

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
November 8, 2023
BEDFORD MEETING ROOM
10 MEETINGHOUSE ROAD**

ROLL CALL: A budget workshop of the Bedford Town Council was held on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Rd. Present were Lori Radke (Vice Chair), and Councilors Phil Greazzo, Sue Thomas, Dave Gilbert, Kathleen Bemiss, and Michael Strand. Also present was Town Manager Rick Sawyer and Finance Director Matt Mannino.

Chairman Carter participated by Zoom, so Vice Chair Rake chaired the meeting.

Vice Chair Radke opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Vic Chair Radke stated that this was the 2nd of three budget workshops. The next one is on November 15th. On December 13th, the Council will move the budget to the two budget workshops, January 10th and January 24th. The budget then goes to the Budgetary Town Meeting on March 13th.

Cemetery Trustees – David Bailey (Chair), Barbara Chagnon

Part-time wages – \$500

Head stone repair – \$4,000

Tree trimming/removal – \$4,000

Mr. Bailey stated that he had some money leftover and requested that they use it for the mapping module. If that's approved, they could take \$5K out of the budget.

Mr. Bailey stated that they were running out of space; they've got 5 or 6 years left. They're proposing a new capital reserve fund with \$45K.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if that was a new capital reserve. Mr. Sawyer responded yes, it's a new proposed capital reserve. The major portion of that would be to do a survey of the property and some initial planning to see if there was any part of the site that could be expanded and how. Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if they thought of purchasing more land. Mr. Bailey thought there was some land that they could utilize in the existing cemetery, which would help. They were also looking into columbariums. They're popular, but also expensive. There was an area set off in the cemetery for that purpose if they do it. As far as land, they could only look at land at Joppa Hill; he was sure other people were vying for that too. People didn't want cemeteries next to their houses. Councilor Gilbert didn't think anything could happen up there until 2025. Mr. Sawyer clarified the 25 acres at Joppa. The end of next year it became available. Mr. Bailey believed that cemeteries came under municipal purposes. Vice Chair Radke stated that they were required to provide per State statute. Mr. Sawyer stated that unfortunately, that 25 acres was going to be somewhat unusable. The way it lays out around the soccer field it wouldn't be conducive to many uses. They could turn the soccer field for better use, but

that would be a lot of money and a lot of work. They have an internal subcommittee looking at those 25 acres, so they'll report out to the Council at some point. If anybody knows of any land in the Town of Bedford that would be suitable and available for sale for a cemetery, please contact the Town.

Councilor Strand wanted to know why the mapping software was so important. Ms. Chagnon stated that right now all that they have on the Town site would be somebody's lot number and plot number, so if you wanted to go visit your family, you wouldn't know where it was. The only map they have was a humongous sheet of paper and if you tried to send a picture to somebody it's very small. The new software had an option where they would do the mapping. They're going to try and incorporate it into the software, so if you're searching for somebody in Bedford, you'll know where to go. Councilor Strand clarified that they would be able to incorporate some of the older graves also, so as time continued on they would have it digitally and Ms. Chagnon responded yes. Mr. Bailey stated that they use it every day to find the lot when somebody was being buried.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if this was the same software that other cemeteries used. Ms. Chagnon stated that there were multiple software packages out there. This software was purchased before she started, so she didn't know how they chose this one, but it seemed to have a lot of the modules. Part of the agreement was what the general public saw on the screen was not going to change a lot from what they presently see except they would be able to update it and make it a lot cleaner and keep adding to the records. Mr. Bailey stated that they couldn't currently get into the existing website because it was Bill Duschatko's, so there was a lot of misinformation on there that they were hoping to get updated quickly. He thought the website would stay the same; just be able to add new material. Ms. Chagnon stated that the new software package was going to allow them to sell a plot, keep track of who it was sold it to, keep track of who's supposed to be buried there, keep track of the contractor that's going to dig the hole, and keep track of all the little pieces of the transaction.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if they needed to vote on spending that money. Mr. Sawyer responded no, he and the Finance Director need to see the request for the transfer internally, but they would include that in the memo for them to act on at their meeting next week to reduce \$5K from the budget.

Supervisors of the Checklist – Hugh Donovan (Chair), Barbara Chagnon

Mr. Donovan stated that they've got four elections next year, so that's why there was a large percentage increase. They also put in 75 hours for the National Change of Address. The US Postal Service regularly produced a consolidated National list of changes of address, which they've never had access to. The State of NH decided to use that list. Every 10 years the Supervisors do a purge and they did that in 2021 and they removed over 3K voters. In July they got a list of 913 changes of address and they had to go through every one of those and remove those people. Every year they'll be going through that. Hopefully when they get to the next purge in 2031, they'll be very few. To remove people, they had to send people a letter and they had 30 days to respond, and if they didn't respond, they could remove them. The State told them that they could remove them, because the USPS had told them that they could remove them, so they were able to do that without sending a letter.

Mr. Donovan stated that they were waiting to see the best way to use the new poll pads. There was a new statewide system for the database. They were supposed to test it January 2023, and now they're saying they're going to roll it out for the presidential primary, which would be terrible, because it hadn't been tested by anybody, it hadn't been seen by anybody. Using the poll pads was very good for the voters, but it caused extra work for them. They had to make sure the company had the right up-to-date version of the database. They also need to add more time to test the system. He thought most of the supervisors wanted to use the old system for the presidential primary and then go to the new one in March.

Mr. Donovan stated that the main challenges they were facing were the four elections, the National Change of Address system, the poll pads, and the new statewide system. For the new statewide system, the State asked for beta testing, and they volunteered. As far as they knew none of the Supervisors in the State had seen it, so the people that were testing it weren't the people that were going to use it.

Mr. Donovan stated that the vast majority of their expenditures was on the salaries; they weren't asking for an increase in the hourly rate. They were just asking for coverage for the four elections.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if they were no longer going to use ElectionNet and Ms. Chagnon responded that was correct. The software provider for ElectionNet was no longer, so they couldn't upgrade it or make changes to it.

Moderator – Brian Shaughnessy

Town Clerk – Sally Kellar

- Elections

Vice Chair Radke stated that part-time wages was for the ballot clerks. Mr. Sawyer stated that the other increase was for Miscellaneous for the food and so forth.

Ms. Kellar stated that they also subscribe to SignUpGenius. They pay for SignUpGenius, because there was tracking that was beneficial when they put together the volunteer lists.

Poll Pad Maintenance

Ms. Kellar stated that the maintenance for the 1st year was included with the poll pads; they bought 10. They would get training for the election team and LHS would also do separate training with the ballot clerks. Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if the plan was to use the poll pads at the first election and Ms. Kellar responded yes. Councilor Thomas stated that when they used the poll pads before, everything had to be copied over onto paper and they only had 10 minutes. It was impossible and you would need double the staff. Ms. Kellar stated that it was a half hour now. If the power went out and they couldn't use the backup battery, they would be at a standstill; all hands on deck. They had extra bodies who could help them within those 30 minutes to help them get set up again. They're very accurate and they would have time built in to make sure the data was imported and works correctly before they go live on Election Day.

Councilor Bemiss stated that since Town Councilors were there, she wanted to know if they should be trained and Ms. Kellar responded yes. Councilor Bemiss wanted to make sure that they would be notified when the training was.

Councilor Gilbert stated that by using the poll pads, they didn't have to go alphabetical anymore; people could walk up to any line, so there should be shorter lines. He wanted to know if people came in and didn't have their ID if they still had to do that process and Ms. Kellar responded yes.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know how the poll pad process worked. Ms. Kellar stated that they were Apple iPads. The camera on the iPad takes the information on the Driver's License; name and address only. They could manually look up somebody, but it was a lot faster if you hit click and it pulls the person up. The ballot clerk confirms that the person is who they are and checks them in by pressing the button and they get their ballot. A little slip is printed with their information on it, which goes to the paper markers. Vice Chair Radke stated that she first introduced poll pads in 2015.

Councilor Thomas stated that the first question they were told to ask was 'Do you mind if I take a picture of your license?' If they do, then you just type it in.

Councilor Bemiss stated that if it takes a picture of your license and you hadn't changed your address yet, you were previously at a different address and now they're here, she wanted to know how that worked. Ms. Kellar stated that it will search the name. When it's checking your ID, it's not checking your address; it's checking your identity. If there was a change of address needed, then you go over to the table to do that.

Ms. Kellar stated that the State had conditionally approved two new counting devices; the LHS Dominion ImageCast and VotingWorks machines. Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if she had looked at both of them. Ms. Kellar stated that she had and she would get information about them to the Council. They're comparable in price, but totally different companies. They're familiar with LHS, a NH based company, and family-owned, Customer support was right down the street, they're familiar with the State and how it works; they know what the Secretary of State wants. VotingWorks was new, a not-for-profit, tech savvy company. She was intrigued by their scanner for absentee ballots. There were some cons to their actual voting machine with the size of their screen; it's a little bigger, so someone standing behind you might see. Vice Chair Radke stated that they were in the budget to purchase them. Mr. Sawyer stated that there was a capital reserve that they established a couple of years ago and there was \$1,200 to bring up the balance to what they currently believe it would cost; in the \$6K range.

- Town Clerk

Ms. Kellar stated that it was a 4 election year, so her costs had increased. She was seeking additional help in addition to the Deputy Town Clerk for part-time wages. She did a little bit of digging and rearranging of the hours that she typically puts in for her. The 'sticky' on the front page was the 720 hours she had initially put in the budget for Paula (Deputy Town Clerk). She broke it down month by month and it equated to approximately 12 hours a week. When she initially thought she needed someone else in to work with

her, it was to have someone in more consistently, so when it got busy, it was seamless instead of having Paula just at crunch time doing crunch time election stuff work as well as doing a vital record or taking a payment, etc.; if she hadn't done it for a few months, it took a little longer to get her feet wet again. She did three different ways of asking for additional hours just in 2024; she'd assess and recalculate in a year they don't have 4 elections. She split it by 12 months and put 12 hours a week and probably 18 hours on Election Day. She also added in the trainings and conferences that she typically goes to on a yearly basis. She did a 2nd calculation where she took out all of that extra week before the election and have a ballot clerk come in full-time and Paula would just do 12 hours a week. She was asking for more hours, but wasn't saving much money based on Paula's rate of pay and the ballot clerk's current rate of pay. If she did a skeletal calculation of having Paula for an entire year, it didn't allow for coverage of the Town Clerk office for when she's at a conference, training, or on vacation. She's asking for 872 hours total for Paula now instead of having an additional assistant clerk in the office. That additional difference was 152 hours, which equated to less than 3 hours a week more to have Paula working with her side by side.

Councilor Thomas wanted to know how Paula worked now. Ms. Kellar stated that she only worked during election times or when she was at a conference. She takes her when she can get her. Councilor Thomas stated that Paula didn't work 12 hours a week now and wanted to know if she would work 12 hours a week. Ms. Kellar stated that because they were going to go from primary straight to the March election, to dogs, getting ready for the next primary, the next election, doing the annual report; having her in consistently would allow for less starts and stops and getting herself reacquainted with doing vital records or a transaction. It would make the workings of the office more seamless. Councilor Thomas stated that she had no vacation in there; it was 52 weeks of working. Ms. Kellar stated that Paula wouldn't be working full-time; it would be 12 hours a week. If Paula was on vacation she could pick up those hours when she was needed more. Ms. Kellar stated that she didn't have any vacation in for herself either.

Councilor Bemiss stated that historically when they've had 3 elections, she wanted to know what they used in terms of hours in a year for the Deputy Clerk position and extra. Ms. Kellar stated that she had only been Town Clerk for one 4-year election cycle and that was 2020. It was during COVID and there were a lot of absentee ballots. Vice Chair Radke stated that she did quite a few 4-year elections and there was definitely a crunch time a week or two before. She used ballot clerks to sit out front and do absentee ballots while she was inputting into the computer. It was a lot of hours put in. Ms. Kellar stated that it was a lot of extra time for the Town Clerk if they're there by themselves. Her first few elections she was working late, working 12 or 16 hour days. When Paula came on board, she found that in 2022 when they had three elections and the past elections that they've done together, they worked so well together that she wasn't there late every day. They got everything done at the end of the work day. It wasn't as stressful; it was good to have her around at those times. Vice Chair Radke wanted to know during those times when it was crunch time, a week or two before the election, and Paula wasn't able to put in that extra time that she would need, would she count on ballot clerks to come in and help out. Ms. Kellar stated that she could. In 2022 she didn't use a ballot clerk; they made it work. She's more efficient than the first couple of elections she did. Councilor Thomas stated that the budget was 720 hours. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know how many hours she had this past year. Ms. Kellar stated that it would probably be Election Day of 18

hours, the week before and after the election and 200 hours for vacation and training. Councilor Thomas stated that last year's budget had 720 hours. The number for the 2023 budget was higher by \$100. Mr. Sawyer stated that they had it at 634 hours that was used. Councilor Bemiss stated 634 was what was used at \$16K and she's requesting \$32K and the Manager was recommending \$16K. Mr. Sawyer stated that was also another position requested that he couldn't support.

Councilor Bemiss stated that the Town Clerk reports to the voters. She wanted to know if she had a job description and did the Deputy Clerk have a job description in which they measure performance. Ms. Kellar stated that there was a job description. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if there was an annual review and Ms. Kellar responded no. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if there was any annual review in the State and Ms. Kellar responded no. Councilor Thomas stated that Election Day was the review. Mr. Sawyer stated that there was one for the Deputy Clerk; she was an employee. Councilor Strand mentioned the dynamic of an elected and a paid position. It probably wouldn't be viable or possible to say that a raise evaluation would be contingent on the outcome of an election, because that would be a conflict of interest.

Mr. Sawyer wanted to know if there was any decision to be made at this point. There was a request to increase the number of hours. Councilor Thomas was confused about how many hours were in the budget. Mr. Sawyer stated 720. Vice Chair Radke clarified that Ms. Kellar was looking for 872 hours and Ms. Kellar responded yes. Councilor Gilbert stated that she was asking for \$3,192. Mr. Sawyer stated that it didn't include FICA and Medicare, which would be \$3,436 if included.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know what Ms. Kellar's typical hours were in a day; this past year. Ms. Kellar stated that she typically worked an 8-hour day and more hours during election time. She didn't take a lunch. Councilor Bemiss wanted to clarify that she was there when the Town Office opened; she's there from the time it opens to the time it closes and Ms. Kellar responded roughly, she makes it there by 8:15 AM. There were times when she had an appointment and may step out, but it was rare. Councilor Thomas stated that if the Paula could be there more often, and they got more things done like all the scanning and other stuff it made sense. Four elections was a big chunk. Councilor Bemiss stated that's why she asked about the job description and performance evaluation and if they expect that to be done as part of her job; then next year they could say was it done. Ms. Kellar stated that the Deputy Town Clerk had the same responsibilities and duties of a Town Clerk. If the Town Clerk was unavailable, the Deputy Town Clerk would step in, so they should be knowledgeable on all aspects of being a Town Clerk. Councilor Thomas stated that she had never worked every week, 12 hours a week; she worked mostly around election time. This would be a big job change for her. Vice Chair Radke stated that it was almost like a part-time position. She wanted to know if that was the intent; more of a part-time position than traditional Deputy Clerk. Ms. Kellar stated that she knew she was going to need more help in 2024 and she was trying to figure out a way to describe it and that was one way that came to mind. To split her hours and stretch it. At 152 hours more, she could get the help that she needed. Bedford was the only town that over 20K residents that didn't have assistants in the Town Clerk department. Vice Chair Radke wanted to know out of all of those people, how many did motor vehicles. Ms. Kellar stated that a lot of those towns did motor vehicles. Cities did not do motor vehicles. She had talked to a lot of the Town Clerks as she was doing her research like Londonderry,

Hudson, and Windham. She asked them how often they did a motor vehicle transaction and for a lot of them it was very rare or they just process the online transactions. Some of them have 5 full-time people working for them, some have a Deputy and 2 part-time, 2 full-time people. They had help; she didn't have help; she didn't have coverage. She'll go downstairs to mail something and people were running around the office saying 'where's Sally', 'someone is waiting at your door.' She's at her desk for 3 hours and she gets up to stretch her legs and people ask where she went. She felt a town their size, with just her, was a lot to ask for. She gave them paperwork that showed all of the full-time Town Clerks, Town Clerks that were population of 10K or more, and population of 20K or more. A lot of the larger towns, the Town Clerk had been around for a long time; there were only a couple of towns where the Town Clerk was new. On the chart if the Town Clerk got paid an hourly rate, she converted it to 52 weeks. Most of the Town Clerks that were working full-time got benefits; there were a couple that didn't. Most of the towns with a full-time Town Clerk also had a Deputy Town Clerk. Windham didn't have a deputy, but had a full-time and a part-time assistant clerk. The assistant clerks all had different descriptions. Talking to the Town Clerks, they all had different responsibilities that go to the Town Clerk be it if they're not doing a motor vehicle, and they were still working full-time and still had help doing the other things. Some of them were Tax Collectors or oversee the Tax Collection department. The Londonderry Town Clerk acts as a Department Head for the Tax Collector as well and motor vehicles.

Councilor Bemiss thought they were talking about Paula and thought they needed to make it the position versus Paula of what their expectations were. If it was 12 hours a week, Tuesday and Thursday, 9-3, they needed to have a position that had whatever hours they want. Councilor Thomas stated that was her concern. All of a sudden they were doing 12 hours a week; how was that structured. Councilor Bemiss stated that it needed to be consistent, because the Town Clerk could make a doctor's appointment on a Tuesday. Ms. Kellar stated that she would love that. Knowing that they were coming in on a Tuesday or Thursday, that's how she was going to structure her week so the Department could be most efficient and they could get the most done.

Vice Chair Radke stated that she struggles with it, because she sat in that position for 10 years. She knew what it was like, so she was a little biased on some of the things she was asking for. Like her down time in August, July, she's got dogs that were in June and she was still asking for help during that time. Ms. Kellar stated that for the past two years in July and August, she'd been working on her certifications. She didn't start them year one, because it was a 1-year term and she took the opportunity to learn the Town Clerk job instead of jumping into training, and then COVID hit and they stopped all trainings. She didn't do any of the certification programs. When things started gearing up again, she decided to do it concurrently. By the end of the summer, she would be a NH Certified Clerk. Under the IIMC (International Institute of Municipal Clerks), she hoped to have her Certified Municipal Clerk designation (CMC). In order to get that, you need 50 hours of educational credits; about 100 hours and 50 credits of experience. Experience came in different ways: past jobs, sitting on committees. She had become very active in the Clerk Associations both at the NH and NE level. She jumped on the conference committee the past year and she was nominated and voted on for the nomination committee for the next year and for the NE level she was appointed to the scholarship committee. She'd been wanting to address records retention for quite some time. She learned at one of her trainings that Bedford wasn't doing some of the things that they should have been doing.

She wanted to focus on that and having time to cover other things in case someone came into her office and requested something from her. Her summer down time she could probably fill.

Councilor Thomas stated that looking at it, she thought if they could go down to 10 hours a week, and it saved 88 hours. She struggled because this had never been put in place before. If she comes in 2 or 3 days a week, but 10 hours, that saved 88 hours, which was half of the request. Where it says 12 hours, she made it 10 hours. Vice Chair Radke stated that closer to the election was where she needed the help. Councilor Thomas stated that the list says 12 hours and she made it 10. There were 44 weeks of 12 hours; it saves 88 hours. Vice Chair Radke stated that instead of 152, minus 88.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to clarify that the Deputy put in 634 hours last year. Mr. Sawyer stated that he was able to identify what happened. In the Manager's budget it was 684 hours for 2023. At the November workshop, the Council added an additional \$3K to cover additional hours that were requested at the workshop to cover the month of December in anticipation of a presidential primary being earlier and/or absentee ballots coming in December. Those were the additional hours and why it was different than what they had in their books. The appropriations that were on the website that went to Town Meeting had a note that said 'increase for assistant clerk hours for December 2023. Council decision made on 11/16'. Vice Chair Radke confirmed that was the \$16,086. Councilor Thomas wanted to know the expended to date. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was very little, about \$4,600. Councilor Thomas wanted to know why and Mr. Sawyer stated that she hadn't been working. Ms. Kellar stated that she didn't cover full-time during some of her trainings. Councilor Bemiss stated that's why she wanted to think about the position versus the person. If they want the hours, they needed to advertise. Councilor Thomas stated that if there hours were there to cover for you and she didn't, now they just filled up the schedule. The money was only expended when she works, however, they had to budget for it; that's her concern. This year the hours were there, but the hours weren't filled. Ms. Kellar stated that during election time there some times when she budgeted her for full-time and there were a couple of days where she wasn't available. Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if it were to be approved, would she be hiring another person, because she put 'Assistant' not 'Deputy'. Ms. Kellar originally said she wanted another person in order to pick up some of those hours, but the Town Manager took it out. She looked to see if she could restructure what she had starting with the 720 hours; if she spread it out in order to make things more efficient for her. Councilor Thomas stated that she was the liaison and she had looked at the spreadsheet, but she would rather see the use of the 720 hours well done than add. Ms. Kellar had said that she wasn't able to cover for her when she went away on a conference, but the schedule said she would cover her when she goes away on a conference. They're adding money to the budget for that; that was a concern.

Councilor Strand wanted to know if there was a way to enforce that schedule. Ms. Kellar stated that if they weren't going to work it, maybe she needed to find another Deputy Town Clerk who would work those set hours. If she were to take a vacation, she still has kids in school and sometimes she's bound by their schedules. She didn't go away February break. She sends her family away, because she's usually working on the annual report or getting ready for the March election. She admitted that if Paula wasn't available,

it was because she was leaving the next week and realized she had to find out if Paula was available; sometimes she's not.

Councilor Strand stated that if that was the current situation, contingent on what the Council decides, she should hold her to when she needs her. He wanted to know if Ms. Kellar had to put time in outside of hours since she'd a salaried employee and to what extent. Ms. Kellar responded yes; usually during election time. To get absentee ballots out the door or if it had been a busy day and she hadn't been able to check them all in and file them, because she's had people at the window or voters or other Town Clerk related business. Definitely during the annual report. She would be at home putting together bits and pieces of that. Councilor Strand stated that looking at all the benchmarks across the State, and knowing during peak times, it's a difficult job, and he thought some of the requests seemed justifiable especially given what she's making and not having. Councilor Thomas stated that they were only discussing the Deputy. Councilor Strand thought they were discussing everything.

Councilor Gilbert stated that they were talking about \$3,400 or 3 hours a week. He wanted to know if they were putting it in or not putting it in. Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if it was something they could put on the list and discuss it next week when they had everything to discuss. Councilor Strand stated that they could, but thought the discussion would inevitably join both of those items. Councilor Thomas didn't think they were joined items. It's an elected position, so they had to look at that differently. This was expanding the role of the assistant to work more hours, but she already had the hours in the budget and not using them. It's says that it's less than 3 hours a week, more as needed. She thought they could find 3 hours a week and really make sure that she was actually scheduled.

Councilor Bemiss thought they should keep the hours for what was worked this year. Councilor Thomas thought they should keep the budget the way it is. Councilor Bemiss thought they should make a job description that it's scheduled and the person that is in that position needed to meet the Town's needs; they didn't need to meet that person's needs. Then see next year if that was achieved. Vice Chair Radke clarified that they would keep the 634 hours. Councilor Gilbert stated that it was 720. Vice Chair stated that it was 720 hours for 2023, keep it for 2024 at \$15,952. Councilor Bemiss stated that she would like to see a formal job description and schedule. Councilor Thomas stated use it or lose it. Especially since the tax rate was based on what they budget, not on what they use. She thought they had to be careful about what they budget. Vice Chair Radke thought they didn't want to have a lot of leftover.

Councilor Strand told Ms. Kellar that she was being told she had to go away on vacation with her family. Councilor Thomas stated that when you run for election, sometimes you didn't get to go away with your family.

Vice Chair Radke suggested that if she was going to a conference and didn't have any coverage, she could put on the website that the Town Clerk wasn't available that week; towns do that. It may be an inconvenience to some folks, but if they knew it in advance. It's not the end of the world. They could go to other towns to get vital records.

- Wages – Request to increase wages by the Town Clerk

Ms. Kellar stated that last year when they set the salary range for the Town Clerk before candidate filing, because she was up for election, she realized that what she was slated to make in 2023 was \$596 above the bottom of the range and she had been in the Town Clerk position for 3 years already. She felt she was worth a lot more than that, because it's her in the office full-time by herself. She came up with that number, because it's smack dab in the middle of the range.

Councilor Strand wanted to know how this was historically decided; was the only way or was there some other mechanism that they've evaluated it in the past. Councilor Thomas stated that the Council sets the range. She wanted to know how it goes year to year. Mr. Sawyer stated that historically it had been adjusted at the same rate as the non-union wage ranges. When she says that she's near the bottom of the range, it's because the bottom of the range had moved every year almost consistently with what the raises had been. They could say that about any employee that was at that point. The range had moved a very similar rate to what the raises had been in the last 3-year period. Councilor Strand wanted to know the last time it was adjusted. Mr. Sawyer responded for the March election. The Town Clerk salary and benefits were voted on by the Town Meeting; they had to vote on that. If they look at every Town Meeting handout, it specifically calls out what the Town Clerk was getting. Councilor Strand wanted to clarify that it wasn't just the person being voted on, that salary was also voted on. Mr. Sawyer responded that was correct. The Council ultimately had the decision to make, but past Councils always said that if it was a newly elected Town Clerk they were going to start at the bottom of the range. They made that statement prior to the election and this case, prior to the filing. This year wasn't an issue, because there wasn't election. The Manager's budget would have had the same range as the non-union employees. Vice Chair Radke clarified that last year the increase was the same as what non-union got and the year before she got what the non-union got. Ms. Kellar responded yes. Councilor Bemiss stated that this year's increase would be the same as the non-union. Vice Chair Radke stated that she's asking for more. Councilor Bemiss clarified in theory; in practice. Vice Chair Radke stated that what she was requesting was more than was proposed for non-union, which was 5.5%. She wanted to know what the requested percentage was and Councilor Gilbert responded 13%.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if they had to make that decision now. Mr. Sawyer stated the person was here to answer any questions; they wouldn't be at the next meeting necessarily although he encouraged all Department Heads to attend the November, December, and January meetings for that reason.

Councilor Bemiss didn't want to leave Ms. Kellar hanging. She appreciated everything she did, but she thought in best practice, they as a town needed to stay within their own guidelines for salary increases.

Mr. Sawyer stated that they bring adjustments to the Council; they do data research and present reasons to adjust ranges and/or positions for people. It could be done in a position like this; it didn't have to stay the same as everyone else.

Ms. Kellar stated that when she picked that number, it's higher on the spreadsheet she gave them. She just recently got the data for that. One of the other town clerks in the State put together a survey; a bunch of raw data. She'd been pouring over it for days.

Vice Chair Radke may side with Councilor Bemiss. It's treated the same as an employee as far as increases. To take someone out singly, she didn't know. She felt whatever the employees get, the elected official should get. She always said that in the 10 years she was there. If they wanted to change that, she was not in support of it.

Councilor Strand was curious to hear the Councilors' general opinion, because this was new territory for him. He didn't know if it was legal or appropriate regarding a performance review or description. Regardless of the outcome, whatever the Council decided, he wanted to know if Ms. Kellar would be open to some sort of Council generated metrics to do a performance review in future years. Councilor Thomas stated that she was an elected official. Vice Chair Radke stated that their Charter dictates that they set compensation. Councilor Thomas stated that they couldn't do performance reviews. Vice Chair Radke agreed. Councilor Strand stated that it was between a rock and a hard place, because the decision would become arbitrary. Councilor Bemiss stated that she brought it up to the Secretary of State.

Ms. Kellar stated that they didn't get the other chart that she saw that gave the Town Clerk a very high average rate. It wasn't fair, because smaller towns were in there. She tried to give them some numbers that were closest to what Bedford was. Unfortunately she wasn't able to get in contact with the Keene Town Clerk. Where she didn't do motor vehicles, she had to look at what the cities were doing. Councilor Strand stated that they could assume that Keene was high. He could see both sides of it. He agreed with Councilor Bemiss that to deviate from the standard practice would be exceptional, but he also saw the market data, so he didn't think it was an unreasonable request. If you're asking for 13% and the norm was 5.5%, he would potentially be willing to support a meet in the middle and do 10%, but he would defer to his fellow Councilors.

Councilor Thomas stated that they could look at other towns and some Councilors make more than they do, but they ran for election based on what the number was in this town.

Chairman Carter wanted to know if they were saying that her increase would be the same as non-union at 5.5%. Vice Chair Radke stated it was a recommendation; they didn't know that was a firm number. She would say whatever the non-unions get, the Town Clerk should get. It's being proposed at 5.5%, but they didn't know if that was a solid number. She would say whatever non-unions get. Chairman Carter stated that her salary could increase by 5.5% and Vice Chair Radke responded yes. Councilor Thomas stated that the number in the budget books was 13%, so they would take this year's budget and multiply it by 1.055. Chairman Carter stated that technically that \$7,600 wouldn't be correct if it was 13%. She was asking for 13%, but she could possibly be getting 5.5%. Councilor Thomas stated that they were talking about potentially lowering what was in the budget, which was at 13%, down to a 5.5% increase.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if anyone wanted to make a motion. Councilor Gilbert didn't think they needed to make motions in these meetings. The motion came in December when they vote on the total budget. Mr. Sawyer stated that historically they've made motions during the workshop if they knew what they wanted to do then confirm them at a later meeting. Councilor Thomas thought it was easier for them to adjust the budget as they go. Mr. Sawyer stated that if the Chair said there was consensus to make

that change, that's good enough for him if it was good enough for them. It's up to the Chair. Vice Chair Radke wanted to know if they wanted to accept the 13% or do what non-unions do. Mr. Sawyer stated that what was in the budget was 13%. It's a motion or consensus to change what's in the budget.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to make a consensus to make it consistent with the pay scale raises of the rest of the non-union employees. Councilor Thomas stated that she was good with that.

Councilor Greazzo thought the process was disjointed. It was dysfunctional to be setting the rate for any elected position. It should be something that the voters did when they elect that person. He understood that the Charter called out that they set the rate, but he didn't think they should be setting the rate every year. He thought it should be tied to the position. This was the position you were elected at for this pay rate and for this period of time. Councilor Thomas stated that for three years they wouldn't get a raise. Councilor Greazzo stated that they could add that into the measure. They vote for this person for this much money and they get such and such raise each year for the three years that they're there. He didn't think it was appropriate for elected officials to be voting on the elected official's salary. Usually you vote for what the next election cycle salary would be. You didn't vote for your own; you didn't vote for other people's. You say this is what it would be for the next election. Councilor Greazzo stated that it wasn't about the person; it was about the position and the people that elect it get to choose. He understood that they could propose and then it could be voted on, but typically when somebody was already in office and it's on a ballot, it passes or fails and then she wouldn't get any. He would rather see it tied to the election of the Town Clerk at the time the Town Clerk was elected. What the salary range would be, and what the pay steps would be for that period of time for that term. Councilor Bemiss thought that was a great idea. Councilor Greazzo stated rather than them sitting there deciding 'did they do good' or 'did they not do good', 'do they give them the raise of this' or 'do they give them that raise.' He didn't think it was their purview to do that. He thought it was the voters. They're charged with the ability to change it, but personally he would rather not have to do that. If they want to, feel free.

Councilor Strand pointed out that the election was just last year. Vice Chair Radke stated that the Charter says they set the compensation.

Councilor Thomas agreed wholeheartedly with what Councilor Greazzo was saying, however, she thought they should adopt that for the next election and this year do their standard procedure, which was give the same as non-union. Councilor Greazzo thought that was fair; he couldn't disagree with that. Councilor Thomas stated that people run on what they think was going to happen. Councilor Strand stated that the election was just this last cycle. Councilor Thomas stated that it set the base and traditionally they'd given the same as the non-union employees, so she thought until the next election and it could be stated differently, they continue that. That's how she could justify what Councilor Greazzo said. Councilor Strand agreed with Councilor Greazzo. He would just hate to see the Town Clerk stuck for three years.

Councilor Bemiss stated that she just put that on their agenda for the retreat.

There was consensus to give the Town Clerk the non-union raises.

Mr. Sawyer stated that they would present that in the summary for their November meeting that reduces the budget line including FICA, Medicare, and Retirement System.

Councilor Greazzo appreciated that, because if that's the standard practice, then that's what they should stick with until the next election.

Councilor Bemiss stated that they do a lot of postage and printing and the statute for the dog licensing said that it could all be done online; she wanted to know if they ever looked into that. Ms. Kellar stated that when they do online licensing, they still had to mail out the tag. The rabies had to be up to date to renew online, but they're still mailing out the tag. Councilor Bemiss stated that she was just trying to reduce costs.

Ms. Kellar stated that printing for last year got blown out of the water because of the number of pages for the March ballot.

Public Works – Jeff Foote, DPW Director

- Facilities – Peter Barbuto, Facilities Manager

Water – increased, adding Pennichuck to the Town Office Building.

Maintenance Services (Cleaning) – slight increase

Maintenance Contracts – largest increase, includes Cloud services for the new door access system, added items for BCTV: snowplowing, landscaping, generator, septic

Mr. Sawyer explained that all of the outside pieces for facilities maintenance of the BCTV building, which used to be covered in the BCTV budget had been moved to Facilities Maintenance, because Mr. Barbuto was overseeing those contracts and doing that work. It didn't make sense to have the invoices going to BCTV to pay for them. They'll see the same reduction in the BCTV budget with an additional increase from the Enterprise Fund, BCTV, to pay for those being done in the general fund. It's a complete wash. They're putting it in the right budget, so the person overseeing the work was the one approving the invoices.

Mr. Barbuto stated that they tried to do as level a budget as much as they could. The maintenance costs were fixed costs with life safety items that they had to do. There were slight increases across the board.

Vice Chair Radke stated that under Maintenance Contracts for the Safety Complex there was \$9,600 for the snowplowing. She thought they talked about that and removed last year. Mr. Foote stated that it was added last year. Mr. Barbuto stated that they took over the snowplowing for the Fire Department, because they weren't doing anymore.

- Administration – Denise Nobert, Business Manager

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Councilor Gilbert stated that the regular wages went down by \$47.9K and part-time wages went up by \$34.6K. Mr. Sawyer stated that they reclassified a position that was full-time into a part-time position. It had been filled as part-time for several years, so they stopped over budgeting for a position that wasn't being used as a full-time position.

- Local Road Maintenance

Longevity – increase

Road Maintenance Program – getting it to \$2M, they've been underfunding it for years

Mr. Foote stated that the road bonds had matured, and the program had matured. They dropped a payment last year. Mr. Sawyer stated that the TIF drops off in 2024, and the next road bond was the following year, 2025. Mr. Foote stated that they needed to get to that \$2M and the way inflationary measures were going, in 2025 and 2026 they'll probably need to get it to \$2.5M.

Councilor Gilbert stated that the reason they needed to do this was because they just built all those roads, so they want to maintain them as they go forward and not just let them sit there. Mr. Foote stated that over the past 20 years between developer offsite improvements, Town local road maintenance and bonds, the Town probably spent \$100M. They just finished a road inventory. They had someone come in and drive all of the roads to determine the condition of the roads. They should be very proud. The company did about 50 of those in NH and MA over the last couple of years, and there was only one other community in MA that had a higher PCI (Pavement Condition Index) than Bedford. They need to maintain that otherwise they would be back in the road construction business versus the road maintenance business. Councilor Gilbert stated that he wanted to put it on camera that this was preventive maintenance that's going forward. They've already spent the money to do it; they need to upkeep it.

Chairman Carter wanted to know where they were on the striping of the roads. Mr. Foote stated that in 2022, they didn't stripe any roads in Town. In 2023, they had a contractor, but it's been a tug of war getting them here. They're probably going to let that contract out to bid next year. All of South River Road was complete; the yellow lines were complete. They had a few roads that they didn't get the fog line in. They're mindful of it, but they're probably not going to get all of the roads done. Chairman Carter stated that with the rash of accidents on the connector roads with New Boston that he's seen, that was a concern. People weren't seeing 'Stop Ahead' and there had been accidents up and down New Boston Road due to people not stopping. Mr. Foote thought it was more of inattention. He had reviewed several of the intersections and most of them it was either a signalized intersection or if it was a stop condition, they had been introducing 'Stop Ahead' signs. He believed that their crews had painted all of the Stop bars. He wasn't sure if it was a center line, fog line, or edge line issue. If they look at the accident reports on a lot of them, it was inattention, cell phones, substance issues, etc. Chairman Carter stated that on McAllister they painted the 'Stop', but they never finished the 'Ahead'. Mr. Foote stated that McAllister was a long-standing issue. They're going to hire an arborist to review the vegetation along the stone wall. That person hadn't come in yet to identify what was an acceptable alternative with that vegetation. They're working on it, they understand it, but if you get to that intersection, you might have to nose out beyond the Stop bar, but if you stop and look to the left, there was sight distance there. Chairman Carter stated that he knew they were working on it. He was in that intersection a half dozen times a day, and he's been able to maneuver and made sure he was able to get out safely.

Councilor Greazzo thought they had done a fantastic job keeping up with what needed to be painted. He thought he had done a great job maintaining and ensuring that the places that needed to be painted were very visible.

Councilor Strand wanted to know if it was safe to characterize an investment in road maintenance yielded a very strong long-term return on investment compared to the cost of construction. Mr. Foote responded yes. It extended the life of the infrastructure. It was probably a 10 or 20 times savings. Councilor Strand wanted to know if he had noticed any changes or loosening in the market in terms of ability to get multiple bids on a project versus trying to chase vendors. Mr. Foote stated that equipment was always an issue, but when they let a bid out on their projects, they get 2-4 quality bids. They work with some of the best contractors in the State. They had two fantastic contractors working in Town right now. Councilor Strand clarified that he was getting multiple bids on most things he put out and Mr. Foote responded yes. Councilor Strand wanted to know if he thought the longevity bonus as proposed in the Town Manager's budget would be affective in terms of retention and decreasing turnover. Mr. Foote stated that when he first heard about it, as someone who had been there for 20+ years, it made him want to get up and go in and really appreciate working for Bedford more than he already did. This was a great community, but they also had a lot of very good employees. If they want stability, if they want institutional knowledge when somebody picked up the phone, they needed to have people that had been there. It saved so much time. The hiring process was so expensive. When he heard about that he was so encouraged and so proud to be there. He thought it was great.

- Highway

Mr. Foote stated that there was a lot of discussion about hiring new employees. The last time they had a new hire at the Highway garage was about 5 years ago; an additional equipment operator and an additional truck driver. One was funded entirely by the enterprise fund for the sewer. The other was half paid for by the enterprise fund. Over the last 5 years they had hired one half of a full-time employee to account for their MS4 program, which they had to do to satisfy the EPA's permit. The other person they hired part-time was at the Transfer Station and they've seen the merits of that. This year he was asking for a new employee as a Roads Foreman and also a mechanic's position; the Town Manager modified that request. Since they were always struggling to find truck drivers, it was modified to have one of those truck drivers and make it a working foreman position and at some point come back and add another truck driver in following years. The proposal was straight out of what was recommended when the UNH Carsey School of Public Policy came in and performed a review of the Department 5 years ago and they recommended it. They interviewed all of the employees and they said they really needed somebody in that position, so they could have someone working with the crews versus the scattered approach they had. They would have someone dedicated and it would allow the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to do more traditional duties versus scheduling a crew every day. They would still be part of it, but it was a big relief. It was long overdue. They recommended 5 years ago that they have 2 of those positions. The 2nd position at Highway was to add a mechanic. As part of their asset management program, he has them track what they're working on. About half of the time, the 2 mechanics they have were working on vehicles unrelated to Public Works; Police, Fire, Assessing. DPW vehicles were being worked on only half of what they needed to satisfy

the need. They looked at Hudson and Londonderry, and they had 2 full-time mechanics but they only supported Public Works. Bedford had 2 full-time mechanics and supported the entire community. This was a need. To try and save money they became a State inspection. They eliminated the need for DPW to have to follow Police or other vehicles to Goffstown or somewhere else. They were realizing a little more cost and effort, but was cost avoidance like a lot of things they do. They hadn't asked for anybody in 5 years. On a daily basis they are asked to do more and more for the community. They love to do it, but they need more help.

Councilor Bemiss mentioned other communities having more staff and wanted to know if he knew the number of vehicles served per community. She wanted to know how many vehicles they had in Bedford between DPW, Fire, etc. that they were doing and how did that compare to somewhere else. Ms. Nobert stated that she didn't have the data for the other communities, but a rough estimate of what they had in Bedford was Planning (1), Assessing (2), Public Works including the Transfer Station (64), Police (29), and Fire (24); that came out to 120. Mr. Foote stated that they didn't ask that question of other communities, but if they were comparable in size, Hudson and Londonderry, he couldn't imagine there were big swings one way or the other. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know what kind of equipment they needed to get for the State inspection and was it going to need to be refurbished every year. Mr. Foote stated that there was a maintenance fee associated with it for having the machine that prints the stickers and hooks up to the exhaust to check emissions. The total for that was about \$4K a year. It included printing the stickers for all of the vehicles and for the diagnostic as well. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if they still had to pay the State fee for inspecting it. Mr. Foote responded no, those days were over.

Councilor Strand mentioned the potential need for cold storage and wanted to know if any of the maintenance related costs could be decreased long-term by having all of the vehicles covered and to what degree it was relevant. Mr. Foote responded 100%. The facility up there was in need of an upgrade and expansion. He thought any time they could put a vehicle in a controlled environment they were going to get more longevity out of it. Most years they purchase 2 six-wheeled trucks and the cost of those with all of the accoutrements for winter maintenance was about \$500K. They were on a 7-year cycle with those trucks. If they were in a secure controlled climate building that had heat, so they could stage for operations the night before they know they're getting a snowstorm, there were a whole host of reasons. He had sent the Council a staff report on that in 2018 and 2019. Absolutely 100% they could be getting more life out of their equipment if it was stored in a controlled environment. Councilor Strand wanted to confirm that that consideration wasn't included in the capital reserve deposit and there was no separate capital reserve account for facilities for DPW. Mr. Sawyer stated that there were some basic capital reserves for the Highway garage for roof replacement, siding replacement and things like that. There was no several million dollar capital proposal based on previous Council decisions to move forward with just the Police and Fire stations at this time.

Councilor Bemiss mentioned the State inspection again and he had mentioned \$5K, but the Town Manager was recommending \$9k. Mr. Sawyer stated the note says they moved it from Admin to Highway where it was being spent. The \$4K for the Permalink subscription they moved from Admin. Ms. Nobert stated that Permalink was for their

online permitting system. It was previously budgeted for under Administration, but the Town Manager decided that it should be under Highway.

Mr. Sawyer wanted to stress that the 2 dump trucks were not in the budget. He took those out of the budget and was proposing that they use year-end funds to purchase those. If the Council had concerns with that, they would be asking them to put \$560K into the budget. Based on some recent information they may tweak the request and not fully use year-end funds. There was going to be some additional Highway funds coming to them in November that they may be able to reduce the amount being taken from year-end funds. That would be before them next week to discuss further. Mr. Foote stated that was something they traditionally do and had been doing it for years; whether it's a State grant or year-end monies. Mr. Sawyer stated that last year there was additional SB401 that funded their Highway vehicles, so they didn't have them in the budget, because they were able to use those additional funds.

Vice Chair Radke stated that they got a Highway Block grant and this was an additional one. They were also getting a bridge one. Mr. Sawyer stated as they did last year.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if they rented the street sweeper and if that was what the \$42K was for. Mr. Foote responded no, that was the capital deposit. Councilor Thomas stated that it was in the capital reserves. Councilor Gilbert stated that it was a capital reserve deposit to buy it. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know how often they used the sweeper. Mr. Foote thought next year they should be targeting to purchase it, in 2024. When he was at the APWA conference, they had a symposium on electric vehicles. He would like to push that out another year or two. He thought they were that close with the technology in having a deliverable, utilizing an electric sweeper. He thought it was a 2025/2026 possibility. Their current one was about 10 years old. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know how many hours a year they used it. She wanted to know if there was any way as a community they could equipment share with other communities. Mr. Foote stated that piece of equipment had a lot of moving parts and he would not be interested in sharing that with anybody, because of the costly maintenance that could occur. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if it was something they could rent. Mr. Foote stated that he wouldn't recommend it. Mr. Sawyer stated that the sweeper went out after the winter. This year they had an employee that came in at 3:30 AM every day. Mr. Foote stated that he used to work from 2 or 3 AM until noontime, a long time on South River Road, all summer long, so they wouldn't be interrupting traffic. Mr. Sawyer stated that they were required to sweep the streets and report the amount of tonnage as part of their stormwater permit with the EPA. Mr. Foote stated that the sweeper was a 2014 model year. They were going to try and stretch that out and save more money. Electric sweepers were far more expensive, but there were a lot of Federal grants related to those and they wanted to exercise that option. Mr. Sawyer stated that the biggest hitch they've heard was they needed to keep it in a heated building make the batteries last. Mr. Foote stated that he learned they didn't want to operate them when it's colder than 50° and the batteries didn't like hills.

- Winter Maintenance

Salt – \$7,250, down \$8 from the previous year

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if they were going to do brine. Mr. Foote stated that with the purchase of those two trucks, they would have 8 vehicles that had that capability. Their goal wasn't to brine, their goal was to wet the chloride when it was on the spreader so when they wet it, it stuck on the street and didn't disperse to the side of the road. He had requested that they look into the price of a tank and start doing that, so they could load the vehicles with that product. At this point he wasn't sold on the brine; it seemed to be a lot of work. They thought it was more efficient and better for the environment to use less chloride and apply it in a better manner than most people did. Councilor Greazzo thought that was a good approach and worth exploring.

Councilor Strand wanted to know the value of brine. Councilor Greazzo stated that it was a pretreatment that helped to clear the road. It also helped to dissipate some of the snow early on when they start plowing and then they could add salt later. Mr. Foote stated that they had been introducing the apparatus on the trucks for 3 years and this would be the 4th year. It was difficult to go through that exercise and prepare for it when they only have 1-3 trucks. When they get 4 trucks they would introduce it.

Councilor Bemiss stated that seasonal wages had doubled from \$8K to \$16K. Mr. Foote thought they reduced some of the on-call vehicles. Ms. Nobert stated that Equipment Rentals and Leasing in 2023 was \$80K and for 2024, the request was \$30K. Mr. Sawyer stated that they were trying to find people who would plow snow. It had been very hard, so this was a new approach to try and do that. They've had two people sign up to do it, which was 2 more than they had last year.

- Traffic control – decreased, electrical costs based on previous consumption.
- Transfer Station –

Tipping Fees – reduced by the Town Manager

Mr. Foote stated that as of September, MSW was down 700 tons for the year and thought that was the reason it was reduced. Mr. Sawyer stated that he proposed to level fund it based on what they'd seen this year. They did a significant increase for 2023 based on the new contract. They needed to extend the contract going forward based on the not yet done changes to compactors and so forth, so there was some risk there, but it felt like they could level fund that.

Vice Chair Radke thought having the weigh station at the beginning as they drive in had deterred a lot of people going in without good reason to dump their stuff. Mr. Foote stated that that was one of the purposes of the whole exercise. In 2017, their revenue at the Transfer Station was roughly \$100K and last year it was \$350K/\$375K. That paid for itself. Not only were they keeping material out, they were keeping undesirable waste out. Mr. Sawyer stated that in 2022, it was just under \$354K. In 2023 they budgeted \$245K. Under Revenue they were proposing a \$5K increase to \$250K for disposal fees.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know when they anticipated the electric compactors going in and Mr. Foote stated about 5 minutes after the solar went online was his goal. The approved Eversource design was for 750kW and they've increase that to 1MW. Instead of just performing a short review on the 1MW option, it was going to be an extended effort.

They could say they want the 750kW and move forward, but the consensus was they wanted to look at the alternative and it was going to cost them another \$10K in review fees minimum, and it could be another 6 months or more before they make a determination if there was any additional infrastructure needed between the Transfer Station and the switching station in Manchester. Once they got to that point, and they've awarded the contract to ReVision, they would be aggressive about the building improvements and the electrification of the trash compaction. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if there would be any possibility they would lose any of their funding by pushing it out further. Mr. Foote stated that it was all based on the Federal government and IRS 30%. Mr. Sawyer wanted to know if she was talking about the \$500K earmarked that they already get. Councilor Bemiss responded no, any rebates. Mr. Sawyer thought they were so ingrained at this point that as long as they make a decision next year they would be okay. Mr. Foote stated that they had been promised that the 3-phase power would be to the toe of the capped landfill by December 31st. Eversource stepped up and they were going to complete the project. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if the 3-phase power was there, what was preventing the electricity from coming out if they got the solar in. Mr. Foote stated that when they get the 3-phase power in, his goal was to have the capped landfill produce the power they would need to compact the trash. As part of that they needed to put the feed behind the meter. Councilor Bemiss stated that she wasn't understanding where the 750kW versus the 1MW; it looked like all of the infrastructure was there. Mr. Sawyer stated that they wanted the solar to offset the cost of the electrical compaction. They weren't budgeting for that increased electricity usage. Councilor Greazzo thought that the infrastructure was there and Councilor Bemiss wanted to know what difference it made if it was 750kW or 1MW and Councilor Bemiss responded yes. Councilor Greazzo thought it was the grid being able to absorb it at their transformer station in Manchester.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if it would be beneficial to get compactors ahead of having it powered by the solar to offset the cost of the equipment that was compacting the trash now. Mr. Foote stated that they weren't including any capital reserve equipment in the next 2 years. The schedule wasn't going to change. If they go through the exercise to assess the 1MW option, it was maximum 6 to 8 month differential to wait for them to go through to determine that. They had a plan and he thought they were in the same lane. They just needed to be careful and do their due diligence.

- Field Maintenance

Mr. Foote stated that they were moving monies from Recreation to Field Maintenance, because they're a little bit better at managing buildings and equipment than Recreation. Mr. Sawyer stated that specifically it was the pool. All those costs were in the budget under the pool and now the pool was just going to be for the employees, lifeguards; all the maintenance would be under the responsibility of the team whose been doing the work and responsible for it.

Mr. Sawyer stated that they should have talked about this under Highway, but wanted to remind everybody that there was \$5K additional in the budget for the mowing of the grass on either side of the sidewalk along Route 101 between Wallace Road and Constitution Drive. He thought it was money well spent on the beautification of the community. It was the #1 complaint his office got this year. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know the cost to

mulch it instead of mowing it; keep the grass away completely. Mr. Sawyer stated that it wouldn't keep the weeds out. Councilor Greazzo thought some alternative to the grass and wanted to know if they could put a vegetative barrier and some gravel. Mowing every year for the sake of mowing drives him crazy when they do it on the highway. Mr. Foote thought it was done, because it was the least costly option on it. If you put stones they get cast when the plow hits it. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if there was another type of grass to keep the tall grass away.

- Sewer Enterprise Fund – Jerome Spooner, Environmental Coordinator

Equipment Repair – increased \$1K, new tires for the vac truck.

Mr. Foote reminded everyone that the Sewer Enterprise Fund was solely funded through user fees of those that had municipal sewer.

Councilor Bemiss stated that prior to revising their sewer fee schedule earlier this year, they were running at a loss. Mr. Foote stated that it was unsustainable. It's stable and it would be stable for a long time. There was a plan in place for capital improvements.

Councilor Bemiss thought they breezed through the addition of new staff and didn't know if they needed to have a discussion about that. Councilor Gilbert stated that they talked about it. Vice Chair stated that there were other new positions as well and maybe they should talk about them all at the same time. Mr. Sawyer stated that the experts were here now if they had questions.

Councilor Strand wanted to know if he believed all his new position requests/staffing spend was necessary. Mr. Foote stated that it was and long overdue; yes 100%.

Mr. Sawyer stated that he should have brought it up under Facilities, but there were three new capital reserves proposed: Town Hall, BCTV, and Library for facilities. He wanted to make them aware that they were part of the budget proposed. On the Library they were also proposing to close out three existing accounts that were there: Parking lot, septic system, and carpet. At Town Meeting the voters would have to vote to close those out and transfer those funds into the new Library fund. As long as there was support for that; that's what was proposed in the budget.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know the intent of the capital reserve for Town Hall. Councilor Gilbert stated that it needed a lot of work. Mr. Sawyer disagreed that it needed a lot of work. They got a report on the work that had been done, but there was work that would need to be done down the road. They had capital reserves for the Safety Complex and the Town Office; if the roof needed to be replaced or the furnace went, they had the reserves to be able to do that work. It would be for something like replacing the flooring in Town Hall. The Town Hall one was proposed at \$10K. If you put \$10K away for 10 years, you could replace the roof. Councilor Strand stated that if they end up discussing those capital reserves further, he thought it made sense to think about having a DPW Facilities capital reserve. Mr. Sawyer stated that it was up to the Council if they wanted to have an additional capital reserve. They have a Highway Garage capital reserve. He thought Councilor Strand was talking about funding it at a much higher level for replacement of that facility.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know how those capital reserve accounts would change if they move to SB2. Mr. Sawyer stated that the process change would be that it would be voted on as a separate warrant article or number of warrant articles. That would be up to the Council. They had historically proposed one capital reserve warrant article that Town Meeting voted on and all of the items were listed so they could be debated and changed and modified by the voters. If they change to official ballot voting where they could only vote on the bottom line essentially, they couldn't have that discussion in a ballot box. The Council may choose to not put them all together as one. The Council may say that the Fire truck was really needed so they're going to call that out and really support that one and hope the rest pass. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if that decision would be made on a yearly basis and Mr. Sawyer responded yes. Councilor Strand wanted to clarify that it would be at the discretion of the Council if they wanted to itemize or do one lump set and Mr. Sawyer stated that was correct. Something like where they're proposing to close a capital reserve would have to be a separate vote by itself. Vice Chair Radke stated if you add a new; that had to be a separate one. They could also be discussed at the Deliberative Session; just like the School's.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know the fund balance on the capital reserve for the Highway garage. Mr. Foote responded \$50K. Mr. Sawyer stated \$82,610

IT – Nate Gagne, IT Systems Manager

Mr. Gagne stated that the IT budget had gone up. He wanted to focus on how Bedford budgeted for IT versus other communities. Bedford seemed to be the exception where the IT Department handled contracts for other departments' services. They're all encapsulated in the IT budget. If he was to assign a department to own particular pieces of technology, for example MUNIS. If he looked at another town it would be under the Finance department, CSI would be Police Department and so on. IT was really responsible for about 60% of the entire budget excluding personnel. IT spend was about \$430K, excluding personnel; Finance at about \$125K, and Police at \$105K. Those were by far the three largest areas. They saw a big increase in certain services. IT encapsulates every department and they really shouldn't be overlooking that. They should start seeing a shift more towards those subscription based services where the costs were more predictable, more fixed. He knows for every employee, what it costs to get the email, Office subscription, backup their data.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to clarify that all of the software licenses were under IT and Mr. Gagne responded virtually all of them. If a department was going to implement a new technology or service, they ask that department to pay for the product or service, and the first year of maintenance. That helps with the accurate representation of how departments were spending funds. In year 2, it goes under IT. They had some new adds this year and that was one of the reasons for the increases.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to know what on-call stipend was. Mr. Gagne stated that Daniel (Morris) was a non-exempt employee and when he had on-call shifts, he got \$100 a week to be on-call. They were requesting an increase this year, because he's willing to pick up more shifts. He himself didn't get that stipend as a manager. The increase represented

worst case scenario. If he picked up all 52 weeks instead of just 26. He's entitled to his vacation when he didn't want to cover weeks, and that was fine.

Councilor Thomas wanted an explanation about the Machinery and Equipment line, because it just about doubled. Mr. Gagne explained that the mobile data terminals in each Police cruiser, and they have 12 of them, were expensive; about \$5K a piece. The biggest issue with those was they're touchscreen and the touchscreens start to fail. They were budgeting to replace up to 4 depending on cost. Because they're so expensive, they try to maximize their life without compromising. Mr. Sawyer stated that they were used 24 hours a day. Mr. Gagne responded yes. Councilor Strand wanted to know what percentage of the increase was directly tied to those units. Mr. Gagne responded \$20K. He budgeted for 4 at \$5K a piece.

Chairman Carter thanked Mr. Gagne for his time last week. Their conversation led to a spreadsheet on spending their money; which departments, which contracts. Mr. Gagne sent him a spreadsheet showing where each dollar was going for each department.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know in their software platforms if they had capability for scheduling all of the meeting rooms in Town and Mr. Gagne responded yes. Some meeting rooms utilize it such as the Town Office conference room. Councilor Bemiss wanted to nominate herself to start a subcommittee. Mr. Sawyer wanted to know if she was talking about the public being able to schedule and Councilor Bemiss responded no. She would like the public to see what was available and what the room capability size was. Mr. Sawyer responded that that's not what they currently had. Mr. Gagne thought she was talking about using it as a member of the Town's network. Mr. Sawyer stated that they didn't make all of their rooms available to the public.

Councilor Bemiss mentioned website design and wanted to know if they had any capability of improving. Mr. Gagne responded yes. They kicked that off this year. It was something that was included in their contract with Civic Plus for a redesign. It was really a matter of time and resources in getting that done. Mr. Sawyer stated and understanding what the request was to have changed. Mr. Gagne stated that it was a facelift; it was not new content. The content that was there was unchanged. They would probably ask departments to go through and do some housekeeping. They didn't update content; it was a graphical overhaul.

BCTV – Bill Jennings, BCTV-WBNH Station Manager

Mr. Jennings stated that they weren't funded by taxes; they were funded by a franchise agreement, which was a 10-year agreement, which they had with Comcast. That agreement went into effect on December 1, 2018 and it expires December 1, 2028.

Mr. Jennings stated that their revenues came from franchise fees (5%) and capital funding. The capital funding was negotiated in the agreement with Comcast for \$250K additional dollars above the franchise fees, which was distributed to them as a payment annually at \$25K per year. Combining those fees and the capital funding, they were tracking at about \$517K in projected revenue. Their budget was \$498k, which was flat year to year. They budget below their projected revenues to remain flexible. They're tracking flat, but they're down 9%. That 9% was \$11K, so it wasn't a major impact. What

kept them in business was the amount of people that subscribe and there were always annual increases. They were still operating efficiently with a workable budget. He reminded the people at home that they didn't use any tax dollars. It was strictly to support the BCTV building, staff, and equipment. It was strictly through the enterprise fund, which was a franchise agreement and capital funding.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to clarify that all of the staff was paid by that; nothing was paid by taxation. Mr. Jennings stated that they had contractors, full-time, part-time, and every single penny came from franchise fees.

Councilor Strand stated that he very much appreciated that even with the payment that BCTV was making to the Town for facilities, including merit and longevity, he still ran a flat budget and that was pretty impressive.

Mr. Jennings stated that as they move forward and feel the pressures, they had to take a look at different line items and how to work; personnel costs were their highest and well-deserved for the personnel that were there. They watch it closely and they had to.

Vice Chair Radke stated that their next budget workshop was November 15th at 5:00 PM and will include Police, Finance, Town Manage, and Town Council budgets.

Mr. Sawyer noted that as part of those budgets, they would be talking about the Energy Commission, Legal, NHMA, Unallocated Reserve, Insurance, and Long-term debt. Those all fall under those categories that weren't in any of the departments.

Vice Chair Radke wanted to know how many new positions were approved by those Councils in the last five years; in each department, for next week's workshop.

MOTION to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Strand. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

The budget workshop ended at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Boufford