.

Unanimously approved

3. Town Manager & Finance Director Updates (if needed)

Finance Director Keach provided a 1 sheet summary of the general fund appropriations and the actual figures as of February 28, 2023

4. Discussion of Municipal Tax Cap – Curt Lebel, Contract Assessor

This item was intended to be added to the Select Board meeting next week.

5. Budget Workshop

a) TIF

Technology is relocated to Capital Improvement

b) General Government

Legal is up significantly and advertising is over spent already this year.

c) Administration

No discussion

d) Compensation & Training

42% increase – due to getting to a funding level so we do not overspend, it was under-budgeted last year. During COVID we had very little training classes. We have had new staff who needed training.

Budgeted 4% for the merit pool. Salary survey recently done due to new positions cost \$800. Question – What is your turnover rate? We have 32 full-time employees with at least 4 or 5 in their 1st year.

The negative number in the current year actual is due to transferring money for the merit increases to the individual department salary lines.

e) Assessing

There is a change in the contract to add hours for the Tax Stabilization Program. Will this mean that we over spend on this item this year? Town Manager Willard has not discussed this with Contract Assessor Lebel.

f) Code Enforcement

CEO Sirois did a good job on his budget.

g) General Assistance

The reimbursement is recorded in the Revenues. There is a bill before the

Legislature to increase the reimbursement to 90%. GA is up, but it is hard to predict. \$15,000 is really \$25,500 with the reimbursement.

h) Town Insurances

15% increase is projected. Our loss ratio is not good with Worker's Comp. The audit resulted in an additional premium. Vehicle insurance is up, possibly due to claim history, and our deductibles are quite low. Rates are also going up due to cost of parts and replacement. There is also a new program – summer camp – to be insured.

i) Employee Benefits

Maine PERS for Public Safety - \$100,000 cost if everyone participates. There are 12 that could take it, 1 has said they will not. Suggestion to survey the employees to try to tighten up the number. Should overtime hours be included in ME PERS? ME PERS helps to attract people to municipal positions, especially if overtime is included. The \$100,000 is based on 10 people. Finance Director Keach used a full year when the program will not begin until October 1st and will go back and check to fine tune the number. People will need to opt to either have the 457k with a 6% match OR ME PERS, not both.

j) Debt Service

No discussion

k) Animal Control

We split this with Naples and Casco, and we have no negotiation power in this. No other employee is getting a \$4 an hour increase. Her set hours are 8am to 4pm, she does come out for emergencies at an overtime rate and there is now a seasonal part-time employee. Town Manager Willard said that other towns are paying more, but the survey says that she will be over the max for her bracket. Insurance is also an issue. Raymond does not pay even a third of that for our employees. Town Manager Willard was asked to go back and negotiate with the cost of insurance. The way to control the cost is to go back to having Animal Control be a Town function instead of a shared position with other Towns. We pay half as much for a family plan. The Town of Raymond would pay a third of our cost for insurance plus HRA. Each town has about 200 calls per year.

l) Fire Department

10 full-time currently that cover shifts and it is proposed to add 2 more to have enough to have 3 to cover 24X7 shifts. If we had a full-time department we would have 8 per shift. With ME PERS and salary increases we should have

no problem filling the 2 positions. We have had interest shown already and we want to hire paramedics who we can train for fire. CMP costs have gone up.

m) Provider Agencies

\$1,000 for bus is in the current budget. \$500 for the Southern Maine Agency on Aging, \$1,000 for the Lakes Region Chamber, and \$500 for the Crescent Lakes Association are also included in the \$3,000. Could the \$1,000 for the Chamber be taken from the TIF since it is based on the Business District? Town Manager Willard will check to see if we can do this. The bus can not come out of the TIF.

n) Town Buildings

CMP has gone up.

o) Public Works

New building – 3 bays, a wash bay, office for Public Works Director, breakroom for the crew, overhead lift, with a time line to start in the Fall and it will take a year to build. The cost will be around \$3,000,000. Proposing using a neighboring Town's plans and have asked an engineer to look at the site who said it could be done. Has not gone to the Planning Board. Trucks are getting bigger and do not always fit to be able to work on inside, this is an issue in inclement weather. The spend-out time for a bond will be around 3 years. Fall may be too ambitious; a Spring start may be more realistic. 2 bonds mature in 2025. It may need to be a 15-year bond instead of 10. At what point does it make sense to bond on our own as opposed to the bond bank? This would need to be researched. There is this proposed building, the tennis courts (\$250,000), the snack shack at Tassel Top (could be around \$300,000) and the garage (\$50,000), and possibly renovating the school (which may be a separate bond based on timing). It makes sense to have 1 bond if we can. There may also be a fiber bond. It may make sense to group the projects that can be started sooner, self-fund it, and bond for \$4,000,000. There would be some costs in the Summer and Fall before the bond was ready if voted in at Town Meeting. 20 years would be 3 or 3.5 with a principle payment of \$200,000 plus interest. Public Works Director White did a good job on his budget.

p) Solid Waste

We are on the 2nd year of the 3 year contract.

q) Cemeteries

No discussion

r) Technology

The increase is for videographers in salaries. We have hired 2 that are in training.

s) Recreation & Tassel Top

Going to bond will push out beginning the tennis/pickleball courts. There is no issue with the \$25,000 grant if we push it out until Spring of 2024. There are ADA requirements for the grant. We have wait lists for all of our programs, mostly due to the indoor spaces we use. Others are based on the bus capacity. Can we use the gym at WHS? We would not get any court time. Once we have the school we will have 6 indoor pickleball courts and would be fine. Doing a great job! Partners with the Library and will be meeting with the Age Friendly group. Looking for a smaller bus.

We make some money at Tassel Top, which is reinvested in the Park, and is revenue neutral to the Town. The cabins are repeat customers at \$1,500 per week.

t) Raymond Village Library

It has been a pleasure working with Allison. The transition went very smoothly. This year we applied \$60,000 to offset the cost of the Library this year, where is it reflected in the budget. Finance Director Keach will add it as a revenue, it was overlooked.

u) Revenues

Why do we think revenues will only increase 1%? Conservative estimate in valuation. The homestead figures are from Curt based on valuation and will continue to go down until we complete a revaluation.

Increase the Fire Rescue to \$220,000.

Possibly add \$1,000 to Fire Permits.

Increase Miscellaneous to \$7,000.

Increase Auto Excise Tax by \$10,000.

Decide how much to take out of the Library reserve fund to offset expenses.

The Animal Control line is fines. If it is \$1,100 thus far, then the budgeted amount should be more than \$500. Increase to \$1,000.

v) Capital Improvements

The municipal building line is for 47 Main St renovations.

The technology line is partially monies from the TIF for fiber not in the TIF district and is partially for new equipment.

GET FROM TAPE

w) County Tax

May require explanation that it is because of the 5 year buy in to get to a fiscal year.

6. Public Comment – none

7. Budget-Finance Committee Comment – none

8. Select Board Comment

Selectman Bruno said the budget is too high and should be closer to 6% increase instead of 8%. The school is reported going to come in at a 5-5.7% increase. We have added new programs and added services where the school has not had changes. Cut about \$107,500. The estimate of taxes for new construction is conservative. Bonding would increase the budget, but the interest is all we would pay in the first year. First payment would probably be in the next fiscal year. Departments who went up double digits should be able to cut.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:05pm by Mr Morse. Seconded by Mrs Lockwood.

Unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Susan L Look, Town Clerk