

1 **Town of Hooksett**  
2 **Town Council Budget Review Meeting Minutes**  
3 **Wednesday, September 21, 2022**  
4

5 The Hooksett Town Council met on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, at 6:00 in the  
6 Hooksett Municipal Building.

7 **CALL TO ORDER**

8 **PROOF OF POSTING-** Provided by Leann McLaughlin

9 **IN ATTENDANCE-** Councilor James Sullivan, Councilor Randall Lapierre, Councilor  
10 David Boutin, Councilor Timothy Tsantoulis, Councilor Alex Walczyk, and Councilor  
11 Roger Duhaime (6:12), Councilor David Ross.

12 **ABSENT-** Councilor Keith Judge

13 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

14 **PUBLIC INPUT**

15 M. Horne- Prior to 7/1/22, Hooksett residents and taxpayers could come to the Municipal  
16 Building 40 hours a week to get services that are performed by the Town Clerk like”  
17 voter registrations and changes, request absentee ballot prior to elections, register  
18 dogs, request vital statistic records, and other services that the Town Clerk function  
19 provided. The work was performed in a combined TC/TC office by fulltime employees,  
20 one who was elected as Town Clerk and another appointed Deputy Town Clerk. I know  
21 both worked extra hours at times in those positions but only a few hours a week. My  
22 experience as a supervisor of the Checklist was that all employees working in that  
23 combined office received vote registrations forms for years. I believe those employees  
24 were allowed to do that because they worked under the direction of the Town Clerk. I’m  
25 sure there were times that Todd Rainer (also elected Town Clerk) and Billie Hebert  
26 (also appointed Deputy Town Clerk) were not physically present in the office and some  
27 of that work continued as “under the direction “of the Town Clerk. Starting 7/1/22, the  
28 combined office was split into two physically separate office, remote from each other.  
29 Since then, Hooksett residents and taxpayers have been under services (my opinion)  
30 because they can only have customer support by the Town Clerk six hours a week and  
31 none on Mondays and Fridays, unless the appointed TC made arrangements to be in  
32 the office other than those scheduled hours. There was no increase in workload for the  
33 Town but the workload in the Tax office was reduced significantly without loss of any  
34 help for the Clerk. I understand the Town Administrator and Town Council are looking  
35 ahead to budget year 202/2024 to help correct this problem. To me, that too long to  
36 solve a problem easily fixed right now. Combine the TC/TC offices again so the fulltime  
37 employees in the tax office can perform the work they used to do “under the direction” of

38 the Town Clerk. Make room for one more desk there for the appointed TC. Give the  
39 Town residents and taxpayers the services they deserve.

#### 40 **6.4 Conservation Commission**

41 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Conservation Commission budget for fiscal***  
42 ***year 2023-2024 in the amount of \$1,095; seconded by A. Walczyk.***

43 A. Walczyk- does the Conservation Commission need a legal line in their budget?

44 C. Robertson- if it is something contentious we use town council. If it is something like  
45 an easement the easement holder usually pays the fees.

46 A. Garron- anything that requires legal review comes from my budget.

47 D. Ross- this is probably the only budget that has not gone up in 20 years and here we  
48 are lowering it. At a time that we have more land than ever. As far as training and dues,  
49 there might be further training that will be good to have. With advertising I know it's  
50 been a dollar but maybe they need to up it to advertise more. I don't think we should cut  
51 their budget at all; I'd be inclined to raise it to the bottom-line budget and to amend the  
52 motion to increase the budget line to \$1,600. Seconded by A. Walczyk.

53 A. Garron- the TA just supported the budget brought forward; I made no cuts.

54 C. Robertson- we cut from what we submitted from last year. He is right we do spend  
55 money on training and dues. We do put signs up around town, and we have considered  
56 getting a game camera and certainly David's increase could cover that.

57 D. Ross- it was general. The game camera has come up they don't have a lot of  
58 equipment. Their responsibilities have increased a lot. They are in charge of a lot of  
59 land in town.

60 A. Walczyk- I agree with Ross, however I am not sure that will be the right amount or  
61 not. I am not sure of that will be enough or not.

62 T. Tsantoulis- I don't want to set a precedent. We have expectations of our Department  
63 heads. He put time and effort into this, and I don't think this is a time to step up their  
64 budgets.

65 D. Boutin- while there may be some merits for the increase, the CC has never come  
66 forward with a budget much higher than this.

67 Vote on the amendment failed 4-3

68 Roll call on the original vote

69 **Roll Call Vote #2**

70 ***R. Duhaime Aye***

71 ***J Durand Aye***

72 ***D. Ross Nay***

73 **R. Lapierre Aye**  
74 **A. Walczyk Aye**  
75 **D. Boutin Aye**  
76 **K. Judge NP**  
77 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**  
78 **J. Sullivan Aye**

79  
80 **Vote in favor 7-1**

81  
82 **6.1 Library**

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84 H. Rainer- the addition to the longevity and decreases in health insurance of \$9,738.  
85 The new amount on health insurance is \$145,856.

86 D. Boutin- what was the amount of the decrease?

87 H. Rainer- we have a decrease of \$9,738. \$1,083,702 is the new proposed we are  
88 reducing the health insurance line, and longevity line is \$7,271.

89 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Library budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 in the***  
90 ***amount of \$1,083,702; seconded by R. Lapierre.***

91 R. Lapierre- I wanted to ask about the Health Insurance line and see why that line was  
92 so high.

93 H. Rainer- it was all based on employees retiring. We had vacancies that shifted, and  
94 the plans changed, and a planned 2-person plan ended up being a stipend.

95 R. Durand- is the longevity new?

96 A. Garron- yes, it is, it is a suggestion from MRI. This helps us recognize employees  
97 with 3-years of service and up, these are lump sum figures.

98 T. Tsantoulis- in the explanation I see the increase was 3%.? What is it now?

99 H. Rainer- 2.42% increase.

100 D. Ross- the building maintenance line can you explain.

101 H. Rainer- that came from employee wages. And covid. And when there are funds at  
102 the end of the year, we focus it on building maintenance and repair. We had HVAC  
103 work; we also have 3 phase power and have challenges with that and had to install  
104 power protection for that.

105 R. Duhaime- I see that you have 2 vacancies.

106 H. Rainer- we do not have any more vacancies as of now, that was earlier in the  
107 process.

108 **Roll Call Vote #3**

109 **D. Boutin Aye**  
110 **D. Ross Aye**  
111 **A. Walczyk Aye**  
112 **J. Durand Aye**  
113 **R. Duhaime Aye**  
114 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**  
115 **R. Lapierre Aye**  
116 **K. Judge NP**  
117 **J. Sullivan Aye**

118  
119 **Vote in favor 8-1**

## 120 **6.2 Cemetery commission**

121 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Cemetery Commission budget for fiscal year***  
122 ***2023-2024 in the amount of \$1,730.00; seconded by T. Tsantoulis.***

123 M. Horne- the budget is pretty standard.

124 R. Duhaime- we had something about all the stones last year, is that in your budget?

125 M. Horne- No we still haven't had any changes to the regulations. Until we change the  
126 regulations, we cannot use budget funds to do stone repair funds.

127 R. Lapierre- what about lot fees have we increased those?

128 M. Horne- when we change the regulations, we will address the lot prices.

## 129 **Roll Call Vote #4**

130 **A. Walczyk Aye**  
131 **R. Lapierre Aye**  
132 **D. Ross Aye**  
133 **R. Duhaime Aye**  
134 **J. Durand Aye**  
135 **K. Judge NP**  
136 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**  
137 **D. Boutin Aye**  
138 **J. Sullivan Aye**

139  
140 **Vote in favor 8-0**

## 141 **6.5 Tax collector**

142 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Tax collector budget for fiscal year 2023-2024***  
143 ***in the amount of \$323,276; seconded by T. Tsantoulis.***

144 T. Tsantoulis- it is a percentage decrease.

145 R. Lapierre- looks like the professional services is decreased.

146 K. Blichmann- For my tax lien and tax deeding servicer, if I do the deed and lien within  
147 30 days she does not charge me for the tax deeding. We also saved in toner for a toner  
148 project we are doing.

149 D. Ross- why the increases in taxes associated in wages.

150 A. Garron- that increase in the wage line was a result of the MRI wage study and wages  
151 adjusted. There are some salaries that did go up as of July 1<sup>st</sup> of last year.

152 R. Duhaime- does this show the longevity changes?

153 A. Garron- the increases will be the same and reflected in the employee lines.

154 **Roll Call Vote #5**

155 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

156 ***D. Ross Aye***

157 ***R. Duhaime Aye***

158 ***A. Walczyk Aye***

159 ***R. Lapierre Aye***

160 ***K. Judge NP***

161 ***J. Durand Aye***

162 ***D. Boutin Aye***

163 ***J. Sullivan Aye***

164

165 ***Vote in favor 8-0***

166

167 **6.6 Assessing**

168

169 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Assessing budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 in***  
170 ***the amount of \$252,941; seconded by T. Tsantoulis.***

171 T. Tsantoulis- it says the professional services was reduced.

172 J. Duhamel- We are doing a reval in 2023, so I will not be available to be out in the field  
173 and do pickups so we will need to hire additional outside services. We decide to take  
174 those funds from the Capital Reserve instead of this budget.

175 R. Lapierre- so is it thought that we are going to spend \$81,000 on professional  
176 services?

177 R. Lapierre- regardless of where it is being taken from doesn't it have to be raised in the  
178 budget?

179 C. Tewksbury- our capital reserve funds have agents to expend so we don't have to go  
180 to the voters. If it is just a strict capital reserve all have agents to expend so you don't  
181 have to.

182 D. Ross- what the issue is once this in the budget it will remain there. It just seems that  
183 how did we pay for this before? So does this mean that we didn't ask for enough? It is  
184 significant.

185 J. Duhamel- What we are doing is a statistical update and is not a full measure and list.

186 J. Sullivan- if this budget is approved for the \$51,000 will it be in the default

187 R. Lapierre- for completeness it would be in the default .

188 A. Garron- the measure and list has \$45,000 in it, and that one we have historically  
189 reduced it. We recognize that to keep pace, we do have to up that line there because  
190 work still has to be done there.

191 D. Ross- I think this should be a ballot question and not apart of the budget. I do not  
192 want to see this as a permanent part of the budget.

193 **Roll Call Vote #6**

194 **J. Durand Nay**

195 **R. Lapierre Aye**

196 **K. Judge NP**

197 **D. Boutin Aye**

198 **D. Ross Nay**

199 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**

200 **A. Walczyk Aye**

201 **R. Duhaime Nay**

202 **J. Sullivan Aye**

203

204 ***Vote in favor 5-3***

205 A. Garron- what we are saying is that we need help keeping on pace with the reval and  
206 to keep on pace we need to add more money. We feel that this work is necessary.

207 J. Sullivan- so that is considered a part of the reval process?

208 J. Duhamel- Yes, it is

209 A. Garron- if that discretion is utilized when we do the revaluation, we need to have  
210 those funds there.

211 **6.7 Public Works**

212 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Public Works budget for fiscal year 2023-2024***  
213 ***in the amount of \$5,539,765; seconded by A. Walczyk.***

214 R. Lapierre- is the road resurfacing higher because of the warrant articles. I think it was  
215 a 5-year warrant article, and after that the default would decrease.

216 D. Ross- I noticed a significant increase in professional services. The actual expenditure  
217 was x and you are looking x, that is a big increase.

218 B. Berthiaume- Apart of that is for line striping and guardrails. We have 5 or 6 roads that  
219 need to upgrade their guardrails.

220 D. Ross- but same question arises.

221 C. Tewksbury- so it is not funded by a special warrant article the CIP did review this  
222 project and it was like \$100,000 and what they recommended was to increase the  
223 budget by \$30,000 for multiple years until the guardrails were finished and then the  
224 budget would be reduced.

225 D. Ross- we had some open positions last year, but again it looks like a significant  
226 increase and the TA request.

227 B. Berthiaume- It is based on union contracts and the set rate increase that we are  
228 contracted to.

229 J. Sullivan- staffing was low and we had vacancies so that is why the salary line is down  
230 compared to the request.

231 R. Duhaime- we have large vehicles, and we don't have a large lift and the vehicle  
232 maintenance is very high. I don't think we need to see line stripping done each year and  
233 id like to see you purchase the necessary equipment.

234 T. Tsantoulis- most new vehicles have a forward-facing camera and uses the lines to  
235 assist the help them stay on the road, and I think we would be negating federal  
236 standards if we did not complete the street lining.

237 D. Ross- street lightening seems to be the same didn't we change to LED and shouldn't  
238 the line be reduced?

239 A. Garron- the LED was done in 2020 and the budget was \$61,000.

240 R. Duhaime-how much salt do we have left over?

241 B. Berthiaume- I don't know, I think we have about half. We are budgeting the same  
242 rate as last year.

243 D. Ross- there seems to be a typo for the sub total of building maintenance, I am sure it  
244 is more than \$6,400.

245 C. Tewksbury- there formula is off it should be the total for both lines.

246 **Roll Call Vote #7**

247 **D. Ross Aye**

248 **K. Judge NP**

249 **R. Lapierre Aye**

250 **R. Duhaime Nay**

251 **A. Walczyk Aye**  
252 **J. Durand Aye**  
253 **T. Tsantoulis Aye**  
254 **D. Boutin Aye**  
255 **J. Sullivan Aye**

256

257 **Vote in favor 7-1**

258 **6.8 Police**

259 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Police budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 in the***  
260 ***amount of \$5,377,037; seconded by T. Tsantoulis.***

261 R. Lapierre- the chief runs a tight ship. And I want to acknowledge that the TA reduced  
262 the vehicle maintenance line.

263 R. Duhaime- so the longevity is or is not in this budget?

264 A. Garron- yes, it is in the budget.

265 **Roll Call Vote #8**

266 ***R. Lapierre Aye***

267 ***R. Duhaime Aye***

268 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

269 ***A. Walczyk Aye***

270 ***J. Durand Aye***

271 ***D. Ross Aye***

272 ***D. Boutin Aye***

273 ***K. Judge NP***

274 ***J. Sullivan Aye***

275

276 ***Vote in favor 8-0***

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278 **6.9 Administration**

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280 ***D. Boutin motioned to approve the Administration budget for fiscal year 2023-***  
281 ***2024 in the amount of \$1,533,500; seconded by R. Lapierre.***

282 A. Garron- with regard to the budget I ask where the budget can be decreased, and we  
283 already saw that the OHD budget was increased. This does include the MRI study  
284 phase 1. This is also for IT and the new Executive Assistant that was approved at town  
285 meeting. I asked dept heads to really sharpen their pencils. I do not anticipate a  
286 decrease but an increase in that. And I hope that the budget before you now make up  
287 for that.

288

289 R. Duhaime- the software upgrade, are we always making upgrades?



290  
291 A. Garron – I wouldn't say that we are always making upgrades, but it does account for  
292  
293 J. Sullivan- with the appreciation I think a meet and greet with the volunteers and made  
294 it more personal. That approach went well at a minimal cost. I think that approach  
295 worked, and we can reduce it down to \$2,000.

296  
297 A. Garron- I thought that was more so in response to the pandemic.  
298

299 ***J. Sullivan motioned to amend the Administration budget by a reduction of \$500;***  
300 ***seconded by D. Boutin.***

301  
302 **Vote in favor 6-1**

303  
304 D. Ross- it seems in the computer line we spent \$45,000 in 1 month that seems like a  
305 lot.

306  
307 C. Tewksbury- we have contracts that are withdrawn in the beginning and the end of the  
308 year.

309  
310 D. Ross- the bicentennial

311  
312 A. Garron- last year we didn't have OHD so that is why

313  
314 J. Sullivan-

315  
316 C. Tewksbury- that \$29,000 was all tax dollars and the \$25,000 was budgeted and the  
317 OHD was unspent and the souvenirs was out of the rec revolving fund.

318  
319 D. Ross- the bottom line is x and spent was x and that is almost \$200,000  
320

321 **Roll Call Vote #9**

322 ***J. Durand Aye***

323 ***D. Boutin Aye***

324 ***D. Ross Aye***

325 ***R. Duhaime Aye***

326 ***K. Judge NP***

327 ***A. Walczyk Aye***

328 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

329 ***R. Lapierre Aye***

330 ***J. Sullivan Aye***

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332 **Vote in favor 8-1**

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**6.10 Community Development**

***T. Tsantoulis motioned to approve the Community Development budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 in the amount of \$547,338; seconded by D. Boutin.***

T. Tsantoulis- is there one particular line item that increased this budget?

A. Garron – there was a large increase in the fuel items.

J. Sullivan- salaries increased.

**Roll Call Vote #10**

***K. Judge NP***

***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

***R. Lapierre Aye***

***D. Ross Aye***

***D. Boutin Aye***

***J. Durand Aye***

***A. Walczyk Aye***

***R. Duhaime Abstained not present***

***J. Sullivan Aye***

**Vote in favor 7-0-1**

**6.11 Finance**

***T. Tsantoulis motioned to approve the Finance budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 in the amount of \$297,474; seconded by A. Walczyk.***

C. Tewksbury- this does include the GASBY standards.

**Roll Call #11**

***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

***R. Lapierre Aye***

***J. Durand Aye***

***D. Ross Aye***

***K. Judge NP***

***A. Walczyk Aye***

***R. Duhaime Aye***

***D. Boutin Aye***

***J. Sullivan Aye***

**Vote in favor 8-0**

375

376 **6.12 Debt & Leases**

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378 *T. Tsantoulis motioned to approve the Debt & Leases budget for fiscal year 2023-*  
379 *2024 in the amount of \$295,000; seconded by A. Walczyk.*

380 **Roll Call Vote #12**

381 *D. Boutin Aye*

382 *A. Walczyk Aye*

383 *J. Durand Aye*

384 *K. Judge NP*

385 *R. Lapierre Aye*

386 *T. Tsantoulis Aye*

387 *R. Duhaime Aye*

388 *D. Ross Aye*

389 *J. Sullivan Aye*

390

391 **Vote in favor 8-0**

392

393 *J. Sullivan motioned to accept the Interest budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 in the*  
394 *amount \$102,383 and \$1 for the TAN; seconded by R. Lapierre.*

395

396 **Roll Call Vote #13**

397 *K. Judge NP*

398 *D. Boutin Aye*

399 *T. Tsantoulis Aye*

400 *R. Lapierre Aye*

401 *A. Walczyk Aye*

402 *R. Duhaime Aye*

403 *J. Durand Aye*

404 *D. Ross Aye*

405 *J. Sullivan Aye*

406

407 **Vote in favor 8-0**

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409 **6.14 Budget committee**

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411 *J. Sullivan motioned to approve the Budget Committee budget for fiscal year*  
412 *2023-2024 in the amount of \$8,181; seconded by D. Boutin.*

413 **Roll Call Vote #14**

414 *R. Duhaime Aye*

415 *J Durand Aye*

416 *D. Ross Aye*

417 **R. Lapierre Aye**  
418 **A. Walczyk Aye**  
419 **D. Boutin Aye**  
420 **K. Judge NP**  
421 **T. Tsantoulis Abstained not present**  
422 **J. Sullivan Aye**

423  
424 **Vote in favor 7-0-1**  
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### 426 **6.3 Town Clerk**

427 A. Garron- I have handed out a wage data report of surrounding communities who have  
428 full time Town Clerks. What you have is a proposal to increase the TC stipend from  
429 \$5,000 to \$20,000 and the deputy from \$1,500 to \$5,000. The question that came out to  
430 me was what a full-time salary will look like. Some are cities, some are small towns, and  
431 the salaries need to be adjusted accordingly. The base rate seems to be about \$50,000  
432 plus. What I can't report on is what exactly do those Town Clerks do. I need to gather  
433 that so we can compare apples to apples.

434 R. Durand- if we increase the pay is there a certain number of hours they are required  
435 to work?

436 A. Garron- unfortunately because they are elected, they can choose their own hours.  
437 The council can have the expectation that the hours be increased.

438 J. Durand- I'd be more inclined to add in the \$20,000 vs the \$70,000.

439 R. Lapierre- in this survey a lot of these towns is that they are a combined office, and  
440 the difference is how they are organized.

441 T. Tsantoulis- we certainly won't be able to duplicate the situation we had with Todd, but  
442 I think the TA is giving us a starting off point to a situation that came to an end.

443 A. Garron – I hope you look at this as a starting point and we were really down to the  
444 wire with hiring. Hopefully this will go towards addressing that.

445 R. Duhaime- this is a good place to start but I'd like to see what other towns are doing in  
446 their roles.

447 D. Ross- what I find curious is that we were working just fine for many years. Again, he  
448 was able to operate out of that office for many years. I disagree with this, and I think you  
449 should bring this up as a warrant article.

450 T. Tsantoulis- we are just increasing the stipend.

451 R. Lapierre- to add a full-time employee we would need to go to town meeting.

452 A. Garron- that is correct.

453 J. Sullivan- for 13 years we had the luxury of an employee who also wanted to be a  
454 clerk and gave the opportunity to be there all the time. We are going from a position of 2  
455 fulltime people to 1 part time individual.

456 R. Duhaime- are we going to address the comments made during the public input  
457 regarding this?

458 J. Sullivan- yes, we can have that as an agenda item to see what they can do.

459 ***R. Duhaime motioned that we address the loss of what we are trying to***  
460 ***accommodate the residents and rectify the issue and assist the residents.***  
461 ***Seconded by A. Walczyk.***

462 A. Garron – we have a letter submitted about more hours needed to accomplish the  
463 duties of the Town Clerk and it seems that he feels the current number of hours are  
464 inefficient. And you want me to see how we can gain more hours.

465 R. Lapierre- this is an elected official and not under the TA so we cannot dictate their  
466 hours.

467 A. Garron-

468 T. Tsantoulis- we just rolled over pretty easy on almost 10 million dollars, and I don't  
469 understand why we are beating this to death. We are not talking about a lot of money  
470 here.

471 R. Duhaime- I have a volunteer who brought this forward and gives a lot and I want to  
472 address his concerns.

473 ***T. Tsantoulis motioned to approve the Town Clerk and Election budget at \$57,099***  
474 ***seconded by A. Walczyk.***

475 R. Lapierre- increasing the stipend to the clerk does not mean we will get more hours  
476 out of the Town Clerk.

477 **Roll Call Vote #15**

478 ***D. Boutin Aye***

479 ***D. Ross Nay***

480 ***A. Walczyk Aye***

481 ***J. Durand Aye***

482 ***R. Duhaime Aye***

483 ***T. Tsantoulis Aye***

484 ***R. Lapierre Aye***

485 ***K. Judge NP***

486 ***J. Sullivan Aye***

487

488 ***Vote in favor 7-1***

489

490 **ADJOURNMENT**  
491

492 ***J. Sullivan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8: 23 pm. Seconded by D. Boutin.***

493 ***Vote in favor 8-1***

494 Respectfully submitted,

495 *Alicia Jipson*

496 Recording Clerk

497