

MINUTES
Selectboard Budget Work Session
Tuesday, January 5, 2021, 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Jessica James, Chris Campbell, Red Muir and Clark Hinsdale. James Benoit joined at 5:25 p.m.

Town Employees present: Deb Healey, Treasurer, Pam Cousino, Town Clerk

1. Open Meeting

5:04 pm – Jessica James opened the meeting.

2. Finalize FY2021/22 budget for town meeting

Deb Healey spoke about a small change down in the assistant town clerk line item to reflect the actual amount. Clark asked about the delinquent tax collector figure. Deb explained that it is based on probable hours that would be spent, at \$25.00 per hour. This will be an article to be voted on at town meeting, but it is also listed in the budget. This money comes from the interest and penalty that is collected each year, (\$36,000 was collected last year). Clark mentioned that it makes sense to pay someone this way, not like in the past when the clerk and treasurer were paid via fees.

Jim asked why the routine maintenance was increased and the response was that the window cleaning will need to be done this summer. It has been a couple of years since they were cleaned. Deb mentioned that the electricity went down some because of the town solar panels which are helping lower our bill.

It was then suggested by Jim that the highway maintenance expense account (5330-68) should split out the tire cost.

Deb then noted that some of the line items under Employee Benefits/Insurance were lowered because of an error in her spreadsheet.

Jim questioned the fact that the Vergennes Fire Department contract was going up \$4100. A review of calls provided by the VFD showed Ferrisburgh had half of the number of calls that Vergennes had (Ferrisburgh calls were 24% versus Vergennes at 48%). Jim stated he sincerely respects and appreciates the first responders but feels that this is poor business for the Town. He feels that line item should be level funded and Chris agreed. Clark mentioned that the West Ferrisburgh lake shore properties are selling for more than their assessment, and since property value is how Vergennes assesses what Ferrisburgh pays, our bill may continue to rise. Clark hopes that level funding this year will prompt a useful discussion with Vergennes on how funding should be handled in the future.

3. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Clark Hinsdale and seconded by Red Muir. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Pam Cousino, Town Clerk