

**TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD
SELECTBOARD HALL – 96 MAIN STREET – THIRD FLOOR
BUDGET WORKSHOP #3
MONDAY, December 12, 2022**

APPROVED MINUTES

CALL MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair, Kristi Morris, called the meeting to order at 7:21 pm.

Selectboard Members: Chair Kristi Morris, Vice Chair Michael Martin, Everett Hammond, Walter Martone, and Crissy Webster were present in-person.

Administration: Town Manager Jeff Mobus, Public Works Director and Water/Sewer Superintendent Jeff Strong, Police Chief Jeff Burnham, Fire Chief Paul Stagner, and Library Director Sue Dowdell were present in-person. Road Foreman Don Turner joined via Zoom.

School Board Liaison: Steve Karaffa was not in attendance

Budget Advisory Committee: Doug Johnston and Scott Richardson were present in-person. Jim Fog Chair, Tara Chase, Corky Bond, and Tre Ayer joined via Zoom.

A. Budget Workshop

Fire Department

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed the Fire Department on page 16 the only changes he was suggesting for the Fire Department was to increase revenue for ordinary ambulance 05-062, to raise that from \$600,000 to \$615,000, and to increase the revenue for the nonemergency transport 44-061, from \$250,000 to \$260,000. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that he provided at the time of the meeting a list requested by the BAC for the number of positions in each department and the list of the vacancies currently in each department. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that he feels comfortable adding those because we've put together a real billing policy and a procedure, so that we have a much better systematic approach towards our ambulance revenue and billing, and he believes we'll see some benefit to that.

Jim Fog BAC Chair via Zoom discussed we had mentioned that the decrease proposed in the building maintenance fund they realized now that it was a special thing to have it so high but this is on page 17 was going down from \$12,000 to \$6,000, so questions were asked in the discussion of whether that savings is wise considering how much maintenance there is to be done but if it's covered in capitals then that may not be any problem.

Scott Richardson added they did not want the Building Maintenance 533 line item cut. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that what they are doing here is to start building a fund as they have not done that in the past, this is to try and get away from that large up and down increases and decreases. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added the budget is already tight so that's why we want to start the funding at \$6,000.

SRDC

Bob Flint SRDC in-person presented a PowerPoint presentation to discuss what they do, they are the one stop shop for Economic Development Services for the region, that means anybody looking to start business or existing companies, they

(SRDC) assist in all sorts of ways, such as direct assistance, technical assistance for applications, financing assistance, looking for locations for expansion, connecting the State programs, etc.

Bob Flint provided an update regarding J&L 1, the building came down last year and this year they took down the Boiler House and still standing at this moment is the so-called office area, noting that work is completed for the year and they didn't make the weather on taking roughing material off the office area and you will also see there are still braces on now exterior wall of LBL Fabrications, noting these will both be dealt with in the spring. Bob Flint added that if you see people there at the moment, those are from Stone Environmental who are doing assessment work on slab, noting they have a pretty good idea of what's underneath, but it certainly wasn't safe to do that while building still stood. Bob Flint further added they have been there for the past few weeks, as well as doing assessment work along the river for chemicals and they will be amending the corrective action plan this winter or cap, which gets approved by the State. Bob Flint discussed that they hope to chase down funding to take out the slab next year, noting that will lead to them coming back to the Selectboard to trigger the Opportunity Zone Designation for the site and that's when they start marketing site.

Bob Flint discussed that there is a frequently asked questions page on our SRDC website, and he post updates regularly. Bob Flint added that they are also starting to tease out marketing on the site, noting that we already do have interest in the property, and he believes that one of their charges is to make sure for the good of the community, the property is put to the best use. Bob Flint further added that the property across the road which is a parking lot next to the gas station, that is under contract with Dunkin Donuts who has gone through their permitting, but the transaction has not happened yet with that.

Bob Flint discussed other properties they own, the former Park Street School which is tied to the Black River Innovation Campus in this past fiscal year they were awarded a \$3 million Congressionally Directed Funding Opportunity aka earmark from HUD, a \$1.2 million brownfield grant from the State from the Agency of Commerce, a half million dollar Community Development Block grant through the town for sprinkler work in the building, and then BRIC has recently been awarded a \$1.5 million Build to Scale grant from EDA to continue and expand their operations. Bob Flint further discussed they are working on minimizing redundancies, electrical work they are trying to get done, and their efforts to continue looking for funds for this building. Bob Flint added that they are working on housing in the old part of the building, they would like it to be 24 apartments for the people who are associated with BRIC, noting that has been a challenge because as was alluded to earlier a lot of the housing money that's been available has permanent covenants to it and that doesn't tie to what their vision is for this project.

Bob Flint discussed they own the former Bryant Grinder facility, noting there are three tenants currently leasing space inside and outside. Bob Flint added that they have invested over \$1 million in the site to date, noting that the ends of the building are good, but the middle is a mess and in time you'll likely end up with three buildings on that site, possibly two. Bob Flint further added that is a brown site also not to the extent of J&L, there is significant contamination there some of which has been dealt with but more needs to be, noting they are in negotiations with somebody for portion of property right now. Bob Flint further discussed the Robert S. Jones Center, also known as J&L 2, that building is fully leased by three companies. Bob Flint noted that they do pay taxes for the properties that they own and the current fiscal year that is a little over \$70,000 that they pay to the Town of Springfield.

Bob Flint discussed they have been heavily involved in the alphabet soup of Cares and Covid programs, and the current one is a forgivable loan program from VITA. Bob Flint added that they received a grant from the EDA (the Feds) for a supplemental revolving loan fund to our regular revolving loan fund so this past year they distributed over \$450,000 in funding. Bob Flint noted that they continue to provide technical assistance to help people navigate through the alphabet soup of grants.

Bob Flint discussed that they were involved in this past year in a grant at the State level was the Capital Investment Grant program, and the only one in this region went to Tenfold Engineering which is in the Industrial Park where Hancor used to

be, noting they received a half million dollars. Bob Flint added as a normal part of the business they assist businesses with applications for the various workforce training opportunities. Bob Flint further added they supported the Springfield Area Parent Child Center with their successful Northern Borders Regional Commission award that they received and the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center with their brownfield award. Bob Flint further discussed they are the point for the Springfield Area Working Communities Challenge and that ties into things that they introduced to the region including Working Fields.

Bob Flint discussed they are tied to the Tech Center, and they are a co-sponsor of the area job fair. Bob Flint added that they are one of 12 recognized Regional Development Corporations in Vermont, which means they are the pipeline to State programs and services for this region. Bob Flint further added that within their office is a small Business Development Center Deborah Boudrieau is the counselor that provides free and confidential counseling and Ed Williams is their Procurement Technical Assistant Center person in their office and he assists with businesses looking to access State and Federal Government contracts. Bob Flint further discussed that they have strong partnerships MARC, Springfield on the Move, and the Springfield Chamber, as well as several Federal partners that they work closely with. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the Town of Springfield also has a very strong relationship with SRDC, adding that right now we are paying \$45,000 a year for SRDC to assist them to fund their operations and that number hasn't changed in a long time.

Chair Kristi Morris asked for clarification on line 566, that we were advocating for the current budget and for next year's budget \$85,000 and over in the margin it says SRDC is 45,000 and Springfield on the Move is \$40,000. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that last year they approved Springfield on the Move for \$40,000.

Doug Johnston in-person commented that he recalled when they put the correctional facility in there was supposed to be an incubator building put in up there and he understood that it had never been done, he inquired if since SRDC is basically being an incubator project in a sense if there was any way they can get additional funding since the State obviously is not going to invest in that. Bob Flint responded that the Town obviously never has taken title to it and he doesn't know if they ever will frankly, but they (Town of Springfield and SRDC) made a serious run at it under the previous administration and he believes they were disappointed, at least from his perspective, that the State meaning the Corrections Department put additional buffer space around that property, making it extremely challenging to develop and also there was an inference that access to that site for commercial development would have to be from Spencer Hollow Road not from what we know as the prison road. Bob Flint added that there were some concerns that if the Town ever assumed the property the cost of maintenance and having to participate in the cost of maintain the prison road especially this time of year. Bob Flint further added that he believes the property is 32 acres and his guess is that only about 22 acres of it are usable, before you put buffers on, noting a lot of slopes and there is a small portion of it that is brownfield.

Further discussion ensued that it was believed they were supposed to train people from that building so they could develop some skills to go outside which was a separate building and they were supposed to mirror the Newport facility, but it was cut due to funding. Crissy Webster added that they talked about this at Planning Commission on Wednesday night about how they want to put that into the revamping the Town Plan and having that in there about being able to access vocational services for inmates to be able to learn skills, so they get released.

Administration

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed administration on page 2 they are recommending an increase to line item 01003 fees and interest to increase that by \$35,000 up to \$185,000. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added on page 10 line item 29990 the technology reserve they want to increase that line item from \$2,500 up to \$10,000, noting the reason for that is that we've had an IT evaluation done and we've found we don't even have basic firewall protections or email protections and we really need to address that and the cost of dealing with a hacker would far exceed that. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that we are applying for some Tech grants that are available through Homeland Security funds as well. Town Manager Jeff

Mobus further added that line item 992 Town Office Repairs they have been asking for \$50,000 and they are reduced that by \$10,000 to \$40,000.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that with all these changes he is recommending these are not things that they want to do he just feels that we can't go to the taxpayers and ask them for an increase of 6.9% in the amount we raise our taxes and so he's recommending a little over \$200,000 in cuts and these are really as low as he is comfortable in going with the caveat that he doesn't really want to do these as they leave us vulnerable to variations. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that one of the hazards of budgeting is that people in any business the budget is the best guess 16-18 months in advance but what tends to happen during budget season is that people look at all the places where people haven't spent all the money and cut those but don't always want to add to the places where they are over which sort of is a problem. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that there's going to be some places where we're going to overestimate and some we are going to underestimate, and you can't address the overages without addressing the underages.

Further discussion ensued that they are looking into potential grant funding for some of the needed building maintenance. Scott Richardson inquired if the 4411 line item for zoning would be correct for the new hire. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed that he was able to hire the new Zoning Administrator a step below the current ZA and after his probationary period he would move to the same step as the current ZA.

Police

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed the police budget he suggested a \$30,000 worth of cuts, the first one is on equipment and building fund on page 12 the bottom line he wants to reduce that amount from \$65,000 down to \$50,000, noting in the past they have tended for the equipment line to go up and down depending on what the needs are to use and we're trying to do these funds so that we don't have those ups and downs in the budget, particularly the ups. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that with the \$50,000 it's possible that we would be looking at a shortfall the first year of about \$10,000 but it would cover things going forward and he is comfortable with that and believes that through a competitive bid for the radios he may be able to get the radios for a little bit less than \$60,000 but if not he knows he can get the money out of other parts of the budget. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added the second change is in the regular pay on page 15, that's the Parking Enforcement Officer and as mentioned before this is not a priority so that's another \$15,000 that can be taken out. Michael Martin asked to clarify that they are proposing zero. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed.

Doug Johnston sighted concerns about eliminating the part-time Parking Enforcement Officer, noting in the past they had tried to cut that position but due to public outcry had to put the position back into the budget. Doug Johnston inquired how many hours a week were they looking to do for the temporary pay for the evidence room technician. Police Chief Jeff Burnham responded they were looking for 20 hours a week. Chair Kristi Morris inquired what page that was on and Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed it was on page 12 under temporary pay the third line down 21419.

Doug Johnston further inquired about the office equipment maintenance 542 on page 12 if this was the ACORN recording machine for the radios, etc. or if it was a different recording device for other equipment. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that the increase was from \$6,313 up to \$7,488. Crissy Webster mentioned she had it noted as audio recording device but did not specify if it was ACORN. Further discussion ensued that this was the maintenance contract and that we did replace the radios with ACORN already. Doug Johnston asked to confirm that we were spreading that cost over 3 years and Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed. Additional discussion ensued regarding the notations being a consistent issue every year and the descriptions do not get changed to reflect the actual expenses as a note for future.

Doug Johnston inquired what else comes with the MDTs (in car computers) if it included the docking stations and what additional equipment do they have to get. Police Chief Jeff Burnham confirmed that he needs to get all of it, noting that the docking stations as reported by the officers have been put in at different times and they don't match up, so there has

been a kind of a Band aid approach to it in the past. Police Chief Jeff Burnham added that he has a quote available and the quote is for replacement of the entire support structure, the computers, the docking station, air cards, the mounting brackets, and everything that needs to make that operate or five cars and that's the dollar amount that he is requesting, noting during the discussions it was going to be over two years but he had two projects over two years and it was suggested he pick one for this year and then complete the other the next year.

Doug Johnston discussed the committee brought up a question as far as the increases travel for trainings and expenses incurred by those attending, per diem etc. line 5562 on page 14. Jim Fog added that their question was why the large increase. Police Chief Jeff Burnham discussed that was a shift of training, noting that the training the patrol had been utilizing up to this point has been whatever they could get online or through Police1, which is a subscription based training module where you sign up times the number of officers and you use what they have as pre-programmed stuff, noting that you watch videos sometimes, sometimes it's how to, and sometimes it's PowerPoint. Police Chief Jeff Burnham added that is the model that was used during Covid, but they are getting away from that and they are getting into live training, scenario-based training, firearms, taser, use of force the model of online stuff doesn't work that's hands on stuff, so that involves some cost. Police Chief Jeff Burnham further added that his experience with the Police Academy has not been stellar, they don't have the resources to keep maintaining the classes in-service stuff for ongoing training, so we're going to private companies that are doing Calibre Press street survival stuff, drug interdiction stuff, these are the things that the officers are working on and need additional training on, but those all cost money, noting where before the subscription based he paid one price and you get what you get. Doug Johnston commented that it says for prisoner transports meals for court appearances, and he inquired what kind of traveling they are doing, noting that they have nine cars and almost half if not more than half are unmarked cars and he wonders why they are not utilizing the department cars because it's cheaper than paying mileage. Police Chief Jeff Burnham agreed and noted that they are not doing any of that if there's a training to be had they have taken marked cruisers. Police Chief Jeff Burnham added we're still dealing with per diem expenses and if it's per the contract a certain distance they have to stay overnight. Doug Johnston inquired if it was part of training though. Chair Kristi Morris noted that we have to speak to finance and how they record that noting it's training and then there's travel. Town Manager Jeff Mobus clarified that he thinks the easiest way to look at it is that the training line is for the registration for training and the travel is for all the other parts of it, noting that he thinks what they used to do before was roll all of that into training it's not all technically training.

Michael Martin added that the comments the Chief had made were part of the letter sent to the Budget Advisory Committee by the Chief detailing the changes and what they were for, even though it didn't make it into the description of the spreadsheet that they have in the budget book, but it was part of the narrative that was provided by the Chief with the budget. Crissy Webster added that from a financial standpoint the travel and the training does have to be very separate, noting the travel has to include the mileage, the hotel reservations, and all of that, where the training is specifically for the training.

Scott Richardson commented that on his (the Police Chief) overview to committee members at the bottom the future needs he talked about the primary console and computer systems it's actually three consoles because the fire department console is tagged to the two and the radios. Police Chief Jeff Burnham added that he is just learning that and he is working with Fire Chief Paul Stagner and as he's learning the interoperability component he's also learning that he (Fire Chief Paul Stagner) is doing a lot of research on the grant foundation and how do we make it a big all-inclusive remedy because it's going to be a very expensive ticket.

Doug Johnston commented on page 14 vehicle replacement fund, the Chief indicated that he is replacing lighting, sirens, partitions, rear seat, and fire mounts and inquired if that was for every time they are transferring, noting that a lot of that can be transferred to the new vehicle. Police Chief Jeff Burnham responded he asked for the upfit company to look at the cruiser that needs to be replaced, which this coming year is going to be cruiser number 2, and that's he believes a 2017 or 2018 Ford and he requested a quote for all the equipment they can transfer from the current vehicle into the new one

and then give him a quote for everything to be new and the difference was a few hundred dollars so it made more sense to spend a couple hundred dollars to replace everything new. Police Chief Jeff Burnham added that he believes they are up charging the transfer. Doug Johnston inquired what they were going to do with the old equipment as they need to remove it before trading the car in anyways. Police Chief Jeff Burnham responded that they would look into aftermarket stuff, like put it out to the Chiefs of Police as a wholesale if someone has a cruiser that might use this because as the model years change so do the designs, they change just enough so everything doesn't always fit.

Public Works

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed public works 51533 on page 21 based on history instead of staying at \$5,000 he has asked to reduce that to \$3,000 as a suggestion. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added the next change on page 23 52540 and this is the Night Differential, historically we've been well under the \$5,000 and he would like to move that down to \$3,000.00. Public Works Director and Water/Sewer Superintendent Jeff Strong added that one clarification on notes, that's for the maintenance worker one running the sidewalk tractor and they don't have anybody working nights anymore. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added on that same page 52510 professional services, historically we've been well under this number, and he does want to do you want to keep it \$20,000 with a reduction of \$10,000, noting we do have plans to have a Stormwater expert come and evaluate some of our stormwater problems.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed the next change 633 winter road materials we're currently going from \$380,000 up to \$430,000 and he would like to reduce that to \$418,000 to make it exactly 10% increase again, noting we don't know storm by storm, year by year but he knows Donny (Turner) is working on different strategies to reduce the salt expense. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that summer road materials he would like to increase it from \$175,000 up to \$190,000, noting it is reducing that by \$10,000 but that does still allow for \$15,000 increase because material costs are up. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added that handrails, we have not addressed our handrails in number of years, which is why we asked for a large increase from \$2,000 up to \$25,000, and he would like to increase that to \$17,000 which is still an increase of \$15,000 is so it's a decrease in the request of 8,000. Public Works Director and Water/Sewer Superintendent Jeff Strong added that was for handrails and guardrails.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed 964 the bridge maintenance fund we asked for a large increase from \$175,000 to \$260,000 in order to fund the match on the first large Eureka culvert, noting we've already received a \$200,000 grant and we expect it to be a \$300,000 project, so we actually have to come up with the other third, and \$200,000 is the largest structure grant we can receive. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that he included in the packet a schedule of all of the bridges and the culverts that they have requested, and he is evening out the increase. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further noted he also added the pedestrian bridge by the plaza. Walter Martone asked to confirm the reduction in that line. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed he was suggesting a \$20,000 reduction from \$260,000 to \$240,000.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed on page 25, 531 land maintenance, noting that tree removal is probably the biggest part of that, he is suggesting that we are going from \$7,000 down to \$5,000, historically we have had a hard time getting tree services and we can only do what we can afford to do. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added 54512 on page 26 overtime for the mechanics, and historical we have not paid a lot of overtime for mechanics, noting it was probably better scheduling, so he would like to reduce that from \$6,000 down to \$3,000 based on history. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added on that same page 54750 the next to bottom line to reduce that from \$425,000 down to \$400,000 with a reduction of \$25,000, noting that was the increase that we were putting in there to include an excavator into the new capital expense plan and after talking with Jeff and Donny they talked about this year doing a lease on an excavator for a month and to pile up the jobs and be efficient with it and see how that works. Town Manager Jeff Mobus noted that during the next week he has to sign a road permit that's going to require us to do a lot of work by 2038. Public Works Director and Water/Sewer Superintendent Jeff Strong added for Municipal Roads General Permit and it's being reissued to

everyone. Further discussion ensued regarding the requirements and our roads and being in compliance with this permit gives us better opportunities for funding. Additional discussion ensued that going forward we will see the benefits of owning an excavator as opposed to renting one to stay in compliance. Everett Hammond inquired if they had a lease payment in there somewhere. Public Works Director and Water/Sewer Superintendent Jeff Strong confirmed they have \$10,000.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed the next change is 55632 building materials historically we've not spent the \$7,500. and he would reduce that to \$5,000. Scott Richardson commented the statement about winter road material on page 23, he noted that materials were up 20% but we were going to drop it by 10% so we are technically running the same amount of materials for 10% less. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that they are looking at the budget and not the actual amount spent the prior year. Scott Richardson sighted concerns with materials increasing by 20% and reducing the budgeted amount. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that he doesn't want to reduce any of these, but we have to live within our means and learn to adjust, noting that Donny has been looking at ways to reduce the salt usage. Public Works Director and Water/Sewer Superintendent Jeff Strong added the Forman have also, noting that they are going to try to do some pre-salting like the State does and they may also try it with a little bit of liquid on the hills and see how it works.

Donny Turner Road Forman via Zoom discussed when you fight it before the snow you're actually putting the material down and you're working from the bottom up instead of from the top down, so historically speaking you're already at the base so when you plow off the crust on the top you're at the base so you're not putting three to four times the material down to get to where you need to be. Further discussion ensued that it turns to brine on the road and it's creating that layer from the ice to the pavement so when you're plowing it off and you're putting 2 to 3 times less material down because you are fighting it from the bottom up instead of the top down. Everett Hammond asked to confirm on that line item if they are carrying 3,500 tons. Donny Turner confirmed the preordered 4,000 tons.

Parks and Rec

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed a correction that they talked about last time, page 32 the signage was accidentally left off and that should be \$400. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added the on page 33, 63882 the trail maintenance improvement line at this point year after year they have been saving the extra funds and we have some funds built up so if when we do have projects on the trails and we have matching for whatever grant we have we there are some funds available for that, noting that he feels pretty comfortable reducing that from \$25,000 down to \$20,000. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further added there are not a lot of places that he feels he could cut funding without significantly impacting operations. Michael Martin inquired where the lawn mowing comes from. Town Manager Jeff Mobus confirmed it comes from that. Further discussion ensued regarding taking the low bidder previously for lawn mowing and getting poor quality work as well as there being funds leftover that can be used this following year. Walter Martone inquired if any money left over in a line item is carried over. Town Manager Jeff Mobus explained that there are different categories, and this is one of them. Additional discussion ensued regarding when funds can be carried over and when they are considered an encumbrance.

Further discussion ensued regarding the prior contractor for mowing. Michael Martin inquired if in the grant we received from VORAC if there was a stipulation that we had to show that the Town was making a substantial commitment to trails and wasn't that how they got up to the \$25,000 in the trails budget. Jim Fog confirmed. Michael Martin further inquired if by reducing this are we going to be in violation of that or was that a onetime deal, we show them that we're making a commitment and then after that year is over, we can lower the budget on that. Jim Fog commented that not how they're going to interpret this he didn't believe, noting it would be one thing if you were to cut the thing in half and say going forward that's what it's going to be, or if you were saying that this was a bad idea and we're just not into it anymore. Jim Fog added that the money that was unspent has been set aside and so in this case because we have that money, we don't

need to appropriate the extra \$5,000 in a year of enforced austerity. Further discussion ensued that the VORAC grant was for this fiscal year and the Town has also put in a significant amount of work remediating the Hartness Park Trails.

Library

Town Manager Jeff Mobus discussed there were a few things that were wrong on page 36, 71510 professional services was a typo and should be \$2,000. Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that memberships and cultural special were flipped and have been corrected so the real number for cultural and special 569 would be \$3,750 and 564 should be \$550. Town Manager Jeff Mobus further discussed that Sue Dowdell met with her staff and still needs to meet with the Trustees, and he requested that she find \$7,000 in total cuts in their expenses. Crissy Webster commented that with the significant building issues that are going on and trying to find funds for that and the increase in the equipment and building fund of \$5,000 and then more technology that people use would it make sense to shave a little off from the physical books, noting she knows that people will still use print books. Sue Dowdell Library Director responded that we are down from where we were before she came, and the cost of their books went up significantly so they are actually buying fewer books and she would not recommend any decrease in that at all. Further discussion ensued that historically this is line item that they made significant cuts. Crissy Webster noted there was additions made to electronics so there was some offset there for over 2 years when she was on the Budget Advisory Committee. Sue Dowdell added that we get up to 50% on our books from the vendor, noting that the price of a new book has gone up significantly and would not recommend a cut to that. Sue Dowdell added that they talked about that, and the Trustees said absolutely not.

Crissy Webster inquired if there has been any more discussion about how to increase some revenue at the library, such as rental of the rooms to different agencies. Sue Dowdell discussed that they had talked about that in the past because it was a recommendation that they had, noting it's very difficult to charge someone for rental of a room, because then she would have to ask what they are using the room for and there is a patron privacy issue to that. Sue Dowdell added that it had been discussed with the board and it was decided that it is not in the mission of the library to be charging for the room. Further discussion ensued regarding the family room that was built using a community grant and that a portion of funding came from the Town. Sue Dowdell noted that she does not believe they will receive the kind of money from that to make it beneficial.

Sue Dowdell discussed when we talk about the revenue where she thinks that we can increase revenue is by their non-resident card holders, noting that she knows the Budget Advisory Committee had questions about her wanting to go fine free, but we charge \$50 for a non-resident card. Sue Dowdell added when we talk about getting rid of the fines, we are talking about \$500 of revenue that we got last year, so we get 10 more non-resident cards and there's the \$500. Sue Dowdell further added that she looked at which libraries in Windham County and Winter County, of the 41 that has reported to the State, there's only us and 2 others Brattleboro and Woodstock. Further discussion ensued regarding the libraries she researched are publicly funded and have more limited hours and smaller collections than our library. Sue Dowdell additionally added that with the number of items in our collection and the number of hours we are open (51 hours per week) we do get non-residents coming to get the cards.

Sue Dowdell discussed that we are looking to get rid of fines and be more in line with surrounding libraries and then market everything that we do have. Sue Dowdell added that we have almost 300 nontraditional items in our collection, and we have a unique collection. Further discussion ensued regarding the potential to partner with other Towns. Sue Dowdell further added that you're also looking at the poverty rate and we have about a third of our population that is food insecure, noting that a family that is food insecure may be less likely to utilize the library for the fear of fines.

Sue Dowdell discussed that the superintendent reported the information out to their Board and how low everything is in the school district, there were no more than 37% were proficient in reading in any grade level and no more than 20% were proficient in math in any grade level. Sue Dowdell added that their high school graduation rate this past spring was 68.8%.

Sue Dowdell inquired so how do we build up our town. Sue Dowdell further added that when you look at the Declaration of Inclusion the Selectboard passed last year, part of it says “by treating everyone in our community fairly and equitably”, noting that doesn’t mean equally that means some get a little bit of a boost in order to be equal. Sue Dowdell further read “ensuring equitable access to town resources”, stating this is not a question of revenue it’s a question of equity.

Everett Hammond commented that about the books if they had a list of books that they were going to buy and put it out there a month before they were going to buy them to allow patrons to donate the books to help save some of the cost to the library and maybe what they could save could go to their Capital Improvement Funds. Further discussion ensued that the library does have a weekly newsletter email and there may be charitable donation rules that they would need to consider. Sue Dowdell added this would be more towards the Friends to do than the municipal library would do.

Town Manager Jeff Mobus added that he had one more adjustment reducing insurance on page 40, from \$1,397,000 down to \$1,392,000 so reducing that by \$5,000. Further discussion ensued regarding the vacancies in the Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, and Maintenance.

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Kellow, Recording Secretary