

## Memo Accompanying Waterboro's Approved FY 21/22 Budget

By Town Administrator Gary Lamb – written April 28, 2021

This memo accompanies the budget approved by Waterboro Selectmen on April 6, 2021. The Budget Committee completed their recommendations at their fifth meeting on March 1, 2021. Per direction from Selectmen, I included a 2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) in my column C of this budget. Please remember that in this current fiscal year 20/21, staff received a zero COLA increase. This upcoming fiscal year runs from July 1, 2021 to the June 30, 2022. This approved budget (municipal non-school section only) is up 10% or \$718,611 over the previous year. This is a significant increase and is largely driven because Waterboro is growing and we need more personnel with associated costs... for Fire Department response, to Transfer Station being too busy for our facility, to a new full-time Town Planner, to more Assessing help, etc.

I will elaborate more on the following specific budget sections, but for now will briefly summarize the following items that are new to this budget:

1. Our Assessors budget shows a \$7500 increase for administrative assistance (one day/week) to allow our Assessor Shirley Bartlett more time to perform more valuable assessing tasks.
2. Recreation section 55 shows a considerable increase in payroll costs since the Board of Selectmen recently authorized pay increases to stem the tide of departing part-time help because of our low wages.
3. Planning Department section 62 shows the Selectmen's desire to hire a full-time town planner.
4. Two new positions in our Fire Department budget section 70 are requested because our call force's response to incidents has dwindled to very little, especially during the pandemic.
5. We are rapidly outgrowing our transfer station (section 80) and show one upgrade from a part-time employee to full-time with benefits, plus some pay increases for additional duties and responsibilities and for weekend staff retention. We need to hire a second truck driver just to haul our increasing household rubbish and recycling volumes.
6. Public Works has a new director, Peter Smith, who started March 5th.

### The following notes elaborate on individual budget sections as necessary starting on page 1 Section 10. Horizontal line numbers are used as references:

- **Section 10 General Government** - June 30, 2022, is the end of my present 3 year contract. In 2019, I told Selectmen I plan on leaving my 10 year Waterboro employment at that time. I have been treated well here and am only leaving to pursue my life's next adventure... not sure just yet what that will be. I will do all I can to make the transition to a new Town Administrator as smooth as possible. Line 25 was decreased \$2500 by Selectmen since their five new laptops will be purchased in the current fiscal year and will not be part of the new budget after July 1, 2021. Our Auditor budget (Line 35) increased \$2500 so we can add more on site monthly or quarterly CPA assistance to ensure monthly reconciliations are completed promptly and to better prepare for annual audits.
- **Section 13 Leases and Debt Service** - starting at bottom of budget page 2. Line 48 shows we retired \$90K in debt by paying off three pieces of equipment. Line 49 shows our principal costs decreased accordingly.
- **Insurance and Benefits Section** Budget Section 15, starting at the bottom of page 3, is up considerably from two new full-time FF/EMT positions, one part-time to full-time upgraded position

at the transfer station, and merit increases for staff retention for selected recreation and transfer station staff.

- **Town Clerk** Budget Section 20, on Line 68, shows I kept about the same budgeted salary amount even though Christine left this position and is moving laterally over into the Tax Collectors position.
- **Tax Collector** Section 25 and Line 85 increased because Sharon retired and was working 4 days per week while our new Tax Collector Christine Torno will be working a full 40 hour work week.
- **Municipal Buildings** Section 35 and Line 139 shows a new \$1000 amount for vehicle fuel since we intend to have the CEO use the retired deputy Fire Chief's SUV for inspections so the existing code enforcement pickup can be used by Town Hall custodial staff for daily maintenance trips.
- **Assessing** Section 40 and Line 148 increase of \$7500 for one day per week of new administrative assistance is to relieve Shirley of some of the more routine tasks so she can conduct more valuable assessing tasks both in the office and with field inspections. This person will hopefully be our existing employee Georgia Hall. The pandemic has greatly reduced our foot traffic into Town Hall and if it does not come back then Georgia would be available to work Tuesdays in the Assessing office and perhaps we will not need to spend all this \$7500. Right now the front lobby customer traffic can be handled by two staff members most of the time.
- **Recreation** Section 55 Program Payroll Line 224 shows a considerable increase for temporary employee wages. We were losing numerous employees to other higher wage local jobs, so Selectmen authorized a pay increase to retain staff for our FUNergy before and after school kids program.
- **Planning** Section 62 and Line 274 shows \$30K for our present part-time town planner Lee Jay Feldman. He is an experienced municipal planner we contract from Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission. He is available five days per week for appointments here, but only works here mostly on the day of Planning Board meetings two Wednesdays per month. He meets with developers as needed, attends Planning Board meetings and advises the Planning Board on applications and development reviews. His job has zero benefits and he bills us \$85 per hour for his work. Selectmen are recommending we hire our own full-time town planner employee with benefits, which would require a \$70K salary (possibly more) for an experienced person. This person could tackle projects now the responsibility of the Town Administrator, as well as perform all the Planning Board and development review assistance now done by Lee Jay. Selectmen's budget reflects a new full-time Town Planner to be hired in August or September, with an estimated salary of \$70K for a 12 month period.
- **Fire Department** Section 70 Line 305 shows we intend to backfill more full time slots during vacation and sick time call outs as these positions are essential for safety of employees and the public. This increased the salary line considerably, since up until now we have not been filling the sick, call-out shifts. While the Chief presented figures with only a 2% COLA increase, please know that our firefighter/EMT wages are below where they should be for wage parity with other York County departments. The Chief is also asking for the two additional full-time frontline FF/EMT positions, previously discussed, to cover manpower needs since our call force response is critically low. If we have a structure fire or double ambulance car accident and no call force response, we too often have insufficient manpower to handle the scene safely and properly. This has to change. In the Town Administrator Column C Line 309, you will notice that I propose a different FD/Police retirement plan from Maine PERS that is a 25 year no age limit plan that should help with employee retention and recruitment. Since many neighboring towns already offer this plan, if we don't have a similar program then attracting other experienced employees will continue to be a challenge. Someone working for a

community with this retirement option is less likely to apply in Waterboro for an opening if they are already vested within that MPERS plan. We have already witnessed this first hand with recent attempted hiring.

- **Transfer Station** - We truly are outgrowing our transfer station (Section 80). We also need to increase man hours and wages to retain weekend operations staff. One part-time position has been upgraded to a full-time position with benefits. Line 379 (Hot top repairs) shows a \$40K increase/estimate to pave the lower portion of the facility for ease of plowing and cleanup. Tipping fees per ton are increasing along with Waterboro's population and waste volumes. We haul our own trash and recycling containers 10-12 trips per week and need another CDL driver for the volume we are hauling as well as vacation and sick time backup. We are in the process of bringing one of our smaller compactors into service, also for household rubbish, to avoid the Mount Trashmore situations that occur many Sunday afternoons.
- **Public Works Department** Section 85 - New Director Peter Smith started with us on March 5<sup>th</sup> and is working with staff to get acclimated to growing our department into the future. Line 429 (Equipment) shows an increase for the purchase of a new flatbed trailer to haul heavy equipment. If we do purchase the new flatbed trailer, we would sell our two old trailers. It is also time to replace the older of our two loader/backhoes. DPW would use the new one and the other would be for Transfer Station operations. This loader purchase estimate is in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget section 92.
- **Our CIP section** 92 on budget page 19 and line 500 shows a new plow for the Fire Department's 4WD pickup was removed by Selectmen. This was more for plowing dry hydrants and cisterns as needed and the occasional need to plow a driveway entrance road ahead of a responding ambulance or fire truck since our DPW plows all town parking lots. Line 501 on page 19 is to continue our replacement of Scott air pack bottles. Line 502 is a suggested replacement of our Fire Department's 2008 SUV and to possibly use that old vehicle for Code Enforcement inspections. Town Hall meeting room furniture replacement (Line 503) is an idea that has been discussed for years but this was not funded. Line 504 for Lions Field light replacement is to install new LED lights there, but this was not funded, and the work will hopefully be done this fiscal year before June 30, 2021 with existing funds. The three items starting on Line 508 through Line 510, under the CIP Buildings section, are pretty self-explanatory. Selectmen did not fund these lines in hopes that unspent funds from the current fiscal year could complete these improvements. Our upgrade roads section beginning in Line 515 is self-explanatory.
- **The Old Home Days** section 97 can be funded at zero for FY 21/22 since the 2021 event has been cancelled. We must remember to carry forward the \$13K budgeted this year and any other remaining funds present now. This will fund the Committee for their work in May and June 2022 leading up to the July 2022 event. The 22/23 budget should be funded as necessary in next winter's budget season assuming the 2022 event will use the usual \$25K.
- The RSU 57 school budget is \$44,943,662 as recently approved by the 18 member RSU 57 School Board. Waterboro's portion is \$9,787,880, which is an increase of \$499,378 over the present budget.

**I greatly appreciate Budget Committee veterans Diane Seehagen, Jim Southworth, Thomas Lee, and John Burrows work during this pandemic-condensed budget season....Thank You!!! They completed their work in five meetings instead of the usual eight or more meetings. Our newest member Jed Young could not join us at all because his work situation required him to work many double shifts because of COVID staff shortages.**