MINUTES

Town of Goshen BUDGET COMMITTEE Meeting January 21, 2025

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Present: Barbara Paronto, Chairperson (2025)
Ashley Cleary Haslam (2027)
Trish LaBossiere (2025)
Renee Frost (2027)
Doug Frost (2027)
Steve Belden (2026)
Robin Brigham (2026)
Bonnie Belden – School Board rep
Dianne Craig – Select Board rep

Absent: Alicia Baker (2025)
Ernie Dennis (2026)

Agenda: Review Departmental Budget Requests, Capital Reserve Accounts, and Warrant Articles for 2025

Barbara stated that at the January 20th meeting several questions had arisen and Dianne had offered to look into them and report back. Dianne stated that the Street Lighting line item covers three street lights, not the blinking traffic lights which are under control of the State. She noted that the church pays for the street light in front of the church. Dianne stated that the total requested for the Town's Operating Budget if $1,118.249, up $101,518 from 2024, not including Capital Reserve Requests which were up $58,000.

The Budget Committee continued its review of the budget request for Highway Operations. ShaeDel Simino, Road Agent, attended the meeting and was introduced to the Budget Committee.

	appropriated in 2024 budget	requested for 2025 budget	noted reasons for significant change
Highway Operations	$136,385	$150,100	wages, gravel, road maint.

Members of the Budget Committee asked Shae about the request to increase the Gravel line item from $18,000 to $23,565, when the gravel will be donated and funds are available in the Capital Reserve account. Shae explained that he would like to begin a program to re-build sections of gravel roads and hoped to keep the Capital Reserve account well-funded and available for emergency situations. If several roads wash out, as happened a few years ago, the Town must expend funds to make the repairs and then request reimbursement from FEMA.

Discussion was also held about the Road Maintenance and Repair line item. Shae explained that he wanted to purchase a calcium chloride sprayer/applicator at an estimated cost of $7,000. The remaining $1,000 would cover the cost to replace guardrails, street signs, etc. Further discussion was held about the Equipment Rental line item. While the Town's roller has been repaired to a functioning point, its reliability is in question. If the Town needs to rent a roller twice a year, the cost is $5,000. Presently, the cost to purchase a new or used roller is too high, but the Town will likely need to purchase a unit in the not too distant future.

The increase in the Culverts line item was to continue the program of culvert replacement. When Shae was hired the Board of Selectmen requested that he inventory every culvert in Town as to its location, material, and condition. Older culverts that have rusted out and some of which have collapsed are being replaced with the heavy plastic culverts.

It was suggested that purchase of the calcium sprayer applicator should not be included in the operating budget but the Board of Selectmen should add a Warrant Article for the appropriation of funds to purchase the unit.

At the end of the discussion, the requested Highway Operations budget had been reduced to $143,100, up $6,715 from 2024, as opposed to $13,715 as originally requested.

The Budget Committee also reviewed the Highway Capital Reserve requests:
Highway Truck and Heavy Equipment - $30,000, Paving - $30,000, Gravel - $18,000, Reconstruction of Roads - $25,000, and Bridge Maintenance - $60,000. Shae explained that he was trying to increase the Capital Reserve accounts so that he would be in a better position to maintain the Town's roads and replace aging equipment. Dianne explained that the State had approved $800,000+/- for Ball Park Road bridge but the Town must pay 20 percent ($160,000). The Bridge Maintenance Capital Reserve currently has a balance of $110,000.

The Budget Committee briefly reviewed the proposed Warrant Articles noting that an additional one – to purchase the Calcium Chloride sprayer tank/applicator for $8,000 – was being requested. Jamie Dow had indicated that should the Town vote at Town Meeting to increase the budget presented by the Budget Committee by more than 10 percent, DRA would eliminate certain items. Items eliminated are warrant articles, beginning with the last one adopted. Barbara pointed out that it was unlikely the voters would increase the Budget, especially by such a large margin, but the Committee opted to still request that the order of Warrant Articles be:

Plow/Dump Truck Lease - $26,060 - Final payment of the lease purchase.
Calcium Chloride sprayer tank/applicator - $8,000
Internet Bond - $51,155 – no amount to be raised from taxation
Offset Transfer Station - $35,000 – from Special Revenue Fund – not to be raised from taxation
Transfer Station Trash Canisters - $20,000 – from Special Revenue Fund – not from taxation
Discontinue Town Buildings & Property and Painting of Capital Reserve accounts – zero out balances

Barbara announced that the Budget Committee's next meeting would be January 30th, at which time the Committee would review the proposed budget as a whole and begin considering its recommendation to the voters.

Doug Frost moved, and Steve Belden seconded, a motion to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Barbara Paronto, Chair