

Georgia Selectboard Budget Meeting
Chris Letourneau Meeting Room
Monday, January 13, 2020
6:00 pm

Approved: **Approved**

Present: Selectboard: Matt Crawford, Steve Lamos, Tara Wright, Jason Burt, Scott St. Onge. Town Administrator/Treasurer: Amber Baker.

Absent: All Present

Public Present: Jamie Cota, Fire Department; Andrew Dunsmore, Fire Department; Keith Baker, Fire Chief; Pat King, Fire Department; Cheryl Letourneau, Town Clerk; Suzanna Brown, GCC, Kent Henderson, GCC.

Matt Crawford reopened the Selectboard Budget meeting on January 13, 2020 for the Town of Georgia in the Chris Letourneau Meeting Room at 6:04 p.m.

Matt invited Cheryl to the table to discuss Line 162 Asst. Clerk's Salaries. She informs the board why she is requesting a part time clerk (12 hours per week). The new clerk will ensure there are always two people in the clerk's office and the Job description is the same as the 20 hour clerks. At this time Line 162 is budgeted for 40 hours per week but this does not cover benefits, vacation or holiday pay. The additional clerk will be important during election time as a lot of things can get dropped as the work load greatly increases. Cheryl left the table at 6:11 p.m.

Matt invited Keith Baker, Andrew Dunsmore, Jamie Cota and Pat King to the table to talk about the Fire Department budget lines and the possibility to purchase a ladder truck out of sequence.

Line 92 Fire Dept. Current Year Loan: At this time the Georgia Fire Department (GFD) has a chance to buy a ladder truck from St. Albans that is in great condition.

Keith believes it is now time for the GFD to have a ladder truck as buildings continue to grow and there are some that the department can't reach now. About 70% of the buildings already have a second floor and a ladder is much safer than using a ground ladder with rescues. With a three-story elderly housing currently in the planning stages; a ladder truck will become a necessity.

The proposed ladder truck has more capabilities than the one currently scheduled to be replaced. Currently looking at a purchase price of \$200k, the price could drop because it would be local and able to still support St. Albans Town. This will depend on the St. Albans Town Selectboard.

Charlebois gave a rough estimate of \$25k to repaint and letter the truck.

Pictures of our current truck engine 2 were sent to the sellers who informed the Town could get \$110k to \$115k, minus their commission, as we would be selling it earlier than expected.

The current air-packs loan is scheduled to end this year and a five-year loan for the ladder truck would not start until next year. This loan would be about the same as the air-packs loan so this would be a zero increase for this line.

The current service contractor for St. Albans Town informed us that the truck is in excellent condition and that department will not find one in this condition for \$200k anytime soon. The Ladder truck would not be available until late July so there's no rush.

The effect on the capital budget is negligible and this will actually put us back on track for future year truck replacements with the next replacement engine being our 1997 tanker that would have cost us \$400k to \$450k. The original plan was engine, engine, tanker, tanker. This ladder truck would become a 2029 replacement.

Ladder trucks actually tend to get used more than pump trucks and this one does have 500 gallons of water. It is also a single axle truck so there will be no issues with it fitting into the GFD bays.

Line 243 Fire Dept. School/training: A ladder truck will have a slight impact as the training is more involved but St. Albans will allow us to piggyback their new ladder trucks factory training for a reduced cost.

Line 237 Fire Dept. Salaries: Last year the firefighters received basically minimum wage and we were advised by the selectboard to bring forward an increase in 2020.

Line 255 Fire Dept. Truck/Apparatus Maint./Repairs: Looking to add about \$4k as ladder trucks have a higher repair cost and more involved testing than a ground ladder.

Line 257 Fire Dept. Money to Reserve Fund: Reserve funds going from \$80k to \$90k to maintain proper truck placements in the future.

The Fire Department representatives departed at 6:45 pm.

Matt invited Susanna Brown and Kent Henderson of the GCC to the table at 6:47 p.m. to talk about their budget.

Line 390 Conservation Money to Reserve Fund: They walked the board through the past reserve funding amounts and the reasons for their reserve funds.

They informed the board that the funds do not have a set purchase in mind, they keep their eyes and ears opened for properties that suddenly come up for sale, looking for right of ways to land that they own that is landlocked and ways to help local farmers keep lands open.

Discussion followed on; the overall budget for this year, the lack of cash on hand at this time, non-sustainable budget increases and what is their ideal number for reserve funds which have traditionally been about right around \$12k until the last few years.

They would like to have \$10k rather than \$5k.

Budget meeting closed at 7:02 p.m. and will be continued on Wednesday January 15, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m.