

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

BUDGET WORKSHOP

December 17, 2018

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bruce Schmidt
John Neal

Brett Sanderson
Logan Nicoll

Heather Tucker

STAFF PRESENT:

Scott Murphy

Pam Cruickshank

OTHERS PRESENT:

Craig Hutt-Vater
David Johnson

Paul Orzechowski
Fred Marin - Okemo Valley TV

I. Call to Order

- A. Bruce Schmidt called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda

- A. Scott Murphy advised that no changes would be needed.

III. FY2020 Budget Workshop

A. Updated FY 2020 Budget

B. Paving

1. Scott Murphy said that he had prepared a new draft with the changes discussed at their last meeting. He distributed a cost sheet for paving work on Commonwealth Avenue, with a 50/50 split between the town and village. These numbers are based on number from Fuller. He said there may be funding available for Class II roads with a 20% match and that both the town and village may apply. We have not received this grant in two years, so it is possible that we may this time around. If we get the funding, we can go ahead with the project and not if we don't. We can add the costs into the budget under Treatment. John Neal asked the time line on the funding.
2. Scott Murphy said we would apply in May and be notified in June and could start July 1, 2019. He said that there is \$111,000 included in the FY2020 budget at this time. He noted that for every \$135,000 added to the budget, it raises the tax rate \$.01.
3. Bruce Schmidt said that we have usually been putting in \$100,000 to \$115,000 yearly for this. We have added roads and mileage. He asked if we should put in more under an Article.

4. Brett Sanderson said we don't want to go backward and change roads to gravel.
5. Bruce Schmidt said if we want to get ahead, we may want to add a few hundred thousand.
6. Scott Murphy said that Ron Tarbell feels comfortable with Commonwealth and Trailside. The following year, we may be doing High Street and with it some infrastructure repairs.
7. Bruce Schmidt said if we get the grant, we will do Commonwealth and Trailside next summer.
8. Scott Murphy said there would be an offset on the revenue side with the grant.
9. Bruce Schmidt asked if Trailside is included in the \$111,000.
10. Scott Murphy said yes. He added that if we get the grant, retreatment costs would be \$243,000 with a net cost to each the town and village of \$48,600. If we don't get the grant, we don't do Commonwealth.
11. Brett Sanderson said he disagrees with doing Trailside. It is still under construction. He is discouraged that the town did not get any money from the contractor toward the paving. And, we will have to do Trailside again in a few years when the project is complete.
12. John Neal said there is a lot of truck traffic on Trailside.
13. Bruce Schmidt said if the project comes to fruition, it will mean an increase in taxes to the town. He suggested that we need to ask Ron Tarbell – for next year – to survey every road and see when it was last paved and what is there now. We need to know what other roads need to be paved. We have extended Commonwealth, Johnson Loop and the Cross Road.
14. Bruce Schmidt asked if it is different than the one in the packets.
15. Scott Murphy said it is in addition to the one in the packets.

C. Ambulance

1. Scott Murphy said that at their last meeting, he had mentioned to the board about possibly hiring an outside vendor to do billing. He met with them last week and there are some inefficient parts to our billing system. Some of our Accounts Receivables are over 180 days and we usually aren't able to collect on them. At this time, with Diane Knight and Carl Matteson handling the billing, we are at about 91% effective. The vendor said they are usually about 95% effective. If we pursued this, it wouldn't make sense and wouldn't increase our revenue much. He said that he took vendor costs out of the budget.
2. Bruce Schmidt said that we need to look into professional consultants for the future of the Ambulance.
3. Scott Murphy said that Stowe had a report done by Municipal Resources regarding their fire and ambulance departments. We can look into it.
4. Bruce Schmidt asked what the next step would be if we get serious about a regional ambulance. Should we go to other Select Boards and commit money to exploring tis. We need to do some groundwork.

D. Elevator Upgrade

1. Scott Murphy said that the town hall elevator needs to be modernized based on age, safety and service. He has an estimate from Bay State for \$65,000 and if we put in \$20,000, we can get in the queue.
2. John Neal asked if this should be an Article or repair. If it's a repair, it should go in the budget.
3. Bruce Schmidt said to take it out of Articles and put it in the budget for town hall.

E. Town and Village Merger

1. Scott Murphy asked the board if there is any interest in merging the town and village and would the voters like more information. He said there was a similar vote in 1980 and the voters turned it down.
2. Bruce Schmidt asked if the Trustees are interested and if yes, we may start discussions, not before. They would lose their board and they are concerned about the Water/Sewer.
3. John Neal agreed.

F. Capital Equipment Plan

1. Scott Murphy said that for FY2020, we have a dump truck and a tandem. We will put a roadside mower in for 2021... So far, we have nothing scheduled for 2022, but may slide the mower into 2022. Ron Tarbell is okay with that.
2. Bruce Schmidt said that they had discussed keeping the Capital Fund Requests at \$30,000.
3. Scott Murphy said we talked about moving it to \$50,000.
4. Bruce Schmidt suggested moving it to \$40,000.
5. Scott Murphy said if we keep the roadside mower, we can keep it at \$30,000.
6. Bruce Schmidt said he wants to be able to tell the people realistic numbers.
7. Scott Murphy said we can build the kitty.
8. Bruce Schmidt noted that they removed the emergency generator for the Community Center.
9. Scott Murphy said there may be some grant opportunities.

G. Discussion About Schools

1. Paul Orzechowski advised that he had been to the Mount Holly meeting last Tuesday and they have agreed to pay \$11,000 for Education Operations.
2. Dave Johnson said it will be a separate Article in Mount Holly if Ludlow approves.
3. Bruce Schmidt suggested that the Ludlow and Mount Holly Select Boards should have a meeting.
4. Logan Nicoll said we need to start this process slowly. We need to separate the funds in general and be able to show what Ludlow has done to supplement the budget and what expenses Ludlow will pull out.
5. Bruce Schmidt said it will be for one year.
6. Scott Murphy asked about School Book and the Library.
7. Paul Orzechowski said we'll take half.
8. Scott Murphy noted the removal of \$18,000 from the Parks and Recreation budget for Recreation to School and also the removal of \$15,000 for Team Sports.
9. Paul Orzechowski said they are hoping there is a surplus. He said they need to replace the oil tank at Mount Holly Elementary with an estimated cost of \$53,000. They also have to subdivide the property due to the closure of Black River High School.
10. Bruce Schmidt asked if Mount Holly will be paying toward the \$5,000 for Fletcher School books.
11. Paul Orzechowski said no. He added that they don't want to charge for indoor soccer.
12. Bruce Schmidt asked about the costs – janitorial?
13. Scott Murphy said they charge \$70/hour.
14. Bruce Schmidt said it is tough at the end of the day; they are using the surplus for the tanks.
15. Brett Sanderson said there may be some funding available.
16. Bruce Schmidt said the school wants help with Recreation and books
17. Scott Murphy suggested \$2,500 for book and \$9,000 for recreation.
18. Paul Orzechowski said Mount Holly will only pay the \$11,000. He added that the Town of Ludlow uses the gym.
19. Heather Tucker said that team sports are out because they are not being offered next year,
20. Logan Nicoll suggested setting an appropriation for everything related to the school for miscellaneous items and not separate line items.
21. Scott Murphy noted that it will be gone next year.
22. Bruce Schmidt said the gym will still be there and the Recreation program wants to use the gym.
23. Paul Orzechowski said the Recreation Department also uses the Mount Holly gym.
24. Bruce Schmidt said it doesn't make sense to change Ludlow hourly for the Rec. program.

25. Heather Tucker asked why Ludlow to use their gym charge.
26. Paul Orzechowski said they want staff there because of the new gym floor.
27. Bruce Schmidt said that is a school board issue. They could make one person responsible for the key.
28. Scott Murphy said that Ludlow does other things that we don't charge for.
29. Bruce Schmidt said that he heard that they have discussed moving the food service back to the stage.
30. Paul Orzechowski said it has been mentioned.
31. Bruce Schmidt said it might work with just the LES. He suggested that Mount Holly do ½ of the \$18,000.
32. Heather Tucker suggested that costs should be calculated by a per student ratio.
33. Bruce Schmidt said we are trying to be good neighbors and asked about \$2,500 toward books.
34. Paul Orzechowski asked the board if they would consider buying the school for \$1.00.
35. Bruce Schmidt said that could not be decided tonight. The building is the gateway to the town but the monthly upkeep costs would run about \$10,000 or \$120,000 per year. We need to consider what can or will be there in the future and it needs to be a community decision. The Select Board needs to be a part of those discussions. He mentioned if the independent school will be a reality and how the town might support it. At this point, the costs should be kept through the schools until this is decided.

H. Recreation Department

1. Bruce Schmidt noted that \$22,000 for Recreation Assistant was changed to \$5,000.
2. Scott Murphy said it should have been for Additional Labor and re-categorized to summer/winter labor. Also, now the staff at the Community Center is included in Year Round Staff and Camp staff is just for the summer.
3. Bruce Schmidt said there is a significant increase in Camp Staff and Year Round Staff.
4. Heather Tucker noted that we have paid for maintenance and repairs to the skate park for the last few years.
5. Scott Murphy said the increase is not large, but that the numbers have been redirected.
6. Bruce Schmidt said that part of the decrease was the removal of the team sports and Recreation to School program. He said that this board really needs to scrutinize the Recreation budget.
7. Scott Murphy said that, in the past, Parks and Recreation has not had good accountability over the years and we are trying to get a handle on it. They had a meeting on the summer programs last week. He said that their idea is for the 4 towns to have one program, education-based and she (Venissa White) has an application in for a grant. Our Recreation Committee came up with a new program. We will set up another meeting with the Recreation Committee. An idea may be to give them the summer program; we provide the location and redirect the transportation costs. Then, revisit this in one year, rather than have 2 competing programs.
8. Bruce Schmidt said it would change our budget. He said that Venissa White's deadline is January 15, 2019.
9. Heather Tucker said there are 2 sides to this; education vs. summer recreation with games and fun. The suggested program is very education based.
10. Scott Murphy said we would still use West Hill and pick up and drop off the children.
11. Bruce Schmidt asked if the transportation costs were included in the \$4,100.
12. Scott Murphy said no, it would be built into the grant and we would receive the revenue.

I. Draft of Town Meeting Warning

1. Scott Murphy said that the elevator repairs will be removed from Articles and put in the budget.

2. Bruce Schmidt noted that Gill Home is back in the Articles.
3. Pam Cruickshank said that HCRS will be an Article by petition, but that she doesn't know the amount.
4. Bruce Schmidt asked the last date.
5. Scott Murphy said January 16, 2019.
6. Bruce Schmidt said he would like to finalize the budget at their meeting on January 7, 2019.

J. Remaining Questions

1. Discussed under other topics.

K. Planning Commission

1. Logan Nicoll said the Planning Commission received the grant that they applied for. He said they has worked hard on the zoning regulations.
2. Bruce Schmidt said they did a good job getting the revisions in within the 6 months that the Select Board had requested.

IV. Adjourn

A. **MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Logan Nicoll to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**

B. Meeting ended at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Bruce Schmidt, Chairman

Brett Sanderson

John Neal

Heather Tucker

Logan Nicoll