

**TOWN OF RYE
BUDGET COMMITTEE
Tuesday, April 26, 2021
6:30 p.m.
Rye Town Hall**

Committee Members Present: Scott Marion, Jeffrey Ross, Jaci Grote, Shawn Crapo, Dania Seiglie, Doug Abrams, Suzanne Barton and Ralph Hickson

Also Present: Town Administrator Becky Bergeron

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

II. Election of Officers: Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk

- **Chairman**

**Motion by Jaci Grote to nominate Scott Marion as chair of the Budget Committee.
Seconded by Doug Abrams. Vote: 7-0-1 Abstained: Scott Marion**

- **Vice-Chair**

**Motion by Jaci Grote to nominate Jeffrey Ross as vice-chair of the Budget Committee.
Seconded by Doug Abrams. Vote: 7-0-1 Abstained: Jeffrey Ross**

- **Clerk**

**Motion by Doug Abrams to nominate Jaci Grote as clerk for the Budget Committee.
Seconded by Scott Marion. Vote: 7-0-1 Abstained: Jaci Grote**

III. Approval of Minutes

1. February 2, 2022

**Motion by Ralph Hickson to approve the minutes of February 2, 2022 as presented.
Seconded by Jaci Grote. Vote: 6-0-2 Abstained: Shawn Crapo and Doug Abrams**

2. February 5, 2022

**Motion by Shawn Crapo to approve the minutes of February 5, 2022 as presented.
Seconded by Ralph Hickson. Vote: 6-0-2 Abstained: Doug Abrams and Scott Marion**

IV. 2021/2022 School Budget Review

The Committee reviewed the information submitted by the School District regarding the 2021/2022 Rye School Budget. The schools' budget runs from July 1st to June 30th, so the review is of the "tail end" of the budget for the current school year. In March 2021, the school budget was passed at town vote with an overall operating budget of \$14,860,999. A warrant article for \$50,000 to replenish the Technology Trust Fund was also presented and passed at town vote.

It was noted that the projected fund balance is approximately \$406,000. This amount will help offset Warrant Article #2, passed in March 2022, for replenishing the Building Ground Management Fund up to \$90,000 from the unassigned fund balance. The tuition fund has been exhausted this past school year (2021/2022), so there will be no high school tuition going back to taxpayers. Warrant Article #3 allowed for \$80,000 to be added to the Tuition Expendable Trust Fund. The projected unassigned fund balance is \$258,000 for school year 2021/2022. There were no significant unanticipated expenses in the 2021/2022 school year.

V. 2022 Town Budget – First Quarter Review

Town Administrator Becky Bergeron gave an overview for the first quarter of the 2022 Town Budget. There is a concern with fuel costs. The Town has used 75% to 80% of the fuel budget during the first quarter; however, costs continue to increase. Public Works Director Jason Rucker made a recommendation to the Select Board recently about waiting on renewing the fuel contracts until more information is known regarding volatility. If prices start to decrease, the fuel costs should level out and become more stable. At that time, the Town will move forward on fuel and heating oil bids.

In regards to the Town Hall Annex, Administrator Bergeron explained to the Budget Committee that a sole bid was received, which was rejected by the Select Board as it exceeded the allowable budget for Phase I. The Select Board authorized the Town Administrator to work with the Building Inspector and Architectural Designer Charles Hoyt to redefine the scope of the project in an attempt to bring the quote down to something more manageable. Mr. Hoyt has reviewed and revised the plans. The revised plan has been sent to the sole bidder Triple Construction. It is anticipated that a revised scope and quote will be back to the Select Board by May 9th. Town Administrator Bergeron noted that five contractors showed up at the mandatory bid presentation, which was held at the TD Bank building. Eleven contractors were in attendance also. Out of all those firms, only one general contractor submitted a bid to the Town for the work.

Town Hall Annex Project Phases:

- Phase I – Interior renovations to existing building (2500s.f.)
Town Clerk's office and the Assessing Office to transition to annex.
Existing Town Hall first floor to be reconfigured to accommodate the Building/Planning Department. Intent is to eventually use the second floor of the existing Town Hall as meeting space with building/planning offices on the first floor.
- Phase II – Proposed addition to the rear of the building (800s.f.)
- Phase III – Second floor buildout over addition (200-300s.f.)

Town Administrator Bergeron noted that the liability insurance has been paid for the year. The remaining \$47,000 that has not been expended is a holiday premium from Primex. The Select Board has appointed a committee to review the appropriations to the regional associations. The committee will be coming back to the Select Board with a recommendation on the associations they feel should be supported by the Town, as they are felt to be the most beneficial to the community.

Administrator Bergeron also noted that the Select Board has been receptive to the idea of expanding the Building Department's administrative position to fulltime. Currently, the position is part-time at 30 hours per week. The fulltime position would encompass 40 hours per week with full benefits. This position would include the duties of keeping building records digitized moving forward and handling the Pump Out Ordinance process. Administrator Bergeron spoke to the Committee about the increase in developments and redevelopments in Rye, which has encompassed the two fulltime building inspectors' time. Their time is also spent following up on complaints and code compliance. In 2017, the Building Department issued over 800 permits. This has increased up to 2021 with 1336 permits being issued. One fulltime administrative position is preferred over two part-time positions, as it's more difficult to find people to fill positions with fewer hours and no benefits. The budget for the part-time position for 2022 is \$44,000. The fulltime position would bring the position to \$104,000 including wages and benefits. If a fulltime person was brought on in 2022, it would cost the Town an additional \$10,000 for the year from what was budgeted.

The Committee discussed their concerns with the position going from part-time to fulltime and whether the request for the position should be supported by the Budget Committee.

Chair Marion took a poll vote of the Committee in regards to whether the position should be supported:

- *Ralph Hickson – Support; Shawn Crapo – Neutral; Dania Seigle – Support; Doug Abrams – Neutral; Suzanne Barton – Support; Jeffrey Ross – Support; Jaci Grote – Support; Scott Marion – Support*

Town Administrator Bergeron gave a brief overview of the year-to-date revenues received.

VI. Other Business

None

Adjournment

Motion by Doug Abrams to adjourn at 8:46 p.m. Seconded by Jaci Grote. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger