

**Budget Committee  
Town of Sandown, NH  
November 8th, 2023**

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, November 8th, 2023

**Meeting Location:** Town Hall, Upper Hall

**Members Present:** Chairman Leslie Kruithof; Vice Chair Steve Brown, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo; Amanda Knight, Leif Aubrey, Ben Sharpe – ex-officio

**Also Present:** Finance Director Gayle Hamel; Recording Secretary Barbara Kayyal

Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

There are 2 sets of minutes to review.

**Minutes from 9/13/23**

No Discussion

**Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the 9/13/2023 minutes as read

**Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

**In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

**Motion passes 7-0-0**

**Minutes from 10/18/23**

No Discussion

**Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the 10/18/2023 minutes as read

**Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

**In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

**Motion passes 7-0-0**

**Town Clerk - #4140-02**

Dawn Nicolaisen, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, presented this budget. Dave Solomon questioned why there was an 8% increase to the payroll line as the town wide increase was set at 4%. Gayle Hamel explains that because the matrix was adopted last year, and some positions needed a bigger increase to bring them up to their matrix level, but last year only went into effect

35 April 1st. There is still 13 weeks of pay that has to be accounted for, otherwise they will fall out of  
36 the matrix. After this year, all positions will only have the universal COLA + year of service increase.

37 Leslie Kruithof asks if the deliberative line is going to be enough, and Dawn answers it is a  
38 guess based on previous years. Leslie confirms this is for the recording secretary for the  
39 Deliberative Session. Telephone line is fairly even.

40 Software support went down because last year we bought the program and now we're just  
41 paying for support. Dawn mentioned seminars are up because the cost to go to these seminars are  
42 up, but there are RSAs that we must budget for these seminars. State mailouts are zeroed out  
43 because they're now included in the software support. Dues are down. One of the programs we use  
44 called Price Digest is now included in the software program, although the software program for that  
45 portion is more expensive. However, because it was such a lengthy transition from the old software  
46 to the new, they gave us a discount for it this year. We'll see what happens next year but we are  
47 likely to go back to the Price Digest next year. This program pulls up tractor trailers, motorcycles,  
48 campers, everything. Helpful to pull up GVWs or MSRPs.

49 The dog licenses line is for the dog tags and the shipping. The supplies line is up because the  
50 price for everything has gone up. Supplies are for all the office supplies needed to run the office. Leif  
51 asked if this supply line is across different departments or if this pooled altogether. Dawn answers  
52 that each department puts their own orders in, but Paula and Andrea will let all the departments  
53 know "I'm putting in an order for Staples or Amazon, what do you need?" We try to get the best  
54 prices we can.

55 Bank mileage is for reimbursing going to the bank. We don't really use the book line item,  
56 but Dawn was told to keep \$50 in there to keep the line item open. Leslie asked why the actuals for  
57 the bank mileage are about half of the budgeted amount. Dawn answered that she needs to keep her  
58 schedule of traveling to the bank private for safety reasons.

59 The office equipment includes a folding machine which is under a lease. Dawn says this  
60 folding machine is the best thing they've ever invested in. Because of all of the renovations  
61 downstairs, there is going to be a third window in the town clerk office, this line item is going to get  
62 a third printer. This printer needs to meet state specifications for registrations and titles.

63 Ben Sharpe asked where the dog license revenue goes. Dawn answered that a certain  
64 portion goes to the state and the rest goes to the town clerk revenue. In the town report, it lists how  
65 many licenses were issued. Dawn mentioned in the conference she went to, she was asked why  
66 we're still charging what we're charging. The state sets a maximum we can charge and we're below  
67 that. Ben mentioned people were talking about how it changed from there being a third notice.  
68 Dawn states there are two courtesy notices and notices in the town sign, the town webpage, etc.

69 Leslie asked what is included in the \$1.4 million revenue line. Gayle answers UCC filings,  
70 vehicle permits and registrations, dredge and fill, poll licenses, dog licenses (town portion),  
71 marriage licenses, vital statistics, town fees, election and registration filing fees, election recount  
72 fees, dog late penalty fees, marriage services, copies for town clerk, return check.

73  
74 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the Town Clerk (#4140-02) budget with gross expenses of  
75 \$95,047, revenue of \$1,400,000 and net expenses of -\$1,304,953, pending further review.

76 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

77 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Assunta Ternullo

**Opposed:** Dave Solomon

**Motion passes 6-1-0**

Dave states his “no” vote is to represent the 45% of voters who voted no on the budget. He will vote against large increases to payroll lines or things that are absolutely necessary for us to get by next year. He reiterates it has nothing to do with this specific position or person. Dave would like this increase to not be fully adopted in one year. Ben suggests making a motion to reduce the line item.

## **Tax Collector - #4150-07**

Dawn Nicolaisen, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, presented this budget. Dawn mentions the tax lien expenses line item is down a little bit because there was a decrease in tax liening. The tax program support line item is down because the purchase has been made and we’re now just paying for support. Seminars are required by RSA to be budgeted for. Dawn has never been to one of these seminars and next year her team wants to go because there are a lot of changes coming to liening and deeding. Tax bill printing is for the paper we print out the tax bills on. Dues are for the NH Tax Collectors Association. Supplies are for office supplies such as toner, envelopes, etc. Copier lease maintenance contract is what we have to pay for our leased copier, along with the \$300 contract that comes with it.

**Motion by** Dave Solomon to reduce the elected payroll line of the Tax Collector (#4150-07) budget by \$2,040, giving a new total of \$73,608.

**Seconded by:** Assunta Ternullo to listen to the discussion.

**Discussion:** Dave clarifies this amount represents a 4% increase. Lynne Blaisdell, Town Administrator explains why it is not actually greater than a 4% raise. Leif Aubrey asks about the scheduling of pay raises to alleviate this confusion. Gayle answers that we set the pay raises to come after the election because we don’t know if the new year’s budget is going to pass. Gayle reiterates the matrix is something the town’s been working on for years and was approved by the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen last year. Gayle mentioned the hardships the town faced in trying to keep and recruit employees due to not having competitive wages.

**In Favor:** Dave Solomon

**Opposed:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Assunta Ternullo

**Motion fails 1-6-0**

**Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the Tax Collector (#4150-07) budget with gross expenses of \$85,090, revenue of \$65,000 and net expenses of \$20,090, pending further review.

**Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

**In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Assunta Ternullo

**Opposed:** Dave Solomon

**Motion passes 6-1-0**

**117 Finance #4150-05**

118 Gayle Hamel, Finance Director, presented this budget. The payroll line is in the same boat as  
119 the tax collector/town clerk positions. The seminars line and the computer software/hardware line  
120 are up because those costs went up. Dave declines to make a motion, he restates he will be voting  
121 no due to the payroll line exceeding the 4%.

122  
123 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the Finance (#4150-05) budget with gross expenses of \$104,550,  
124 revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$104,550, pending further review.

125 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

126 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Assunta Ternullo

127 **Opposed:** Dave Solomon

128 **Motion passes 6-1-0**

**129 Assessing #4150-06**

130 Lynne Blaisdell, Town Administrator, presented this budget. We used to pay upfront the  
131 year the assessments are due, but because our vendor also does reevaluations, we can now pay a  
132 more even amount every year instead of having a \$50,000 spike every couple of years. This contract  
133 started back in 2022, and each year of this 5 year contract has a small increase and is partially tied  
134 to the CPI. Every 5 years this contract is shopped around for.

135  
136 **Motion by** Amanda Knight to accept the Assessing (#4150-06) budget with gross expenses of  
137 \$87,626, revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$87,626, pending further review.

138 **Seconded by:** Steve Brown

139 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,  
140 Assunta Ternullo

141 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

**142 Treasurer #4150-08**

143 Gayle Hamel, Finance Director, presented this budget. The payroll line has the 4% increase  
144 and the other two line items, supplies and mileage, are level funded.

145  
146 **Motion by** Steve Brown to accept the Treasurer (#4150-08) budget with gross expenses of \$4,545,  
147 revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$4,545, pending further review.

148 **Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe

149 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,  
150 Assunta Ternullo

151 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

152

**153 Budget Committee #4150-09**

154           Gayle Hamel, Finance Director, presented this budget. This budget was gone over during the  
155 Budget Committee's first meeting. The committee discusses the seminar line item, with Assunta  
156 stating this will be her last year, so there will be at least one new member next year. Gayle  
157 emphasizes that it is a very helpful workshop, especially for new members.

158

159 **Motion by** Ben Sharpe to accept the Budget Committee (#4150-09) budget with gross expenses of  
160 \$1,271 revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$1,271, pending further review.

161 **Seconded by:** Steve Brown

162 **In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon,  
163 Assunta Ternullo

164 **Motion passes 7-0-0**

**165 Police #4210**

166           Joe Gordon, Police Chief, presented this budget. Payroll is down because we lost officers to  
167 other towns. Raises and payroll changes will come through the police union negotiations and a  
168 warrant article. Payroll may be down, but overtime is up because we need other officers to take  
169 extra shifts to make up for the lost employees. The Chief struggles to get new officers, even with a  
170 \$20,000 sign-on bonus, which comes out of the payroll line. This bonus is not a lump sum but given  
171 out over several years. Assunta asked about grants to help the towns retain officers, and there  
172 aren't any. The Chief stresses the police union warrant article is going to be greater than 4% for  
173 some positions, as he is struggling to bring in lower level officers.

174           Witness fees are for the time the officers spend in court. Additional duties are for going to  
175 court as a prosecutor, doing field training, firearms training, and over the past year it's been  
176 blended into the regular work schedule. Callback hours is determined by the union contract. Shift  
177 differential is \$0.50 for evenings and a \$1 for overnights, and this is in the contract. Bereavement  
178 leave and grievance pay are level. The incremental sick days line is down 27%. Steve Brown asks  
179 why the incremental sick days line is set so much higher than it's ever been used. The Chief  
180 answered that the officers can roll those hours over, and if they all decide to use those days, they  
181 need the money to support that.

182           The tuition reimbursement line item is up, despite not really using it in the past. John Sable  
183 retired, and he ran the IT system at the station for about 23 years. He still comes in to do per diem  
184 work. With his absence, we're training Artimovich to do Sable's job. It's been very beneficial and  
185 cost effective to use someone in house for this work. This project is covered by a couple line items.  
186 Tuition reimbursement covers the classes and books. Paying for outside support could cost around  
187 \$8,200 a year, so this is a great cost saving endeavor. Educational incentive is a union benefit to pay  
188 employees to further their education, \$0.50 for an Associate's degree and \$1.00 for a Bachelor's  
189 degree. Ben asked why the Education Incentive line was \$1 for the past two years, the Chief  
190 answered because they didn't have anyone using this incentive. The \$3,592 is for any new hire with  
191 a degree.

192

**Motion by** Ben Sharpe to reduce Educational Incentive line item in from the Police (#4210) budget from \$3,592 down to \$1.

**Seconded by:** Steve Brown

**Discussion:** The Chief clarifies one of their new hires does have a degree and doesn't know if the other new hire will have one. It is also clarified that the educational incentive has been used recently, but it was taken from the payroll line for paysheet purposes.

**In Favor:** Steve Brown, Ben Sharpe

**Opposed:** Leif Aubrey, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

**Motion fails 2-5-0**

Prosecution rate has been the same for many years. Communications and telephone lines are level funded, we have a really good cell phone rate for municipal rates. The health line is for polygraphs and psychological evaluations needed for hiring.

The training for this year is for regular annual ethics/bias/etc. training and annual firearms training, mandated by law. It also contains \$5,000 for one officer to take S. NH Special Operations Unit training. This individual is likely to leave if this training isn't offered, and the Chief feels they are likely to stay if we can support them in this training. The Chief says this is a great asset to the town and they will be able to support the state and area as well.

**Motion by** Ben Sharpe to reduce Training line item in from the Police (#4210) budget from \$19,687 down to \$14,687.

**Seconded by:** Steve Brown

**Discussion:** The Chief states this is a matter of retention, and says he has lost officers because he hasn't supported their interests in the past, and he thinks he's going to lose this officer if he can't support this training. This training will also provide value to this town and region and state. Steve asks if the Chief cannot find \$5,000 in his \$870,000 budget. The Chief responds that he only asked for what he needed and nothing more, so no he could not.

**In Favor:** Steve Brown, Ben Sharpe

**Opposed:** Leif Aubrey, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

**Motion fails 2-5-0**

Dues are paid to NH Chiefs Association, N.S.P.I.N., and Rockingham County Chief of Police. Supplies are up because the cost of supplies are up a little bit. While ammo is level funded from last year, it's up from previous years, due to the rise in cost. The equipment maintenance line item includes updating their Microsoft licenses for Excel, Word, Powerpoint, and email. This line item also includes a copier agreement, radio tuneups, flashlight batteries, AED batteries and electrodes, IMC updates and support, body camera lease and maintenance. The gas line is the Chief's best guess on what gas is going to be using last few year's numbers and projections. The Chief is debating between the hybrid and non-hybrid version of the Explorer. Next year we should have a clearer picture of the savings this will bring. The vehicle maintenance line is detailed in the packet. Leslie asked about the ACO Jeep, and the Chief says they use it for multiple purposes as well as Animal Control purposes.

Books need to be updated periodically. It can be digital versions as well as physical books, and the Chief likes physical books. Uniforms are part of the union contract, including their 5 sets of uniforms along with vests and carriers. There are grants for the kevlar part of the vests, but the outer carriers are supported by the town. Steve asked about anticipated grants for this year. The Chief states they are always looking for grants when they're available, and lists some of the grants the town gets such as training grants, selective enforcement grants (gets officers out to monitor problem areas), DWI grants, and grants updating the mobile units. Will Sable goes out and looks for grants and is currently waiting back on one. There are no grants for police cruisers. Some of these grants are only reimbursements, so we still need to budget for these line items. Gayle mentioned the OHRV grants, but the Chief says the judge doesn't always find the person guilty so it's not very helpful. Assunta mentions just because we apply for grants doesn't mean we always get them.

The photography line item is for thumb drives, and phone dumps for investigations. The community service line is for firearms safety courses, OHRV safety courses, promotional stickers to give to children, and flowers.

Dave asked about when the Chief plans to purchase firearms this year, and the Chief answered they are in order, they are just waiting for federal guidelines to be approved. The equipment purchase line item went down for next year because the firearms will be bought with this year's money. This line item covers various replacements needed throughout the year, including desktop computer, Imc mobile software and upgrade. Brand new tasers are too expensive, so we're getting middle grade, refurbished, but comes with cloud based cameras. For the cruiser line, we are at the end of the lease for the cruiser. The Chief found out the \$36K-39K vehicle jumped up to \$53K. They are trying to charge the Chief lot fees. The Chief is struggling to find cars available, and needs money available when he can find one, so he can buy it outright or at least get a lease payment on it. The charger is predicted to need to be swapped out, it's starting to cause larger problems. There is also the detail revolving fund, which has about \$28K in it right now. The \$25K in the cruiser line item along with the revolving fund are still not enough to purchase and outfit a vehicle. Gayle says we can encumber the money if the Chief is able to find a car by the end of year. Ben asks which other funds are available to the police budget, in addition to the detail revolving fund. There is only an OHRV safety fund, which is used for OHRVs.

The personal time allotment is something all departments have, it's money to pay out upon an employee's departure. Gayle states it's a fourth quarter expenditure. It was not included for a long time, and made it difficult for budgets such as the police department to be bottom-line. Revenue comes from licenses to carry, pistol permits, accident reports, incident reports, witness fees, parking tickets, court fines. Leif asked about speeding tickets, and the Chief said it all goes to the state and it pays for the police academy. Leslie asked why we pay for our officers to attend the police academy, and the Chief clarified we pay the officers their hourly rate to attend. Money from speeding tickets do not go to the town, we do not have quotas. The OHRV side does bring 60% of that money to the town and the state gets the other 40%. The detail revolving fund is funded by doing police details which is billed to the vendor, and this money is only for police cruisers. Ben asked about Animal Control, and the Chief said that used to be its own budget but it's been ceased, and is incorporated into the police duties.

**Motion by** Amanda Knight to accept the Police (#4210) budget with gross expenses of \$870,344 revenue of \$1,790 and net expenses of \$868,554, pending further review.

**Seconded by:** Dave Solomon

**In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

**Opposed:** Steve Brown, Ben Sharpe

**Motion passes 5-2-0**

Steve clarifies that he thinks the Chief put together a great budget with great documentation. His only issue was with the two line items.

### **Patriotic Purposes #4583**

The Fireworks line item is set at \$5,000 and the wreaths/flags is set at \$250. Dave said he would not support this budget with the fireworks line.

**Motion by** Dave Solomon to reduce Fireworks line item in from the Patriotic Purposes (#4583) budget from \$5,000 down to \$0.

**Seconded by:** Amanda Knight

**In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

**Opposed:** Ben Sharpe

**Motion passes 6-1-0**

Ben said the town voted for the fireworks on the warrant article, and the tradition is to put it in the budget after it passes. This keeps going up to warrant article and keeps being a yes vote. Dave mentions we can fundraise to do the town hall lighting and oktoberfest, we can fundraise for fireworks. Assunta mentions this might be the year this doesn't pass, as our taxes are up, even though \$5,000 doesn't make a huge difference.

**Motion by** Leslie Kruithof to accept the Patriotic Purposes (#4583) budget with gross expenses of \$250 revenue of \$0 and net expenses of \$250, pending further review.

**Seconded by:** Assunta Ternullo

**In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

**Motion passes 7-0-0**

**Motion by** Leslie Kruithof to adjourn the meeting.

**Seconded by:** Ben Sharpe seconded the motion.

**In Favor:** Leif Aubrey, Steve Brown, Amanda Knight, Leslie Kruithof, Ben Sharpe, Dave Solomon, Assunta Ternullo

**Motion passes 7-0-0**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55pm.

Submitted By:



319 Amanda Knight