

**Town of Jackson Town Board Meeting**  
**Budget Meeting**  
**October 17, 2022**

The Town Board of the Town of Jackson met on October 17, 2022 at 7:30 pm at the Town Hall for the budget meeting.

**PRESENT:**

- Jay Skellie..... Supervisor
- Travis Rea..... Councilman
- Carol Rich..... Councilwoman
- Edward Rouse..... Councilman
- Jennifer VanDeWater..... Councilwoman
- Molly Dixson..... Town Clerk
- Sean Carney..... Highway Superintendent
- Donna Nolan..... Budget Officer

**Also present:** Cambridge Deputy Fire Chief Tom Gray

Supervisor Skellie opened the meeting and invited Deputy Fire Chief Tom Gray to speak on behalf of Cambridge Fire, as Chief Alexander was out of Town. Tom explained why the department has requested a 4% increase from last years budget, as equipment, hoses and diesel have all gone up in cost due to inflation. He said that gear for the firemen have a shelf life and they need to be replaced often as per OSHA requirements, not to mention the heavy wear and tear they regularly go through. With the recent addition of the new firehouse, they have put in an order for a new truck, with builds for trucks currently stretching out to 18-24 months, double what they were before. They are struggling getting tires and parts for trucks as everything is backed up. Sup. Skellie spoke to say that we will try to do the best we can in regards to the budget, and that we try to keep matters equitable between all 4 fire departments that protect the Town. Deputy Chief Gray said CFD tries to keep things fair between all Towns as well.

The Town Board reviewed the budget line item by line item, as lead by Budget Officer Donna Nolan. They discussed the following items:

- Budget Officer Nolan stated that the numbers look good for the General and Highway expenditures, although she is still waiting on a \$40,000 check for CHIPS reimbursement.
- The Town Assessors have requested a 16% increase for the two Assessors and a \$7,200 stipend for health care benefits from the Chair Assessor. The Board discussed the amount of effort the Assessors have had to put in due to the recent revaluation in the town. After thinking it over, the Board agreed that a 6% increase in salary for the Chair and an 8% increase for the other two Assessors would be fair.

- The Board discussed the contractual and equipment expense raises requested by the Assessors. Budget Officer Nolan advised to put the contractual expense at \$2,000 to determine how it is used in the next year. The Board discussed the need for the Assessors to have their own laptops but questioned whether they could use the printers and paper shredder at Town Hall.
- Budget Officer Nolan pointed out where she added \$1,000 in Miscellaneous Revenue for the franchise fee as well as \$3,000 in Mortgage Tax revenue.
- The Justice Clerk will be a 2% increase (or \$61 over 2022).
- Supervisor Skellie discussed whether to increase the Town Attorney's contractual expense more than what is drafted, as the Town's current attorney may soon be retiring.
- Budget Officer Nolan pointed out that Buildings contractual expense may need to be raised another \$2,000 to heat both Town Hall and the Highway Garage, as the cost of heating oil and propane continues to rise.
- The Board discussed whether or not to raise the Examining Board's contractual expense more than \$75 (per member). They decided to leave it as is.
- After discussing Highway Superintendent Carney's request for an increase in pay, the Board settled on a 4% increase (or \$2,002 over 2022). The Board did not go into length on the pay for the other Highway employees at this time, but Supervisor Skellie stated that they are comparing pays with nearby Town's to try and come up with a fair amount.
- Money budgeted in 2022 for Solar Law legal fees has yet to be used. This money may carry over into the 2023 budget.
- Social security benefits have been raised \$1,000 in the new budget. Budget Officer Nolan pointed out that she may be able to move disability insurance.
- The Board discussed the revenues in the budget, which haven't been changed much. Budget Officer Nolan said she might be able to raise Interest and Earnings more due to rates being higher. An extra \$5,000 was added to Unexpended Balance to put it at \$55,000.00.
- At this time, the Board looked over Highway Appropriations. Superintendent Carney stated that his requests are in line with the rising costs of diesel, parts, salt, sand, etc. It was discussed that Personal Services alone will put us at our cap, anything more on contractual expenses will put us over. Contractual expenses across the board are up \$102,000.00. This number needs to go down to get us close. Supervisor Skellie pointed out that he is aware other towns will be going over the tax cap this year. Even with the little buffer we have, a lot needs to be cut. Budget Officer Nolan said she can come up with a rough 4.5% cap for Highway Appropriations and present that at the Budget Hearing.
- Supervisor Skellie said that we will be up on sales tax this year which will help a percentage point to budget with. He is going to get an idea of how much and get back to the Board.

**RESOLUTION #97-22**

A motion by Councilman Rouse, seconded by Councilwoman Rich; Resolution passed 5-0, **to set the date for the public hearing on Local Law #2-22 to November 2, 2022 at 8:00 pm.**

Budget Officer Nolan believes we should work on using the federal money granted to us from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (COVID relief funds). While this is money that can't be put towards the budget, it can be used to provide internet for the Town as well as to assist the town in capital expenditures. There is roughly \$178,000 left to be used in ARPA money by 2024. The Board discussed if it would be best to use some of this money to invest in building a new salt shed at the Highway Garage. Superintendent Carney said he can look into what the cost of this might be. The Board also discussed the possibility of donating the money to local organizations.

A public hearing on the 2023 preliminary budget will be held on Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:10 pm prior to the regular Town Board Meeting.

**RESOLUTION #98-22**

A motion by Councilman Rouse, seconded by Councilman Rea; Resolution passed 5-0, **to adjourn at approximately 9:03 pm.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Molly Dixson, Town Clerk