

Lebanon Board of Finance
Special Meeting March 9, 2024 at 8:30 am
Town Hall Conference Room (in-person) and via Zoom
MINUTES

Recording in progress.

Present: Mike Ninteau, chair; Philip Johnson, vice chair; Diane Malozzi, secretary; Gregg Lafontaine, Justine Spielman, Harold Nelson.

Alternates present: John Noblet, Giselle Russo

Absent: Haley Messier, alternate

Also Present: First Selectman Kevin Cwikla, Finance Director Hayley Wagner.

1.0 Call to order

Having established a quorum, M. Ninteau called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

2.0 Discuss the following FY 2024-25 Operating and Capital budget areas. After each discussion there will be an opportunity for public input.

Dept 400 Legal

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

Budget increased \$25,000.00. Main driver is DPW contract negotiations. Legal counsel is contacted for various advice continually, which is billed at an hourly rate.

No public comment.

Dept 401 Selectmen

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

Budget decreased. New administrative assistant salary is lower than previous assistant due to lesser experience.

No public comment.

Dept 415 Computer Services

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

Increases in software licensing, for payroll program and services. Currently looking into ways to save money by combining phones, computer services, printers and supplies under one department for the town. A suggestion was made to look into hiring a contractor to negotiate fees. H. Wagner explained some departments would be limited in options for software due to their needs being in a noncompetitive market. Recent increase of 8% for added security. Will need to look for lower cyber insurance policy.

No public comment.

Dept 417 Town Hall

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

Increase in budget. Largest drivers are the addition of a line item for a newsletter to be mailed to residents quarterly as well as postage and utility phone/internet. No revenue would come from the newsletter, all ad monies would be retained by the publisher.

No public comment.

Dept 426 Fire Safety Complex

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

Budget decreased. Lower costs contracted for utilities/oil and dumpster services.

No public comment.

Dept 430 Public Works

Budget presented by DPW Supervisor Dean Hunniford.

Largest budget drivers are salaries, cost of materials, engineering and routine maintenance.

Due to the uncooperative weather and wash outs caused by such the use and number of materials has increased. The engineering budget will look at updating the current drainage systems throughout town to make them more efficient during storms and decrease material replacements. State funding does offset some cost of materials but not all. An additional non CDL maintainer has been added to payroll to ensure that maintenance for equipment repair and work is done to prevent more costly repairs in the future. The septic needs to be remediated. K. Cwikla said ARPA funds will be used for remediation. ARPA funds will be used for a sweeper.

Capital requests for ongoing tree maintenance and removal at \$500,000.00 and highway paving at \$650,000.00.

Request for plow truck for \$265,000.00 with a lead time of a year to replace an older truck whose engine blew this season and \$55,000.00 for a pick-up truck to replace a 2007 model. The plan is to turn over pickups every 10 years to keep the fleet operating with less repair costs and to maximize resale of the current truck.

Public comment: Kathleen Smith, East Hebron Tpke, Board of Selectman emphasized the Selectman's use of ARPA funds.

Dept 433 Snow Removal

Budget presented by DPW Supervisor Dean Hunniford.

Standard increase of about 3%. Cost of salt increased due to inflation contract increased. The BOE negotiates their own contract for snow removal which has increased.

No public comment.

Dept 431 Building & Grounds

Budget presented by DPW Supervisor Dean Hunniford.

Largest budget drivers are salaries, mowing for town and cemeteries, misc. services contractual, and for maintenance and repairs to town buildings. The town has seven buildings, some of them requiring more repairs due to age. A new grounds maintainer position was created for a non CDL maintenance worker for 19 hours due to the amount of maintenance required. D. Hunniford explained that all types of maintenance are required from small things to more significant repairs but they all need to be done. They are looking at possibly one appropriation to cover maintenance for buildings, ground, recreation and transfer station to reduce potential liabilities.

No public comment.

Dept 425 Building Dept

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

Jason Nowosad, building inspector, was not able to attend the presentation. K. Cwikla will reach out to him for any concerns the BOF may have. K. Cwikla said the budget shows a small increase, the driver being salary. It was noted the cost of software appears high. K. Cwikla will get more information for the BOF. Revenue may increase due to projects coming up in building that have received or applied for permits.

No public comment.

Dept 441 Health Dept.

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

Managed by the Uncas Health District based on per capita currently estimated at a population in Lebanon of 7,200 people.

No public comment.

Board suspends meeting for break at 10:15 am.

Meeting resumes at 10:25 am.

Fund 204 Community Center

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

H. Wagner said funds come from interest income on the endowment that was left to the Town. The town makes one deposit of \$100.00 per year into this fund. The unaudited balance is currently about \$100,000.00. ARPA funds are being used the extensive renovation in progress. Maintenance costs are not within the parameters of the fund.

No public comment.

Fund 205 Animal Control

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

This is a misc. services contract with NEOGG managed outside the town that has a standard increase every year. Revenue is estimated.

No public comment.

Fund 208 Town Improvement Plan (TIP)

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

TIP is a per year appropriation requested by the Board of Selectman for funds to cover costs of items and projects that do not meet the criteria for capital spending. A detailed report of items and projects requested or identified is provided to the BOF. The BOS manage the plan for spending in accordance with the policy.

Public comment: Kathleen Smith East Hebron Tpke, Board of Selectman member. Ms. Smith asked the BOF to consider increasing the amount the BOS can spend without authorization from the BOF due to inflation.

Fund 228 Emergency Management

Budget presented by K. Cwikla.

This is a misc. services contract, required by the State, managed outside the town that has an average salary increase every year.

No public comment.

3.0 Adjourn

M. Nintean adjourned the special meeting at 11:03 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Malozzi, Secretary
Board of Finance

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.