

Municipal Budget Committee Meeting
Community Center
8 Whitten Street
Allenstown, New Hampshire 03275
November 29, 2018

Call to Order

The Allenstown Municipal Budget Committee Meeting of November 29, 2018 was called to order at 6:06 pm by Chairman Keith Klawes.

Chair Klawes called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Present on the Board: Kris Raymond, Dave Coolidge, Keith Klawes, Tiffany Ranfos, Carol Angowski, Melaine Boisvert, Deb Carney, Ron Cox

Excused: Ryan Carter, Chad Pelissier, Jeffrey Venegas

Allenstown Staff: Derik Goodine, Town Administrator; Debbie Bender, Finance Director

Also present: Armand Verville, Old Allenstown Meeting House

Review of Minutes

Ms. Boisvert made a motion to accept the November 8, 2018 minutes as amended. Ms. Carney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mr. Cox abstained.

Ms. Ranfos made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2018 meeting as amended. Mr. Cox seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mr. Coolidge and Ms. Boisvert abstained.

Old Allenstown Meeting House Budget

Mr. Verville stated that the proposed budget for the Old Allenstown Meeting House is \$1,300, as it has been for the past three or four years. Some items are more expensive, such as the phone and electricity, he said, but it is manageable. He said that his name and phone number are on the door of the Meeting House and he or his wife, Claudia Verville, are usually available to let someone in for a tour. He added that one of the Americorps students at Bear Brook's Spruce Pond has volunteered to open the building once a week for tours.

Ms. Carney asked if they hold bake sales.

Mr. Verville responded that they have one bake sale each year.

Chair Klawes asked about the phone and modem expense of \$850.

Mr. Verville explained that the modem connects with Wayne Alarm Systems, their alarm company. The alarm is \$288 per year and the monthly phone bill is about \$45.

Ms. Raymond asked about car shows.

Mr. Verville said that he ran car shows for four years as fundraisers, but he announced that he would not be doing it again. He said it was a lot of work.

Mr. Coolidge said the shows were terrific.

Ms. Raymond suggested that perhaps Parks & Rec or the Economic Development Committee could take this over.

Chair Klawes told Mr. Verville that the Committee would be making its recommendations on all of the budgets at the end of the presentations.

Town Administration Proposed Budget

Mr. Goodine continued the discussion of the Assessing function which had begun at the last meeting. He said that the Assessor routinely picks up new sales of homes and checks the neighborhood at the same time, making notes on improvements and checking that improvements were done with the proper permits.

Ms. Bender added that the Assessing Contract gives a good synopsis of the function of the Assessor, which Committee members might like to read in order to better understand the revaluation cycle and activities. She said that during the four years between revaluation years, they routinely spot check ten percent of the properties, looking for changes.

Ms. Bender also told the Committee that she wanted to clarify the discussion about ballot printing from the last meeting. She said that ballot printing for local elections is a function of the Town Clerk. Ballots for State elections are printed by the Secretary of State's office.

Ms. Raymond referred to Warrant Article #13 which was approved by the voters in 2016. The article spelled out titles and numbers of hours to be devoted to tasks in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office. It also stated the salary for the position, saying it could only be increased by a vote at Town meeting. She said that is how the budget should be done.

Mr. Coolidge said that the warrant article dictates the number of hours spent on each type of activity, meaning that if the Town Clerk has already worked the maximum number of hours on car registration, he/she would have to turn customers away for that activity.

Ms. Bender said that perhaps another warrant article would be needed.

Chair Klawes said that what Warrant Article #13 says must be the guide.

Mr. Cox noted that, according to the article, the Town Clerk/Tax Collector cannot get a raise without a vote at the Town elections. He asked if that extended to COLAs, saying it would be difficult to be in that position without a raise.

Ms. Bender said that she would check on that, adding that the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office employees have had raises. She said that she had a directive from the previous Town Administrator to work on increasing the salary of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector because that position is underpaid by a lot.

Chair Klawes said that the salaries of the full-time and part-time employees of the office should be separated, as they are in other budgets.

Ms. Bender said that perhaps they should check with the Town Attorney.

Ms. Angowski asked about the charities listed under the Welfare-Social Services budget.

Mr. Goodine responded that \$18,210 goes to the Community Action Program for the Boys & Girls Club; \$500 goes to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program; and \$3,500 goes to Child and Family Services.

Ms. Bender reported that the full-time executive salary line includes two employees and asked if they should be separated. The line includes the Town Administrator and the Administrative Assistant to the BOS and the Town Administrator. The Administrative Assistant is also the Welfare Director and a fraction of her salary comes from there.

Ms. Boisvert asked why the Budget Committee is not on the list of committees.

Mr. Goodine responded that the Board of Selectmen wanted to keep some committees separate.

Ms. Boisvert asked for an explanation of how the Municipal Agent salary, which is no longer funded, was distributed among other accounts.

Ms. Ranfos said that by her calculations, there is an increase of between \$8,000 and \$10,000 in the total for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector and the deputy over two years.

Mr. Goodine said that this is in comparison to the default budget, not actual 2018 figures.

Ms. Bender added that, because it is a bottom line budget, salary increases could have been given by using funds from other lines. For 2019, the BOS has allowed a 2.5% COLA increase and each employee doing a satisfactory job gets a step increase of two percent. She offered to send the Committee members a copy of the wage scale, which could then be discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Ranfos said that 4.5% is a lot, especially for someone with a high salary.

Ms. Bender said that the COLA varies and could be 0% some years. The wage scale has 12 steps, with a two percent increase each year for 12 years. The previous scale gave step increases every few years, and this scale is more consistent. The wage scale, she added, only changes with changes in the COLA.

Chair Klawes said that the step increase is almost a COLA.

Mr. Goodine said that Allenstown is at the low end as compared with a survey of surrounding communities; it is important for retention to be competitive with other communities. MRI was enlisted to help with determining a competitive wage scale.

Chair Klawes said that it is cheaper to retain than to deal with high turnover. It matters whether they are getting to being competitive or are there already.

Ms. Bender said that this is not unusual; every other town does this.

Ms. Ranfos noted that salaries cannot be decreased after granted.

Mr. Cox said that five percent is high, and that he is used to benchmarking for salaries in the private sector.

Chair Klawes noted that the dollar amount of the raise would depend on the salary level.

Mr. Goodine continued, saying that the proposed amount for training has been increased from \$2,000 to \$3,400 because of his strong belief in the importance of keeping up with new ideas and changes.

Mr. Coolidge asked how the 12.8% increase in the Health Insurance line is divided between the Town and the employees.

Ms. Bender responded that the Town absorbs 80% and the employees 20%.

Ms. Boisvert asked if a stipend is available for employees not taking the health insurance benefit.

Mr. Goodine responded that a stipend is not currently offered, but it is something they plan to look into.

Mr. Goodine said that the Planning Board budget shows an increase because of work that needs to be done on the Master Plan and CIP updates. This must be done in order to collect impact fees for new development. As the fees are collected, this will be paid back quickly.

Chair Klawes asked why the legal expenses for the ZBA are not budgeted better. They always seem to go over the budget for that line.

Mr. Goodine said that if additional legal fees are incurred by the ZBA, the funds would be pulled out of the larger pool of funds for legal services.

Chair Klawes said that the Sewer Department budget will be on the agenda for the next meeting, December 6th, and that the School Department budget is scheduled for December 20th.

Ms. Ranfos made a motion to adjourn at 8:02 pm. Mr. Cox seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.


TOWN OF ALLENSTOWN

Budget Committee
16 School Street
Allenstown, New Hampshire 03275

Signature Page

Budget Committee Minutes

November 29, 2018

Original Approval:	
	12/18/2018
KEITH KLAUES, CHAIRMAN	DATE

Amendment Approvals:		
Amendment Description:	Approval:	Date:
	KEITH KLAUES, CHAIRMAN	DATE

Signature Certificate



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Easy Online Document Signing



Keith Klawes

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Keith F. Klawes

Multi-Factor
Digital Fingerprint Checksum

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Timestamp

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Audit

All parties have signed document. Signed copies sent to: Keith Klawes and Derik Goodine.

Document signed by Keith Klawes (chefkk@comcast.net) with drawn signature. - 24.34.66.143

Document viewed by Keith Klawes (chefkk@comcast.net). - 50.237.188.146

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