

THE TOWN OF FORT FAIRFIELD
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
Second Public Budget Hearing 2022/23 Budget
May 5, 2022

Town Council opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.

All Councilors are present.

Staff: Andrea Powers, Town Manager and Neadra E. Dubois, Town Clerk, Tony Levesque, Darren Hanson, Ella Leighton, Dep. Chief Fenderson, Jennifer Gaenzle, Kevin Senal, Chief Cummings

Citizens: Joni Yoder, Dianna Leighton, Sharon Ouellette, Norman Miller, Thomas Towle, Paul Johnson, Beth Johnson, Sandra Durepo, John Durepo, Diana Leighton

Budget Advisory Committee: Pat Canavan, Kevin Bouchard, Aaron Brown, Billie Jo Sharpe, Danielle Cote, Jason Barnes, Janet McGillan

Mr. Kilcollins – “I think there’s some new, updated information, you know, and I know we see the support that we’re getting. Keep in mind, this is just a proposed budget. I know we have some, some work to forward with the information we’ve got and I’m sure if anybody’s got any input to, to put, this is the time to do it. This isn’t a debate, this is just information from you people that you have and you want to conduct with the, with the table, we’ll, we’ll take notes and at this time, Andrea, did you have anything to add or do we wanna?”

Ms. Powers – “I’m ready.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Okay. If anybody has anything they’d like to”

Mr. Bouchard – “Good evening. My name is Kevin Bouchard. I’ve been a resident of Fort Fairfield since 1979. I’ve run several businesses in the course of my career. I had a retail pharmacy in the medical equipment business here in town in the late 80s to early 90s. More recently I operated a biomass business that provided wood chips for the biomass border at [inaudible]. Historically, right or wrong, I shied away from getting involved in local politics. My desire was to avoid either perceived or real conflicts of interest, such as my dealings with the School Department, and out of concern for the potential negative impacts on my business by serving. My hat is off to people like Bob, who run a business in Town and they’re willing to go to take on these challenges for the community. I understand we’re not here tonight to talk about the Budget Advisory Committee, but I have a couple of recommendations to make to improve that Committee if we may. The Budget Committee is, is relative to the Budget, so. *coughs* Excuse me. Got two recommendations on Budget Advisory Committee and one question. With appointments, the Boards and Councils, and Committees, or whatnot, it takes a bunch of time for most of us individuals to get up to speed. In my experience, I found that learning curve to commonly be six to twelve months where you’re minimally productive at first and you slowly get going to where you’re functional. [inaudible] The ordinance, as I understand it, provides for standard terms of appointees so that you have a

similar number of members changing every year and I 100% endorse that concept, but, I would recommend and, I hope the other members of the Committee might follow forms, I didn't talk with anyone about this, I would recommend the initial appointments be for two or three years, as opposed to one or two. It's because of that learning curve issue that we have to deal with. Now, if I'm the only guy on the Committee who wants that, well, okay, I'll bow to the wishes of the Committee. The other thing, my second recommendation was the Ordinance as I understand it, is silent, as to the specific time frame of appointments and there may be something in Town procedures that addresses this, and I apologize if the problem is off on that. The Committee's only recently been appointed, the budget process for 22/23 is well on its way and my perceptions were closer to the ending than to the beginning. Other than general overall recommendations, I suspect there's not a whole lot that the Budget Advisory Committee would be able to accomplish this year. My, my second recommendation is that appointments be to this Committee late December, no later than mid-January and the rationale there is, I'm thinking the Committee should be active at the time that you're working with your Department Heads."

Ms. Powers – "It starts in November, actually."

Mr. Bouchard – "Okay. I don't, I don't know why, I was just, you know, we're coming in towards the end of the [mic cut out] it's just the fact that this is when it got presented to us. It's not a complaint, it's just the calendar that we're dealing with right as we are here. And then my question is the budget presented last week, as I understand, it has a deficit of \$2,019,226.00 in it. Does Council have a plan on how it wishes to fund that budget? My guess is you don't have one tonight, but. Thank you."

Mrs. McGillan – "And, the Mil Rate?"

Mr. Kilcollins – "Thank you."

Mr. Levesque talks to Mr. Bouchard [inaudible]

Mr. Kilcollins – "Anyone else?"

Mrs. Leighton – "Good evening. So, we're making comments about the budget, right? My name is Diana Leighton, I've lived here since 2005. I'm here to speak specifically to the total Fire Department Expense budget line. And, I'll try to keep it short, but I'm not very good at that, so. Everybody in this room and everybody in this community need two things; they need a safe community and they need an affordable community. So far, the safe community piece is pretty good. The affordable piece is struggling a little bit. I want to be clear that I've spent the past couple weeks being elbow deep in Council Minutes and videos and everything else to get a sense of what the motivation and the approach is to the current EMS Department, the way that it's set up. I understand that a big motivating factor is response time and making sure that we're able to get to the people who need it. I also hear the term 'we're saving lives' very often which is accurate. Again, we all need a safe community. The problem with that is that sometimes when we posit that, it makes critics look like they don't want to save lives and that's not true. So, I want to reassure you that I'm not just here with complaints, I also have a recommendation. So, I was looking at comments in the Bangor Daily News, from the Maine EMS about the national crisis of rural areas when it comes to EMS Services, meaning this isn't just limited to our Town and certainly other municipalities are

struggling with this as well, and trying to find solutions. The only thing that stuck out to me makes me sad. For a single full-time staffed ambulance to be sustainable, they need to be making 1,500 to 1,800 calls a year, for a single ambulance. I was thinking, we have 3,500 people in our community and I wouldn't wish upon my worst enemy that we're going out and making 1,500/1,800 calls a year. I also remember the remark that there's calls and there's transport, and there's a difference between the two. So, I don't know if there's some nuance there as well, maybe we're not even talking about 1,500 calls, maybe we're talking about 1,500 transports to be sustainable. And I don't think that's going to happen in our Town, and I don't want that to happen in our Town, so I'm going to say no, that's not going to work and that's not going to be sustainable. So, we're not going it alone. Southern Aroostook is trying to get a consortium together of 12 communities and even Maine EMT is saying that might not work. Because I don't want to critique services, I've heard very spirited remarks about we need to be able to do our jobs, we need to have a living wage, and we need to be able to do our job safely too, because you're members of the community and you're absolutely right. You deserve to be safe and you deserve to have an affordable life as well, so I'm not here to critique services, but that revenue piece is a struggle especially when we look at financial billing, which, again, it's not just us. It's not just us, this is a statewide issue. There are work groups coming together to try to figure this out. We look at other municipalities and the revenue they're pulling in. That's not even super great, to use the technical terms, super great. So, I just want to point out the elephant in the room, that the EMT Department, the way that it's set up, is not sustainable and it's what are we gonna do in five years? We talk about these are lease to own ambulances, so they'll pay themselves off in five years and then we'll have them for five more years. I believe former Chief Baldwin made that statement. So then, we'll have them for five more years, and then what? In ten years what do we do? We do this whole process again? I mean, my son is eight, he's gonna be graduating High School in ten years and this is not a far off conclusion. My recommendation, at this point, and I understand it might be bigger than the scope of this room, and it might be bigger than the scope of this particular budget, but my recommendation is that at the very least, in the coming year, we need to either visit or revisit the possibility of a regional ambulance system that spreads among multiple municipalities. How many municipalities, I don't know, it's above my pay grade. But, we need a regional system because we can't be shouldering this load all on our own. It's not going to work. It simply isn't going to work because the other price of that affordability aspect is, it's not going to matter if you respond to an emergency in 20 minutes, or 25 minutes, or 15 minutes if nobody's there, because they moved out because they couldn't afford to stay, not only in this Town, but maybe not even in this County because they decided to move downstate so they could be closer to the hospital themselves. And then our tax base is gonna start falling out from the bottom under. We talk a lot about the School Board, I go to the School Board budget meetings, they're fun, they're fun. And I love them because they're informative, and they're transparent, and it's a tight budget. But I also know from going to those, that tax base margin, weren't counting those kids. One, two kids per year, how many did we lose? How many get one, two that? We don't have a wide margin for our tax base. If one or two households decides to leave Fort Fairfield and God forbid they're a family with a couple of kids, and a couple of acres of land. That adds up. And all of a sudden the Police Department that also has expenses and the Public Works Department that also is dealing with the inflation that we're all dealing with right now. The money isn't there, and, we're wringing out a dry washcloth. So, we need to do whatever we can to get back to that affordability piece before that bottom starts falling out. I think a regional ambulance system might be the best approach and I would love to see some types of feasibility study on that. Thank you."

Ms. Powers – “I could actually speak to that, if you’d like?”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Yes, if you would like, for some of the answers.”

Ms. Powers – “We actually have been for the last two years. And, I have spoken about mutualizing the corridor from Mars Hill through to Caswell, and that it makes the most sense, having Fort Fairfield centralized there and then reaching out to this corridor, and then this corridor, like that, straight line. And we’ve, they’ve, we’ve gone to see them, we’ve given our presentations and they’re not interested. No one wants to pay for Fire and Ambulance, that’s what we’ve been finding with these meetings, but we’re going to keep having these needs and we’re going to keep talking about how important it is to do that because it’s really more about the service that’s being provided for the safety of the citizens here in Fort Fairfield, because we do have mutual aid contracts with this other communities as well. And, it’s important for us because we are a professional service. We are not volunteer. We do have volunteers here on the Fire side, but you definitely do not have volunteer EMS. So, it’s important to make that essential and we are set up for the administration of such to happen. And we have legislation that is being presented currently that will make it an unfunded mandate for all municipalities in the State of Maine to provide Fire/EMS service for their communities. So, it’s coming one way or the other, and what that service looks like, we don’t know yet if it’s going to be determined by the state, or if it will continue to be determined by autonomy by your communities so, that’s something to keep in mind as well. And I, I think DC has something to add too.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “Mr. Chair, I, I want to say, your comment about 1500 EMS calls is 100% factual, it’s a proven fact. But, to be clear you need 1500 transporting EMS calls to 100% pay for that ambulance, so that would be no tax burden and so, you know, no service out of the southern quarter of the State and sustain that according to Maine EMS, so it’s not, it’s not just us. Regionalization is something that Ms. Powers and I and the Council have talked about and tried to do. It’s getting everyone on the same boat, because we have some places that try to do it for less and it’s, it’s not easy. It’s not easy to find people that want to work there, it’s not easy to find people that benefit from that service. Obviously, it’s better than nothing, but we try to do the best we can to the highest level we can and that’s really what saves lives. So, it’s not just us. 1500 is accurate, we can do 1500 calls, you pay for one ambulance at no cost to anybody else. Last Maine EMS spoke, Bangor was close to that number, but even Bangor wasn’t fully there. So, that is factual and it’s not just us”

Ms. Powers – “So, thank you for those comments and we fully back that, and we are working hard to get to that point. When we have those comment sessions again, when we get back there, please come back and join us.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Yes, Tom.”

Mr. Towle – “Tom Towle. Just to respond to that, I’m all in favor of regionalization. We’ve got a Superintendent of Schools that does Superintend in Caribou, does it here, that’s part of regionalization. There’s a lot of regionalization going on. My question is, and this very point made by this lady here, what’s wrong with regionalizing towards Caribou or Presque Isle, which are also established Departments that are running ambulances now that are costing the taxpayers and the communities that they, that they

provide services to, approximately \$100 per capita, where, and we've talked about this before, Fort Fairfield now we're in excess currently of \$300 per capita. If this budget goes through, we're gonna be somewhere between four and five hundred dollars per capita. That's if the \$400 revenue line is accurate. I just want to point that out."

Ms. Powers – "Thank you."

Deputy Chief Fenderson – "We would love to regionalize with whoever would like to regionalize, however, we respond to Caribou and Presque Isle to supplement their ambulances because they are over stretched. They, they have less people on shift than when I was a full-time Paramedic in Presque Isle and they run approximately 400 more calls a year now, with less people on shift, and one of my last shifts, I did 15 EMS calls myself. So, regionalizing is great, but if you're not able to send an ambulance, it's ineffective."

Mr. Towle – "If they're short of staff and we've got 11 full-time and we've got 25 total full-time and part-time, it makes sense to me that maybe we take a look at sharing some of our staff with them and regionalize."

Ms. Powers – "We already do share staff, but that's where that comes in, the part-time is."

Mr. Towle – "But they're not sharing our costs."

Ms. Powers – "We're not getting that money."

Mr. Towle – "They're not sharing our cost."

Ms. Powers – "And they could make the same for us because we have staff that work for them too. The issue really is, the shortage of EMS providers across the State, well really across the country"

Mr. Kilcollins – "Yeah, cross country, yes."

Ms. Powers – "And NMCC is working hard to eradicate that in the county, but you can only do so much with the students who attend college for that program, so. It is a very hot topic and people are very one way or the other it seems, very divided on this, but as long as we maintain a calm discussion about it, I have no problem sharing information or sharing thoughts as well as I'm sure DC does, but because we're not here to attack."

Mr. Kilcollins – "And, seeing how we're on this note, if we had to tomorrow, find the service that we provide in our community and hire that out, if that note, what would the price be, what would the quote be?"

Mr. Durepo – "You can't talk, Sandra."

Ms. Powers – "That, it's changed exponentially since the last time you did that."

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “Last I spoke with Leadership, it wasn’t really an option.”

Ms. Powers – “Both Caribou and Presque Isle.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “But they do now, so.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “But the price would be 300, 500 thousand a year, 600 thousand a year?”

Ms. Powers – “Oh no, just for us to work with Easton was over 600 thousand a year and that was just half cost. That wasn’t, we weren’t making any profit off of that, so I’m sure with Presque Isle it would be even more.”

Mr. Johnson – “We’re not making a profit now, so it’s still a loss. I guess the main thing that concerns me is like, first of all, the lack of transparency. I didn’t know much about it. I, I, I had Mr. Ouellette stopped at my house to talk to me and mentioned some of the stuff he was”

Ms. Powers – “Who are you, Sir?”

Mr. Johnson – “My name is Paul Johnson.”

Ms. Powers – “Thank you.”

Mr. Johnson – “I live down on Forest Avenue. And, I was, I chatted with him for a minute, but I had no idea, no idea what was going on with the lack of transparency, but also it’s like the process of how these decisions were made, and then also, well I haven’t had any information about why everything kind of blew up regionally with the programming that was there before, which was, you know, about maybe 10 percent, not even I guess, maybe less, eight percent of what it is now the budget. But, I think, I think more importantly is, is, is like, like it doesn’t seem like, and then I, I can’t, I can’t, I’m just like I can’t figure it out that there isn’t a process to kind of fade it in. It’s a good idea to regionalize, and if that’s the end goal, why did we do, why did we buy, you know, make this huge decision? For example, I want, I want a new truck, I can’t afford it. I want a brand new F250, I can’t afford it. I have to wait, figure things out, you know what I mean? Figure out until I can afford what I can afford. We have a very small, relatively low tax-based town. Why did we just go do this as opposed to making it across a relatively long period of time and, and making it more sustainable. I just, I, I, I don’t understand the process. I mean, it’s, I don’t know. I understand risk versus reward, but this is so much risk, and I mean, the budget again, we need the services, I’m not, I, I’m glad about the response time, outstanding. But, but, but, but that budget line is now nearly as much as the School and it’s, it’s, it’s, it’s completely unsustainable, I don’t understand. And, as you’re talking about people living, I mean, one of the reasons we chose Fort Fairfield is taxes were a little bit better than Presque Isle and stuff, even though the services weren’t quite there as far as like, overall like, big picture stuff. I mean, we’re not from here, you know what I mean? We’ll go closer to Town or whatever. I mean, I mean, it’s in, you’re gonna, you’re gonna lose people. So, so, so, I guess as far as a question goes what was the process and why, why was this decision made as opposed to decisions, so, like, they would have taken more time and it would have faded in, faded in more of a

regional system as opposed to having a, a, a, our own system, and then trying to essentially not sell it, but to, to, to, to market it toward other towns.”

Ms. Powers – “DC would you like me to start, or did you want to? Okay. So, this was done over a period of time. It was done very transparently, so there was no lack of transparency. We had Public Hearings here, at the Council Chambers, that were well attended. And, they had public opportunity to give that input, and there was only one person who spoke against through all of that process. And, they worked for”

Mr. Johnson – “And the budget was transparent?”

Ms. Powers – “Absolutely.”

Mr. Jonson – “That the projected budget of 1.8 million dollars was transparent?”

Ms. Powers – “No, no, no. We started out slow like you had just said. We did not go full on with how we were going to do this and we don’t have brand new trucks.”

Mr. Johnson – “But that’s not, but that’s not transparency. I mean, I mean, the, the, transparency is like, I know how much a truck costs. If somebody says it’s only five grand and I pay them five grand and oh wait, fifteen grand. You know what I mean?”

Ms. Powers – “Oh, I get what you’re saying now. So, I did tell them back then, that eventually at some point in time we are going to have to fully fund this Department, and it’s probably going to hit us at about three years, which is where we’re at right now, if we don’t fully fund it now, which was back in 2019. And, so, we expected that this was eventually going to happen, we’ve had these discussions every budget year about how it’s incrementally going to go up so that we can make sure we are fully funding the service. The Council voted on it, it was, I mean there was a lot that was said, they are the legislative body for the Town of Fort Fairfield, we are not a Town Meeting form of government, and this interaction is not normal, but, the Chairman has asked for us to be able to have good, quality conversations back and forth with the citizens about this because this is a very tenuous year. We’re seeing inflation all the way around and if you’re seeing inflation at home, you can be assured we have inflation here with the Town as well, so we have responsibilities that we have to take care of. All we’re doing is presenting what it costs to run the services here in Town. This is a proposed budget for what it costs to run the services.”

Mr. Johnson – “But what you’re saying is that while it was being approved people know it would be roughly 1.8 million dollars?”

Ms. Powers – “Eventually, down the road, yes.”

Mr. Johnson – “They knew that?”

Ms. Powers – “Actually, I had said that it would be over two million to run it and so it’s come in under that number.”

Mr. Johnson – “All right, cool.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Yes, Tom. You had something to add, Tom? Thank you.”

Mr. Towle – “I just had a. When was, when was the budget number established during the startup period?”

Ms. Powers – “2018, December of 2018.”

Mr. Towle – “And it was discussed during the creation of the Department that we could be spending in excess of 1.8 million dollars?”

Ms. Powers – “Yes. In excess of two million dollars is what I had suggested.”

Mr. Towle – “Okay, and I was out of the loop on that I guess, and a lot of other people were, and I was not at that meeting. I’ll be honest with you, the number that I heard at that time, which is why I didn’t attend any meetings, the number that I heard, was this could cost us in excess of a half a million dollars. That was the word that was on the street at that time. I didn’t attend any of those meetings. I didn’t know about it until all of a sudden, two years ago, when it was created, and it was starting, so that’s my fault, maybe for not digging into it, but I would like to see if there are minutes that actually state that it was going to be looking at close to two million dollars for this Department two years after it was created, in terms of that I’d like to see those. Thank you.”

Ms. Powers – “You know, you can come and request those at the Town Office, anytime.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Did you have anything else to add?”

Mr. Johnson – “I don’t think there’s anything I can add. That was, that’s, I mean, terrible [inaudible].”

Mrs. Durepo – “I hate this podium. People, I can’t see the Chairman of the board. John won’t let me sit next to you. [laughter] Okay, my question is, you passed this out tonight, is there no change in the School Budget for next year?”

Ms. Powers – “There is, that’s why you have this number here too.”

Mrs. Durepo – “Did I not get everything?”

Ms. Powers – “It’s right there.”

Mrs. Durepo – “I’m sorry.”

Ms. Powers – “That’s all right.”

Mrs. Durepo – “Okay, my question, I do have a couple of questions. First of all, when you do your calculations and I know a budget is just a budget, I’ve worked with budgets everybody, and my name is Sandra Durepo and my husband is John, he’s with me but he won’t talk because I talk too much. Town Manager?”

Ms. Powers – “Yes, ma’am?”

Mrs. Durepo – “Your budget is just an estimate, but my question is on your estimate for 22 and 23 is not actual, when you look at your actual that you spent for 20 and 21.”

Ms. Powers – “Yes. We’re not there yet. We’re still in this fiscal year, so we don’t have an actual yet for this year.”

Mrs. Durepo – “Aren’t you physical year for the Town?”

Ms. Powers – “We’re, we’re July first to June thirtieth. So this fiscal year does not end until the end of June. So I have to make my predictions on what the State is going to give us for revenue sharing, what our valuation is going to be, there’s a lot of things that take place between August, September and October before the Mil Rate is set. And, I have to, based on what’s happening at the State level, numbers that are coming out, inflation, all of these things and what it costs to run our services, I have to project what that will be [inaudible], because of our fiscal year does not fall [inaudible].”

Mrs. Durepo – “Everybody’s fiscal years are different. Okay, July first.”

Ms. Powers – “To June thirtieth, yes.”

Mrs. Durepo – “I have a lot of other questions, but this is a. First of all, Chairman of the Board, I’d like to know who’s on the Budget...what did you tell me Kevin?...Budget Improvement Encouraging Committee. Who’s here? Last time you had them raise their hands.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Yeah, they raised their hands.”

Mrs. Durepo – “Billie Jo, Aaron, Jason, Kevin, I know Janet, I think you’re Pat aren’t you?, I don’t know this girl. Thank you, Town Manager.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “So, anybody else would like to add any concerns to the budget, proposed budget.”

Mrs. McGillan – “What is the proposed Mil Rate right now?”

Ms. Powers – “We don’t have one.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Well, based on this, it’s gonna be close to 30 or over 30.”

Ms. Powers – “I can tell you it’s not.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Yeah, so, it’s going to be 25?”

Ms. Powers – “It’ll probably be, I don’t like to give a prediction because we don’t know those numbers. So, what Tony does with that, in the role of the Assessor, he does not get any of that information until September really. And, we can’t finalize what we’re doing, moving forward, until after all the rest of our work is done, like the summer assessment, all of that stuff has to be finalized first. All I can do is give a proposed budget of what it costs for our services to go for, and you’ll, you’ll see this the more you start talking about the budget, there are things that we cannot know, but still have to project prior to the Mil Rate, and that’s how things will change based on the formula for the tax rate calculation which gives us the Mil Rate. So there’s a calculation, it’s sort of like a form that filled out, and it’s all set up by the State. We just plug in our information and the State does the rest of the calculations for us, and that is how we get from the State, what the lowest flow rate is that we can give, or what the highest Mil Rate is, and then Council can choose anywhere in between there, from the lowest to the highest, and you want to think about your overlay at the end with your Mil Rate. You should never have a negative overlay when choosing the Mil Rate, which means you’re not raising enough money to pay for your services that you’re asking for when you have a negative earnings.”

Mrs. McGillan – “You don’t have a balanced budget.”

Ms. Powers – “In Municipal Government, there’s no balanced budget until the Audit. The Audit is what tells you whether or not you had a balanced budget. So, it’s not like a private, like your own personal budget where you have expenses and income coming in, it’s not like, because we raise taxes for the debt, whatever the deficit is, we raise taxes because if there is no deficit, if our income covers our expenses all the way around, between the School, the County Tax and the Municipal Budget, we would never have to send out a tax bill, and wouldn’t that be lovely, but that’ll never happen.”

Mrs. McGillan – “But if the Mil Rate goes up 5 or 6 Mil, it’s not gonna go over well.”

Ms. Powers – “Well, again, there’s, and there’s a lot of things we could talk about with the Mil Rate, but there were lots of discussion on not putting the Mil Rate at the lowest Mil Rate two years ago, also last year, but we did because the discussion was, we keep we’ve got to try to keep the Mil Rate as low as we possibly can. But, by continuously doing that year after year, after year, you’re setting one of these entities, the three entities that make up your tax bill, you’re setting one of them up for eventual failure, because you don’t have the money to make your services what they need to be, your equipment is outdated, your vehicles become outdated, what you do for programming eventually gets cut. There’s a lot of things that come into that effect. I will say this, the Mil Rates all around us are much higher than our current Mil Rate at 19.5 Mils. And for us to provide those services, 24, 25, 26 in the communities around us.”

Mrs. McGillan – “But they have businesses to support that Mil Rate. And businesses are moving.”

Ms. Powers – “That’s right. But actually, we have businesses coming in as well, and, and, we speak about those during the Council Meetings, so you could certainly come in and hear about all the new and exciting things that are happening, and I think it’s important to remember that what we’re doing here

tonight is just presenting to you, to the public, Budget Advisory Committee, everyone, honestly, what it costs to run the services that our people expect that live here. Like, these are the things that they want to see in their community. Everybody keeps talking about, well everybody's going to move, but we have to remember we have a lot of new young families here in Fort Fairfield now too that have moved here, and, and folks aren't really talking about them either, but we do, we have a lot of young new families here in Town. I met with Superintendent Doak this week and their, you know, numbers are shifting constantly. We went over their proposed budget for next week, some years you, you have more, some years you have less, it fluctuates, so. And, those are things that we have to try to project as well. But, I will tell you that we are all trying to work together to make this a safe and affordable community to live in. We all live here, we want it to be like that. Nobody here is trying, there is no glamour in public service, I, I will tell you. There's no, nobody's trying to make this like, the most spectacular, look at us type of thing, we're just trying to do our jobs and do them well and safely. And, the numbers that we have presented tonight are much closer than last week's numbers to what it will cost for us to provide those services. I'm ready to start talking about them if you are, Sir."

Mr. Kilcollins – "Yes."

Ms. Powers – " So, if you, if you take a look at this, the paper here, the first one, the only number that will not change, or that could possibly change on that is the number from the County. County, the County Tax. That number is already set and that, that, that number will not change. The top number, from MSAD 20, is their proposed total budget for next week, and we'll talk a little bit more about that in just a minute. And then, of course, the bottom number is our proposed total budget for the Municipality. And then, if you look at the bottom, like we discussed last week, our Municipal income, our, our revenue that we receive here is 392,098 dollars more than what our expenses are. But, you have to keep in mind, if you flip the page over, when we send out a tax bill it does not come just from the Municipality, it is three separate entities all combined together on one tax bill. So, the expense, the total expense is your top number that you see, and that is all three entities the Municipal, the County, and MSAD 20. The income, the income is our income that we receive. There's, there's no other income on top of that. That, is that middle number and then the bottom number is the excess on top of the 599 that we've asked for. Does Council have any questions on those?"

Mr. Johnson – "You asking for a vote from us? Is that what you're doing?"

Mr. Pelletier – "So the 599 is added to the excess on that page, the 2 million [inaudible]."

Ms. Powers – "So yes. So, this, this that you see here, the 599,129 dollars is our total budget. Now, MSAD 20, their total budget is 7,343,055 dollars. They receive, very similar to the situation that we have with our Municipal Revenue Sharing, they have a system that's called EPS, do I have that right, Sir? Thank you, Sir. You know what that is, Essential Services, yes, and so, there is a, because of the State Statute, they, the State will provide 79 percent of what that number is in there, from their formula, if the Town commits their 21 percent, to receive 100 percent, and that number is 1 million, one hundred forty, no that's the wrong number, \$1,199,786.66 to give them their combined about that they need to receive the \$5,738,450.21. The excess that they're asking for is well, what they're asking for from the Town, our porting they're asking for an amount above that \$1,199,786.66 to get them to \$2,203,432. So, that's what

they'll be asking the Town to put towards MSAD 20 this year. And, we have to take that \$2,203,432 and add that to the \$599,129 and then, the County Tax, which is 277,400 something dollars, you have to add that to that number as well, and that's what gets you to the 8 million that you see on the back page, the 8,479,770. So that is the three, three entities combined, is what that is. Now, we take our income off of that, and it only brings us to the excess of \$2,088,543. Now listen, I am, I am not knocking the Schools, the School has bills that they have to pay, they have services that they provide, they have to maintain their buildings, their equipment, their vehicles just like we do. It's, it's no different. The thing we have to remember is, though, those combined budgets together, our income is also being taken from the extra that they're asking for as well as the County. So, if you take the income that we will be receiving, the 6,391,227 and remove from that, the \$2,203,432 and the \$277,400 something from the County, that's what is giving us that deficit at the end. So it's, it's not just the Municipality, it's not just the School, it's not just the County, it is all of these entities combined together. And, in a season of 17 percent inflation rate, eight and a half COLA rate, these are all of the things that are making it what it is. So, that being said, I have the rest of the presentation for Council if they would like. So, with the School and their, their total budget minus their EPS funding, if funded at 100 percent, which means they have to pay the 21 percent, they paid the 79 percent, the State would pay the 79 percent, that would give them their \$5,738,455.12. And then, you take that out of the total budget, they have a deficit of that, but they also have a 55% that will pay into that as well, and so that's why they're only asking the local is the \$2,203,432, and that part is important to remember as we go through the rest of all these here. So, the first one, Code Enforcement. Does Council have any questions for Code Enforcement, Assessing, Community Development, Marketing and Economic Development? Mr. Levesque is here if you have any questions for him. I will caution Council again, we have kept the quarterly review down to the absolute minimum that we possibly can, but we do not want to find ourselves in the situation that we were just in last year with not having a Reval done for over 20 years, so we, hopefully things will get better in 23/24 fiscal year, and we will be able to start building that back up again. But, I believe we're okay with the 10,000 [inaudible], we're comfortable, we're okay for now."

Mr. Levesque – “[inaudible] 9600 last year.”

Ms. Powers – “Okay. Library.”

Mr. Pelletier – “We talked about the amount of employees at the Library at the last meeting.”

Ms. Powers – “We did.”

Mr. Pelletier – “I don't remember, was it one full-time and two part-time?”

Ms. Powers – “Correct. And then, we asked for an additional part-time.”

Mr. Pelletier – “So three part-time, one full-time?”

Mr. Kilcollins – “In this Library budget, that they're proposing is the re, the added repairs that was needed for the”

Ms. Powers – “Slate roof? If you look to the bottom for the reserve”

Mr. Pelletier – “Does it say 155?”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Yup. That’s where the 155 is coming up, right. So, that’s added into the budget for 22/23?”

Ms. Powers – “Correct. Yes. We separated all of the Reserve Accounts for Council so that they could see the difference between Reserve Accounts and, yeah. And, if you’ll notice, heating oil has gone up again as well as diesel and gas, utilities.”

Mrs. Libby – “So, what’s the cost of the additional employee? Like, what’s the total cost of that additional person?”

Mr. Pelletier – “Well, it’s, it’s, it’s 101,258, I mean, that’s, that’s the total for one full-time and three part-times?”

Ms. Powers – “Correct.”

Mr. Ouellette – “But you went down on your operations.”

Ms. Powers – “She did, yup.”

Mr. Pelletier – “I see operations, is that fuel, fuel and supplies and things like that?”

Ms. Powers – “Yes. It’s, it, which one are you looking at?”

Mr. Pelletier – “Oh, the, I’m sorry, operations.”

Ms. Powers – “Consolidated? So, if you look at the Library’s Budget, you’ll see that.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Is there any grant money for that new Slate Roof? Is there anywhere to find a grant for something to maintain that building, because it is a special historical building?”

Mr. Pelletier – “It’s a Carnegie building, Carnegie Library.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Yeah, so there’s no grants out there that may help with that Slate Roof?”

Ms. Powers – “So we, Jenn has applied for several grants for the Slate Roof and it always comes back as a denial because we have, we don’t, we cannot show them that we can match, there’s usually a match to the grant.”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “And, it’s not just, it’s not just that, also they require a written quote from a contractor. All of the contractors are from down State. They are booked out for the next 3 to 4 years and the only way

to get them up here is if we have a solid commitment that we will fund it, then they'll come up and give us a quote, because they don't need to go looking for any kind of jobs. So, once I can get them up here to get a quote, then I can apply for the grants, but without that quote, I cannot apply for a grant."

Mr. Pelletier – "So where did the 155 come from? Where'd that quote come from?"

Mrs. Gaenzle – "That is my estimate that you had asked for, an estimate of what it would cost, so I took the square footage of the room and multiplied it by the average cost to replace a slate roof to get the 150,000. If, if once I, I get an actual contractor up here it may only cost 50,000 to do the repair, but I don't know that, I'm not a slate contractor, and they will not come up here. I have made repeated, repeated calls, they just won't. It's a Slate Roof and it has to be done historically, or we lose our National Historic Register, which means [inaudible] to pay for it."

Mrs. McGillan – "You can't get a local contractor?"

Mrs. Gaenzle – "No. No, there are no, no, there are no."

Ms. Powers – "We actually have requested local contractors, and none of them will do it for us."

Mr. Pelletier – "What's the matching amount? What does that have to be?"

Mrs. Gaenzle – "Well, it depends on the grant. Some grants are for 20,000 and they want you to match 20,000, some of them are 60,000, it depends on the grant and what, what grants are available at the time that I apply."

Ms. Powers – "We generally try to look for grants to apply to that don't require a match, but sometimes, sometimes [inaudible] sometimes 50 percent. USDARD is 45 percent match."

Mrs. Libby – "So, they won't even come and look at it?"

Mrs. Gaenzle – "No."

Mrs. Libby – "And what do you have to do to get them to come?"

Mrs. Gaenzle – "They want a commitment that it's paid, that it's gonna be paid for, that, they. So, they don't want to come and waste their time quoting something and then you not do it, because it costs them money. They have to bring equipment up, scaffolding and everything else and set it up to even be able to go up on the roof and inspect it."

Mr. Pelletier – "How that usually works is in the bidding world is you usually go out for three bids, usually. And, you pick the bid that you want, you get at least three bids, so to get three people to bid a job like a Slate Roof, it's gotta agree, it's gonna be tough, and so contractors are gonna drive four, five hours, six hours, whatever, and to spend an hour or two."

Mrs. Gaenzle – “And, my other issue is, so most of the grants have a deadline in the time that you can use them. Most of them, maximum is two years. If a contractor is scheduling three and four years out, I can’t even apply for that grant for another two years because the grant would expire and I have to return the money before we can pay the contractor. So, it’s, it’s very fine line of timing, but I can’t without some kind of commitment that there is money there, I can’t, they won’t even look at it and it’s just going to sit there and deteriorate.”

Mrs. Libby – “So how much extra, like funding, grant funding are we eligible for by keeping it a Slate Roof? Is it even worth it at this point?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “Yeah. Yes. Because”

Mr. Pelletier – “You lose that status [inaudible].”

Mrs. Libby – “But if we can’t fix it and it’s costing us extra money, then is the status really?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “If effects our archives. There’s grants that I’ve applied for, National Endowment for Humanities Grants, 90 percent of the reason that I got that is because the Library is Carnegie Library and it’s in the National Historic Register, and that was \$27,000.”

Mrs. Libby – “I, I guess I’m just, I’m just wondering if it’s costing us more money to keep it restored as?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “Since I’ve, I’ve been a Librarian, I know that I have gotten close to \$40,000 in grants and, the majority of them would not, we would not either have been eligible or, they would have bypassed this for somebody that was, that did have. So, there is, and it will affect many, many grants for the future. I’ve been there, October will be eight years. That’s a lot of money to get in eight years. Since I’ve been here, before I was here, I think the biggest grant that the Library had ever received, ever, was \$10,000 besides the actual building from the Carnegie.”

Mrs. Libby – “But we’re asking to put away 150 this year, is that what is requested?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “That’s what I’m requesting. It doesn’t mean that we’ll have to use all of that \$150,000.”

Mrs. Libby – “But if we were able to put away, say, 50,000?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “I can’t guarantee that, I can’t. I, I’m just, you know, you wanted a number, this was a number that I had to come up with. I can’t, I can’t guesstimate, I’m not a slate contractor. And, if you only put 50 away and they come up and it says that it’s 80,000.”

Mrs. Libby – “But that’s what we have in your Reserve, Admin Reserve Accounts for. So, we can use funds from that if necessary.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Janet, did you have something?”

Mrs. McGillan – “Is it in dyer repair, right now that it has to be done?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “Yes, there is at least just”

Mrs. McGillan – “How come we haven’t been putting money away for it before now?”

Ms. Powers – “We’ve been asking every year.”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “Every year, for the past eight years, I’ve asked for money in my reserve and it’s always been denied or taken away or lowered.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Is there zero in there now?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “There is zero in there now.”

Mrs. McGillan – “So now we’re just, we’ve been waiting, we’ve been asking for it for three years?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “Eight years. I’ve been asking for it for, going on, this will be my, I’m sorry, seven years.”

Mrs. McGillan – “So you mean in the last eight years, you haven’t been able to get anybody to come and look at that roof?”

Mr. Pelletier – “Is the roof leaking now?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “It is not, but there is, when I [inaudible] drone photo, the drone to go up to do the photos, there is a ten foot section, it’s called ‘hip roof’, I got a real big education on roofing.”

Mrs. McGillan – “So, why can’t we send those pictures down to a contractor?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “I have, oh, I have. They don’t care, they have enough jobs, they don’t care.”

Mr. Pelletier – “There’s nothing like laying your eyes on a job, though, you know. So, let me ask, has anyone actually gone up in the attic area with good lights and looked that all over?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “We have not. It’s, it’s very, very difficult to access. Mike Greenlaw, when he had, I needed to have a new emergency light put in for the front entrance, OSHA regulation, he came to do that, he had to, he looked to see about how he could run wires to it, it’s in the bathroom and it’s a drop ceiling, and there’s one section that you can pull out and you have to slide the ladder up in there and climb up in there, he was able to get his head up in there, but he said it’s very difficult to get in there without ripping the entire ceiling out, taking all of the tiles down, so that’s why we haven’t done that. He shined a light over”

Mrs. McGillan – “So, have you tried writing to a Senator or a Congressperson by chance? Write a Senator or Congressperson and take that avenue?”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “You can, I can’t because I work there.”

Mrs. Libby – “So, last year, when we did the budget, we talked and discussion came up of, you know, possibly not funding any of the Reserve Accounts, and we were told that we had to fund the Reserve Accounts, so, this is saying that we didn’t fund any on this.”

Ms. Powers – “Somewhat you have to, [inaudible] percentage. No, she, she already used the, what was put in for this fiscal year and approved.”

Mrs. Libby – “Right, but there was a Reserve funded last year. I just wanted to clarify.”

Ms. Powers – “Yes, you are correct. Sorry, yes.”

Mrs. Libby – “So, there was money that was put away”

[inaudible]

Mrs. Gaenzle – “At the time, too, we had the Regular Quarterly News section, that roof was 30 years old, and, so, we’re not, that’s what I was saying.”

Mrs. Libby – “But, I just wanted to clarify that, yes, there was money funded for it.”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “Right.”

Ms. Powers – “That is correct. That, that was the other side of the building.”

Mrs. Libby – “Yes. Okay. Okay. I just wanted to make sure.”

Ms. Powers – “And then, we had to use Admin Reserves to take on that too.”

Mrs. Libby – “Right. And, how much did we fund last year?”

Ms. Powers – “Five.”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “Five thousand. Five thousand, which is, I get, that’s part of the 155, I’m asking for the five thousand again, and.”

Mrs. Libby – “So, 50 though would be a huge jump compared to what we funded last year.”

Mrs. Gaenzle – “Right. So, my five thousand, and I’ll tell you how I get to the five thousand, that’s if you have a brand new roof, which we now do, you put a thousand dollars away, in 27-years, you have the

\$27,000 to pay for that roof. Another thousand dollars needs to be put away for a new furnace, our furnace in the old section, as we talked about, has been since the 1950s, it is, you can replace the motor, but then what do you do if the eyes go bad and you can't find eyes for it? You're back to the same issue, so."

Mr. Pelletier – "You're running a dinosaur."

Mrs. Gaenzle – "Exactly."

Mr. Pelletier – "Very energy inefficient."

Mrs. Gaenzle – "It's extremely inefficient, and, and actually, honestly, I think we do, for such a large building, we do very well with our heat, because we have the heat pumps, and we have the newer furnace, that is also 30-years-old now because it was installed with the original, with the new part of the section, so at doing a thousand dollars for all of these different things, that's where I come up with the five thousand. A thousand dollars for this roof, a thousand dollars for that roof, a thousand dollars for this heater, and a thousand dollars for this heater, those are my five major issues that I will, that I worry about. But, if they had done that 30 years ago, we would have had enough to pay for the roof that we just replaced, we wouldn't of had to depended on Administrative, and take that away from other departments. And this is why I'm saying, every year all we need is that five thousand dollars, but it keeps getting taken away to fix things [inaudible]"

Mrs. Libby – "And again, it sticks to have to say from 150 requested to 50, but we can only do so much."

Mrs. Gaenzle – "And I, and I understand, but I cannot guarantee that we'll get somebody up here."

Mrs. Libby – "Right."

Mrs. Gaenzle – "I can tell them, look, I have \$50,000 set aside for this group, where are you gonna get the rest of the money?, I'm gonna apply for grants, well, grants"

Mrs. Libby – "Well, where are you gonna get the rest of the money? Then, I'll have to speak to my Manager, because there is money in Admin and we may have to use it. So, if we approach it differently, we may come out with a different answer, that's just my recommendation."

Mrs. Gaenzle – "Okay."

Ms. Powers – "Rec Department. Did Council have a chance to look at the comparisons?"

Mr. Pelletier – "No, we just."

Ms. Powers – "No, no. From last week. They're the same comparisons from Caribou and Presque Isle. That hasn't changed, their comparisons are the same. And, do you have any questions on them?"

Mrs. Libby – “On the playground for the Rec, the five thousand, you may have already said, what is the plan for that? Like, is it just the, it’s just the five thousand in the Reserves?”

Mr. Senal – “Yup. So, currently, I believe, if I remember correctly, there’s now, if we get this five thousand, that’ll put it to fifteen thousand. So, as we stated in past Council Meetings, we are applying for Land Water Conservation Fund to be able to redo the playgrounds, and, as part of that there needs to be Town funds coming towards it. So, this gives us a start towards it. Now, it doesn’t have to be through taxes that we raise the funds, it could be from fundraising, you know, and we’ve got, I believe if we, I believe it’s June 30th is when the application is due, and from discussing with, we haven’t gotten all the quotes back yet, as a matter of fact one of the people said we’re not even going to give you a quote, it’s out of our scope of work, and I said, okay, you’re a playground company, but okay. But, June 30th is when the application is due and once we get that in, if we get approved, we can then start funding with more grant applications as well, because some of these grants, when you apply for them, they don’t mind matching funds because your matching funds can be other grants. But, what we need to do is have a number to know what we need to match, but this gives us just something to go towards it.”

Mrs. Libby – “And you said there’s 15 in there currently?”

Mr. Senal – “I believe if you put this five on there as well, it’ll bring it up to 15.”

Mrs. Libby – “Oh, okay, so there’s 10 in there currently. And, then, the Parks and Rec Reserve, that goes just to whatever the necessary things, like the 10 thousand?”

Mr. Senal – “So, that was to start saving towards redoing the steps out front, and then there’s a project out back. The Fire Marshall has told us, when you go around the back side of the building, there is an exit door there, even though it’s typically not used, it’s just an emergency exit, but there needs to be a solid walkway of some kind, as well as, after this budget cycle goes through, I’m sorry, after this grant application goes through, so It’s about a two-year process, so it’s equal to that, and it just breaks it down. We can then start applying for another grant, after this one’s complete, start looking at redoing the Community Athletic Courts so the Tennis Courts as well as the fencing around the Pool. So, that stuff could help go towards that as well.”

Mrs. Libby – “So just matching, just to have if we need to match grant funds. Okay, Yup.”

Ms. Powers – “So, we have \$7,713.87 in Parks and Rec’s Reserve.”

Mrs. Libby – “Thank you.”

Ms. Powers – “You’re welcome. Fire.”

Mr. Butler – “Andrea, did we get another sheet for the Fire Department? Or is it the same as last?”

Mr. Kilcollins – “It was Fire and EMS, but I don’t see one. Unless they got a new one.”

Ms. Powers – “How about we skip to the PD and we’ll come back to Fire? PD is tab five Councilors. Please keep in mind Councilors that we have a Officer who will be going to the Academy, so when you look at the Education/Training Line, that’s why you’re seeing the increase.”

Mrs. Libby – “And I’ve probably asked this before, but just remind me, do we have a contract in place with this Officer, that after they go to the Academy, they are going to work for a certain period of time?”

Chief Cummings – “State Law indicates that if they leave one of another Law Enforcement Agency, the other Law Enforcement Agency is responsible for, for their training costs. First year 46,000, second year 40,000, it goes down 6,00 every year.”

Mrs. Libby – “Perfect. I thought so, but I couldn’t remember, so, thank you.”

Mr. Pelletier – “Is this 22,000, is that, is it for more than one Officer to be trained, or is it for one?”

Ms. Powers – “No. We have, it’s 18,000 for an Officer to go to the Academy?”

Chief Cummings – “Yeah, that and the tuition is what you, you’ve gotta factor in the tuition for the Academy, the ammo, the overtime, the backfill of shifts, the travel expense, it’s intuitive close to \$20,000.”

Ms. Powers – “And then, the rest is for supplemental training from the rest of the Officers and Chief.”

Chief Cummings – “20,000 for the training, not to include the shift coverage while, while they’re gone.”

Mr. Pelletier – “How many weeks is that? Did you say how many weeks that was?”

Chief Cummings – “18 weeks. 18 weeks outside of Augusta [inaudible].”

Mr. Butler – “What’s the Contracted Services?”

Chief Cummings – “Dispatch?”

Mr. Butler – “Okay, thank you.”

Chief Cummings – “No problem.”

Mr. Pelletier – “Is Contracted Services something every municipality pays a, pays a share of?”

Chief Cummings – “So, we pay the State of Maine Department of Public Safety and they provide, they answer all of our, our calls that come in to the Station, 9-1-1, and that includes the Fire Department as well, that, that cost.”

Mr. Pelletier – “That’s in this?”

Chief Cummings – “Yes.”

Mrs. Libby – “So, I just have to say, like every budget, what I try to do is I try to look at it and I try to find if there’s anything on that that we could possibly take anything from, just so people know, like, every single line, I’m staring at these lines, and I do this at home, and I do this over, and over, and over, and over, and so, I don’t mean to pick at like, the Department Heads, and say can we cut this, can we cut that, but I literally look at every single thing and honestly, I have to say, like, your budget is very lean, and I don’t see anything even possible to cut.”

Chief Cummings – “I’m a taxpayer in this Town too, and I feel the same way about keeping costs down, so.”

Mrs. Libby – “Yeah, so.”

Chief Cummings – “My budget reflects that, so.”

Mrs. Libby – “Yeah. And, I’m not saying that, like, others are excessive, it’s just some Departments, different things costs whatever, but like, in looking at your budget, it’s”

Chief Cummings – “We have not sent a Police Officer to the Police, the full 18 week Police Academy since I went, I was the last Officer to go through Fort Fairfield, so we’ve been fortunate enough that we’ve been able to hire Officers with experience. So, we, obviously, when I started in July, there was nobody, so, I mean, we’re originally complimented with five Officers total. We cut that back to four to obviously do some trimming on the budget. We also were able to hire, including myself, two other Officers, that have already, already have a full-time certification, so we don’t need to go, they don’t need to go to Police Academy, so we’re fortunate in doing that, so. One Officer, in close to 15 years, is, to the Police Academy is pretty good.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Yeah, and that, I’d like to add, that’s also set in a budget to where Chief Cummings had to bring that Department to, from where they were. The working standards were minimal and just reviewing from where it was to what you’ve brought it to. Proud of you. Good job.”

Chief Cummings – “But, you know, we had to, we had to outfit our whole Department, every Officer, head to toe, which is \$3,500 at minimum per Officer, for gear, equipment, uniforms and things like that, you know, we’ve thought outside the box on a few things and, you know, we don’t use the most expensive equipment, we don’t use the most expensive uniforms, we kind of middle of the road stuff, so, and then, you got to keep in mind that things like ammunition have doubled in price, and it’s hard to get. So, I mean, when we’re paying \$300 for a thousand rounds of ammo, now we’re paying 556, if we’re lucky, so, it’s just, that’s, that’s where we’re at.”

Mr. Butler – “How long do you qualify?”

Chief Cummings – “We are qualifying once a year, but we really should be qualified twice a year. You know, once a year, to go out and shoot is not a lot, so. That’s the minimum standard from the Academy is,

is 250 round courses, but I don't feel it's enough. I think our officers should be shooting out, shooting on the range more, because you need to State permission."

Mr. Buter – "Do they get practice ammo?"

Chief Cummings – "I, I heavily guard the practice ammo."

[laughter]

Mr. Butler – "Been there and done that. I worked for the Federal Government, and we had to qualify four times a year. And, I agree with two times a year, it should be."

Chief Cummings – "Thank you."

Ms. Powers – "So if you turn back to tab four, for Fire/EMS. If you remember from last week, the Emergency Management, that's a one-time increase in cost, and that's for us to upgrade our Dike system to a modern warning system. It will cut down on our costs by doing this, moving for the future of the Dam actually. It allows us to have access at the touch of our phones versus having to man it 24 hours during asaps, we'll be able to adjust things as needed from our phones versus having to go in, so we won't have to pay people to man the Pump House anymore."

Mrs. Libby – "How much do we normally pay for that, on average?"

Ms. Powers – "Cody, do you have a cost for the amount that we pay our people that watch the Pump House for us? It fluctuates."

Deputy Chief Fenderson – "So, if you have volunteers, you pay them minimum wage, the problem is, the past two years that I've done scheduling is you don't really have enough volunteers covered, so then we have to pay our Town employees whatever their overtime rate is. It does come out of whatever Department they work for [inaudible]"

Mrs. Libby – "So, what does it cost? Like, what did we spend on that last year, roughly? Do you know?"

Deputy Chief Fenderson – "Last year was substantial. We had the issue with the gate in the, the Pump House that broke, it was down, so we, we pumped for"

Mr. Levesque – "30 Days extra."

Deputy Chief Fenderson – "Yeah. We did six payrolls last year, so it was, I don't have the exact number, but it was."

Ms. Powers – "We can pull that, though."

Mrs. Libby – “Yeah, I’m just curious, like, what that cost versus the cost of the upgrade, just for, just to compare.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “Our entire budget [inaudible].”

Ms. Powers – “It’s a very similar system to what Fort Kent currently has, and, I have put in for a grant for that as well but there’s no guarantee. It’s a Federal Grant, so it’s all across the country that has put in for the grant.”

Mrs. Libby – “And, that’s the Emergency Management line, the EMS line?”

Ms. Powers – “Emergency Management line. Yes, the E01065510.”

Mrs. Libby – “Okay. And then the EMS Expense?”

Ms. Powers – “Oh, so the difference between EMS Expenses and Medical Expenses, Cody, do you wanna?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “So Medical Expenses line, Medical Expenses is expenses for our staff, they have two fit testing they have to do, TB testing, COVID testing, any kind of medical costs for our staff. EMS Expenses are expenses for the EMS service, restocking ambulances, and anything related to the costs from the EMS Service that it was different in previous budgets, but we tried to separate those to clarify costs.”

Ms. Powers – “If you remember last year, everything was combined and now we’ve separated it so you can see more directly where those funds are going to.”

Mr. Pelletier – “I was talking to a previous Council member and as far as billing goes, like, towards a patient, if you pick up a patient, take that patient to the hospital, whatever you use on that patient in the process of picking them up and dropping them off, we have to pay for that, taxpayers pay for those, those products, because it was explained to me was you relayed that information to the hospital, the hospital charges their insurance company for those, consumables we’ll call them.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “That is how EMS billing used to be done years ago. Medicare and centers for Medicaid and Medicare services changed the way ambulance billing was done several years, at least eight years ago, we can’t bill for individual items. It used to be an itemized list. If I used five IVs trying to get your IV, we could bill for each, all five of them, now it’s a level of care, so when I talked earlier about trying to provide the highest level of care, if we provide a basic life support service, which would be an EMT Basic, there’s a set amount of money we charge, regardless of what we do on call, if we provide an Advanced EMT, there’s a certain amount of money we can charge for that call, if I provide a Paramedic, that we can charge X amount of dollars depending on the level of care on the ambulance, and the only fixed amount we charge is the amount we charge for mileage and you can only charge loaded miles. So, we can only charge from where we take, pick up the patient to the hospital for mileage and then our additional cost is per license level. So, again, it now, it doesn’t matter if I use 100 IV needles trying to get

your IV or if I use one, it's still whatever that set amount is that we bill. And then, we submit it to insurance, that's why we paid this billing company. They fight to get us the most of what we bill and their average is 80 to 85, depending on the month, every month. Sometimes they can get 90, sometimes they can get 80."

Mrs. Libby – "So, what is the highest level, did you say?"

Deputy Chief Fenderson – "Paramedic. So, it's CMS, Center for Medicare Medicare services, it's a BLS. So, there's BLS Emergency, BLS Transport, ALS 1 Emergency, ALS 1 Transport and ALS 2. So, ALS 2 is you can only get that from a Paramedic care, it's doing multiple drugs, or doing specialty, like, intubations or if I use an I O needle, and then the ALS 1 is like, an Advanced EMT can get that, but ALS 1 is the majority of our, our calls. Whether it be Paramedic or Advanced EMT, but they usually fall into ALS 1."

Ms. Powers – "Thank you."

Mr. Pelletier – "So, the EMS loan, was that, is that a loan that we're paying back, Andrea?"

Ms. Powers – "It is, yes."

Mr. Pelletier – "It is, okay."

Mrs. Libby – "So, I hate to pick at Reserve Accounts, and I know, I do it every single year, so you probably know what's coming, but I don't know how else to look for a way to save other than to look at those types of accounts, because, the services we have to pay for, and I want to be able to fund them so that you can do your job adequately and people can get paid what they should get paid. So, when I look at where expenses can be cut, I look at these as a savings account, you know, you, you pay your bills and then you put what you can into a savings account. So, if we have to look to cut, that's where I'm recommending, so maybe if you can look at what you can cut there, that would be, I know, I know, that you, that sometimes we can't cut any of those, but if there is."

Deputy Chief Fenderson – "If, if you look at, compared to the last one, I did cut our Education/Training Reserve. If you guys are able to fund my Education and Training Budget line item, then I, I should be able to manage to get the training stuff I need without, without the Reserve for that. The other line items, the EMS Expenses, the Truck Reserve, the SCBA replacement, those three specifically are, are very large ticket things. We just had a big conversation about why the Library doesn't have Reserves for their roof and why we didn't plan for it, for over 30 years. The life expectancy of our equipment, if it was new today divided by the life expectancy, then those are the amounts that we need to put into Reserves. We don't have there, the things we have, other than our ambulances are at the, at and beyond the end of their life expectancy."

Mrs. Libby – "Which three were the three you said?"

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “The SCBA replacement, the, I forgot what it’s called, Fire Truck Replacement, and the EMS, it’s the one that doesn’t have a line item assigned to it.”

Mrs. Libby – “Oh, okay, yup.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “We don’t have that yet, EMS equipment [inaudible]. So, those, those are very important for us to start planning now, so we don’t have to be in such a heated debate when the time comes to replace them, or have to take out large loans, like we did to start the service, because that’s a recurring expense, but if we save a little bit, like we all just talked about the Library had to think ahead and save a little bit now. It’s, it’s less we’re going to have to spend. I totally understand what you’re saying and I will do work with you guys, however, you want me to run the budget. I presented you, the budget at the minimum amount that’s safe for the Department, so I will take whatever suggestions you guys want and we will do that, but just, just remember, if we cut those, I will be coming to you not, not very long from now, and telling you I need a \$500,000 Fire Truck because ours can’t get out of the Bay and we can’t get the one behind it out, because the front one’s broken.”

Mrs. McGillan – “So, where’s, you got a maintenance budget, right?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “Right.”

Mrs. McGillan – “So do you maintain these equip, pieces of equipment?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “As I mentioned”

Mrs. McGillan – “I mean, we do. We have a maintenance budget, where at our business and we maintain our equipment and we’ve got loaders that are still working and your stuff doesn’t go out half as much as mine does, especially in the winter, and there’s got to be some place there where that maintenance budget and should be able to take care of this stuff for a while, so that this Reserve does not have to be so high.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “So, the price of one Fire Truck is \$400,000.”

Ms. Powers – “475,00 For Public Pumper, and if we were to get a grant for that we would have to match that by 45%, which means, we would have to have \$213,750 in the, in the Reserve and we currently only have \$76,784 with Fire Truck Replacement Reserve.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “So, when we talk about Maintenance Budget, as three, at least three of you remember from last year, we talked about why we can’t cut the Maintenance Budget, if you look at your chart, you’ll see it’s the same as last year, and we talked about how inflation is astronomical. I’m going to spend my entire Maintenance Budget this year, which means that next year, I’m going to spend it all and not have enough. We do the best we can to maintain the things we have, that’s why they’re still currently running and I haven’t come to you and said I need a \$500,000 or \$400,000 Fire Truck. But, I want you all to remember, other than our ambulances, every other piece has, and the Power Truck, so that, and the ambulances and the Power Truck are the only two pieces of equipment that are still inside their expected working life. The only reason we can still use them is because the Department was a Volunteer

Department, so there's a, required by law, of things we have to do with the trucks, testing them, using them, it's different for a Part-Time or a Volunteer Department versus a Career Department. When we moved to Career, it's a lot more use and testing of the truck and that is required by law. We can't not do it, so that it, we're not going to get the same usage out of new trucks as we did with the ones we have now because they're going to need to be checked more often and used more often, and if that had been done all along, you might have gotten ahead of some of the problems that have come up now. So, we do have a Maintenance Budget, we do maintain the best we can, which is why I'm not asking you for \$500,000 for a brand new fire truck. But I am asking you to think ahead so I don't have to ask you for \$500,000."

Mrs. Libby – "Right. And, how much did you say is currently in the Reserve?"

Ms. Powers – "\$76,784."

Mrs. Libby – "Okay, yeah, and, honestly, I hate asking these questions, but everybody seems to have a complaint about the budget, so somebody's going to try and figure out a solution, and if I have to ask these questions, I'm sorry, but it has to be done."

Mr. Johnson – "I was just curious, somebody had just mentioned a few minutes ago, there's a, are there outstanding loans on"

Mrs. Libby – "On the ambulance."

Mr. Johnson – "On the ambulance, and what is the total amount? I know that we have, or is it reflected in this, this, is this our repayment we plan on the next couple of years, or is that reflected as like, total repayment in here over the next year or two?"

Ms. Powers – "It's own to lease and that's our, these are our payments."

Mr. Johnson – "These are our payments, so what's the outstanding loans amount that we have on top of this, that if we were to pay it off, if we had cash, we could, you know, what would be the outstanding amount total?"

Ms. Powers – "We don't normally do that because that's why we're here having these conversations, that if we were to, if we could have paid for those outright and not had to have done that, we would have, but we just simply, in 2019, could not afford, or, or, wanted to raise the Mil Rate enough to, to make that happen."

Mr. Johnson – "Well, this would be a low reflection, right? I mean, because there's an outstanding loan amount that would be, I mean, not reflected in a clean budget for the year. I'm just wondering what those numbers are."

Ms. Powers – "I can get those for you."

Mr. Johnson – "Okay, cool."

Mr. Pelletier – “So, so there’s a hundred thousand dollars here says Fire Truck Replacement, is that for Fire Truck Bumper or Tanker or what is that?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “That is for any truck that needs replaced. I’d love to tell which one is gonna go first. [inaudible] It’s gonna cover anything we need.”

Danielle Cote – “Quick question, Cody, your figurative number 500,000, is that new or used?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “That is new with a life expectancy of 30 years.”

Ms. Cote – “Of the 30 years. Okay. Very good.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “If you purchased a, it’s called a custom cab but everyone thinks that it’s a Fire Truck [inaudible] those are probably 375,000.”

Mrs. Libby – “I don’t know, I just need to ask, but do you guys have any like, recommendations? Because I feel like I’m asking a lot of questions, and there’s a lot of like, stuff that goes on and talk that goes on, but nobody else has recommendations, so, I just need to.”

Mr. Levesque – “Maybe the Advisory Board will come up with some for you.”

Mrs. Libby – “Yeah, but like what was stated, they don’t have a lot of time either, so, we’ve gotta figure something out.”

Ms. Cote – “If I could comment on that, Melissa? Janet made a comment of the maintenance and Cody mentioned that on the Volunteer Department, the trucks sit there, and you made mention that your trucks are out constantly, which I see your truck constantly. A truck sitting there, sometimes is its own worst enemy. Okay, Dad’s truck, Firefighter’s daughter here, Dad’s truck has not moved out of Fire Station number two in Madawaska in over six months. When they went to go look at it, it had the hardest time starting.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Now, there’s the Maintenance part that comes in. We know those are sitting, we need to get them out and moving and keep them running.”

Ms. Cote – “Then, you’re looking at your fuel expense.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Well, it doesn’t take that long to get them out and running and rip them back in just to get the fuels running through them so the hoses aren’t cracking, and all that, because they being used. So, now, somebody’s on duty, they’re not using that truck, they should be doing something.”

Ms. Powers – “So that’s, that’s what DC was referring to. They have weeklies and dailies that they have to do by law every day. So, those vehicles that we currently have are vehicles that were part of the Volunteer, Paid-On-Call and that’s why they are so outdated and beyond their use, because they did sit for periods of times, for years sometimes, before they were used.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “For 19 of the 20 years of their expected life, they were required to be checked once a month, and now they are required to be checked daily.”

Ms. Powers – “So that’s the issue that we’re running into, is that we have vehicles that are past their life use for safe, safety reasons, but we’re still using them, the best that we can with the Maintenance Budget that we have, in order to make sure that they are functioning for our staff to be able to do their services.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Now, is there a refurbishing outfit that does Fire Trucks that can refurbish them?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “You can’t refurbish a commercial cab. You can refurbish a custom cab and they can remount and update it, but when it comes to a commercial cab, you’re talking about just taking the body off and putting a new chassis underneath it, and it’s, at that point, it’s almost the same price as buying a new commercial cab one, because I’m sure you all hear about firefighting foam and how unhealthy it is for people, it’s also unhealthy for the truck and when it sits, again with a Volunteer Department that is only required to chock it monthly, those foam systems break down and start leaking into the truck and that starts deteriorating the whole truck so, it’s a, as the lady in the back mentioned, that sitting is the worst thing for it. And, unfortunately, when you have a Volunteer Department, you can’t get over to it every day like, like we’re able to do now, and we’re doing the best we can to try to fix those things that come up. The problem is, when we got those trucks, they weren’t, they had budget issues then too is the best way to talk, to address that, so we took something that was maybe closer to the bottom of the barrel and we’ve used it beyond its life. You can’t really refurbish something that was never intended to be refurbished, because it was bottom of the barrel to start with. Again, they’ve been useful trucks, we’ve gotten their expected service life out of them, we’re continuing to use them as best we can, and use our maintenance budget to keep them going, but it only goes so long before there’s critical failures that are just so cost, costly that it doesn’t make any sense to make repair.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Kevin, did you have something to add?”

Mr. Bouchard – “No. I have a question. We’ve heard the term by law a couple times, what law are you talking about?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “Maine Bureau of Labor.”

Mr. Bouchard – “Bureau of Labor regulates your equipment?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “Bureau of Labor regulates our required equipment checks. So every time there’s a Bureau of Labor stand, evaluation, we have to show them the records of our daily checks, our weekly checks. They’ll pick random employees and ask them to perform a daily or weekly check for them on whatever piece of equipment they want, whether that be a Fire apparatus or a breathing apparatus, they’ll pick any employee that’s there at random to demonstrate those skills and then they’ll come to us to show them the paperwork that shows that we’ve been doing it.”

Ms. Powers – “OSHA, Safety Works, those types of [inaudible]”

Mr. Bouchard – “I was just curious because Bureau of Labor does not sound like someone that’s gonna deal with EMS.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “Well yes, this is Fire related, anything EMS related is required by Maine EMS rules and the law that [inaudible].”

Ms. Powers – “We’re combining services so. But, but each one of those services has its own.”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “And, Bureau of Labor does do some things with EMS, but Maine EMS is the governing board for anything related to EMS.”

Mr. Bouchard – “And, Maine EMS is part of the State of Maine?”

Deputy Chief Fenderson – “Correct. They are the governing agency of every EMS service in the State of Maine and the licensing.”

Mr. Bouchard – “Thank you.”

Ms. Powers – “Thank you. Any other questions?”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Thank you.”

Ms. Powers – “Tab number seven. Oh, sorry, tab number six, Public Works. And Councilors, please remember, as things change, as new information is given to us from the people that we get our fuel from, that we get sand, salt and sand, all these things, they can change until we get to the point where we have to vote on budget and it is what it is at that point, and we have to do the best to project where those costs are going to be. I really hope that we see a decrease in fuel, diesel and gas, but I’m not certain that’s going to happen, since it’s at 6.29 right now.”

Mr. Pelletier – “Don’t look good.”

Ms. Powers – “And projected to be over seven by next month, so.”

Mr. Butler – “Now, the vehicle fuel and lubricants, is that for just highway or is that for all the Departments, for the Police Department.”

Director Hanson – “Good evening, Council. The amount that you see in our budget is for our Department alone.

Mr. Butler – “Okay.”

Director Hanson – “That does include maintenance for the fuel system that’s, that’s all under us. I just did a four-year average. We use 25,000 gallons of fuel, some years it’s been as high as 29, some years as low as 21 but it averages out pretty easy. We averaged it at five dollars a gallon, we’re currently over that,

the majority of what we use is diesel. You know, we're seeing projections of possibly over seven dollars a gallon throughout the summer, you know, I'm, I'm really hoping that it averages out back closer to five, but at 25,000 gallons, that's just a real-world number there, that's \$25,000."

Mr. Kilcollins – "So, your Parts/Repairs, access on your freight, that number, you're comfortable with that number? To me, to me in the works that I do, that number is kind of scary, could be. Not scary high, scary low."

Director Hanson – "The way things are going, Councilors, I'm not comfortable with any of these numbers. It's, it's, we're in uncharted territories. And, know, something as simple as a brake rotor, that we were getting last year for \$50 is right now \$100. You know, we do have some flexibility there, we have some parts on hand we've saved our used trucks so we could rehash every part that we have. We're pretty resourceful when it come to that. I, I don't feel great about the number, but I, I, I do feel that we can get through."

Mr. Kilcollins – "You can make that work."

Director Hanson – "We can get through. Yes, Sir. That's all we're doing is getting through."

Mr. Pelletier – "I have to agree with you, I do. I, I know numbers when it comes to this stuff too, and to me it seems a little bit low, so."

Mr. Bouchard – "He'd probably take more, if you'd give him more."

[laughter]

Director Hanson – "Now, we've had that discussion and again, this is why we have Reserves, right, you know, like, we don't know what's going to happen in the very near future. We've got some global issues that are really affecting what's going on today, you know, hopefully in a few months things will moderate, you know, we hope isn't gonna get us through, but again, it's why we have Reserves, we can dip into that if we really get into a crunch, you know. Town Manager and I talked the other day, you know, it, it's irresponsible to under budget, but you also never want to go into a budget planning for 50% inflation, I mean, that's irresponsible as well because our budget's just gonna keep skyrocketing. It's, it's a tough situation."

Mr. Kilcollins – "So, looking at your Parts and Repairs for, like, your 2021 budget, that's been moderate to be accurate, not much oversight on it."

Director Hanson – "Yeah, it, it's really changed. The majority of the changes as you know, it has taken place in the last two to three months. If, if, if there's anything on that, that is really low, it's, it's Paving Reserves."

Mr. Butler – "I don't get my sidewalks again this year."

Director Hanson – “No, Sir. A real number for Paving Reserves right now would be somewhere between 800,000 and a million dollars a year, to get us back where we need to be, and then the real number after that would be, depending on paving costs, around four to five hundred thousand a year. Just to keep our, keep ourselves in a ten-year rotation. The Council has heard over years past that, that they were on a ten-year rotation. You have 80 miles of road, you have to pave eight miles a year to be on a ten-year rotation. It’s just as simple as that. And, if you look back through history, the Town has paved .29. .59 miles, that’s not a ten-year rotation.”

Mr. Pelletier – “How many miles of road do we have, Darren?”

Director Hanson – “80 Miles.”

Mr. Pelletier – “We do have 80 miles, wow.”

Director Hanson – “80 Miles of paved.”

Ms. Powers – “Our Paving Reserves is at 225, \$225,083.93. We should be at 800,000.”

Director Hanson – “Yeah, I’ve recommended the last eight years, every year that we, we put away a hundred thousand. I, I think we got 70,000 one year, majority of the years it’s been around 30 to 35,000, hasn’t kept up, and again, what we would’ve done three years ago at \$68 a ton, this year its going to be north of a hundred.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Oh yeah.”

Director Hanson – “So doing anything this year, although the roads need it terribly bad, would be irresponsible.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “No, I can’t pick on anything on that budget that you’ve got. It’s very well written”

Mr. Pelletier – “It is what it is.”

Director Hanson – “Thank you.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Thank you.”

Ms. Powers – “Tab seven. We’ll do the Admin first.”

Mrs. Libby – “There’s only one Reserve line for this one, is that correct?”

Ms. Powers – “Yes. I did not request the additional Reserves for Admin Reserves, Undesignated, any of those this year. [inaudible] Our Admin Reserves has \$257,323 left. I mean, if we were on a schedule with that, we should put \$25,000 in there. But, we’re only asking for 10,000 in Reserves. So, Admin includes Town Office, Town Clerk, Code Enforcement, Assessing, Tax Collector, Community Development.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Did we add another person in the Town Office?”

Ms. Powers – “We did, yep.”

Mrs. McGillan – “Full-time?”

Ms. Powers – “Full-time.”

Ms. Cote – “And the Education and Training line is accurate for that new training, Ms Powers?”

Ms. Powers – “So, we are doing and taking as many of those trainings that are free and online, so that we are not sending any of our staff outside to do that.”

Ms. Cote – “To Augusta, okay”

Ms. Powers – “There are a few that have, I mean, MMA makes us pay for them, that’s good because we are members of MMA our cost is a lot less than if we were not. And, there is a lot of supplemental trainings that they can do as well. It’s not what we would like to do, but considering, for this year, we thought it was best to stay inside.”

Ms. Cote – “Nope, just double checking. I’m sorry to bug you again, Ms. Powers. The General Assistance line, is that what you expect out of your expenditures, or is that the actual General Assistance Budget?”

Ms. Powers – “So, yes. So, we, that is what we see, generally. We don’t anticipate, I mean, even during COVID, we didn’t have any jump in General Assistance. [inaudible] But, we generally don’t see a lot of that here.”

Ms. Cote – “That’s not a bad thing.”

Mr. Bouchard – “I suspect she’s from the Valley and she thinks this is a low number.”

Ms. Cote – “That is a low number.”

Mr. Bouchard – “I’m from the Valley, too, so.”

Ms. Cote – “My budget had an extra zero in it, so. Yeah, yes, yeah, that’s, that’s nothing.”

[inaudible chatter in the crowd]

Mrs. Libby – “I don’t have any questions on that one.”

Ms. Powers – “Okay, so if we move on to, the same tab, the Festival Expense, And then your income is directly behind it. So you’ll notice that the income has increased from last Public Budget Hearing to this

one, we went through, the Director and I, we went through currently what we have that has come in, and we were able to base that off of the projected budget for, because if you remember, our Festival falls in between two budget years, so it sort of gives us a little better idea of where we're at for the following fiscal year."

Mrs. Libby – "Do you know what the Reserves on this one are used for?"

Ms. Powers – "Yes. So, we this year, we used them for the picnic tables, next year is the anticipation of the staging. And Cheryl Boulier, our Director, was able to get us all of the umbrellas for the picnic tables were donated, and then, we just purchased the picnic tables. And, speaking of the Festival, for the Rec Department, we have already started the process of the fundraising for the playground, we have found a donor for the tickets that you will be purchasing to raise funds for the playground, and we're doing a potato barrel, guess how many potatoes are in the barrel, so those have been donated by the Blackstone Farm Family [inaudible]."

Mrs. Libby – "So, just to be nitpicky at the budget, the only thing that I see is, I know it's, like, a special year for the Festival, but, we have an increase of \$4,000 on Fireworks. So, just, I mean, our fireworks are always really, really nice."

Ms. Powers – "That's actually, so last year, we didn't do the full amount in that year, we separated it out, so it's actually, the, the amount was 70,000, 7,000..."

Mrs. Leighton – "Last year, was 7500."

Ms. Powers – "7500. So it's a thousand dollar increase."

Mrs. Libby – "Okay."

Ms. Powers – "And, it's more reflected but we were still working off of COVID. So that's why it looks like."

Mrs. Libby – "Right. That's a little bit more."

Mr. Levesque – "And it's paid in split years. The rate increase went up, wasn't caught in the first year."

Mrs. Libby – "Okay."

Ms. Powers – "So now we have to catch it."

Mr. Bouchard – "So, budget in net cost in the community is 3775. Expense minus income."

Ms. Powers – "So, our income exceeds our expense."

Mr. Bouchard – "Oh, really? You must have different sheets than I do."

Ms. Powers – “Oh, well that’s if they funded [inaudible]. Without the Reserve, it exceeds, the income exceeds the expense with the Reserve.”

Mr. Levesque – “And she’s still seeking sponsors.”

Ms. Powers – “Correct, and that income number may change even before the May Council Meeting. So we, we updated as of”

Mr. Bouchard – “That wasn’t a criticism, it was just there’s not a lot of money, there’s not a lot of net dollars coming out of taxpayers [inaudible].”

Ms. Powers – “Correct. Generally, what we try to do, is make sure that the income is at or exceeds Festival cost, and in this year, it is very difficult to make that happen. But, we are still striving to do that, so. Cheryl is still seek out sponsorships. And, I really hope Council will fund this, because we really need this.”

Mrs. Libby – “What’s the full cost of that staging? Is it the 10,000?”

Ms. Powers – “So, you know, the original cost this past, past year, when we ordered it, was 16,000, and we have in the Reserve Account, I’m sorry, I think it’s 21, oh, \$21,409.78 currently. But, that was before COVID and then our product never showed up. Thankfully, they never charged us for it, so, and that was at a little over 16,000 then, but now, it’s gone up to 24,500 for the same staging, just two years later. And, it’s staging that can be used for all different things not just for Festival, that’s why we looked at it. The Rec Department can use it [inaudible]. But, we haven’t ordered anything yet, we’re waiting on [inaudible]. Any questions on that? Okay, so tab eight, Other Expenses and Unclassifieds. Our Other Expenses would be Community Center, which is our heating oil and our coal, utilities, building repairs, and the bond payment. This is our last year for that bond payment.”

Mr. Towle – “I just got a question.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “Yes, Tom.”

Mr. Towle – “Okay. Did I hear Kevin mention earlier that there was repairs being done on his Department Budget, or was it, is that coming from the Community Center Budget?”

Ms. Powers – “Say again?”

Mr. Towle – “Did I hear Kevin say earlier that repair money was coming from the Rec Department Budget to repair steps out front?”

Ms. Powers – “No, I think you heard the conversation about a grant.”

Mr. Senal – “Part of that could be useful, but yeah.”

Mr. Towle – “Okay, so this is two different sets of monies to fix the steps. Did I miss something?”

Mr. Senal – “Nope.”

Ms. Powers – “Go ahead, Darren.”

Director Hanson – “We, we’ve made a recommendation that each Department that shares this building put away \$5,000 a year into a Reserve Account to help fund to the maintenance of the building. We have a Fire Department that has certain needs, a PD that has certain needs, Rec has certain needs.”

Mr. Towle – “Right. Okay. Thank you.”

Ms. Powers – “And the Town.”

Director Hanson – “And the Town.”

Mrs. Durepo – “So there’s four, you have four different Departments breaking down expenses on this building?”

Mr. Senal – “In the Community Center.”

Director Hanson – “Yes, Ma’am.”

Ms. Powers – “Yes.”

Director Hanson – “Repair expenses, the heating and whatnot is paid for just out of Town Office Budget, is that correct Ms. Powers?”

Ms. Powers – “That is correct.”

Mrs. McGillan – “So, we’re putting 20,000 away for the building, this joint building?”

Ms. Powers – “We do. Yes. And, we have a roof that leaks every year, and we know that we’re getting close to the point where that will have to be, not repaired, but redone. And, so, we’re incrementally putting aside for that, but if the cost of materials and labor continues to go up, we may have to get a bit more aggressive, 23/24, 24/25.”

Mrs. Libby – “And these steps out here as well?”

Ms. Powers – “Yes. [inaudible] Yeah, so, this section, that we’re on right now, was the part that was built on, and then of course, the armory section over here, and then putting the [inaudible].”

Director Hanson – “Unfortunately, this new section had no underlayment, there’s no ice water shield or anything, so every time you get a. just a small ice dam build up, which we do have frequently, we have leakage. And, I suspect, when we peel the roof off to have it replaced, we’ll see damage [inaudible].”

Mr. Bouchard – “Under [inaudible] sanitation budget, that’s with Fire?”

Ms. Powers – “Public Fire? Fire hydrants. So, that’s the costs we incur, regardless of”

Mr. Bouchard – “I, I, her father was a Fire Chief, my father was a Fire Chief, I understand that. I assume we get that at the Utilities District.”

Ms. Powers – “Yes.”

Mrs. Libby – “And we were going to speak to AWS about”

Ms. Powers – “I did.”

Mrs. Libby – “Do we have?”

Ms. Powers – “We have come to a definite agreement and understanding that, yes, that income level has to be raised, and it’s reflected in the, not in the expense side, but on the income side. Consolidated Income, you’ll see it.”

Mr. Butler – “The insurance is going up \$30,000?”

Ms. Powers – “Yes, Sir. Any questions on the Unclassifieds, the Outside Agencies? Any questions on the Unclassifieds? So, if you want to, again, we can look at the Consolidated Expenses on tab eleven. I would just like to reiterate. Ten is the [inaudible]. Consolidated Expenses, the first information that was shared this evening with the Budget amounts, so what you’re looking at here with, including all Total Unclassifieds and Other Expenses. All Total Expenditures would be \$7,835,134. We are asking for Reserves of 510,000 for a total of \$8,345,134 and again that includes the, the \$2,203,432 from the School and the \$277,209 from the County, and that’s what gives us that total. And then, our revenues are \$6,325,908, so that’s what leaves us the excess of the [inaudible]. And this covers everything that we discussed.”

Mr. Butler – “The MSAD 20, you got 22, 22 million, now does that mean 2,200,000?”

Ms. Powers – “\$2,203,234 is what the School will be asking for at their budget meeting next week, is Thursday, sir? Tuesday, sorry, Tuesday the 10th.”

Mr. Martin – “That’s not for public, that’s the School Board vote.”

Ms. Powers – “Right. Not the Town. Not the School’s meeting, that’s the School Boards vote on what to do with this budget that they’ve proposed.”

Mr. Butler – “And, and the State recommends?”

Ms. Powers – “So in order for the School to receive their funds from the State, we have to put our portion of that in, and that is \$1,199,781.66. They, in order to receive their additional \$4,538,673.46, which is 79% of the 100 percent of the EPS for the School, we, we have to fund it, it’s State law, we have to fund that, we do not, we can’t do anything about that. Whatever that comes to, that’s what we have to fund. The difference is that they have an excess in order to fund their budgets and that’s the additional that they’re asking for from us that makes up the \$2,203,432.”

Mr. Butler – “So, they’re, they’re asking more, than the state would recommend?”

Ms. Powers – “So they’re, they’re asking, yes, to fund their budget, what, what their budget comes to, similar to our budget, they need the additional amount from the Town to, to fund that budget to make that budget work for them.”

Mrs. Libby – “And, the Town has to pay that amount.”

Ms. Powers – “If they’ve voted on it.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “If it’s voted on, right.”

Mrs. Libby – “And that’s not the vote that’s coming?”

Mr. Martin – “Well, the School Board is voting on their budget.”

Ms. Powers – “No. It’s the School Board’s proposal next week.”

Mr. Martin – “That would be the Budget Hearing.”

Mrs. Libby – “Oh, I was thinking, like, the School’s Budget that they’re voting on.”

Ms. Powers – “And, may I ask you a question?”

Mr. Martin – “I’ll do the best I can.”

Ms. Powers – “Did you, did you hear that the Legislature is funding the 55% of 100%? So they are. So, that would be why they are only, because if you run the numbers, it actually comes out to \$2,804,381.54. So, there’s 600,949.54 that the State is also going to fund for the School, if we do our part and pay into the School. So, rather than hand us a bill for \$2,804,381, it’s \$2,203,432.”

Mr. Martin – “You could ask for the additional local that the School has asked for. Mr. Doak can provide that to you and see what that has been over the last few years.”

Ms. Powers – “Yes. And I, I had last year’s and this year’s in [inaudible].”

Mrs. Durepo – “So, when is the School Budget Meeting?”

Mr. Martin – “The School Board meets on the 10th to make their decision. I don’t know, I don’t believe that we’ll probably set that hearing date at that time. Sorry for confusing you. Usually in June, actually I think he’s probably gonna try to do it sooner than that, probably in May.”

Ms. Powers – “Any, any questions on that? No? Okay. And, so, eleven is the Consolidated Income and you’ll notice there’s a few changes there, additional changes. And it, also Councilors have been stated that the Municipal Revenue Sharing is anticipated to be fully funded at the five percent, instead of two and a half percent. The increments, the two and a half percent, then the three percent and five percent, they, they agreed to the five percent. But, that number that you’re looking at there, the \$905,807 is not, it’s not really a permanent number until September and sometimes even in October it’s changed, but that’s, it’s, it’s not permanent yet. That’s, that’s the number they gave us in March. I check it like a stock. Any questions on Income? The, if Council has no more questions, the next time we’ll meet about the Budget will be the May Council Meeting, May 18th at 6 PM here in the Council Chambers.”

Mr. Towle – “If this budget was accepted [inaudible] tonight, and we’re looking at a two million dollar deficit, my first question is, today, this is a Tony question again, but today, what does one mil raise?”

Ms. Powers – “So, we can’t give that either, until we have.”

Mr. Towle – “But today’s year, today, this budget.”

Ms. Powers – “On the 19.5 Mil Rate?”

Mr. Towle – “How much money does one mil raise?”

Mr. Levesque – “185,000.”

Mr. Towle – “Yes. Thank you. If”

Mr. Levesque – “How’d you know I’d know that?”

Mr. Towle – “Because you and I both know that. If that’d be the case and we’re looking at a \$2 million deficit. And, I’m going to do rough math in my head that says about 10 mils.”

Ms. Powers – “No.”

Mr. Towle – “Today just, I’m trying to get a handle on what we’re talking about the numbers, if I could.”

Ms. Powers – “Right. Yeah.”

Mr. Towle – “Based on today’s Mil, what it raises, and if you, let’s take a look at a 10 Mil, for instance, we’re looking at less than \$2 million being raised. Today, using today’s Mil numbers, okay, and I think it

was stated earlier, that the State will only allow us to raise so many Mills per year, so let's say that the, the State says you know we, you can't raise 10 Mills. That's too much. And, this budget is already approved, the Mil rate is not set until October, and all of a sudden we're able to raise 25 Mills and we need that additional money to make up the difference in deficit. Is there a plan, as to where that money is going to come from at this time?"

Ms. Powers – “So, that's not quite how that, how that works. So, again, like I said, the Municipal Tax Rate Calculation Standard Form comes from the State. That changes ever year, so your Mil for this fiscal year does not match your mil for next year, period, it just doesn't. Unless everything stays exactly the same, we would be looking at 19 and a half Mills, we would be looking at the same numbers, nothing would change, but because everything changes from year to year we can't base it on that. So, rough calculations, which is what I said last meeting, last week, when it was said that we'd be raising it by 31 Mills, that was the statement that was made, that's, that I can't imagine anybody having a Mil Rate over 40 Mills, anyway, I mean that would be an excessively expensive tax. However, in running those numbers based on the State and all the information that we have, if nothing changes moving forward to June, I mean, we could be looking at a 26 Mil Rat at the high end of the Mil Rate, not 31, not 42, not 50, which has also been stated, so that's, that's where that lies. And, it's doing a rough Calculation in you head, versus all of the information that you have in order to configure a Mil Rate, a lot of things get left out when you're doing that, so there are things that are taken into place here, taxable valuation, exempt value, homestead, BETE. Statutory Standard Reimbursements, there's County Tax, Municipal Appropriation, tip financing, local education, total assessments, anticipated State Municipal Revenue Sharing, all other Revenues and then it's all calculated into a formula by the State and that, I could, I do math quite well, and I could never do this in my head. It's a formula that comes directly from the State, so when you have an excess that is your, that's your taxes, that's your tax money being used to, to help supplement those costs, and so that's, that's what that comes from. So the statement, how do you plan to pay for that?, It is paid for in taxes, that's, that's why we do this. This is why we, we have the budget hearings and why we discuss budget for many months, many weeks, many months prior to Council voting on the budget in June. That's where that money comes from, and Council will, they have a lot to decide on, now that they've heard all the information, now that they've seen everything that's presented to them from County, from the School, and from the Municipal side of it, the May Council Meeting is where they really start looking at and deciding on where to move forward, where to cut back, where to, you know, what to fund, what not to fund. That's where that decision process gets taken into account, because a lot changes between now and when the June Council Meeting comes to, and then, from June to September, once we've even already set the budget, there's things that change at the State level as well. I'm hopeful that they will change for the better for us, just given the discussion of the Legislature level and their willingness to find a lot of things that they, they have been pulling back on because of COVID and now they're willing to fund because of COVID. So, I, this is not permanent. This is, of course, what we've presented and, again, we'll have lots more discussions on what that looks like moving forward. But, yeah, it's, it's just saying, you know, 185,000 and then, and doing the Mil Rate that way, it, it really isn't supplemental to what we do with the formula that comes from the State, so it changes, I mean it changes here, we don't have the Taxable Valuation yet. We don't have any of that stuff, so those numbers are going to change here as well. That's why I do not like to give a predicted Mil Rate when we do this in May and June because that, that will change based on the numbers that we get back from the state. But,

currently, right now, if everything stays where it's at, what's been presented, that, that would be the highest Mil Rate."

Mr. Johnson – "But that won't cover it. I mean, I mean, it would have to go up the year after, because the State only allows us to go up so much, right?"

Ms. Powers – "No. According to the State, that this more than covers. We would have an overlay of \$264,933.89, and you always want an overlay when you do your Mil Rate, so that you don't run into the risk of having to do a supplemental tax bill."

Mr. Levesque – "Ms. Powers, can I explain? There's a little bit of a [inaudible] and Tom may have misunderstood how it was presented. The form that we get for the Municipal calculation, the form is presented by the State, based on information provided by the State and the local being done. It gives you a maximum amount and a minimum amount yield from the Mil Rate, but there's no magic number that says we can only go up two Mills or we can only go up four Mills. It tells you what your maximum is and what your bottom is. If you have a reval, like we did, right?, we bottomed out 7 Mills, 7, 8 Mills."

Mr. Towle – "I misunderstood because I thought the statement was that we could only raise our Mil Rate a certain amount. I misunderstood that."

Mr. Levesque – "That's okay. That form gives you a maximum and a bottom, there's no number range, it's a percentage of the Mil Rate."

Mr. Towle – "Is it safe to assume, Mr. Levesque, that, that Mil Rate is basically the Town's valuation, drop three zeros, does that typically raise one Mil each year?"

Mr. Levesque – "No. Well, yes. One Mil per value but the issue is much [inaudible]. I'm not here to debate. I'm here work in the work session."

Mr. Kilcollins – "Thank you, Tony."

Mr. Johnson – "But based on this data, 3.7 million is what we paid this year in taxes as a whole pound, and that's gonna to go up to about 5., 5.8, right? So, so, so, I mean, the, the overall amount that each individual person is gonna have to pay goes up a huge percentage, it has to regardless of what the Mil Rate is and how land is valued in the, the magic number system, the State number system, it's still going up by like, like a giant percentage, right? Because we, because it says right here it was 3.7 million is what we collected in taxes and this year with the \$2 million shortfall, it's gonna be, or 2.1 million shortfall it's gonna be that much more. So, yeah, there would be some, some flexibility, but that still means, right? I mean, taxpayers are gonna pay that much more unless, like, we've got a Wal-Mart or something, right?"

Ms. Powers – "So, to break that down even further for you, this year, commitment for us, is \$3,626,942 at 19.5 Mills, based on the final budgets, the County Tax was \$267,563, the School's was \$2,142,385, and the Municipal part, the Municipal portion of that \$3.6 million was \$1,216,994."

Mr. Butler – “Which, if you look at Mils, and that’s what a lot of people look at, the School would be 11.52 Mils, the Town will be 6.54 Mils and the County would be 1.44 Mils.”

Mr. Johnson – “What percentage of that 2.1 million then would be, you don’t know. That’s where the”

Mr. Butler – “Well, of the total of the Mil Rate last year, 59.0 percent of zero seven percent went to the School, MSAD 20.”

Ms. Powers – “Yes. Oh, you mean for Fiscal year 23, 22/23?”

Mr. Johnson – “Yeah, Yeah, predict it.”

Ms. Powers – “I can’t. I can’t break that down yet until we have final numbers from the School and final numbers from the Town, and then I can.”

Mr. Johnson – “But it looks like, roughly, like, oh, okay, alright.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “I want to thank everybody, unless anybody else has anything to add. We’ll make it work, we’ll make it work. We’ve got a lot of good people on it and I feel with the effort we can, we can all put this together and make it work for another year. Well, thank you everybody for showing up and we’ll meet again at our next Council meeting.”