

**ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE
TOWN OF MADISON
January 17, 2023
MINUTES**

Members Present – Chairman Tino Fernandes; Ron Force; Ned Rogerson; Doug McAllister; Sharon Schilling; Selectman John Arruda; School Board Member Michael Brooks; Alternates Adam Price and Nicole Nordlund

Others Present – Town Administrator Linda Shackford; Chief Robert King Jr; Patrolman Michael Mosher; Foreman Justin Chick; Facility Manager Dave Swift; Librarian Sloane Jarell; Library Trustees Dave Stevens; Peter Stevens; Residents Ken Hughes and Jay Buckley; Videographers Aysia Morency and Amanda Hayford; and other members of the public

Where and When Posted – Town Hall upper & lower bulletin boards and Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on October 26, 2022.

Meeting Called to Order – By Fernandes at 6:00 p.m.

Elevation of Alternates – There is a full committee with no need to raise alternates.

Approval of November 21, 2022 Minutes – Motion by Force, seconded by McAllister to approve the minutes of November 21, 2022 with changes. The motion passed **unanimously**.

Approval of December 6, 2022 Minutes – Motion by Force, seconded by McAllister to approve the minutes of December 6, 2022 with changes. The motion passed **unanimously**.

Police Department Budget – Chief King presented to the Committee a PowerPoint presentation. This presentation focused on the supporting criteria that King used to establish the wage increases for his department. King compared his department to local, state and private employers for the positions of chief, lieutenant and patrolmen.

There are 28 departments in the State of NH looking for full-time officers. King cited the range of salaries noting up to \$15,000 sign-on bonuses being offered.

As an example of the positive point to retention, King used an opening at Crest Chevrolet for an opening paying \$95,000 that one of his patrolmen is qualified to for. If that patrolman left, King offered the breakdown of a new hire with a price tag of about \$30,000 before the new hire would have worked a day.

Arruda asked for King to explain the need for four cruisers. King stated that there is no 24-hour service in Carroll County. All services after 1:00am are on call. If Madison Police do not respond to a Madison call then the Sheriff's Department would respond with an officer that could be coming from an area as far Milton to Jackson. Having each officer with a vehicle allows a quick response, and extends the life of the cruiser by up to four years.

Force asked King to describe how he determined the wages for his department. King uses 3% as a rule of thumb with his department seeing no increased wages in 2022. Neighboring departments are paying patrolmen \$31.50/hr. and his lieutenant was brought up with local departments. Force asked if he would

consider splitting the increase over two years. King said that could be an option but he is in a race to stay ahead of other departments to retain his employees and does not expect increases next year.

Schilling asked if King has done an analysis on smaller towns and ones close to us. King responded yes, he looked at state and local departments noting that Madison's wages are just barely above Freedom's. Ossiipee's turnover rate for the last 2 years was almost 75% noting that they pay less and employees pay more for their insurance than in Madison.

Brooks asked if King has had a conversation with his department members about commitment and King said yes, with the proof of the Crest Chevrolet position not being taken.

Library Budget – Fernandes noted a 17.9% increase in the library budget over 2022. Fernandes stated that this Committee is advisory and that the Selectmen have no control over the library numbers, but Town Meeting does.

Alternate Trustee Dave Stevens offered to explain the increase. Stevens stated that Madison's library is staffed with three part-time employees and calculates that increasing to a full-time position would be a 29% increase. Madison is unusual in that we staff our library with part-timers versus examples of Freedom and Effingham that employee full-time staff with less hours of operation offered. The salaries increased to become competitive after having only one applicant for an open position.

Force asked for a volume matrix comparing pre-pandemic numbers. Librarian Sloane Jarell stated that circulation numbers have increased noting that in 2022 there were approximately 19,000 items compared to the usual 15,000 -16,000 items. Force asked if it would be reasonable to make these increase over time. Stevens noted that it is a competitive environment and library employees have been approached by other towns.

Schilling sees the issue being an overall increase of \$15,000 with one person's salary accounting for half of that increase, questioning if the increase is supported. Stevens showed that the remaining portion of the budget shows a less than 3% increase and he does not see the need of risking the loss of their director with Trustee Littlefield offering supporting numbers to Stevens comments.

Rogerson thanked the library representatives for offering a better understanding.

DPW Budget – Foreman Chick was present to answer any questions from the Committee. Force asked for detail regarding the \$200,000 road improvement warrant article; asking for mileage details to which Chick responded there are 62 miles of road of which 33 miles are paved. There is about \$19,600 left from the road improvement warrant article from 2022 that is available to use until the end of 2027.

Rogerson asked about increases in asphalt prices with Chick explaining that AC pricing was at \$800/barrel at the August peak and it is now about \$760/barrel; the price of AC will influence how much paving can be done with the amount in the article, it could be fewer roads. Chick also touched on the inability to get help for his department with Arruda agreeing. Arruda stated that they ran the Transfer Station on two people several times during the summer when 4,000 cars will come through on a weekend.

Arruda noted that the Transfer Station took in just over \$69,000 revenue in 2022. Arruda also noted that the Town now pays for disposal of materials that we were paid for in the past, cardboard was specifically called out at costing \$45/ton for disposal.

The Committee asked about the large overage of the DPW supplies line. Chick explained that he is unable to speak to expenditures prior to August of 2022 but did explain that everything from hoses and oil to office supplies comes from that line.

Fernandes asked about recycling #1 and #2 plastics to which DPW Dave Swift explained how difficult that is and not cost effective at this time.

Rec Program Budget – The Committee discussed with Rec Department Committee Members Adam Price and Joy Gray the Rec Program funds. The discussion began with the article that will establish a fund for the Rec Program. Price explained that there were approximately \$4,100 taken in donations and fund raising; and \$7,065 was raised in summer camp revenues from the 45 participants. Force asked if the department is funded will revenue still be obtained to which Price responded that sports are free to Madison children with a small fee for out-of-town participants. Schilling asked if Price has a projection of revenues for 2023 to which he responded it is an unknown because we cannot yet predict participation numbers. Gray offered an estimation of \$20,000 as revenue for the summer program by using figures that better reflect the amount to be charged based upon surrounding town's fee schedules.

Fernandes brought up the article that contains the request for a full-time Rec Director with an estimated \$96,000 value with salary and benefits. Price stated it cannot be a part-time position. The goal is to have more than just youth sports. Schilling asked if there has been any discussion of a combined PE teacher and Rec Director. Price explained that once you involve school personnel in the Rec Program it causes the need for a nurse to be involved. Brooks commented that the school's and Town's salary, insurance and retirement structures are very different and that could be an obstacle.

Nordlund is in favor of increasing the fees for rec services and is happy to see adults included.

Fernandes see this energy and excitement of a Rec Program, even if the full-time position doesn't pass, as a good thing.

MES Budget with Vote on School Warrant Articles – The Committee offered their votes on the warrant articles for the School Warrant as follows:

ARTICLE 2: Shall the School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$7,440,477? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$7,310,809 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the School District or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

Motion by McAllister, seconded by Force to approve Article 2. The motion passed 4-3 with Schilling, Arruda and Fernandes in the opposition.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters of the Madison School District adopt a school administrative unit budget of \$1,082,411 for the 2023-2024 school year in which \$375,417 is assigned to the school budget of this district?

This year's adjusted budget of \$1,049,713 with \$363,371 assigned to the School District budget will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the district voters voting in this administrative unit.

Motion by Force, seconded by Rogerson to approve Article 3. The motion passed 4-3 with Schilling, Arruda and Fernandes in the opposition.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 to be placed in the capital reserve fund previously established for the purpose of educating educationally disabled children.

Motion by Rogerson, seconded by McAllister to approve Article 4. The motion passed 7-0.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Madison School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be placed in the previously established Building Capital Reserve Fund.

Motion by Rogerson, seconded by McAllister to approve Article 5. The motion failed 2-2-3 with Schilling abstaining for not enough information, Force abstaining because the CIP was not considered in the discussion and Rogerson abstaining because of insufficient information.

2022 Town Budget Drawdown – Arruda explained that of the \$239,046 left over at the end of 2022 there was \$121,653 encumbered. Ultimately, there was \$117,393 put back into the unassigned fund balance.

Review of Proposed 2023 Town Budget:

Force began by expressing his concern for the huge increase in the library budget putting his vote on the entire operating budget in jeopardy.

Schilling questioned the amount in the Planning Board line regarding legal fees as there may be no defense of STR regulations.

Fernandes asked if the BOS are still considering a warrant article versus in the operating budget for the legal line. Arruda stated that the warrant is pretty much done as is though taking it out of the operating budget would appear to change percentage increases. Schilling and Fernandes asked if the BOS would still consider that change with Arruda commenting that the BOS only really see the bottom line. Arruda will bring this and a look of the Planning Board line this back to the BOS for review.

Review of Proposed Town Warrant Articles for 2023:

The Committee reviewed the warrant articles and made comment on the following:

Articles 2-4: Operating Budget – Nordlund asked how it would work if the money for the legal defense for STRs were taken out of the budget. Brooks explained that if an expense occurred for legal reasons it would have to come from somewhere and that would be the BOS's decision as they are in charge of the bottom line. It was suggested that an ETF be created to be funded with the remaining funds from the legal line should there be funds remaining. Brooks offered to look into if that is possible.

Repair of the Dam: Brooks commented that Shawn Bergeron is meeting with DES to get a scope of the project for the BOS.

Trust Fund Balances YE 2022 – The balances were reviewed with no comment.

Warrant Article Summary YE 2022 – The balances were reviewed with no comment.

Public Comment: Jay Buckley stated he was impressed with the great job the Committee is doing.

Such Items as Properly Presented to the Committee: The next meetings for the Committee are:
Monday, February 6, 2023 School Deliberative Session
Tuesday, February 14, 2023 Public Budget Hearing

8:51 PM – Motion by McAllister, seconded by Schilling to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

NEXT ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING – The next Advisory Budget Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. for the Public Budget Hearing at the Madison Elementary School.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford,
Town Administrator
Recording Secretary