

The highway budget's vehicle rental fund was higher than last year due to the continued rental of the skid steer which saved the road crew a lot of time. In addition, there is a new vehicle, but we also got rid of an old vehicle and we will be paying less than last year for roadside mowing but will not be having a reduction in services.

We did everything we could this year to maintain a flat budget for non-highway expenses and we were successful. The budget reflects the hiring of an assessor to help the listers. Nanette explained that one assessor is more costly than three residents serving as listers, however it is difficult to fill the positions of listers with residents. We had a resident as a long time lister, but now that person is stepping away. The Fire Department was reduced by 3%, Julia expressed her gratefulness in their help during the pandemic times. We had also made some line items to help support ongoing events in the town such as the summer concerts and a donation request from the Westford Common Hall.

Regarding revenue, we are budgeting \$20,000 for delinquent taxes. We have previously been conservative with this number, but this is more realistic to what we bring in. Recording Fees also increased because the state increased the recording fees, and many people are refinancing and transferring property.

Allison wanted to make sure the presentation is clear in that this is the municipal budget and tax rate and is not related to the school budget. The school is talking about a dramatic increase, Allison is open to using more of the fund balance to reduce taxes if the school taxes would be a burden on residents. To Bill this is a bigger conversation. Are we thinking things will go down when things normalize? Moving an expense to help out this year if we knew it was one year would be doable, but if it continued then a further discussion should be had. Julia wondered if it was a good practice for the town to mitigate the school taxes this year. Allison thinks that the community benefits from being part of a larger school system and the fund balance is already money we've taken from residents.

Julia explained that to this date we have not yet seen people not paying their taxes because of financial hardship so \$20,000 still feels right to her, but she would like to further the discussion next time. Bill agreed with Allison's plans to reduce the taxes by moving funds into the fund balance to accommodate that. Even with a significant increase to that fund balance it wouldn't off set much that would be worth anything to people, maybe 8 dollars or so.

On the thank you slide Bill suggested a special thanks to all boards and organizations in town that not only level funded, but decreased budgets with very little issue.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Bill made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:52 p.m. to discuss a legal opinion. Allison seconded. Motion passed: 3-0. People in attendance were Julia Andrews, Allison Hope, Bill Cleary and Nanette Rogers. The board exited Executive Session at 8:02 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

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January 7, 2021
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Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Andrews, Chair
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk

GUEST LIST

Tom Chittenden
Buddy Meilleur
Alyssa Black
Lee McClenny