

# Salisbury Budget Committee

## Approved Meeting Minutes

### October 17, 2022

A meeting of the Salisbury Budget Committee was held on Monday, October 17, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Academy Hall.

Jason Hood, Chairman (2024)	Present	Marcia Murphy, Vice Chair (2023)	Present
David Kelly (2024)	Present	Bill MacDuffie, Sr. (2022)	Present
Jennifer Hoyt (2023)	Present	David Croft (2024)	Present
Eric Swendsen (2025)	Present	Kevin O'Neill (2025)	Present
Brett Walker, Selectman (2022)	Present	Jeff Blanchard (2022)	Present
April Rollins, Town Administrator	Present	Jennifer King, Recording Secretary	Present

**Several members of the public were in attendance.**

**No one attended via Zoom.**

Page 4 8.93% should be the percentage on page 3 and 5

Chair Hood called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### Approve Minutes

**Motion:** by Selectman Walker, seconded by Chair Hood, to approve the draft meeting minutes from the joint BoS - Budget Committee meeting of September 7, 2022.

**Discussion:** David Croft stated that he was unable to attend this meeting, so the minutes should be corrected to reflect this. Brett Walker amended the motion to approve the minutes with this correction. David Croft **seconded** the amended motion which passed successfully with one abstention (*Croft*).

Vice-Chair Murphy was wondering how they should approach looking at salaries this year: should they do an across-the-board increase, or leave it all over the place (per department). Perhaps they should look at the entire budget and then go back and review the salaries.

David Croft feels they are already behind the eight ball when it comes to salaries because they don't have a scale. He would like to see them have some type of a scale that shows some sort of increase each year based upon merit. He feels that it makes for easier tracking from year to year and gives the employee an idea of what they are looking at down the road. He understands this may not be something they can institute for this year.

Brett Walker is opposed to the scale. He said they receive salary recommendations by department. He feels the employees should be paid according to their value, though he understands that government typically uses the scale approach. The Budget Committee can in fact vote upon whatever budget is submitted, but it's up to the Selectmen to allocate it.

David Croft said that he feels that their employees are their most valuable tool. If they lose people, they don't really have people kicking down the door to apply.

Jeff Blanchard asked how salaries have been handled to this point. He asked if they are treated like any other line item that can be adjusted as necessary as they go forward. He suggested they can always address it within each department's budget, but then they can revisit it at the end. He understands that the role of the Budget Committee was not to dictate salaries, but just because they put a certain amount in a budget line item, they don't have to spend all of it or they can add to it from other places as needed.

Vice-Chair Murphy asked if the BOS can change the salary of the Town Clerk or any of the elected officials. Brett Walker answered that they cannot; they can only change the town employee salaries. He added that they are looking at a relatively uniform adjustment to salaries for the upcoming year. Bill McDuffie Sr. asked if they wait to review salaries until the end, what about these departments that already included raises in their budgets? Discussion continued regarding the procedure pertaining to determining salary increases.

Kevin O'Neill said that it is important to keep in mind that the residents paying these costs are also facing increased costs because of inflation. The costs of heating fuel and food are up. He is wondering what they have for discretionary spending and if they can look at what can be limited in order to be responsible to the town. Brett Walker said they have little in their budget that would be considered discretionary. They do have larger purchases they save for each year, but those aren't really considered discretionary, as they can't keep kicking those purchases down the road.

Jeff Blanchard said that he is comfortable with treating the salaries the same as other line items in the budget, leaving them subject to adjustment before they finalize the budget.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. said that salaries are a pretty small part of the budget and feels they should be treated differently than other budget items.

Eric Swendsen asked if the department heads had not already determined their salaries to include in their recommendations? Chair Hood responded that they had not yet given recommendations

regarding salaries. Federal employees are looking at a 4.1% increase and COLA is at an 8.93% increase. They need to decide if they want to be on the higher end of that spectrum.

Discussion occurred regarding the best way to decide upon the salary rate increase for town employees and for elected officials.

Brett Walker suggested they take a non-binding vote to start the process.

Chair Hood recommended 6% as a starting point for discussion.

David Croft **motioned** to recommend a salary increase of 6.5%. Chair Hood **seconded** the motion which carried with (2) (*Swendsen, Blanchard*) opposed.

## AGENDA ITEMS

### Budget Meetings with Department Heads

#### **4140 - Elections, Registrations, Vital Statistics**

Town Clerk Jim Zink-Mailloux presented his department's budget. There was an Increase made to salaries of about 5% but he has since adjusted it to 8.93%, He also reduced the lines for equipment and training. They purchased a new printer and he also bought an extra toner cartridge this year, so supplies and equipment have decreased significantly. Stamps are increasing by .03 and postage will be going up approximately every 6 months for the foreseeable future.

Jeff Blanchard asked if they could purchase some forever stamps now and avoid the increase. Mr. Zink-Mailloux answered that they use a postage meter that actually saves them money as well, so they would be spending more up front to purchase the stamps and wouldn't see that savings for several years.

He also recommended a stipend increase for election officials because their compensation has not been increased since 2014 and they have actually added three hours to their day on Election Day. He also recommended increasing the meals budget (not increased since 2008).

Overall adjustment of 6.1% from 2022.

Brett Walker spoke to the recommended increase in the salaries for the Supervisors of the Checklist. It isn't related to a CPI adjustment, but they are trying to bring them up to a level of compensation that matches the work that they are doing. Discussion continued with the Supervisors of the Checklist regarding the time and work that goes into each election season.

Brett Walker **motioned** to approve the budget for line items 4140-05 to 4140-34 to be amended to \$28,817 as written. David Croft **seconded** the motion.

**Discussion:** Jeff Blanchard said they just decided that they were looking at Jim's salary as the benchmark for all the salary increases, when they had just decided on a salary increase recommendation of 6.5%, and now they are voting to approve a budget containing a salary increase of 8.95%. He is wondering why they are voting on each one with a different set of principles. David Croft said the 6.5% was a starting point and non-binding.

Eric Swendsen asked if increasing the salary for one department by a certain amount sets a precedent for rest of the department heads requesting the same. Chair Hood said that that is up to each department head to decide if they want to budget salaries conservatively or not.

Jeff Blanchard called a **point of order**: he asked if they could approve these numbers now and still make adjustments at the end.

Brett Walker **motioned** to move the question. Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the motion which carried with a majority in favor.

**Vote** on original motion: **(6-2-2) Hood, Murphy opposed, Hoyt and Blanchard abstained.**

Brett Walker **motioned** to approve the budget for line items 4140-35 to 4140-55 for a total of \$2,210. Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with one abstention (**Murphy**).

#### **4149- Tax Collector and 4150- Financial Administration**

Tabled.

#### **4153 - Legal expenses**

Jeff Blanchard **motioned** that they keep this level funded at \$13,000 instead of the requested \$15,000. Brett Walker cautioned against underfunding this account due a couple of cases that could end up costing them some money in legal fees. TA Rollins said they already have the bare minimum amount in there that is recommended. Bill MacDuffie Sr. said that what they don't spend goes to the surplus to offset taxes.

There is no second. Motion fails.

Jennifer Hoyt **motioned** to accept this account at the requested \$15,000. Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the motion which **passed successfully** with one opposed (**Blanchard**).

#### **4191 - 10/28 - Planning Board and 4191 - 40/45 - Zoning**

Chair Hood noted a slight decrease from last year in advertising.

David Croft **motioned** to accept the Planning and Zoning Budget at \$2,050. Eric Swendsen **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

#### **4195 - Cemetery Trustees**

Chair Hood reviewed the requested cemetery budget. They are seeking an increase for the Sexton as they have not had an increase in 5 years. Chair Hood suggested that they look to moderately increase salaries more often so they aren't jumping 3 or 4 years.

Vice-Chair Murphy asked what a Sexton does. The trustees answered that they are the point of contact if someone wants to request a burial plot and digs holes for cremated remains. They also maintain cemetery records.

David Croft feels that they should remain consistent with all employees at an 8.93% increase.

David Croft **motioned** to set the salary to represent an 8.93% increase: \$3,268. Brett Walker **seconded** the motion which passed successfully

Brett Walker **motioned** to approve the Cemetery budget in the amount of \$21,768. David Croft **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

#### **4210 – Police**

Chair Hood noted that the DARE amount has decreased by half to \$250.

David Croft stated that as Sheriff, he discontinued the practice of charging the town for pistol permits. Where his future in that role is currently uncertain, he suggested possibly including something in the budget for that again.

Brett Walker **motioned** to increase the Police budget by \$1 for pistol permits. Chair Hood **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

Chair Hood **motioned** to approve the police budget at \$33,251. Brett Walker **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

David Croft asked if the increase in State Police hours has been at all beneficial. Brett Walker feels it's beneficial to have them in town more. It hasn't really

decreased the amount of speeding in town. Discussion continued regarding the service provided by the state police to the town.

#### **4215 – Ambulance (Tabled)**

#### **4220 – Fire Department**

Fire Chief Bill MacDuffie Jr. asked that their on-call employees be included in the 8.93% increase.

Brett Walker **motioned** to increase the line item 4220-15 (Fire Department Incentive Pay) to \$9,804. David Croft **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

Brett Walker **motioned** to approve the Fire Department budget at \$40,674. Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

#### **4290- Emergency Management / Forest Fire**

Chair Hood **motioned** that they approve the Emergency Management/Forest Fire budget at \$10,419. Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

#### **4240 - Bldg. Inspection**

Discussion occurred regarding the Building Inspector position and how it is funded. He gets an hourly rate plus a fee that he collects.

Chair Hood wondered if they were required to have a compensated position for this role. TA Rollins said that they have a building code that they adopted, so it is necessary that they have an Inspector.

Brett Walker noted that he also serves as the Health and Safety Officer for the town. Discussion continued regarding the compensation for this position as well as possibly restructuring their fee schedule for this department.

David Croft **motioned** to approve the Building Inspection budget at \$11,200. Jeff Blanchard **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

#### **4312 – Highways & Streets Maintenance**

Bill MacDuffie Sr. recused himself from this discussion.

Jeff Blanchard **motioned** that they approve the Highways and Streets Maintenance budget at \$350,023. Eric Swendsen **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

#### **4520 - Recreation**

Brett Walker **motioned** to approve the Recreation budget at \$2905.00. Chair Hood **seconded** the motion which passed unanimously.

**4550 – Library**

This item is on hold per request of the Library Trustees.

**4600 - Conservation Commission**

Chair Hood **motioned** to approve the Conservation budget at \$500. Jennifer Hoyt Walker **seconded** the motion which passed unanimously.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The next Budget Committee meeting will be held on Monday November 14, 2022.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Hood **motioned** that they adjourn the meeting. Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer King, Recording Secretary