

**MINUTES**  
**Selectboard Budget Work Session**  
**Tuesday, December 15, 2020, 5:00 p.m.**

Members present: Jessica James, Jim Benoit, Chris Campbell, Red Muir and Clark Hinsdale

Town Employees present: Deb Healey, Treasurer, John Bull, Road Foreman

Visitors present: Catharine Hays, Marsha Hoffman, Silas Towler

**1. Open Meeting**

5:10 pm – Jessica James opened the meeting.

**2. Discussions with**

**a) John Bull**

Except for the \$4500 request for the ash trees his budget is \$10,000 less than last year. Salt prices dropped a bit and he was able to lower the salt line item by \$5,000. Need to replace a culvert on Walker Road that will cost \$10,000. Regarding the stormwater work needed for the roads, many of them have already been repaired and he is expecting funding next year for another project. John believes that \$4500 for the ash trees should be a good start, but he would like to rename it the tree maintenance fund, since there are other trees in town such as dead trees that will need to be taken care of.

Equipment is still the main issue we need to address. The proposed capital budget estimated a yearly expenditure of \$113,500.00 per year. This last year we only had a budget of \$85,000.00. As pointed out in that plan, failure to stick with our equipment replacement plan is creating some financial issues for the future. If we start funding the \$113,500.00 this year, we are projecting a deficit of \$101,419.00 for the year 2026. At this rate it would be 2030 before we reached a positive balance. John suggested that we outright purchase some of the smaller dollar items with the money in the contingency fund. For example, they have an equipment trailer that can't be inspected and needs to be replaced.

He recommended that we replace our 2010 International this year. It is becoming painfully apparent that 10 years is the life span of a truck and plow equipment before it becomes a major repair issue. He was told that 2021 prices should remain the same for budget purposes. The total truck and equipment cost will be \$220,000.00. He would hope for a trade value of at least \$30,000.00 so we would need to ask to buy a truck for \$220,000.00 with a price not to exceed \$190,000.00 after trade. Jim Benoit spoke about the budget. The 2017 truck and the excavator will be paid for in this budget that we will be voting on and the Sister's property was paid off in the current budget cycle. He feels that we can work in the new payment without too much difficulty. Jim also feels that it is important not to use the equipment fund for down payments, so that it can grow to be used for the purchase of lower cost items.

There was a discussion regarding removal of the Ash trees and danger trees. It may be that they use a hybrid system of the road crew removing some of them and hiring a tree service to remove some of them.

**b) Catharine Hays, Bixby Memorial Free Library**

The Bixby Memorial Free Library new director, Catharine Hays spoke with the board. Curbside pick-up is available 5 days a week. The youth services librarian works on weekly packets for different areas and is helping to get all students a library card. They make sure they follow the science regarding the amount of time after books are returned before they are safe to hand out again. Trying to get some air purification units into the building so that the library employees and volunteers are safe. When the employees and volunteers can all work in the building, they can reach many more people. Red Muir asked about grants that they used and Catharine mentioned the Vermont Arts Council. Vermont Libraries are on top of the best information and are guiding the local libraries. 34% of Ferrisburgh residents have a library card. Marsha Hoffman mentioned that there was 50% turnover and they were able to get some PPP to keep the employees on. She felt that many of the ways that they do things with Covid-19 will continue after the pandemic is over. Silas Towler mentioned that there are 3 Ferrisburgh residents that are on the Bixby board, Marsha Hoffman is the treasurer, Pat Mayo and Silas.

**3. Continue Budget discussion**

A few minutes of further budget discussion ensued with no decisions made.

**4. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn by Red Muir and seconded by Chris Campbell. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Pam Cousino, Town Clerk