

Town of Candia
Budget Committee Meeting
Approved Minutes
October 23, 2024
7:00 PM
Town Hall Meeting Room

Lynn Chivers called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Attendees:

Lynn Chivers, Chair
Brenda Coughlin
Josh Reap
William Saffie
Ryan Young (remote)
Susan Young (Selectmen's Rep)
Stephanie Helmig (School Rep)
Susan Gill (absent)
Katrina Niles (absent)

Chair Lynn Chivers opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. She requested for speakers to state their names for the meeting transcription clarity. She acknowledged Kevin Coughlin volunteered to manage Zoom for this meeting.

Minutes from the last meeting were reviewed, edited and approved. Motion made by Sue Young to approve the minutes, seconded by Josh Reap. Unanimous approval of minutes. Lynn Chivers notes that there were no questions from the school at the last meeting and moves on to the current questions.

Questions for the Selectmen 2024-2025 Budget

1. Will there be a COLA? If yes, how much will it be?

Yes, the updated budget now includes a 2.5% COLA approved by the Selectmen in the October 21st meeting.

Cemetery

2. Facility Improve / Maint/Contract Serv \$15,000 budgeted for last year and \$158.93 spent so far this year. Will this be used and what is the intended use of the \$16,000 requested for next year?

Beth Chalbeck and Mark Chalbeck responded to the Cemetery questions. explained tree removal plans and costs for cemeteries. Northern Tree has been contracted to remove trees with a crane from Hill Cemetery for \$14,700 including some dead trees on abutters properties risking safety of older headstones. East Candia Cemetery on Depot Road funding was eliminated from last year's budget so the dead ash trees were not removed. \$16,000 budgeted for tree removal and maintenance will be used for the Village Cemetery. Tree cutting of many

trees for expansion, removal of tree stumps, repair of the broken arch (arch repair proposal if pending) and the scope of work will take place throughout the next few years.

Ryan Young asked about the contracting process for tree work, asking if they have a single contractor or if they seek multiple quotes. Beth explained Northern Tree was used last year and this year because they provide an Eversource discount because Mark Chalbeck is employed by Eversource.

3. There is a substantial amount of money in the Cemetery Common Trust fund and General Cemetery Maintenance Fund. How much can be taken out every year and how can it be used? Has the amount that is intended to be used been subtracted from the requested operating budget?

Beth Chalbeck explained the Cemetery Common Trust was established in the 1800's for Holbrook Cemetery and elaborates on the limitations of the cemetery common trust fund, stating that they can only draw off interest and cannot exceed the established withdrawal amount. The current balance is \$775,000 however the only money allowed to be used is by the generated interest. There is a specific formula to determine how much interest can be withdrawn. The formula is \$25.00 per perpetual care lot. There are 420 lots so \$10,500 can be withdrawn this year. This amount is maintenance generated by how many hours Martin (employee) works in the Holbrook Cemetery. Lynn Chivers seeks clarification on the changes made to the fund in the 1980s. Mark Chalbeck clarified that in 1980, a revised perpetual fund was established by the NH AG office. The money withdrawn can now be deposited into the General Cemetery Maintenance Fund and can be fully spent. It is the desire of the Cemetery folks to allow this fund to grow. Josh Reap raises a point about the inflationary impact on the \$25 withdrawal limit, suggesting that it may be worth discussing with the Attorney General's office to potentially increase the amount available for maintenance. Beth agrees that it would be beneficial to explore this option further. Discussion supported the need for the Cemetery to begin the process with the NH AG for a formula re-evaluation. Stephanie Helmig asked where the annual interest of approximately \$75,000 goes? The unused interest gets deposited into the Common Trust Fund. Beth stated she has withdrawn \$10,500 in the last two years however it goes to the General Fund for the Select Board discretion. There is a concern about the lack of clarity regarding the perpetual care and maintenance funds, leading to confusion among the participants about how these funds are managed. The Cemetery would prefer the money go back to their budget for project use but at present they are not allowed to use that interest money. Stephanie asks about the \$10,500 received annually, which is directed to the town's general fund to offset taxes and is not earmarked for specific expenses. Stephanie suggests consulting an expert to improve financial management and bookkeeping practices, particularly regarding the cemetery's budget and expenditures. A question was raised for the need of a revolving account so the cemetery could use this money for cemetery needs. Beth explained when a plot is purchased that money goes to the town and a deed is issued. The fees from the purchase is \$200.00 for perpetual care per plot and \$200.00 for the land. However there is a cost to that purchase by Manchester Memorial, \$275.00 for four corner markers, and \$100.00 for marker install. This cost comes out of the cemetery budget but the revenue seen never goes back to the cemetery budget. Beth explains that the old perpetual fund cannot be altered, while the new perpetual fund allows for more flexibility in spending. The conversation emphasizes the

need for careful management of these funds to ensure sustainability. She also said Dick Snow is generating a warrant article to create a revolving fund for cemetery use of this money. The conversation shifts to the town's general fund, where income from various departments, including the ambulance service and recycling center, is deposited, leaving departments with limited budgets. Susan Young inquires about the revenue report and the specific sources of revenue from the trust fund, expressing uncertainty about where to find this information. There is a discussion about whether the interest from the trust fund can be requested for specific projects or if it is strictly used to offset the budget. The discussion concludes with a focus on the importance of maintaining the cemetery and ensuring adequate funding for its upkeep. Andria Hansen was requested to provide Budget Committee clarification on the wording of all revolving fund and how the money generated is currently designated.

Highway

4. How much is currently in the revolving fund? How will that be used? Has that been subtracted from the proposed operating budget?

The focus shifts to the highway department, where the current status of the revolving fund is discussed, noting that approximately \$22,000 is available for use on specific projects. The funds are earmarked for Crowley Road and future projects, with an emphasis on ensuring that block grant money is used appropriately for highway maintenance. Questions arise about the relationship between the revolving fund and other funding sources, with participants seeking clarity on how these funds can be utilized.

5. What subcontractor raises were given in the last year? How many raises were given and what are the amounts?

Committee members inquired about the specifics of raises given to subcontractors over the past year. There is a discussion about the rates for winter and summer contractors, with a focus on ensuring that the town remains competitive in its compensation practices. Participants express a desire for more detailed information regarding the increases and how they compare to state rates.

Planning Board

6. How do you plan to use the \$5,000 requested for Master Plan Implementation / Planning? So far, none of the \$8501 budgeted for last year has been used. Do you plan to use the other three lines that were not spent in the last budget? You are still requesting the same amount.

Tim D'Arcy is introduced to discuss the planning board's budget request for \$5,000 for master plan implementation. He explains that previous budget lines have not been spent yet, as they are committed to specific projects with Southern New Hampshire Planning. The conversation concludes with a discussion about the impact fees generated from new housing developments, which are intended to support town services and infrastructure. The discussion revolves around the allocation of funds, specifically mentioning a fee of \$2,000 per house lot for building permits. Tim expresses uncertainty about the school and solid waste costs but believes

solid waste won't be a significant expense. The funds are committed to cover school and solid waste expenses as outlined in last year's budget. Stephanie seeks clarification on the \$2,000 fee, confirming it is not deducted from the tax rate but is an upfront cost associated with building permits. The fees vary for commercial, residential, and industrial projects, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which have their own impact fee calculations. The impact fees differ based on the type of commercial or industrial development, with examples given of varying traffic generation levels. The \$2,000 fee is a one-time charge that must be paid before a building permit is issued, and if no house is built, the permit is held. The conversation shifts to the completion of a project related to school and solid waste, with Susan Young inquiring about its status. Tim explains that Nate, a knowledgeable planner, is working on it, but no completion timeline is provided. The planning board will approve the project, and the select board's approval is also necessary. There is a plan to adjust impact fees annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to avoid falling behind. Stephanie asks about the impact fee for 55-plus housing, which is calculated differently, and Bob Donovan will look into it. The next topic is the \$5,000 budget request for the housing opportunity plan, which is part of a larger project funded by state grants. The town is addressing housing shortages and aims to integrate findings into town plans and subdivision guidelines to facilitate development while maintaining community character.

Tim explains the planning board is under pressure from development demands and litigation issues, with conversations about defending zoning regulations and assessing town resources for housing. Susan Young inquires about the inclusion of unclaimed ADUs in housing calculations, but the planning board does not enforce regulations and cannot accurately assess existing unpermitted units. The planning board is working on an ADU ordinance to ensure compliance with health and safety standards. Brenda Coughlin raises concerns about potential litigation from builders, and while there was a recent legal battle, no major issues are anticipated in the near future. The planning board has a line item for legal fees, which has been adjusted to reflect past expenditures.

Police

7. What is the reason for the big increase in the police retirement line? How is that calculated?

The discussion transitions to the police budget, specifically the increase in the police retirement line due to state-mandated employer contribution rates based on officer wages. The current employer contribution rate is set at 31.28%.

Solid Waste

8. Equipment purchase line you are requesting \$4000. What are you purchasing and can it be taken out of the Recycling Center Capital Improvement Fund?

9. Special Projects line there was \$4000 budgeted for last year and \$400 was spent. You are requesting \$4000 again this year. How do you plan to spend it?

Chuck Whitcher addressed the solid waste budget with a request for \$4,000 for equipment purchases, specifically a sweeper for the skid steer to maintain pavement. The possibility of funding this purchase from the recycling center capital improvement fund is confirmed. The

special project line has \$4,000 budgeted again, with plans to replace an aging shed and make necessary repairs to existing infrastructure. Chuck is uncertain if these expenses can be covered by the capital improvement fund but emphasizes the importance of maintaining the budget for improvements.

10. Glass disposal charges there were \$7000 budgeted last year and \$3777 was spent. Why are you requesting the same amount for next year?

The glass disposal charges are discussed, with a budget of \$7,000 from the previous year and a request for the same amount for the upcoming year. Chuck anticipates two more glass hauls, estimating costs around \$5,400, and suggests reducing the budget request to \$6,000 to account for potential rate increases. Chuck clarifies that glass has no resale value and is more cost-effective to dispose of than regular trash, which incurs higher fees. The glass is crushed and repurposed on-site by waste management. A discussion about the disposal of glass reveals that it has no value and is not sold. Instead, it is crushed and used on-site for projects by waste management in Rochester. The speaker notes that while glass used to have some utility, it is now considered worthless, leading to a curious situation regarding its disposal.

11. Landfill disposal line there was \$194,560 budgeted for last year and 36% of it is still remaining. Why has the requested amount for next year increased to \$203,560?

The landfill disposal line shows a budget of \$194,506 for the previous year, with 36% remaining. The requested amount for the next year is increased to \$203,560. Chuck explains that this increase is based on historical data, particularly the highest volume year of 2020, which had 1,382 tons of waste. He also mentions that the lowest amount was in 2023, with 1,261 tons, and calculations were made using both years to arrive at the requested budget. Chuck clarifies that the landfill line also covers burn pit ash disposal, which is expected to cost between \$8,000 and \$10,000. They emphasize the uncertainty of future waste volumes and the importance of using real numbers and contracted prices for budgeting. The discussion touches on the impact of COVID-19 on waste volume trends. Susan Young shares a reminder to voters that any unspent budget funds do not go to personal use but return to the town to hopefully lower the tax rate. Russ Dann mentions that recycling efforts have generated \$74,000 for the general fund, highlighting the financial benefits of recycling. Brenda Coughlin expresses the need to keep expenses down and emphasizes the importance of realistic budgeting. She acknowledges that while funds may return to the town, it is crucial to manage budgets carefully and wise planning avoiding excess budgeting.

Tax Collector

12. Stipend was increased from \$14,273 to \$15,211. How did you arrive at that amount?

The stipend for the tax collector has increased from \$14,273 to \$15,211. The tax collector explains that their compensation is not based on hours worked but on the completion of duties. They have been in the position for 15 years, and the increase amounts to less than \$300 a week for their availability and responsibilities. A question arises about the hours worked by the

tax collector annually, with a suggestion that tracking hours might be beneficial. The last adjustment to the stipend is questioned, with a request for clarification on when it occurred.

Town Building Expenses

13. Building Maintenance line was \$6250 last year and \$16,250 is being requested this year. How will this money be used? Why is this not being taken from the Town Office Maintenance Fund?

The building maintenance line for town buildings has increased from \$6,250 to \$16,250, primarily due to the need for a new entrance door costing approximately \$8,000. The decision not to draw from the town office maintenance fund is made to preserve funds for unforeseen repairs, such as roof issues or parking lot repaving.

14. Smyth Building Maintenance line has increased and your budget shows \$21,415 for roof repair. Is anything being taken out of the Smyth Memorial Building Fund or the Byrd Smyth Building Trust Fund?

The Smith Building maintenance line has also increased, with \$21,415 allocated for roof repairs. The speaker confirms that funds from the Smith Memorial Building Fund and the Byrd Smith Building Trust Fund will be used for the new walkway project, although exact estimates for the walkway are not yet available. Questions arise regarding the balances in the Smith Memorial Building Fund and the Byrd Smith Building Trust Fund. Lynn Chivers mentions that the Smith Memorial Fund has approximately \$12,377 available, while the Byrd Fund's interest and total balance are unclear, prompting a request for further clarification. Discussion ended with Andria asked to have Carla Penfield attend the next Budget meeting for funding clarification.

General Business

The next meeting is scheduled for November 13th, where preliminary recommendations for the town budget will be voted on. The following day, a discussion on warrant articles will take place.

A discussion about hiring a Zoom assistant occurs, with a suggestion to pay a minimum of \$25 for attendance and \$15 per hour for longer meetings. The need for consistency in the position is emphasized, and the potential for hiring an administrative assistant is considered, with the understanding that the position may need to be advertised. The conversation shifts to the compensation for the Zoom assistant, with a proposal to pay either a flat fee of \$25 or an hourly rate of \$15, whichever is higher. The implications of hiring someone as a subcontractor versus an employee are discussed, along with the potential need for advertising the position. The discussion revolves around a low or no skill position that requires individuals to come out at night and then return. Ryan Young contemplates making a motion regarding the wage structure for this position. Ryan suggests a wage of \$25 an hour, with \$15 for every hour worked beyond that. There is some confusion about the structure of the pay, with participants debating whether the \$25 is a minimum or if it applies to the first hour only. The committee clarifies that the \$25 is a minimum wage, and they discuss the implications of paying \$15 for every hour worked after the first. There is a concern about how this wage structure aligns with state law, particularly regarding the legality of switching wages during work hours. The conversation shifts to the practicalities of calling someone into work and the minimum hours they should be compensated for. There is a suggestion that if someone is called in, they should be paid for at least four hours,

which was previously three hours. The committee considers the implications of the wage structure, particularly for short shifts, and agrees that a minimum wage of \$25 is necessary. They also discuss the possibility of setting a minimum of two to three hours for shifts to ensure fair compensation. Bill Saffie motions to establish a wage of \$25 minimum and \$15 an hour for multiple hours worked. Susan Young seconds, and the committee members present confirms that the structure is \$25 minimum and \$15 an hour, whichever is higher. The motion passes unanimously, with all in favor. The group then moves on to discuss whether there are any other topics to address before concluding the meeting. Josh makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, Brenda seconds. The committee votes in favor of adjourning, concluding the discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Coughlin