

**Town of Readfield
Budget Committee**

Minutes of Meeting - April 1, 2021

APPROVED

The Readfield Budget Committee held a regularly scheduled meeting on April 1, 2021. Committee members in attendance included Andrews Tolman, Chair; Martin Hanish; Rebecca Lambert; Ed Sims; and Ellen Schneider. Eric Dyer, Readfield Town Manager, was also present. Because of the ongoing pandemic, this meeting was conducted via ZOOM; details of the meeting and log in credentials were posted on the Town website, to facilitate participation by members of the public. However, no members of the public logged into the meeting, which was called to order by Tolman at approximately 6:30 pm.

The meeting began with a review of the draft Minutes for the Committee's March 11, 2021 meeting. Lambert offered a motion to accept the minutes as drafted; Hanish provided a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Dyer then provided a brief overview of the changes to the proposed budget that had been made since the group's last meeting. These changes are summarized in the document labeled "Draft 5" that was included in the meeting packet and available on the Town website. The most significant of these changes was the reduction of the amount budgeted for the Contingency Fund from \$50k to \$25k. The Committee was previously aware of the potential change to this line item, as the final appropriation was predicated on the disposition of several decisions pending before the Select Board. Those decisions – which included changes to the Town benefits package for employees – having been made and corresponding changes made to the individual budget lines (primarily salary and benefits lines) to reflect those decisions, the amount reflected in the Contingency Fund where surplus monies to fund the changes were held in abeyance, could now be reduced.

Overall, the changes to this iteration of the budget result in a small reduction to the proposed mil rate, lowering it from 15.77 to 15.75. Dyer reminded the Committee that this mil rate reflects the municipal portion of the budget and assumes no change in the school budget. The RSU budget process is not yet complete. Additionally, the amount for the County tax assessment reflected in this draft of the budget should be considered a placeholder; the County has not yet finalized the new tax rates. The amount for County tax included in the draft budget does estimate a 3% rate increase, which Dyer believes will be relatively close to actual.

The Committee then considered the budget-related articles included on the draft Warrant. These articles had already been reviewed and approved by the Select Board. Tolman led the Committee through each article and Members had the opportunity to raise questions regarding any specific budget item. The votes on each article are as follows:

| Article | Budget Item | Amount | Vote (Motion to Approve, 2 nd , vote tally) | Notes |
|---------|------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7 | Administration | \$620,098 | M: Lambert; 2 nd : Hanish; unanimous approval | |
| 8 | Municipal Maintenance | \$144,915 | M: Hanish; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 9 | Community Services | \$75,466 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 10 | Recreation | \$50,321 | M: Sims; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 11 | Protection | \$154,335 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Sims; unanimous | |
| 12 | Cemeteries | \$22,700 | M: Hanish; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 13 | Roads/Drainage | \$417,850 | M: Lambert; 2 nd : Hanish; unanimous | |
| 14 | Capital/Bonding | \$395,000 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Sims; unanimous | Includes bonding to complete Fire Station and Library projects, as well as to \$145k for roads |
| 15 | Capital Improvements | \$892,858 | M: Lambert; 2 nd : Hanish; unanimous | |
| 16 | Solid Waste | \$323,665 | M: Sims; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 17 | Regional Assessments | \$49,000 | M: Lambert; 2 nd : Schneiter; unanimous | Amount for Cobbossee Watershed (\$24k) is a placeholder as the district has not yet completed its budget process. Dyer does not expect the final number to be materially different, however. |
| 18 | Kennebec County Taxes | \$310,000 | M: Hanish; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | Tolman reminded Members that this number is a placeholder. |
| 19 | Debt Service | \$125,224 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Sims; unanimous | |
| 20 | Local Tax Relief | \$10,000 | M: Sims; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 21 | Kennebec Behavioral Health | \$1,000 | M: Lambert; 2 nd : Schneiter; unanimous | |
| 22 | Central ME Area Agency on Aging | \$1,513 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 23 | Family Violence | \$1,250 | M: Sims; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 24 | Courtesy Boat Inspection | \$2,362 | M: Hanish; 2 nd : Schneiter; unanimous | |
| 25 | Sexual Assault Agency | \$910 | M: Sims; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 26 | 30 Mile River Assoc | \$2,500 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 27 | Union Meeting House | \$5,000 | M: Sims; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 28 | Blizzard Busters Snowmobile Club | \$1,569 | M: Hanish; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 30 | General Assistance | \$10,000 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | This item was taken out of order |
| 29 | Unclassified | \$70,000 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | |
| 31 | Authorization to expend grant revenues | n/a | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Hanish; unanimous | |
| 32 | Acceptance of Estimated Tax Revenues | \$1,972,618 | M: Lambert; 2 nd : Hanish; unanimous | |
| 33 | Appropriation of Designated Funds | \$138,270 | M: Hanish; 2 nd : Schneiter; unanimous | |
| 34 | Authorize Use of Unassigned Fund Balance | \$25,000 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Hanish; unanimous | This item authorizes the use of certain fund balances to cover unanticipated contingencies |
| 35 | Appropriation of Unassigned Fund | \$225,000 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | This allows use of unassigned fund balances to reduce the |

| | Balances | | | overall tax commitment |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 36 | Transfer of funds from Cemeteries Operating to Capital Reserve Fund | \$10,000 | M: Schneiter; 2 nd : Lambert; unanimous | As this item involves only a transfer of monies from an operating to capital reserve fund, it does not strictly require a Committee vote. However, the Committee supports this transfer. |

With 36 articles reviewed and approved, the Committee had completed its consideration of the draft Warrant.

There was a brief discussion of certain other articles that will appear on the Warrant. Lambert provided the Committee with an update on the RSU budget, which is not yet completed. She reported that while the availability of new funds under the American Rescue Plan Act can be used to offset some expenses, it is still likely that Readfield's share of the RSU budget could increase on the order of 4-5%.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
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