

Town of Farmington  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, February 28, 2024  
Selectmen's Chambers  
356 Main Street-Farmington, NH 03835

**Committee Members Present:**

Joe Pitre, Chairman  
John Deering, Vice Chairman  
Doug Staples, Selectmen's Rep  
Jess Parker, School Board Rep  
Bob Morgan  
Jim Horgan

**Others Present:**

Ken Dickie, Town Administrator  
Mary Barron, School Board member  
Mackenzie Campbell, SAU Business Admin

**Committee Members Absent:**

Angie Cardinal, excused  
Heidi Mitchell, excused  
Jenn Haskell, excused

**1). Call to Order:**

Chairman Pitre called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance,

**3). Review of Minutes:**

**January 17, 2024-** Public Meeting Minutes- No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (Parker, second Morgan) to approve the Jan. 17, 2024 minutes as written passed 6-0.

**4). Review Board of Selectmen's Budget:**

Town Administrator Ken Dickie said this was the first month of the budget and they were waiting for Town Meeting to get the Town budget approved. He said the same as last year they had a lot upfront payments at the beginning of the year so there are a few lines where they'll see for instance in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector software line there is 24.5% left which was for contract they have to pay upfront.

He said Finance Assessing software is an upfront payment, payroll outsourcing is obviously a contract, Fire Dept. training is another line he saw at about 65% and you have to take that when it's available so they grabbed so they can get these people trained and get that out of the way and it will normalize as the year goes on.

He said there is a stipend for emergency management that's why that's down 31% and they will see a line in Parks & Rec supplies and they will a negative 1399% because it was misallocated and she fixed it as he was sitting there so next month that will be corrected.



Mr. Dickie said he wanted to bring the committee up to speed that they are in the midst of starting to resurrect the project for standing up the recycling building and while they were digging for the footings they got into the old burn pits where we used to burn our trash many, many years ago so that begged the question of whether the subsurface material would be able to support the load bearing wall of the recycling building so at that point they had to call an engineering firm in. He said they came up with a proposal of cork screw pylons going into the ground and he asked for the price for those things and it came back at from \$50,000 to \$150,000 total cost for upwards of 5 pylons across that 80 ft. space.

Mr. Dickie said that's when he got with the Project Manager and Building Inspector Ron Lemer and the Project Manager talked with the construction firm, Barron Bros. and also with Norm Vetter for cement and they discussed this among themselves. He said Mr. Lemer found a paragraph in code enforcement that dealt with subpar material and how we could still build on it and meet the code and they ended up coming up with an 8 ft. wide footing the full length of the wall 20 inches thick using 1 inch rebar to support that wall. So the additional cost is going to be \$19,500 instead of \$150,000 he said.

Mr. Pitre asked why they can't move it and noted that we own almost to the river.

Mr. Dickie said we do but they already have forms and footings already started and he brought that to the board and that's what they'll be doing.

Mr. Stapes said all of that is a landfill no matter where they move it.

Mr. Pitre added that they used to make charcoal there and there are tunnels going back towards the salt sheds underneath it.

Mr. Dickie said the other one where they're kind of at the mercy of the Code Enforcement/Bldg. Insp. Is the salt shed which is in sad shape and it needs to be replaced.

Mr. Horgan asked him to repeat the difference in the price from where they were originally and where they're at now for the recycling building.

Mr. Dickie said it was \$338,000 and they have to add \$19,500 to that but he anticipated potential increased cost over runs so he requested another \$150,000 instead of \$138,000 so with that increase of \$19,500 he is short about \$7,500 which he will find. He said he has been talking about the salt shed with different people and potentially they could put telephone poles in the ground and make a 3-sided shed for a salt shed and all they need to do is keep the rain off of it they don't need anything too extravagant. He said he has been talking to Cameron's and other people about milling some lumber for us for some timber to frame around the poles to support the trusses for the roof. Those are the 2 big projects I've been working on besides the well and the other projects we've got going as far as a cost impact he said.

He said they've done all the test drilling up around Town Wells #4 and #5 and they did some drilling around Well #6 to try to determine the best site to put in Well #7 to solidify the town with water well into the future so that's moving.

He said he told them earlier that they were able to land another \$2.5 million from the state's revolving fund for water and that's 100% forgiveness so the total responsibility to the Town for



the well will be around \$2.5 million not the \$5.7 million they thought it was going to be when they first got into this.

Mr. Pitre said he had a note that said he wants to go over the Fund 08 for the Police Dept.

Mr. Dickie said we lost a cruiser trying to respond to a call over in Lancelot Shores when coming over Poor Farm Road. He said the officer came up over a knoll on the back side of the hill, the sand was blown off the road so it was icy and the officer lost control and the cruiser went straight instead of going around the corner and it flipped on its side. He said the cruiser was totaled and they were able to get \$58,000 back from the insurance and with what we had in Fund 08 will offset the rest of it.

Mr. Horgan asked for the status of the bottom line and if they were going to change the bottom line from the original recommendation on the budget.

Mr. Dickie said he was not going to change the bottom line.

Mrs. Barron said that was unanticipated revenue when the insurance check comes in.

Mr. Dickie said no he has already reviewed it with NH Municipal Assoc.'s legal counsel and it's money in, money out going for a new cruiser so it's not unanticipated revenue. The accident was unanticipated but the revenue from the insurance that we carry is expected when we lost a vehicle so it's not unanticipated revenue he said.

Mr. Morgan asked if the officer was okay.

Mr. Dickie said he was shaken up but he was okay.

Mr. Pitre then asked what it costs us for Tax Anticipation Notes and do we get TAN notes. He asked if they can handle it with the money they have in their budget the 5% to 17% for this lapse of about 3 months until the budget is approved.

Mr. Dickie said yes.

Mr. Pitre asked if we are close.

Mr. Dickie said we are okay. He said when they get close is when they are trying to set the tax rate. He said right now the tax rate has been set so they have revenue coming in through the tax collection.

Mr. Pitre said so they haven't spent any money on TAN notes in November.

Mr. Dickie said that's right.

Mr. Pitre said that's good and at the County it's about \$400,000 which is not acceptable. He asked if there were any other questions and hearing none, he thanked Mr. Dickie for attending.

#### **5). Review School Board's Budget:**

SAU Business Administrator Mackenzie Campbell began by summarizing the documents for January. He said the school expended \$1,070,346.34 in Jan. and that brings their Y-T-D to \$7,856,348.98. He said currently they have another \$4,384,112.73 encumbered through the end of the year, their Jan. revenues totaled \$762,796.36 bringing their Y-T-D revenues to \$10,301,420.86 and their total grant report requests from the feds in Jan. was \$242,236.50. He returned to a question from Mr. Staples at the last meeting about the Valley View School Tutors line on the first page of expense report and he looked into the line and the line is just



overspent and it was going towards VVCS tutoring however they have under spent their Tutoring in the 2 other schools and they have a net positive difference of \$7,259.39.

Mr. Staples asked if he thought that would cover them through the year.

Mr. Campbell said it seems so, we're in March now and there's a little money encumbered but not enough to drain it or make it negative between the three schools.

Mr. Staples said their supplies lines too are way over spent and asked if that is because it's coming out of the grants.

Mr. Campbell said the plan is to go back and get a lot of that from the grants so some of the stuff is-with ESSER you're allowed to retro-activate so the plan is to come March they've submitted a warrant article for the town's approval by the voting body and if they approve that warrant article they know they can expend the rest of the ESSER monies and they will request back what they can for supplies as well as order what they need through Sept. 30, 2024 when the grant ends. He said some of that money could be moved out of those lines at the end of the year, some of those lines are artificially low starting at \$1 and that kind of binds them in an unfair way because if you spend \$2 it's overspent.

Mr. Horgan asked if he knew what the student population was at the moment.

Mr. Campbell said it's approx. between 750 and 800.

Mr. Horgan asked how that compared to the year before.

Mr. Campbell said he believes it is trending downward.

Mr. Horgan asked if it has been trending down for the last 5 years.

Mr. Campbell said he did not know.

Mr. Pitre said yes and that he has been keeping track of that.

Mr. Horgan asked if it was expected to trend upward over the next 5 years.

Mr. Campbell said he could assume that would be the case with the strategies the previous administration was using to develop those budgets.

Mr. Pitre said it was 768 the last time he checked which is probably up a little.

Mr. Campbell said the plan moving forward is to analyze what they're actually spending and hopefully not keep putting forward with huge increases at all. He said they are trying to be fiscally responsible with projects and try to prevent jumps in tax increases and keep that level moving forward until they determine what is really sufficient for the next year.

Mr. Horgan asked how many students moved from our schools to another school.

Mr. Campbell said that he couldn't say although they just placed 2 more students out of district which is a Spec Ed term so that will raise Spec Ed costs and those costs are unfortunately for the number of students high.

Mr. Morgan asked if they still have 12 unfilled positions.

Mr. Campbell said he believes the number is going up as they lost 2 custodians since the last time they talked and they are still on the hunt for Paras, Teachers and any other support they can find for Subs.

Mr. Staples asked if he got an answer for the travel for the Spec Ed for the high school. He said it



was all blown out and asked if that was because they're paying parents to transport or we have private transportation.

Mr. Campbell said there is not an adequate amount of bus drivers to transport all Spec Ed cases currently which has them contract out those services and the services are expensive. And that number is going up he said.

Mr. Staples asked if they made a payment yet for the new lights.

Mr. Campbell said all they've done is process an application fee to obtain the lease they have not made a payment towards the lights.

Mr. Pitre asked if there were any other questions from the members and hearing none thanked Mr. Campbell for attending the meeting. He then added that Mrs. Cardinal and Mrs. Haskell called in so their absences were excused.

Members pointed out that Ms. Mitchell replied to Mr. Pitre's e-mail and said she wouldn't be attending the meeting.

Mr. Pitre said he did not see that earlier and that her absence was also excused.

**6). Any Other Business:** None

**7). Public Comment:**

Mr. Pitre thanked everyone for being here and said that this is his last meeting and he knew they were having trouble getting Bud Com members. He said it has been a pleasure to work with them, it has been tough at times but at other times it has been very rewarding. Thank you very much he said.

**8). Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 27, 2024

**9). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Staples, second Deering) to adjourn the meeting passed 6-0 at 7:22 p.m.

Kathleen Magoon  
Recording Secretary

Joe Pitre, Chairman

Emmanuel Kressner "Manny"