

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 23, 2022
Preston Town Hall - Lower Level**

Call to Order - Sandra Allyn-Gauthier called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier
Jerry Grabarek
Ken Zachem

Also Present

Keith Wucik - Chief of the Fire Department
Kimberly Lang - Recording Secretary
Andy Depta
Andy Bilabio
Lee Cremin
Russ Holland

2. Previous Minutes

a. May 26, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes

*Ken Zachem motioned to approve the May 26, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes as presented.
Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

b. June 16, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes

*Ken Zachem motioned to approve the June 16, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes as presented.
Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

3. Correspondence - None

4. Reports - None

5. Appointments and/or Resignations

It was stated that Linda Hopkins, Assistant Town Clerk & Assistant Registrar of Vital Statics has submitted her letter of resignation effective as of July 8, 2022. Her 21 years of

service was noted and have been greatly appreciated; the Board wishes her all the best in her new job.

6. New Business

a. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Spending Plan

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier reviewed the ARPA Plan fielding questions from the public at the end of each section by department. She explained that each department in town shared proposed items for the next Capital Improvement Plan, once that was established then the Board of Selectmen following the guidelines of the ARPA expenditures selected items that would be one time expenditures with a high priority towards public safety and need.

It was explained that the Fire Department would be hiring a full-time firefighter/EMS to cover shifts that are presently left empty. The first year of ARPA would cover the full cost of salary and benefits; the second year 75% of the cost; the third year 50%; and the fourth year the cost would be placed fully in the operating budget. By phrasing in the cost over 3 years it avoids the fiscal cliff that towns need to avoid with their ARPA funds.

The \$160,000 for the 1990 pumper truck would be additional funds added to the planned \$550,000 expenditure from the 2018 Capital Improvement Bond. There is an urgency with this expenditure because the cost is being held until July 1, 2022 after which the cost will increase by 10%. It was explained that the Fire Department would like to replace the Chief's vehicle which is a 2016 with over 100,000 miles on it.

The Public Works trucks - 2014 F350 plow truck and a 2004 Sterling plow truck.

Town Hall Renovations include the front entrance, the stairs and railing, also the parking lot needs to be redone. The flooring is original to the building, 1974. The amount also allows for \$10,000 for engineering.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier explained that these will be the items that go to the Town Meeting on June 30, 2022 to be approved. She then went through the plan more thoroughly fielding questions from the public for each section.

Andy Depta, 6 Young Court, gave members of the Board a copy of his questions and concerns that he hoped would be addressed during the presentation.

Andrew Bilodeau, 99 Lake View Drive, asked if the issues shared on Andy Depta's list would be addressed.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Full-time Firefighter - \$183,388

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that the full-time firefighter would eventually be in the operating budget and that the cost listed is with benefits. So those questions have been answered.

Chief Wucik explained that part-time staff helps but still shifts are not being covered. A full-time person would have a rotating schedule that would help fill in the gaps in the schedule. Right now, we ideally schedule 2 people at each fire house. Today there was one for both, which means we have to rely on outside help which isn't ideal. The Fire Department is reaching out through grants to help defer the cost of the firefighters needed to adequately service the town. They have applied for a FEMA based SAFER Grant to cover 100% of the cost of 4 full-time firefighters for 3 years. A SAFER Grant only covers staffing. AFG Grant covers tools and gears. The Fire Department has never been granted a SAFER Grant and has been awarded a AFG Grant once.

Andy Bilodeau asked why the cost of the firefighter wasn't placed in the operating budget after all it is staffing.

He was told that it was best to use the ARPA money to offset the cost that allows the town to recover from the last two years and to ease into paying for a full-time firefighter over 3 years.

Andrew Bilodeau asked when the Ordinance was passed at the Annual Town Meeting.

It was shared that it was approved at the Town Meeting on May 26, 2022 and that the Ordinance was posted on the Town website.

Pumper Truck - additional \$160,000

Andy Depta asked if there are written specs for the pumper truck. And what is the life cycle of such vehicles?

He was told by Chief Wucik that there are written specs for this vehicle and that the average life cycle for volunteer departments is 15-20 years. And that they are replacing a 1990 pumper truck.

Lee Cremin, 10 Amos Road, asked about the logistics of purchasing a gasoline pumper truck when President Biden declared that the US will have carbon free emission vehicles by 2030.

Chief Wucik stated that in 10 years they still will be able to use gasoline vehicles, he also stated that there are no hybrid emergency vehicles of that size available.

Andy Depta asked about a maintenance plan that would be followed.

Chief Wucik shared that the DOT has a yearly inspection of all the vehicles and during those inspections point out any issues and repairs that are needed. The DOT maintenance and repair issues are addressed promptly and the vehicles are kept in good working order. He also mentioned that the pumper truck does not comply with present NPA standards, its cab is open, there aren't 3-point harness seat belts, so men could fall out.

Andy Depta asked if it would be auctioned off or sold.

He was told that's what is usually done, but this truck is so old and isn't NPA compliant so not sure who would want it.

Hose Replacement - \$45,000

Andy Bilodeau asked if they were replacing only the hoses on that pumper truck.

Chief Wucik explained that they would be replacing any hose that is 20 years old. The ones that are presently failing the yearly safety tests. He also stated that they can't give it to another department because they are failing the safety tests so they wouldn't be able to use it. The Chief said he would be reluctant to pass on faulty equipment to another department no matter how desperate they are, it's not good practice.

Lee Cremin suggested that they could be used in a splash park.

Inflatable Rescue Boat/Trailer/Equipment - \$10,000

It was stated that Preston does not have a rescue boat at the present time, however they are responsible for emergencies on Avery Pond, Amos Lake, Hallville Pond, Poquetanuck Cove, and some of the Thames River.

Lee Cremin asked why an inflatable rather than a hard shell boat.

She was told that it is lighter and could be carried into places that don't have a boat launch like Hallville Pond.

There was a brief discussion regarding what other towns have boats, it was stated most of the surrounding towns have boats because of their responsibilities to respond to water emergencies within their borders. What kind of engine would this boat have? It was told that they would be purchasing an emergency service package that would come with the boat, engine, and trailer. The State Bid listed the package for \$7800, and some equipment would be needed in the boat so it was determined that \$10,000 should cover the total cost.

Blood Pathogen Shower

It was stated that the Preston City Fire House has a Blood Pathogen Shower , but Poquetanuck Fire House does not. One needs to be installed there for the safety of the firefighters to ensure their health and that they don't take any harmful diseases home to their loved ones. This is also a regulatory issue that needs to be addressed.

Lee Cremin asked if the Town does tax breaks for return of services.

Ken Zachem explained that the Town does prefer bidding which allows locals to place bids first.

Replace Chief's 2016 vehicle - \$55,000 - previously discussed

Defibrillators (Town Hall, Library, Senior Center, Transfer Station) - \$6,400

It was stated that the current defibrillators in these areas need replacing. It was stated that they last about 10 years. The current ones are so old parts are no longer available. The

defibrillators are stored in a box easily accessible to anyone in an emergency, just like fire extinguishers.

Andy Bilodeau suggested that additional defibrillators be placed at the Town Garage, Old Library because it's occasionally used for meetings, Community Room at Lincoln Park, Senior Housing, and the Community Park.

It was stated that the Town has no authority over the Senior Housing and that to secure one at the Community Park would be impossible, but there is one in the concession stand.

Poquetanuck Vehicle exhaust system - placed back in the Capital Plan

Hoping to replace parts and make repairs to existing systems at Poquetanuck Fire House.

Dry Hydrant repairs - placed back in the Capital Plan

They have been hit by cars, roadside mowers, and as they are repaired it is hoped that they are better marked and protected by pillars.

TOWN GARAGE

Enclosed Trailer -\$8,500

Enclosed trailer would load equipment for a job and take the trailer to a job site to save time and effort.

At this point Lee Cremin asked if this plan is to be submitted or has been submitted or if there was time to add something to the plan. She then asked how this plan is addressing the Coronavirus local recovery. Explaining what she has worked on the past 2 years and suggesting the remaining funds that are left possibly be used on a project that she has been working on. After a brief description of her plan, Ken Zachem explained that what she described was beyond the criteria and scope of the intended use of the ARPA funds.

Tag Trailer - \$20,000

This would make it a more efficient way to transport large equipment to job sites.

Security Upgrades - \$45,000

A camera system and card key access for the Town Garage would be connected to the police and department heads. Key card access is needed so there's greater control of who enters and leaves.

Andy Depta asked who would be notified in an emergency. He was told a security service would notify the police and fire and department heads.

Replace 2014 F350 plow truck - \$84,000 - no discussion

Replace 2004 Sterling plow truck - \$210,000 - no discussion

PARKS & REC

Mower - \$19,000

Parks & Recs is requesting to replace their 20 year old mower.

Preston Community Park roof replacement - \$20,000

This is to replace the pavilion's original 1996 roof.

Preston Community Park security cameras - \$15,000

They have had issues, so upgrades are needed to expand the views and lengthen the footage.

Preston Community Park guardrails

The Parks & Rec requested holding back on this to ensure the installation of a newer security camera system.

LIBRARY

Repair and improvements (short term) - \$11,050

This was originally part of the operating budget, but was taken out to reduce the budget and it was thought it would be best to use ARPA funds. The 1986 Library needs soffits fixed and some carpentry work done around the outside, the bathrooms need work so the cost covers bringing the bathrooms up to ADA compliance. The fixtures are the original and need to be replaced to be compliant.

Carpeting and Painting - \$33,150

The paint and carpeting are the original and need to be replaced.

OLD LIBRARY

Exterior Painting and carpentry - \$20,000

It was clarified that the Town owns the building and that the Historical Society meets there in warmer months. Because the Town owns the building they are responsible to keep it in good repair. It needs exterior work done, some carpentry, and shingles replaced.

TOWN HALL

HR Study - \$15,000

This will provide a job classification and compensation study, allowing the Town to establish salary ranges that are fair and competitive. By partnering with Brooklyn, not only

would Preston share the cost, but valuable data and information would be gained by both towns.

Servers, copiers, plotters, and key access system - \$45,000

This will upgrade the servers, copiers, and plotters. By having an access system rather than a key, when there are personnel changes the access card would be deactivated eliminating the need to collect keys or changing locks,

Town Hall renovations - \$190,000

Many of the necessary jobs are to replace original flooring, make the entryway safer by repairing and upgrading the railing. The parking lot needs repaving and lining; as well as other upgrades.

Strategic Planning - undetermined

There's a need to figure out where the Town would like to be in the foreseeable future and develop the steps to get there. In order to apply for many grants towns need to show how the request fits into their Strategic Plan. Therefore the town needs to develop a Strategic Plan in conjunction with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the POCD, Plan of Conservation and Development. Preston can move forward with this by looking for help and guidance from the CCM. There was a brief discussion as to how Riverwalk will affect any Strategic Plan that is developed.

Grant Matching - undetermined

OTHER

SCCOG Regional Recovery Coordinator - \$8,984

This is an additional cost from SCCOG to assist towns with documentation of their ARPA funds and to assist with the accounting recording/documentation required. However, since the recording and documentation has been simplified, this may be one payment rather than payments over 3 years. It's unclear at this point just what the cost will be, but SCCOG will have coordinators able to assist towns with the documentation and recording required for the ARPA funds.

Summer camp supplement (BoS budget request)- \$10,000

Parks & Rec received a Summer Enrichment Grant to cover this request.

NON-PROFIT REQUEST

UCFS - \$13,000

New London Homeless - \$1500

Sexual Assault Crisis of Eastern CT - \$16,000

Uncas Health District - \$13,688

Southeastern Cultural Coalition - \$13,688

TVCCA - \$2000

ARC - \$1500

Each of these non-profits received their traditional contributions in the operating budget. These are the additional requests that were made and at this point it was felt that it was more important to meet the needs of Preston. But, if additional contributions are made in the future here is the list to go by. One thought was if additional funds were to go to TVCCA requesting that Preston's funds be earmarked to assist Preston residents whenever possible, such as fuel assistance.

Andy Biladeau stated that cemetery upkeep should or might want to look into. And the Preston City fountain, it was given to the Town as a memorial and funds were given for maintenance perhaps that could be looked into. It was identified as the Bates Fountain. He also suggested that the Preston City Playground, Downer Park, be mowed on a regular basis.

b. Town Meeting

Ken Zachem motioned to approve the legal notice to a Special Town Meeting on Thursday, June 30, 2022 at 7:00P.M. at Preston Plains Middle School, located at 1 Route 164, Preston to consider taking action on the following question: "Shall the Town of Preston in accordance with the Ordinance Establishing the Town of Preston American Rescue Act and Providing for the Expenditure of Such Fund adopted on June 9, 2022 approve the single appropriations in excess of \$50,000 as detailed in the Preston American Rescue Planas presented and approved by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance?" Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

c. Fire Department Bid Waiver- Fire Apparatus - Pumper truck

There was a brief discussion about the Bid Waiver Request from Chief Wucik and the Houston-Galveston Area Council. It was discussed that several area fire departments use them for the purchase of apparatus because they help with the bid process of expensive equipment and the purchasing of such items needs to be completed in a timely manner in order to avoid unnecessary cost increases due to delays in the purchasing process.

Jerry Grabarek motioned to award the Marion Fire Apparatus for the purchase of a new fire pumper apparatus through the Houston-Galveston Area Council which qualifies as a regional purchasing entity, under the Preston Ordinance, Bid Opportunities, and section 2 where the

Board of Selectmen can exercise the authority to award in the amount of \$706,377 contingent upon approval of the additional \$160,000 at the June 30, 2022 Special Town Meeting. Ken Zachem seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

d. Public Works - Bid Waiver - Guardrail replacement

Ken Zachem motioned to award under a Bid Ordinance and Bid Waiver under a state related contract from Atlas Industrial Services to replace 2 sections of guardrails on Roosevelt Ave Extension, and additional work designated by Public Works Director Jim Corely. The total cost of 9,423.80 is offset by an insurance pay out of \$7,130.05; leaving the Town to cover the amount of \$2,293.75. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

e. Referendum Results

It was stated that both budgets passed and that the Board of Finance took an additional \$50,000 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to offset the budget for a total of \$900,000 and set the mil rate at 27.88.

6. Old Business - None

7. Tax Refunds - None

8. Public Comment

Andy Biladeau requested the Ordinance that was approved at the most recent Annual Town Meeting.

9. Adjournment

Jerry Grabarek motioned to adjourn at 8:40 P.M. Ken Zachem seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary