

**Ludlow Select Board  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**Wednesday December 11th, 2024  
6:00PM**

**HOWARD BARTON CONFERENCE ROOM  
AGENDA**

**Select Board Special Meeting Zoom Link**

Zoom Meeting ID:437 305 4865

Password: 255344

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brett Sanderson, Chairman

Justin Hyjek

George Tucker, Jr.

Scott Baitz

Noah Schmidt

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Brendan McNamara

**I. Call to Order**

- A. Brett Sanderson opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. He opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. All Select Board members present.

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

- A. Brett Sanderson noted that no changes were needed.

**III Hear Citizens**

- A. There were no comments

**IV. FY 2025-2026**

- A. Brendan McNamara said he would like to start by going over the departments and the highlighted information. He said he had emailed an earlier copy to board members and after reviewing it with Ulla Cook, department heads and auditors, the hard copies tonight have a few changes from the emailed copy.
- B. AMBULANCE
1. Brendan McNamara advised that the biggest change is the new monitors at \$18,000/year for 3 years. He advised that Insurance is up 11%.

2. Justin Hyjek noted that employees and their families are receiving the Platinum insurance package.
3. Brendan McNamara said there are about 50 full time employees in the TOWN.
4. Justin Hyjek said he would like to take a hard look at all of the numbers and see where we can cut.
5. Brendan McNamara said the total expenditures for this budget are \$7,212,273.03, Revenue is projected at \$2,277,871.00 and Amount to be raised in taxes is \$4,934,402.03 - an increase of 5.3%. He added that is one point below where we were last year. He added that he cut wherever he thought we could cut and this is a tight budget. He said that the \$70,000 in Ambulance is for the new ambulance, ordered last year and will be for 5 years. Originally, we considered keeping the 3rd ambulance, but moved some of the equipment to the new one and decided to sell the 3rd. We expect to sell it for about \$50,000.
6. Justin Hyjek asked about the \$100,000 for part-time EMTs and asked why it is lower. Is that split with Okemo?
7. Brendan McNamara said he looked at the actuals and 2024 was the flood year.
8. Justin Hyjek noted the huge increase from 2022 to 2026
9. Brendan McNamara said that is due to increase in volume and taking over Mount Holly (700 calls). He added that they are also expecting (conservatively) about \$45,000 in grant income.
10. George Tucker, Jr. said Ambulance increase in revenue nearly pays for their budget.
11. Brendan McNamara said this year; they are pushing the higher end. This year we are at  $\frac{3}{8}$  already.

C. CEMETERY

1. Brendan McNamara said that the Cemetery Commissioners set their budget and will be meeting next Wednesday. Currently about a 3.1% increase.

D. ADMINISTRATION

1. Brendan McNamara said that there is an increase with the addition of the Grant Coordinator position, and child care. Also \$11,500 for network server and computer upgrades. When asked, Brendan McNamara said he does not collect a car allowance and considers it part of his job.
2. Justin Hyjek said he would like to see all cell phones as one line item.
3. Brendan McNamara said we are working on that. He added that the police don't have department issued phones and should. He said that Police Sergeant Jeff Warfle is working on finding a vendor.
4. Noah Schmidt noted that Health/Safety is projected at \$100,
5. Brendan McNamara said that is correct
6. Noah Schmidt asked about Web page maintenance
7. Brendan McNamara said that is a new item, He said that he added \$45,000 in grants and a new state PILOT PROGRAM of \$40,000 in revenue

E. APPROPRIATIONS

1. Brendan McNamara said that Appropriations are voted on from the floor.

2. Justin Hyjek asked if the Library requests could be combined. He said the After School Program is a shoe in and that BRACC has moved to Chester.
3. Noah Schmidt asked if Appropriations can be increased by requests from the floor.
4. Brendan McNamara said yes.

F. BUILDING AND GROUNDS

1. Brendan McNamara said this is fairly flat. He said that Facilities Repair/Maintenance had an unforeseeable increase with the replacement of the boiler at the Fire Station - about \$30,000. He said money is tight. He said that he thinks that all municipal buildings should be under the purview of Building and Grounds, but they aren't. He would like to be able to go to one person.
2. George Tucker, Jr. asked why there is a Community Center fund, but not for all buildings.
3. Noah Schmidt noted that uniforms are not in the budget,
4. Brendan McNamara said he will add it.

G. COMMUNITY CENTER OPERATIONS.

1. Brendan McNamara said there is not much change here with an increase of \$5,887.50

H. CAPITAL

1. Brendan McNamara said there is also not much here, except that they need a new highway truck at about \$165,000.

I. DEBT MANAGEMENT

1. Brendan McNamara said there is not much change here. Some of the debts have been paid off. There are new trucks. And there is an increase of \$65,323.

J. FIRE DEPARTMENT

1. Brendan McNamara noted new radios at \$7,000 and State Association dues of \$5,000. He noted that Equipment Repair/Maintenance and diesel costs have doubled. He said the increase in costs is \$38,708.
2. Noah Schmidt asked how strict we are about the departments keeping to the budgets.
3. George Tucker, Jr. asked if they keep to their budget.
4. Brendan McNamara said we use the budget as a target.
5. Noah Schmidt asked about the Ambulance Transport Program as revenue
6. Brendan McNamara said it is through insurance. He said if we enter into a MOU with the state for inspections, Ben Whalen is conservative in his estimates. We hired him to be Chief, not fire inspector.
7. Noah Schmidt said that the Recreation Department needs to generate revenue.
8. Scott Baitz asked about false alarms
9. Brett Sanderson said properties are allowed one free one every 6 months.
10. Scott Baitz said false alarms are a big portion of the calls.
11. Brendan McNamara said how do you collect on the fines? He will talk to Ben Whalen.

K. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

1. Brendan McNamara said that Ron Tarbell has a tight budget. Salaries and costs of living increase, but we try to keep up with inflation.
2. Justin Hyjek noted that the year of the flood, salaries were \$318,401.67.
3. Brendan McNamara said the backhoe lease payment is \$32,708. He said there is not much revenue generated.

L. INSURANCE

1. Justin Hyjek noted this is also included as a line item under each department.
2. Brendan McNamara said we handle the bulk of the payments and charge to departments. He added that Recreation and Cemetery have the highest costs.
3. Justin Hyjek asked if it is audited yearly,
4. Brendan McNamara said yes.

M. LISTERS

1. Brendan McNamara said the Listers' budget is flat. He said the contract with the assessor is \$48,000/year and it is a 3-year contract.

N. HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

1. Brendan McNamara said the Select Board will be discussing this at their January meeting. We dropped the Repairs and Maintenance costs.
2. George Tucker, Jr. said we had done some things to the building to bring it up to code.
3. Brendan McNamara said there are 8 students.
4. Justin Hyjek said it takes time to build that kind of school.

O. PLANNING SERVICES

1. Brendan McNamara said that they have hired a part time assistant. He thinks that they should increase the zoning fees.
2. George Tucker, Jr. agreed.

P. POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. Brendan McNamara said that salaries are determined by the Union Contract. He said Dispatch was increased by 10%. He said that the Dispatchers do get overtime. He added that the new chief's starting salary will be less than Jeff Billings' current salary.
2. Justin Hyjek noted that Traffic Control is \$25,000.
3. Brendan McNamara said that we have been charging the Ambulance for Dispatch, but now that they are under the town budget, we can do away with that.
4. Justin Hyjek said he has never seen someone get a parking fine.
5. George Tucker, Jr. noted that there are lots of warnings.
6. Brendan McNamara said that is at the direction of the board and town manager.
7. Justin Hyjek asked about the Windsor County Sheriff.
8. Brendan McNamara said we don't contract with them,
9. Noah Schmidt asked who would have jurisdiction.
10. Brendan McNamara said that is not a big thing in Vermont.

Q. PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

1. Brendan McNamara said there is a decrease in costs because of the little league field no longer being there. It is now at the High School. He said that Nick Miele does a good job making a plan and sticking to it.
2. Noah Schmidt said the costs of fireworks have increased and they could make more on their programs.
3. Brendan McNamara said the Dog and Skate parks have more revenue. He added that we don't have enough children for teams.
4. Noah Schmidt asked if we are paying for kids from out of this town.
5. Brendan McNamara said yes. IF we know they will be playing on our teams, they should pay a stipend.
6. Noah Schmidt said we are paying for officials, maintenance and lights.
7. Justin Hyjek said we should have a donation box or VENMO scan at the fireworks.
8. Scott Baitz said also at the dog park.
9. Justin Hyjek said we have a skate park and it will need recoating every couple of years - about \$2,500.
10. Scott Baitz asked about the Ice Rink not being at Jackson Gore this year and said he thought it was park of the Jackson Gore permit.
11. Brendan McNamara said the permit was revised.
12. George Tucker, Jr. said Okemo was supposed to have one instead of at West Hill.
13. Brendan McNamara said he will look into it.

R. SOLID WASTE

1. Brendan McNamara said that Patti Potter has a good budget. The actual for attendants' salaries for 2024 was \$144,767.92/. They were open 7 days a week during the flood cleanup. He added that Eugene moved there and is doing a good job.
2. Justin Hyjek said we are losing money on the logo bags.
3. Brendan McNamara said he can investigate other towns, Cavendish uses tokens and they are not effective or financially responsible.
4. Justin Hyjek asked what Patti Potter's opinion is about the bags.
5. George Tucker, Jr. said we budget \$48,000 in permits and you get 52 bags with a permit. If you need more, you have to buy them.
6. Brendan McNamara said that Patti Potter advocates raising the permit fee.
7. Noah Schmidt asked if they can start taking credit cards.
8. Brendan McNamara said no. We only take them for tax payments. He will talk to Patti Potter.
9. Noah Schmidt asked about Zero Sort
10. Brendan McNamara said we can't do Zero Sort on everything and it is not free anymore.
11. Justin Hyjek asked about the bathroom.
12. Brendan McNamara said they are waiting on the plumber.

S. Brendan McNamara said the board will meet next Wednesday for wrap this up. We will look at Capital, fire truck, town clerk, articles. He will have Ulla Cook look everything over. He thinks it is pretty solid.

R. Noah Schmidt asked if it is realistic?

- T. Brendan McNamara said there may be some changes, but it is pretty realistic.
- U. George Tucker, Jr. said we need to raise Planning/Zoning fees. He said that we now have the lawyer writing the decisions.
- V. Noah Schmidt said we should promote wellness programs to help lower insurance rates.
- W. Brett Sanderson said we did that in the past, but there was not a big difference in fees.
- X. Brendan McNamara said Joe Guadiana had an eye injury. We don't have a lot of injuries. He said Kevin MacPherson is very meticulous.

**V. Other Business**

- A. There was none

**VI. Executive Session (if needed)**

- A. Not needed

**VII. Adjourn**

- A. **MOTION by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded by Justin Hyjek to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting closed at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

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Brett Sanderson, Chairman

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Noah Schmidt

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Scott Baitz

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George Tucker, Jr.

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Justin Hyjek