

2016 Newsletter

Office of the Selectmen

2/1/2016

Edition 1 Volume 2

Finances

Historically, Bridgewater has always had strong finances. Occasionally we get some surprises, but we have learned to smooth out those “bumps in the road”. In the last few years, the latest problem is State agencies downloading additional requests for more data. Most cities and towns have had to increase staff in response to requests. In effect, various Federal and State department’s labor decreases

safety building and, with the consent of the Town meeting, we repurposed the bond with a five year note to replace some very old equipment in the highway and police department. Cost pressures from the School District (SAU 4) and Grafton County will be the most likely problems facing us in the future. Our 2016 budget will be mostly level funded.

We also anticipate no warrant articles requesting additional

“The mania for giving the Government power to meddle with the private affairs of cities or citizens is likely to cause endless trouble.” – Mark Twain,

at the expense of the Towns. We have been able to improve our productivity through technology, but that has its limits. The Town portion of the tax bill declined last year and we ended the fiscal year with a small surplus. Our overall fund balance is also positive.

Last year we retired the bond associated with the public

funding.

Highway

As mentioned earlier, we upgraded some equipment in this department. The Ford F350 was moved to the Refuse District and we upgraded to a large truck. It is an International Terrastar 4X4. This is larger than the prior truck but smaller than our

Selectmen’s Office



Meeting Dates:

February 9th 2016

State Primary Election

11-7 PM Town Hall

March 8th:

Town Meeting Day

Voting for Town, School and Grafton County Officials

12-6 PM Town Hall (voting only)

7:30 pm Town Meeting

The B-HVD Annual Meeting will be held at the Bridgewater Town Hall on Tuesday, April 12, at 7 PM with polls opening for the election of officers at 5 PM All constituents are encouraged to attend.

911 Alert – Please be sure you affix your street number address to your dwelling.

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large plow trucks. This will be more suitable for plowing small storms and reduce wear and costs on the larger (and more expensive) trucks. We replaced a 1990 and 1992 backhoe with a single new Caterpillar 420F Backhoe Loader. It is also an Integrated Tool Carrier to allow for accessory equipment to be used on the backhoe. Effectively, it makes the machine more multipurpose.

We had a bit of a surprise this year relative to our above ground storage tanks. While they are double wall tanks, new rules require monitoring devices be installed similar to underground tanks. These tanks are not solely for convenience. They give us the ability to get fuel in the event of a long term electrical or fuel outage. (We have manual backup pumps).

We were unable to obtain gasoline this summer as vendors, by regulation, cannot fill tanks that are non-

compliant. Fortunately, we anticipated most of this by purchasing these tanks prior to 1996 and only had to upgrade to new controls. Nonetheless, it still cost \$ 30,000 to upgrade and register the tanks!

Public Safety:

Fire and EMS:

As mentioned earlier, we received an \$85,000 grant from a private foundation to allow us to replace aging air packs in the fire department and a cardiac monitor – defibrillator for the EMS division. We are in the final year of payments of the newest fire truck. (Original cost - \$ 310,000!!) The upgrade to the facilities coupled with additional staffing and training over the last decade has been impressive. There are significant training and educational requirements in this day and age to be a fire fighter or EMT. Annually, the ambulance averages about 120

calls for service. The fire department has a great response record for a small part-time department. Many of our staff from highway, police and EMT's are crossed trained to assist in emergencies.

Police:

This year we replaced the police cruiser with a Ford Police Interceptor Utility Cruiser. (4x4). This upgrade includes new communications and other accessories necessary for protection. In addition, important changes by the Police Chief has improve random patrol scheduling especially on the weekends.

Given the seasonal nature of a recreational community coupled with the expanse of the town, it is impossible to be all places at once. Securing your property with alarms and locks for recreational equipment is a very helpful deterrent. New, inexpensive, wireless burglar devices using

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cell towers access can improve protecting your assets and personal safety.

See/paste: <http://www.asecurelife.com/best-home-alarm-system/>

(Only a starting point about the subject – no endorsement!)

Trailer security. Recently a snowmobile trailer with two snow machines was stolen. In driving around the community, very few secure the trailer hitch or chain the trailer to a stationary object. (Search on “trailer hitch security in your browser)

Bridgewater-Hebron Village District.

B-HVD is a special-purpose village district formed in 1998. It consists of the municipalities of Bridgewater and Hebron. In 1999 it built the current school building located in Bridgewater. It leases the building to the Newfound Area School District for \$1 per year. The Village District Board is responsible for the care and

upkeep of the building and grounds. Its focus is to provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating atmosphere for learning. The School District is responsible for the educational content. The Village District charter restricts direct involvement in educational matters.

With respect to upkeep, some years ago B-HVD set up a maintenance reserve to buffer any impacts on the tax rates of each town due to any unforeseen major capital repairs. We will have to use those funds this year to repair the heating plant, which recently had some major problems. In addition, the shingles on the roof have deteriorated because of a defective manufacturing process. We received a prorated settlement under the warranty terms. However, the price of the shingles alone is a small portion of the cost of replacement, which is not included in the warranty. Labor costs to remove and replace the roof, coupled with the disposal

cost, are the major expenses. With the use of the maintenance funds and some short-term bonding, we project little or no increase in the future tax rate.

Congratulations to our children, families, teachers, and staff for their success in the first year of the statewide Smarter Balanced Assessments. Our students did an outstanding job in the English language arts/literacy and mathematics summative tests. This kind of performance comes from a well-run school (thank you Principal Dana Andrews), high standards, community involvement, and an engaging environment where students look forward to each day.

The new greenhouse continues to be a lucrative learning tool, integrating various aspects of the school’s curriculum, as well as connecting the school and community.

Sincerely,

Terry Murphy, Skip Jenness

Hank Woolner, Selectmen