

MINUTES
BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 10, 2024

IN ATTENDANCE: Doug Benton, Don Paiva, Fred Platts, Mike Provost, Danielle Reed, Cindy Williams
Selectmen's Rep: George Tuthill

Don called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

A motion was made by Danielle, 2nd by Mike to accept the minutes of November 12 as written, so voted.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 7 at 6:00 at the Old Town Hall to review and finalize the numbers of the budget prior to the public hearing scheduled for January 14.

George Tuthill shared the Selectmen are proposing a 4% cola raise for all employees as they feel we have fallen behind in recent years. The proposed federal cola is 2.5. All employees received 5% last year.

Don shared some numbers he worked out showing total benefit packages received by Alexandria employees broken into hourly wages. There is concern with the substantial proposed increase in health insurance premiums.

There is concern with the amount of the proposed police department budget at almost \$400,000 for a small town, part-time police department and the number of responses that appear to be made by state police over the past year.

George explained that we provide small Christmas bonuses to employees and incentive pay for taking on additional responsibilities.

Danielle asked if we have a policy requiring the request of several bids over a certain dollar amount. George advised that we do.

There was discussion about the concern with Newfound School district not providing budget numbers to DRA necessary for the towns to get tax bills out. There was a deadline of November 30 which was missed. Some towns may need to borrow money to continue operations. Jennifer advised us that we are ok for the time being, however, she is withholding the December school payment. There has only been one time in the last several years Alexandria needed to borrow money in anticipation of taxes due to the expense of a severe storm.

Our Selectmen met with Bristol Selectmen to discuss the ambulance service and doubled expense over last year from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and we are being advised that next year they are planning to propose an additional \$80,000 increase. We were advised by George Clayman at our previous

meeting that there were 180 calls this year in Alexandria to date. The Selectmen plan to meet with Bristol on a regular basis moving forward.

The Selectmen discussed the possibility of leasing equipment with operator back and forth between Bristol and Alexandria. Bristol has very few gravel roads and an antiquated grader and could benefit from leasing ours. They also discussed the sharp corner at Hemphill Road at property line of Bristol and Alexandria and what can be done to make safer.

There was discussion regarding the library and their budget request. George advised that the library still remains separate from the town and he isn't sure the situation will be finalized by the end of the year. If not, it would appear their request for funding would need to be put as a warrant article separate from the town's budget. The members of the committee felt we need more details on the requested \$17,000 for maintenance.

A motion was made by Mike Provost at 6:56 to adjourn, 2nd by Don Paiva, so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Williams