

# Salisbury Budget Committee

## Approved Meeting Minutes

### November 13, 2023

A meeting of the Salisbury Budget Committee was held on Monday, November 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at Academy Hall.

Jason Hood, Chairman (2024)	Absent	Marcia Murphy, Vice Chair (2026)	Present
David Kelly (2024)	Present	Bill MacDuffie, Sr. (2026)	Present
Jennifer Hoyt (2026)	Present	Lorna Carlisle (2024)	Present
Eric Swendsen (2025)	Present	Kevin O'Neill (2025)	Present
Brett Walker, Selectman	Present	Jeff Blanchard (2025)	Present
April Rollins, Town Administrator	Present	Jennifer King, Recording Secretary	Present

Several members of the public attended the meeting at Academy Hall

Two members of the public attended the meeting via Zoom.

Vice-Chair Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### Approve Minutes

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** to approve the draft meeting minutes from the Budget Committee meeting of October 16, 2023.

Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the motion for discussion.

The Committee noted a few corrections:

- Gayle Landry should not have been mentioned with recreation; the correct name is Kathleen Doyle.
- Jeff Blanchard noted a correction in which the Tax Collector's salary was said to be set at 5%; it should be "a 5% increase."

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **amended** the motion to approve the minutes of October 16, 2023 with corrections.

Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the amended motion which passed successfully.

#### AGENDA ITEMS

##### Department Head Budget Reviews

The Committee reviewed the budgets as presented for the following departments:

**4130 Executive \$26,954**

Brett Walker said that the increase in this budget represents the 3.7% COLA increase in salaries (excluding Selectmen, as well as the Municipal Assistant, who is a recent new hire).

Kevin O'Neill **motioned** to approve the Executive Budget at \$26,954.

Jeff Blanchard **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4150 Financial Administration \$70,145**

TA Rollins said that a change (+\$500) was made to the miscellaneous line to include funds for employee appreciation. It was left off of this budget proposal in error.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** to accept the revised total for the Financial Administration budget at \$70,145.

Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with two (Swendsen and Blanchard) opposed.

**4155 Personnel Administration**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they table discussion on this item until they have firmer numbers on payroll taxes, etc.

David Kelly **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed..

**4194 General Government Buildings \$95,862**

Brett Walker explained the two large increases in this budget:

- Shoveling: they have not been successful in finding someone to handle shoveling at the town buildings this winter, so they are offering additional work to Jeff Miller who handles the mowing for the town. The rates are \$250 per storm (up to a foot of snow), then it's up to a maximum of \$500 (requested budget of \$6,000).
- Building Maintenance/Supplies/Repair. The Planning Board had recommended a smaller amount for this line, but Brett Walker said that Selectman Jim Hoyt recommended the increase because they have committed most of their Capital Reserve Funds to other projects, and they have a number of projects that still need to be completed, including the roof on the Town Hall, the porch at Academy Hall, air conditioners at the Fire Department, the library floor, etc. There were a lot of years in which no maintenance was done on these buildings, so they are trying to catch up on that and address the issues that are more pressing.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they accept the budget for General Government Buildings at \$95.862

David Kelly **seconded** the motion.

**Discussion:** Eric Swendsen asked about the budget for heating fuel, noting that they did not expend their budget last year. TA Rollins explained that it's only October [so they are just entering the heating season]; last winter was a bit milder so they didn't use as much fuel. Brett Walker noted the conflict occurring in the Middle East makes things uncertain in terms of pricing.

Discussion continued regarding the work to be done and the amounts requested for the budget and capital reserve. Vice-Chair Murphy noted the increase to the Govt Buildings Maintenance Repair (+\$14,000), and the Capital Reserve Fund (+\$10,000 instead of \$2,500 as in the past).

Eric Swendsen asked about what is considered Govt Building Maint/Repair vs Building Projects

TA Rollins said that the Projects line includes: UV light replacement, alarm system servicing, hot water heater servicing/replacement, etc.

Jeff Blanchard noted there was discussion at the last Planning Board meeting about the air conditioning units at the Fire Department when they were discussing the Capital Reserve Fund projects. TA Rollins said that those would come from the Building Projects line as well.

Brett Walker said that the increase in the budget and capital reserve are reasonable for the work they are looking at needing to do in the near future.

**Vote:** successful with none opposed.

**4196 Insurance \$22,826**

Kevin O'Neill **motioned** that they accept the budget for Insurance at \$22,826. David Kelly **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none in opposition.

**4197 Advertising & Association Dues \$2,501**

Vice-Chair Murphy noted a decrease in this budget

David Kelly **motioned** that they accept the Advertising & Association Dues budget at \$2,501.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

Eric Swendsen asked why the cost for Public Notices dropped so much. Brett Walker said they aren't being mailed or put in the paper any longer.

**4199 Other General Govt. \$1,500**

TA Rollins explained that the Abatement increase is a recommendation by their auditor that can only be approved by the Selectmen. She also noted an increase in Town Hall rental requests.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they accept the Other General Govt budget line at \$1,500.

Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4215 Ambulance**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they table this item until they have accurate numbers.

Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4240 Building Inspection \$11,200**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they accept this level-funded budget for Building Inspection at \$11,200.

David Kelly **seconded** the motion.

**Discussion:** Kevin O'Neill asked about the increase in fees for the Building Department. Brett Walker said that this will be presented as a Warrant Article at Town Meeting. Jeff Blanchard clarified that the fees are not used as the Building Inspector's compensation, which is separate from the fees.. Brett Walker said that the fees would be a way to reimburse the town for what they are paying the building inspector.

**Vote:** passed successfully with none opposed.

**4220 Fire Department \$46,023**

**Brett Walker motioned that they accept the Fire Department Budget at \$46,023**

**David Kelly**

Brett Walker said that the increase in this budget was for additional funds for vehicle maintenance, as their vehicles are aging.

**4290 Forestry \$10,635**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they accept the Forestry budget in the amount of \$10,635.

Eric Swendsen **seconded** the motion for discussion.

Discussion occurred regarding the increase on the Dispatch line. Chief Bill MacDuffie Jr. explained that the amount on that line is what they are being charged to use the dispatch service and is not a number they have control over.

**Vote:** successful with none opposed.

**4312 Highways & Streets \$407,523**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they accept the proposed budget for Highways & Streets at \$407,523.

David Kelly **seconded** the motion which passed with one abstention (MacDuffie Sr.) and none opposed.

**4316 Utilities and Streetlights \$4,500**

David Kelly **motioned** that they accept the proposed budget for Utilities and Streetlights at \$4,500.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **seconded** the motion for discussion.

Discussion occurred regarding the possibility of solar-powered streetlights.

Vote: successful with none opposed

**4323 Recycling \$8,601**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they accept the proposed budget for Recycling at \$8,601.

David Kelly **seconded** the motion for discussion.

Discussion occurred regarding funding for Hazardous Waste Day. Jeff

Blanchard asked about the necessity of having the Hazardous Waste Day every year.

Vote: successful with none opposed

**4324 Transfer Station \$128,502**

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they accept the proposed budget for the Transfer Station at \$128,502.

David Kelly **seconded** the motion for discussion.

Vice-Chair Murphy noted an increase of \$7000; most of that is salaries.

Brett Walker explained that Manager Bert LaFlamme works by himself, but they are still looking for someone to cover on Wednesdays. They currently pay Bert LaFlamme a stipend for covering Wednesdays in the meantime. Eric Swendsen asked about any safety concerns having only one person there. Brett Walker said that the compactor helps the workload and reduces the number of times he has to use the backhoe for compacting. Manager LaFlamme is confident that he can handle the job on his own there.

Brett Walker noted that hauling is also up. Discussion occurred regarding how the hauling is accounted for. TA Rollins explained that debris hauling is accounted for on a separate line at the bookkeeper's discretion.

**Vote:** successful with none opposed.

**4325 SW Cleanup \$10,150**

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they accept the proposed SW Cleanup budget at \$10,150

David Kelly **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4414 Animal Control \$1.00**

Kevin O'Neill **motioned** that they accept the proposed Animal Control budget at \$1.00.

Brett Walker **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4415 Health Agencies & Hospitals \$2,750**

Vice-Chair Murphy noted that this budget is up \$250 because the Twin Valley Food Pantry has now been included. TA Rollins said that she toured their facility and feels that they are very underfunded for the population they serve.

Brett Walker **motioned** that they accept the proposed Health Agencies & Hospitals budget at \$2,750.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with one (Blanchard) in opposition.

**4442 Direct Assistance \$22,000**

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they accept the proposed Direct Assistance budget at \$22,000.

Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4589 Other Culture and Recreation \$0**

Eric Swendsen **motioned** that they add \$1.00 to the Other Culture and Recreation budget in case it needs to be used.

Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they accept the proposed Other Culture and Recreation budget at \$1.00.

Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4919 Agency Funds (CC Town Contribution)**

Brett Walker said that this is pretty well funded by land use.

Jeff Blanchard **motioned** that they fund this budget item at \$0.00

Eric Swendsen **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**5400 Transfers to Trust Funds \$0**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they fund this line at \$0.00,

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4723 TAN Interest \$1.00**

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they accept this budget item at \$1.00.  
Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4910 Highway Projects**

Currently Tabled

Bill MacDuffie Jr. stated that he is working on getting numbers together for further engineering for West Salisbury Road. He is hoping to be able to encumber funds to put toward this, but he is still waiting on numbers to be able to budget accurately.

Eric Swendsen **motioned** that they table this budget item.

Kevin O'Neill **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed and one abstention (MacDuffie Sr.).

**4711 Debt Service: Principal \$0**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they accept this budget item at \$0.00.

Eric Swendsen **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4721 Debt Service \$0**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they accept this budget item at \$0.00.

David Kelly **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4902 Capital Outlay \$0**

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they accept this budget item at \$0.00.

David Kelly **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4909 Capital Outlay \$0**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they accept this budget item at \$0.00.

Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**5500 Warrant Articles / CRF \$267,076**

Brett Walker stated that the money from land acquisitions and funds received from the Pingree Bridge are going into Highway Equipment.

They heard back from the DRA which said they could put forward a Warrant Article that would authorize the library to expend the \$3,845 in donor funds.

Eric Swendsen **motioned** that they accept the proposed Warrant Articles as presented totaling \$267,076.

Bill MacDuffie **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed.

**4550 Library**

Brett Walker **motioned** that they amend the library budget from \$48,607 to \$44,762.

David Kelly **seconded** the motion which passed successfully with none opposed and 1 (Hoyt) abstention.

#### Selectmen's Report

Brett Walker told the committee that they have not yet set the tax rate; they are waiting on numbers from the school board.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Vice-Chair Murphy stated that she attended the last SB meeting. They are getting more money from the state, but the insurance also increased.

Brett Walker expressed concerns about the housing development on the edge of town and the impact it will have on Merrimack Valley School District.

The next Budget Committee meeting will be held on Monday, December 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Eric Swendsen motioned that they adjourn the meeting.

David Kelly seconded the motion and the Budget Committee adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted by Jennifer King, Recording Secretary**