

2022 Fairlee Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

The Fairlee Budget Committee Members met on Monday, December 5, 2022, in the Town Hall Auditorium. The purpose of the meeting was to review the 2023 proposed draft budget before meeting with the Selectboard in the Town Hall Grange Room at 6:30pm.

Present were:

Dan Ludwig, Budget Committee Member
Elizabeth Wilson, Budget Committee Member
Richard Kenney, Budget Committee Member
Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Town Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:04pm by Dan Ludwig.

Dan Ludwig nominated Elizabeth Wilson for Budget Committee Chair. Richard Kenney seconded the nomination. All were favor. Nomination passed. Elizabeth Wilson was duly elected Budget Committee Chair.

The Budget Committee discussed how they would conduct the annual budget hearing in January. All were in favor of having the hearing in the Town Hall Auditorium with department heads and to have the hearing available for the public in person and by ZOOM. Georgette Wolf-Ludwig will ask the Town Administrator to help facilitate ZOOM.

The Budget Committee then reviewed and discussed the following draft proposed department budgets.

Summary Budget

The Budget Committee reviewed the General Fund summary pages as of 10/31/2022 noting the percentage increase over last year's budget is 12.86%.

Administration

The Budget Committee discussed the TA Transitioning line item. Dan Ludwig expressed concern on the hiring of a new Town Administrator which may require a higher rate of pay. The Budget Committee questioned the reduction from 40hrs per week to 20hrs per week under the Town Treasurer's line item. Noting an increase was made to 40hrs per week under the Asst. Treasurer line item. Liz Wilson questioned whether the Asst. Town Clerk budget also needed additional hours. Georgette Wolf-Ludwig explained she had made a notation on the Town Clerk's Budget if it was possible, an increase of 3hrs would be helpful. She did not submit a budgeted amount for this increase, so it's not reflected in the line item. The Auditor line item was questioned since it showed no expenditure for 2022. It was questioned if the Training line item was enough. It was discussed that the Health Insurance line item showed a significant increase, and it was questioned why the Telephone line item was over budget. The Budget Committee supported the 7.4% COLA increase for the town staff and questioned why it had been reduced from 8.7% which had been originally proposed.

Cemetery

No questions or discussion.

Community Organizations

No questions or discussion.

Emergency Services Building

No questions or discussion.

Fire & Rescue

Liz Wilson questioned why the Fire and FAST Supplies line items did not show expenditures in 2022 as well as the three additional equipment line items. Under the Equipment New Fire/Forestry line item it was noted that due to supply shortages the equipment was unable to be purchased. Regarding the FAST Equipment and Equipment Repair/Maintenance line items, the thought was perhaps some bills would still be submitted before the end of the year.

Highway

The Budget Committee questioned whether the Town had received all the grant money for the purchase of the hay bale shredder, noting that the actual payment of this equipment was much more than the grant money indicated under revenues. The Budget Committee also questioned the Summer Rd – Resurfacing and Summer Rd Ditching line items since there was no expenditure in 2022 listed. Liz Wilson commented on Street Sweeping line item and asked if all of the increase was really due to fuel costs as indicated in the budget notes.

Information Technology & Equipment

The Budget Committee all agreed that this is a large budget but understood the importance of the Cyber Security line item. Georgette Wolf-Ludwig added that the printer and scanner for the Town Clerk's Office might need to be postponed.

Library

No questions or discussion other than the COLA percentage in the notes needed to be corrected. It was noted that this correction needed to be made in other budget notes as well.

Listers

The Budget Committee questioned why there was no revenue amounts in the 2022 Actuals column. Dan Ludwig explained the reason the townwide reappraisal was postponed until 2023.

Lake & Town Forest

Dan Ludwig will be asking the Selectboard not to combine the Lake and Town Forest into one budget. He had asked for this separation last year as well.

Other

The Budget Committee discussed their concern on the \$2,000.00 increase in the Fireworks line item.

Police

The Budget Committee discussed the new Police Officer position under the Salaries & Wages line item. They will ask the Selectboard for clarification on this new position.

Railroad Station

Budget Committee questioned why there was no amount under the Revenues Grant Income - Park and Ride line item for the Bus Shelter. They will ask the Selectboard for an update.

Recreation Council

No questions or discussion other than the Recreation Council is in desperate need of more volunteers.

Town Hall & Parks

Liz Wilson questioned the bandstand repair. Georgette Wolf-Ludwig explained there was money under the Parks line item for repairing the floor joists, floor, and benches in the Bandstand next year.

Trash & Recycling

The Budget Committee was very happy about the increased hours for the transfer station in the budget.

Tri-Town Commission

No questions or discussion.

Zoning

The Budget Committee questioned the Planning Grant and Municipal Planning Grant 2023 income line items under Revenue. They also questioned why there is a decrease between the proposed ZA Salary line item and the ZA Salary line item that is being presented in the budget.

Water

No questions or discussion.

Capital Budget

The Budget Committee will discuss the Capital Budget with the Selectboard.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25pm.

Attest: Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, CVC/MMC
Clerk to the Budget Committee

The Budget Committee then met with the Selectboard at 6:30pm to review and discuss the 2023 draft proposed budget.

Minutes Approved by the Budget Committee