The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 began at 6:00 p.m. Remote participation due to COVID-19.

Members Present: William Rosenblum, Chairman, Derek Debarge, James Gennette, Antonio Goncalves, and Manny Silva.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2021 SEP -1 A 10:
TOWN OF LUDLOW

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Visitations:

6:00 p.m. – Ellie Villano, Town Administrator, Kim Collins, Town Accountant & Eric Gregoire, Finance Committee – FY22 Budget

Ms. Villano explained that Ms. Collins and Ms. Villano will be presenting the Board of Selectmen with what they believe should be the operating budget for FY22. The information for the precinct members must be mailed by Friday and the warrant must be posted.

Ms. Collins presented the spreadsheet with the operating budget for FY22. She explained that the level I budget was reviewed several times and would have left the Town with a decrease in the tax rate and over $500,000 in excess levy. After the level II increases, we are left with a $.01 decrease in the tax rate and $274,000 in excess levy. Beginning with the moderator, there was a 2% increase with no additional requests. Selectmen is at a 5% increase. This is strictly due to contractual increases and step increases for the Town Administrator's employees. Finance Committee is at a 2% increase with no additional requests. Accounting is a 5% increase with no additional requests. This is due to the Town Accountant's contract as well as the step increase for the Accounting employees. Assessors is a 6% increase which includes step increases for the employees as well as an additional $2,000 for training. Treasurer is a 4% increase for contractual purposes only. Tax Collector is a 1% increase, for contractual purposes only. Town Counsel does not have an increase this year but there was a sizeable increase last year. Human Resources is a 25% increase due to contractual increase as well as moving her employee from part time to full time. IT is a 1% increase prior to the level II request, which is almost $3,000 for his reclassification and $80,000 in total which includes the HR payroll automation and some cyber security and upgrades. Town Clerk is a 6% increase due to contractual obligations. Elections is a 26% decrease because there is only one election this year. Conservation Commission is a 2% increase. Planning 2% increase. Board of Appeals 0%. Public Buildings 6% increase for the new Senior Center. Property and Liability Insurance increased 27% due to new buildings coming online and vacant buildings being insured. It was reduced by $25,000 based on information received by the Town Administrator. We added that $25,000 to our ice and snow deficit. The Police Department is a 2% increase before the additional Sergeant's position was approved at the last Board of Selectmen's meeting. Therefore, $107,919 added to the budget for a total of $4,016,182. Dispatch is a 14% increase due to a position that was not funded last year. Fire Department is a 2% increase. Ambulance and EMT a 2% increase. Building Inspector decreased 1%. Weights & Measures up 2%. Emergency Management added $1,000. Animal Control increase 13% due to utility costs and combining the Animal Inspector and the Animal Control Officer into one position. Safety Committee up 2%. Department of Public Works up 5% but there is an additional $131,740, which is attributed to $95,000 for storm water which is mandated and $36,740 for one PW1 position to be added which was approved by the Board. Snow and ice will not go up. Street and traffic lighting will not go up. Board of Health is up 3% and then $1500 is being removed and added to Animal Control. Council on Aging is going down 2% but in the Level II budge they are asking for $29,000. $5,000 to bring their part time cook to full time and $24,000 for additional food due to the increase in seniors that they are servicing. Veteran's services increased 1% and then he reduced it by $20,595 which was put into the snow and ice deficit. Hubbard Library no increase. Recreation increased by 38% due to last year's budget being drastically reduced due to COVID and not having summer camp or Haviland Pond open and staffed. Historical Commission no increase. General interest and debt decreased by 37% due to paying off the high school renovation as well as the boys and girls club. Fringe benefits increase by 1%. School Department level II budget has an increase of $241,997 from an original 2% increase. This will be a 2.79% overall for the School.

Mr. Goncalves asked why every other department has a reason for their increase, but the School Department does not.

Ms. Collins explained that there was another report given to the Board that had a detailed list of their requests. The Sewer Enterprise fund was reduced by $942. Landfill enterprise remains the same at $10,000. Golf is increased by 11%. All enterprise funds are funded by their retained earnings and have no effect on our tax rate or excess levy. Cable TV increased 35%. $150,000 capital project for the high school auditorium, which comes out of their retained earnings. This brings the total budget to $74,348,111, which is a 1.1% increase over last year. For free cash, the Police requested overtime and I believe it's $100,000 but it's not set in stone. $25,000 for the 250th celebration. $163,906 was added to the Capital Project line item because things were approved after the level I budget was put in there. The total Capital article this year is $402,419 from free cash. $100,000 from MGM was added. After all the changes we are looking at $21.07 estimated tax rate and $274,000 in excess levy. Last year the budget was very tight due to COVID and the prior year the budget was reduced to stay within our levy. This year we had a lot of late requests. There needs to be some deadlines. We will have written procedures on how this will be handled in the future.

Mr. Rosenblum agreed that there should be rules and deadlines for submitting the departmental budgets.

Mr. Gregoire agreed with Mr. Rosenblum and Ms. Collins and also wanted to let them know that the Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee is also on the line. A baseline of how to handle these and have procedures in place is very important across the board. The Finance Committee is open to having conversations with all the departments and how to handle this and streamline it better. They also wanted to have a conversation about how costs are impacting the community and what specific costs we can bear in each fiscal term. The budget that was brought to you tonight is not reflective of the Finance Committee's recommendations.

Ms. Villano stated they have been trying to provide as much relief to the tax payers as possible. She is happy that is was a tax rate cut even though it wasn't significant.

Mr. Goncalves did agree that 2-3 years ago the Board was talking about $1.00-$1.20 increase every year and this has been two years in a row with great numbers.

Ms. Collins stated that this includes borrowing as well and thanks the Financial Advisor for giving the Town good advice as to when to borrow and the best way to borrow. This also helped in keeping the tax rate down.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2021 SEP -1 A 11:18
TOWN OF LUNENBURG

Mr. Rosenblum stated that it's all about the tax bill, not the tax rate. There will be a small decrease this year.

Mr. Silva reminded the Board that the allowable growth in Town should increase and then the tax rate will decrease as well.

Ms. Collins is hoping that is the case.

Mr. Debarge gives kudos to Ms. Collins and Ms. Villano for going through the budget line item by line item. He would like the Finance Committee to be more involved with everything as Mr. Gregoire stated. This year was the largest disconnect between the individual departments and the Board of Selectmen as well as the Finance Committee. Communication is key to 'control' the budget requests. He is happy with the decrease of $.01 in the tax rate, but future budgeting needs to be communicated better. Mr. Debarge asked if this could be passed as a draft tonight?

Mr. Gregoire is encouraging the Board to wait for the Finance Committee's recommendations before making a motion for the budget.

Mr. Goncalves asked if it is possible to put the information online for the precinct members to access and review with a stipulation that the budget could change pending Finance Committee recommendations?

Ms. Villano said it could be put online, but she does not see a problem with the Board approving the budget tonight if they are in favor of it. Waiting to send the budget to the precinct members is a disservice. Ms. Villano disagrees with Mr. Gregoire and does not see a problem with the Board

approving it before the Finance Committee makes any recommendations. In the future, there will be better communication and cooperation with the Finance Committee.

Mr. Gregoire disagrees with Ms. Villano and feels that looking at things in two different spheres is not helpful either.

Ms. Collins is concerned that the precinct members and departments will not have enough time to review this budget before Town Meeting. The Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen are meeting on May 4th and if the Finance Committee disagreed with a portion of the budget, that could be discussed at this meeting and then the changes could be given to the precinct members at Town Meeting.

Mr. Goncalves stated that this will only be approving what was presented to us and then the budget still must go through the Finance Committee and final approval will be at Town Meeting.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Silva to approve the budget as submitted. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2021 SEP -1 A 8:
LUDLOW, MASS.

CORRESPONDENCE

81. Michelle Goncalves, Chair Ludlow Cultural Council – requesting the Board's permission to hold a Community Market on Saturday, October 2, 2021 and Sunday, October 3, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day at the Mac Donnelly Gazebo.

    Moved by Mr. Gennette, seconded by Mr. Debarge to approve Michelle Goncalves request to hold a Community Market on October 2, 2021 and October 3, 2021 if she is to abide by State guidelines for COVID. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

82. Mary Jane Handy, Director of Accounts, Massachusetts Department of Revenue - notification of Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Issues and other related matters.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to file. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

83. Mike Kelleher, Chairman, Ludlow School Committee – requesting to schedule a visitation with the Board of Selectmen to discuss a coordinated plan to deal with needs for the Ludlow High School track and field project, the opening of Harris Brook Elementary, Veterans Park, 63 Chestnut Street and 54 Windsor Street.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Debarge for Ms. Villano to schedule a meeting with the Chairman of the Ludlow School Committee to discuss several issues regarding the school and parks, with a possible change of venue. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

84. Jessica R. Viera, Resident – requesting to join the Pond Committee.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Debarge to appoint Jessica Viera to the Pond Committee. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

85. DeeAnn Smith and Christa Mamuska, Ludlow Animal Control – request for hearing of formal complain against dog owner, Courtney Carnavale.

    Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Debarge to schedule a hearing for complaint against the dog owner at the request of DeeAnn Smith and Christa Mamuska. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

86. Board Reorganizations – Recreation Commission.

    Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Debarge to file. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

87. Nicole Desnoyers, Indian Orchard Resident – requesting the Board's permission to hang a banner near the Putts Bridge for Children's Mental Health Week during the first week of May.

Moved by Mr. Debarge, seconded by Mr. Gennette to deny the request to hang a banner at Putts Bridge for Children's Mental Health Week due to the Town's bylaws. Vote 4-1.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to review and comment on the pilot program for Huxley Solar, LLC.

This was reviewed in October 2020, but it was not in the best interest of the Town at that time. The Board requested to a new schedule of proposed installments including the 2% escalator before making any decisions. Ms. Villano will send the original template to Mr. Gennette as well.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to table the First Amendment for Grant Administrator Services. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Gennette to approve and sign the Ludlow Fish & Game Club, Inc. gravel bank permit. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Moved by Mr. Debarge, seconded by Mr. Silva to approve the Veterans Tax Work Off Program as stipulated in the documents provided. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Moved by Mr. Silva, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to approve the appointment of Mr. Debarge to Celebrate Ludlow and the Ludlow 250th Semi-Quincentennial Celebration 2024. Vote 4-0-1. One Abstention.

Moved by Mr. Debarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to approve all Annual Appointments. Vote 5-0 all in favor. (Mr. Debarge read the entire list of Annual Appointments in his motion)

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2021 SEP -1 A 10:13
TOWN OF LUDLOW

BOARD UPDATES/MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Debarge to discuss Celebrate Ludlow.

Mr. Debarge explained that after speaking to Laurie Smith, Chairman of Celebrate Ludlow, there is some concern about going forward with this celebration. We discussed reducing the crowd size and moving things around, however, we don't think it's possible and would like to plan for next year instead.

Moved by Mr. Debarge, seconded by Mr. Goncalves to cancel Celebrate Ludlow for this year and plan for next year. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Chairman approved and signed all bills, warrants and abatements. A record of all warrants is in the Selectmen's office for perusal until provided to the Town Accountant's office.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Gennette updated the Board that Beverly Barry is making some good efforts in getting help of the Commissions on Disabilities Committee.

Mr. Debarge stated at the last meeting the Board discussed getting volunteers together to clean up West Ave by the sound barrier. The Rotary club was asked, and they were in to help. However, that afternoon it was clean. Mr. Debarge was advised that there were four trucks with crews cleaning the trash. The DPW did not do it and Mr. Debarge was given the phone number for the Mass DOT. After speaking with Mr. Crociere and that Mass DOT; Mr. Debarge found out that a resident had complained about it, which is why they did it. Mr. Debarge also asked what the status was with reopening the Town Hall? He would like to have the Board of Health involved in this as well.

Mr. Goncalves advised everyone to remain diligent with the COVID cases on the rise again.

Mr. Silva echoed Mr. Goncalves' message and there was a resident who passed away recently from COVID and to be cautious and vigilant.

Mr. Gennette with the warm weather approaching warned residents to be careful driving and slow down a bit.

Mr. Rosenblum read an email received from Sam Silva, a resident with complaints about the Town. Mr. Rosenblum explained about one of the complaints being Turnpike Package and wanted to let the residents know that there is a purchase and sale agreement pending for that business. Mr. Rosenblum also explained about the event that was going to happen at Ludlow Country Club and was told that the Manager told the party that there could not be 200-250 people at the event due to restrictions and was willing to break it down into 4-5 separate visitations of 40-50 people. Also, the event did not have as many people as they cooked for and ended up donating the rest of the food to the Fire Department. Mr. Rosenblum also read an email responding to the Bingo in Town having more than 100 people inside. The Polish American Citizens Club stated that they only set up 100 chairs for their Bingo and it would be impossible for more than that to attend. Mr. Rosenblum understands resident's frustration and level of comfort regarding the pandemic. Also stated that the Selectmen try to catch all these issues in Town, but they could have missed some things. However, the Selectmen still do their due diligence and investigated these allegations made by Sam Silva.

Mr. Silva commented on Sam Silva's letter regarding the Board of Selectmen being corrupt. He is very upset and does not agree that this letter was justified especially to the Police Department and the State. Mr. Silva agreed that he is a member of Gremio and they have not had any events since the pandemic began.

Mr. Goncalves also agreed with Mr. Silva and asked if the residents could please notify them immediately when they see something like this instead of waiting.

Mr. Gennette stated that he is the new guy and from what he has seen thus far is everyone on the Board is very passionate about Ludlow and wants only the best for the Town.

Mr. Debarge while it's nice to be able to comment on social media and to send emails of this nature, you must have the facts. Not every Board in Town is aware of everything going on in Town. Mr. Debarge agreed with Selectmen Silva that as soon as a resident sees something, they should notify the establishment, as well as the Selectmen immediately.

Moved by Mr. Goncalves, seconded by Mr. Debarge to adjourn this meeting at 8:29 p.m. Vote 5-0. All in favor.

Ludlow Board of Selectmen

All related documents can be viewed at the Board of Selectmen's Office during regular business hours.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
2021 SEP -1 A 10:17
TOWN OF LUDLOW