

**TOWN OF BROWNVILLE**  
**BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS & BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, January 3, 2023 ~ 6:00p.m.**  
*American Legion Post 92 - 67 Railroad Ave. Brownville*

1. Chairman of Board of Selectpersons opened the meeting at 6:00p.m.

Selectpersons Present: Byron Weymouth, Kevin Emery **NO QUORUM** (Absent: Shelly, Dean & Jimmy)

Budget committee members present: Gary Chapman, Marie McSwine, Lynn Weston, Leesa Coates, Jeff Coates and Mike Washburn (@6:30)

Employees Present: Felice Lyford, Kevin Black and Shawn Mitchell

Others Present: None

2. Budget Committee Chairperson Selection – Motion to elect Gary Chapman as Budget Committee Chair.

Motion: Marie            Second: Jeff            Vote: All in favor

3. 2023 Initial Budget Presentation – The manager presented the following overview of the 2023 budget request:

CHANGES ACROSS THE BOARD – As everyone is aware, the cost of living has increased substantially for the last couple of years. Minimum wage increased 8.24% from 2022 to 2023 alone. Full-time and Part-time hourly employees received base raises or “premium pay” of \$1.50/hr not including overtime from ARPA funds in 2022. For 2023 the budget has that raise added in as well as \$.50/hr (or the min wage increase if applicable). Health insurance went up 4.9%. Heating oil, fuel, electricity, parts & labor, supplies, freight & postage, professional service rates, mileage rates, salt, sand, sanitation tipping fees have all increased as well. More general assistance applications are coming in, and more people qualify to receive those benefits (at higher costs for heat, electricity, rent etc). The county assessment for Brownville increased 10.5% (The county budget represented 5% of Brownville’s mil rate in 2022). The school assessment decreased in 2022 as the school received refunds that they passed onto the towns and county. Since the school budget is not set until summer, we have no insight on that figure for our purposes, but I suspect it would increase.

REVENUES – Looking at the whole picture for 2022, we brought in just over \$100,000 more than anticipated, with the largest portion coming from Municipal Revenue Sharing. We were very conservative, estimating \$165,000, but we received \$261,165. Excise tax was not as lucrative estimating \$220,000, but we only brought in \$212,200. We are turning back very little unexpended balances from municipal departments, and went over budget in a couple areas by minimal amounts, and those will need to be ratified on the 2023 Warrant (estimate a total of \$1300 over four departments: Town Office, Animal Control, Street Lights & General Assistance). We have multi-year contracts for Fire (\$28,100 with Lake View & Piscataquis County), Highway (\$2,341 for Piscataquis County). In 2022 we terminated our Lake View plowing contract (amicably) as we swapped some plowing areas with Milo and they border the Lake View area; whereas Brownville has to travel through Milo to get to that area, so it made more sense.

GRANTS - One of the most encouraging sources of funding that offsets some of our expenses are through grants. In 2022 we received or, were awarded, more than \$35,000 in grants to install generators at our village fire station and the American legion (our emergency shelter), three back-up cameras for two fire trucks and our sanitation truck, cold water rescue equipment, cold water rescue training and first responder training. Although not considered "grant" funds per se, the Town has been awarded \$750,000 to complete the Underpass Project, to replace the failing retaining wall on Railroad Avenue at 100%. These funds were requested thru Susan Collins for Congressionally Directed Spending in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee based on an application for assistance we submitted earlier in 2022. Something for Brownville to celebrate in these hard times, for sure.

ARPA – The Town received a total of \$125,511.63 for American Rescue Plan Act funds. The Town voted at the Annual Meeting to allow the Board of Selectpersons to appropriate the funds as they deem advisable as long as they adhere to federal guidelines. In order to outfit new members of the EMS crew with protective equipment, \$25,448.67 was spent on nine sets of new gear. The Town Office had three new heat pumps/air purifiers installed for \$9,568.36 after the Efficiency Maine rebates. Rather than increasing the 2022 budget for wages/raises, \$42,535.11 was appropriated from ARPA, designated as "Premium Pay." \$6,011.22 was allocated to supplement costs that were not covered by other grant funds and/or the county, to install the generators at the American legion (emergency shelter) and the village fire station. The Town's new website was designed for the amount of \$795 appropriated from ARPA. The After School Program previously run through YMCA (grants) ran out of funds. Due to the successful outcomes of the program, it was important to keep it running at little or no cost. With funds donated from local businesses, Brownville agreed to allocate \$3,000 to support the continuation of the program. Lastly, we have allocated \$17,000 (but not paid out) to be used as in-kind funds should the Maine Highlands Broadband Coalition be successful in their application for grant funding that includes Brownville. We have \$21,153.27 remaining, that has not been allocated to any projects.

RESERVES, CAPITAL REPLACEMENT PLAN & DEBT – In the reserves category, initial and manager requests have not changed from the 2022 appropriated amounts for 2023 for a total of \$131,000. Although we cannot afford to increase what we raise and appropriate in this category, we have assets that are due to be replaced. Again, costs have increased substantially for trucks and large equipment. It would be great if we could set aside larger amounts in all the categories, but doesn't seem possible at this time. We will be faced with continuing to invest in repairs or using some of our reserve funds and financing the assets needed. For many years, the Town has skimmed and cut in areas that force us to push our assets to the limits. Although we have extended the life of our vehicles and equipment, it leaves us with a need to invest greater amounts for the future. This year we lost our Holder, and have no ability to repair it, as we cannot find the parts needed. This piece of equipment was brought back from the bone yard probably 7+ years ago and was due to be replaced in 2018. The 2004 GMC 1-Ton in Public Works was due to be replaced in 2014, and we've spent thousands on repairs the last couple of years. Our 1998 CAT Loader and the 2008 International are due to be replaced in 2023. Our 2004 Volvo, due for replacement in 2024, can be refurbished for approximately \$60,000 that includes a new sander body (\$35,000). Our Sewer Flusher self-combusted and we are looking at replacing the pump and weighing the cost of that vs purchasing a new or a "new to us" replacement machine. The asset is extremely old, so putting \$10 -

15,000 into it is a risk. The Water/Sewer truck is in need of replacement as well, and I believe we have the reserves set aside for that. We are working on a rough quote for this. Currently, the debt that the Town carries is strictly in the Water and Sewer Departments. That debt is figured into the user rates which we plan to sustain in 2023. We paid the final payment on our paving loan in 2022.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON THIS PRESENTATION – When we developed the 2023 budget, it was done over multiple days, many hours and with department heads and staff involvement. Although the “2023 Initial Request” may seem like it’s a department request, it truly represents what the Department Head and I feel is needed to run the budget. Knowing it reflects an overall increase of \$134,000 in the municipal budget, not including the county and school assessments, I looked at each line item again and again to see if there were areas we may “possibly” be able to cut. Overall, it was a reduction of approximately \$30,000. Please know that I feel as strongly as the Department Heads do about the initial request representing what’s needed to run the Town.

4. Future Budget Meetings Schedule below. Byron delivered budget packets to those Selectpersons not in attendance.
  - Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m.
5. Adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Felice M. Lyford, Town Manager

**Selectboard:**

  
Byron Weymouth, Selectboard Chair


\_\_\_\_\_  
Shelly Ekholm

  
Kevin Emery

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Hartin

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean Bellatty

**Budget Committee:**

  
Gary Chapman, Budget Comm Chair

  
Marie McSwine

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Washburn

  
Lynn Weston

  
Leesa Coates

  
Jeff Coates

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through. Some words like "The" and "of" are visible.

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through. Some words like "The" and "of" are visible.

Handwritten text, mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through. Some words like "The" and "of" are visible.