

Fryeburg Budget Committee Minutes
February 28, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.
David & Doris Hastings Community Center

Budget Committee members present: Patrick Emery, Chiye Harper, Jim Tyrrell
Select Board members present: Tom Kingsbury, Tom Klinepeter, Richard Murray
Staff present: Katie Haley, Ruth Antonucci

Haley called the meeting to order and the Budget Committee members introduced themselves.

Tyrrell made a motion to nominate Emery as committee chair, which was seconded by Harper and passed unanimously.

Emery opened the floor for the presentation by Eastern Slope Regional Airport. Gene Bergoffen, Don Thibodeau and Allison Navia were present. Bergoffen noted that the airport had a good year and that the transient aircraft hangar is almost complete and the solar project is in permitting stages. He relayed that continued Town support is important and is requesting \$20,000 for the airport. Bergoffen reviewed the airport governance and the plans to shift management. As such, the airport has engaged Allison Navia to manage the airport. Navia will report to the executive board. The Eastern Slope Airport Authority will contract with Sanford, where Navia is the airport manager, for \$27,456 yearly. The new focus of the \$20,000 requested is to fund Navia's role.

Navia introduced herself and provided details on her background. Her goal is to make the airport self-sufficient and believes that it can be done, despite it being difficult for general aviation airports to do so. She will be tasked with standardizing and organizing policies and procedures which will help the airport run properly. Bergoffen reiterated the need for town contribution and support to make this happen.

Tyrrell noted that the taxes received from the airport help offset the request. There was discussion about the applicable taxes (leased hangars and excise). There was also discussion about the lease. Klinepeter noted that there is income from the solar, even while in the permitting stages. He also asked if the ARPA grants funds were incorporated into the budget; Bergoffen confirmed. Harper asked for a clarification on income and expenses.

There was a discussion about the need for professional management and the burden that other similar airports have on the towns. As an example, Navia noted that the Sanford airport was costing taxpayers \$150,000 per year when she began working there. It is now self-sustaining. There was continued discussion about the lease arrangement and the ramification of discontinuing the airport. The Town would be required to pay back 20 years of the funds received.

Emery closed the discussion on the airport budget request.

Haley reviewed the upcoming schedule of meetings. Haley then reviewed her suggested COLA raises for employees. She proposed a 6% raise, citing the need to retain and attract employees as well as dealing with increasing wages for all sectors of work. Harper would like to see larger raises. This was discussed. Kingsbury said that he supports 6% and perhaps more. There was discussion about mil rate impacts and impacts to other things like workers comp. Haley will run some estimates of the increased overall budget with expanded wage increases.

Haley reviewed the Civil Services budget. There were no comments.

Haley reviewed the Parks budget. There were questions about porta-potty locations and the recreation field maintenance.

Haley reviewed the Professional Services budget. She noted that she had just received notice that the town's attorney is retiring and that she may need to increase that budget line; while the actual hourly fees may be the same, it will take a new attorney more hours to become familiar with Fryeburg issues. Haley also outlined new AxisGIS mapping software that is being considered.

Haley reviewed the General Assistance budget. There was lengthy discussion about the amount historically spent from this budget, the reimbursement of 70% from the state, oil prices for GA recipients, and the requirements to qualify for GA. Haley and Antonucci commented that there has been an increase in GA applications and an increase in the use of the fuel pantry. Harper asked if we could create a separate budget line and separate program that is similar to GA but is easier to qualify for, so that more people can be assisted. This was discussed.

Emery made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Tyrrell and passed unanimously.