

TOWN OF FRANCONIA
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 13th, 2020 HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Meth, Jill Brewer, Jeff Blodgett.

PRESENT PANELISTS: Jenny Monahan, Kim Cowles, Tim Blake, Scott Leslie, Corey Rush, Chief Mac Cashin, Carol Wills, Duffy Pratt.

The meeting was called to order at 3:04pm.

APPOINTMENTS:

Department Head Budget Review: The Board examined the Departmental Budgets to identify places where funding can be reduced to meet the \$100,000 budget cut voted in at Town Meeting. Chairman Brewer said some money may be found in the Executive Budget Wages depending on what happens with getting a part-time Town Administrator as that position would not receive benefits and the annual salary would be lower. Chairman Brewer also said that any savings in Executive Budget Wages would also depend on the agreement made with Municipal Resources Incorporated.

During the review of the Legal Expense Budget, it was discussed that the town has a capital reserve fund for legal expenses so the \$12,000 Legal Expense Budget may potentially be a place for a cut.

The Personnel Administration Budget was briefly discussed. The Board said they hope to be able to provide COLA increases for employees and improve the retirement plan but may not be able to do both this year.

For Highway Department Budget review, Scott Leslie said some cuts could be made to his budget for this year but he would need the funds back next year. Scott said \$10,000 could be cut from Gravel and some funds could be taken from Highway Improvements.

The Cemetery Budgets Landscaping line may be a place for a small cut. Chairman Brewer will ask Jayne O'Connor if that line could be lessened at all.

The Police Department Budget was discussed with Chief Cashin. He has not yet hired his fourth officer but that does not affect his budget as the additional officer was approved by warrant article. His Part-Time Wages may be a place for a little savings depending on when a new officer is hired.

Chairman Brewer said the Life Squad Budget may be a place for some cuts but Chief Schmucker was not in attendance to discuss the details. The same was true of the Fire Department Budget. The Board will reach out to them to see what their thoughts are on their budgets.

The Recreation Budget was discussed with Kim Cowles. She said that due to Covid-19 some events have been cancelled or postponed. What will happen with the Summer Recreation remains to be determined by Covid-19 mandates so it is difficult to make any concrete changes to their budget currently.

The Transfer Station budget was reviewed with Tim Blake. Tim said there are a few lines in his budget that could be trimmed but other lines were overspent last year. He said his Training line could be reduced but he would need the funds back next year. Tim also said due to the reduced operations at the Transfer Station because of Covid-19 some money is being saved on shipping recycling, but that is a short term solution and he would need the money restored in next year's budget.

After the Board concluded the budget review, there was a brief discussion about providing employee COLA increases.

Chairman Brewer made a motion to approve employee Cost of Living Adjustment increases of 2.5% and enact the increase retroactively to January 1, 2020. Selectmen Blodgett seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passes.**

CORRESPONDENCE:

Complaint Re Presby's Recycling Center: Duffy Pratt of 131 Ridge Road wrote the Board with concerns about Presby's Recycling Center. She said the steel pile has grown and is much more visible in recent years. She is also concerned about the possibility of chemicals leaking into ground and the Ham Branch and possibly contaminating drinking water. Chairman Brewer said the information about the complaint has been sent to Allan Clark so the Board can get his opinion on the issue.

TO SIGN/APPROVE:

The March 9th minutes were approved as written.

TO DISCUSS/REVIEW:

Town Administrator Staffing Update: Selectman Meth provided an update on his communications with Allan Gould, President of Municipal Resources Inc. He said MRI would assist with payroll, accounts payable and accounts receivable. On a monthly basis they would do New Hampshire Retirement system reporting, reconciliations and interfund reimbursements. On a quarterly basis they would do the federal and state filings and annually they would do the Workmen's Comp reporting and MS filings for the Department of Revenue Administration.

Selectman Meth said he thought moving forward with MRI would be a good plan for the town and Selectman Blodgett and Chairman Brewer agreed. Selectman Meth will reach out to MRI to see what the next steps are.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Cable Consortium: No update at this time.

Chamber of Commerce: Selectman Blodgett said the Chamber has not met in a while and may be experiencing leadership issues currently.

Conservation Commission: No update at this time.

Energy Commission: Selectman Meth said a Zoom meeting is scheduled for April 14th at 4:30 and Gilbert Brown of Freedom Energy Logistics will be joining.

Planning Board: Selectman Meth said the Planning Board held a hearing on March 12th regarding tree trimming by Asplundh for Eversource.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Virginia Mike asked why the Town Administrator position is not posted on Indeed.com. Chairman Brewer said the position isn't currently posted but when it is re-advertised the Board will consider listing on Indeed.com.

Dawn Steele asked when recycling might be restored to the Transfer Station. Chairman Brewer said a NH Municipal Association webinar on the topic is happening on Wednesday and hopefully it will have information about best practices.

Dawn suggested the Board consider a 2%-3% match for employee retirement instead of 5%. Chairman Brewer said the Board would be considering the retirement plan when looking at the budget.

Dawn suggested the town may wish to move to a bi-weekly payroll plan with MRI and that it might save some money.

Dawn asked if the draft meeting minutes will be posted to the website. Kim said yes draft minutes will continue to be posted to the site.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Monahan
Administrative Secretary