

TOWN OF DEERFIELD, NH  
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE  
George B. White Building  
8 Raymond Road, Deerfield, NH 03037  
6:30pm Tuesday, 29 November 2016  
MINUTES

Call to Order 6:30pm

1. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

2. Moment of Silence/Prayer

3. Roll Call

Present: James Spillane, Chairman; Bill von Hassel, Vice Chairman; Ian Scott, Kevin Verville, Steve Giovinelli, Troi Hopkins, Carol Levesque, Karen Cote (6:33pm), David Carbone (6:34pm) Members; Zach Langlois, School Board Rep Member; Andrew Robertson, Select Board Rep Member Also Present: Jan Foisy, Town Administrator; Evelyn DeCota, Phillbrick-James Library Librarian; Kevin Barry, Town Clerk; Penny Touchette, Town Business Administrator

Chairman Spillane reminds the entire committee that there is an expected decorum during MBC meetings. Chairman Spillane states that during the meeting he should be addresses as Chairman or Mr. Chair. He reminds the committee that members need to be recognized by the Chair before speaking. Questions should be addressed through the Chair unless you have been acknowledged and are asking questions of someone testifying at the microphone. A member will receive one warning any subsequent violation of decorum and they will be asked to leave. If they do not leave, they will be removed from the meeting. He has also sent a reminder about the email usage policy. If you have a question, send it to the Chair, Vice Chair or both.

I. Scott addresses the committee as well as town residents. He speaks about appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the MBC and give back to the town of Deerfield. He explains that he spent the first few meetings that he has attended observing, listening, and gaining understanding for some of the rules of the committee and the way that it works. He states that he does not work in the interest of any special interest groups, unions, or businesses. His goal for being on this committee is to help save the townspeople money. He apologizes for the language he used at the last meeting and asks for another chance. He will continue to fight for what he believes in and he believes that the committee will benefit from his unique view.

4. Citizen's Comments

None seen

5. Approval of Outstanding Minutes

November 22, 2016 have not been received, therefore approval is postponed until the next meeting on Saturday, December 3, 2016.

Chairman Spillane states that he needs to leave in the afternoon of the Saturday, December 3. Vice Chairman von Hassel will not be able to act as Chair. K. Verville is also not available to act as Chair. Therefore, the meeting may need to end prior to finishing review of the budget and be continued at another meeting.

## 6. Old Business

Chairman Spillane asks Mr. Langlois if he has anything to bring from the School Board.

Z. Langlois responds that the Board has not meeting since the last MBC meeting. They will be meeting on Wednesday, December 7. The draft budget will be brought to the MBC on December 6.

A. Robertson states that Don Watts, Chairman of the Cemetery Committee, believes there are 111 cemeteries in Deerfield. The town owns 22 of them by deed. Eight receive regular maintenance. 2 or 3 others receive some maintenance.

Regarding retirement contribution, the following were made: in 2015 \$67,382, in 2016 \$71,203, in 2017 \$78,875. For Police in 2015 \$100,805, in 2016 \$113,786, and in 2017 \$123,391. In 2016 totaling \$184,989, and in 2017 \$202,266.

In 2015, there was a 4% increase COLA for all employees. Police Department is the only 2017 proposed raises at a flat 3%.

## 7. New Business

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Library budget in the amount of \$105,699.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

Ms. Evelyn DeCota, Librarian, speaks regarding her retirement planned for 2017. She states that it has been her pleasure to work as librarian for 35 years. In 1981 there were 2200 residents which has increased to nearly 5000 today. In 1981, the library was open 4 hours a week and only 50 people used it. Now thousands use it and it is open 36 hours per week. With the help of Friends of Library, Library Trustees, Select Board, Municipal Budget Committee, citizens and staff, the library has grown to what it is today.

Ms. Decota states that for safety and liability reasons for both employees and visitors, it is important to have a second staff member at the library. Therefore, they are requesting a part-time position of 15 hours as Programming Assistant. This person will be responsible for programs toddlers to seniors- Storytime, Summer Reading Program, Humanities to Go. Trustees and library staff view this addition as a necessity.

Chairman Spillane thanks Ms. DeCota for all of her work over the past 35 years. He asks for further information regarding the increase in the Full-Time Staff line and the decrease in Contract line

Ms. DeCota responds that the increase in the Full-Time line is to allow for bargaining room when searching for her replacement. It is a \$3.16 per hour increase over the current hourly wage. There will be a two week overlap with the new hire to decrease the chance of interruption of service.

The contract line went down because of a change with the cleaning company. They are now coming twice a week instead of three times per week.

Vice Chairman vonHassel asks if a search for a new librarian has started.

Ms. DeCota states that the Trustees and staff have formed a committee to address the vision for the library in the coming years and timeline for the search. She plans to retire in September.

Vice Chairman vonHassel asks if that committee will also look into comparisons with wages for librarians in surrounding towns.

Ms. DeCota replies that they do have plans to look into that information and that Deerfield is below surrounding towns.

K. Verville thanks Ms. DeCota for her years of service. K. Verville clarifies whether the comparison has already taken place or if that data still needs to be collected.

Ms. DeCota states that the data regarding comparable surrounding towns still needs to be collected.

**Motion:** K. Verville moves to table the Library budget until Saturday

Ms. DeCota asks Mr. Verville to repeat his previous question.

K. Verville replies that his understanding is that she will be at the library until September plus the two week overlap therefore the new hire would be for approximately a quarter but that the budget is reflecting a 12% increase in this line. He is looking for information regarding comparisons of compensation for librarians in comparable surrounding towns.

Ms. DeCota asks if he is asking her to do the research or if others will do the research or both.

K. Verville acknowledges that it is a short time to Saturday but, if possible, ideally both would do the research.

Ms. DeCota comments that the annual salary at \$25 per hour translate into \$52,000 per year.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks if cleaning could be taken on internally especially with the additional proposed

**Second:** Vice Chairman von Hassel

**Vote to table the Library budget until Saturday: Yay: 6, Nay: 5, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Ambulance budget in the amount of \$11,500.

**Second:** K. Verville

A. Robertson notes that this is a contract service and the town is currently in the middle of a contract in which there is an increase each year. He also states that there is additional back-up information.

I. Scott asks Mr. Robertson the length of the contract.

A. Robertson states that the contract is for five years.

Chairman Spillane asks what is the current year of the contract.

A. Robertson responds that this is the first year of the contract.

**Vote to accept the Ambulance budget in the amount of \$11,500: Yay: 11, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0- Motion Carries**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Town Hall budget in the amount of \$32,223

**Second:** K. Verville

A. Robertson states that major expenses include the continued painting of the exterior. One side is painted each year. This is necessary to address the peeling paint/shutters. There will be a formal bid process.

C. Levesque asks Mr. Robertson if there are plans to repair the windows at the town hall.

A. Robertson states that there is not a plan at this time to address the windows.

**Vote to approve the Town Hall budget in the amount of \$32,223: Yay: 10, Nay: 1, Abstained: 0- Motion Carries**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Town Clerk budget in the amount of \$118,061.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson notes that the Mr. Kevin Barry, Town Clerk, is present and available for questions. He also

notes that the Town Clerk is exempt from the new over-time rules and this is the reason for the recent update.

Kevin Barry, Town Clerk, provides an overview of the budget which includes a \$3500 increase on the Full-Time Employee line. Most of this increase was due to a \$.50 per hour raise for the Deputy Town Clerk who recently completed a four year certification. There is also a small raise for the Town Clerk. The budget includes an increase in mileage for Increase in a contract. \$3300 increase for supplies files for archives as “the keeper of all records”. Dog licensing line is increased because it has been overspent by \$223. Increase in postage by \$100 to help with communication about dog licensing and town registrations. The Meetings, Seminars, Training line has decreased because now that the Deputy Town Clerk has completed the certification, she will not be attending the classes now.

In reference to the postage line T. Hopkins suggests using postcards or a digital version to send reminders for dog licenses rather than letter to decrease the expense.

I. Scott asks if there are any plans to get a credit card reader at the Town Clerk’s Office.

Mr. Barry responds that he is not aware of any plan for a credit card reader.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks how many vehicle registrations are done online.

Mr. Barry replies that approximately 2000 vehicle registrations have been done online over the past two years.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks in which line is that reflected.

Mr. Barry responds that it would be under the Maintenance and Venders line.

K. Verville confirms that the current salary for the Deputy is \$31,994 and the proposed \$35,110 is a 10% increase year on year.

Mr. Barry replies that the change in salary is correct.

Ms. Foisy states that it is just over a 3% increase

**Vote to approve the Town Clerk budget in the amount of \$118,061: Yay: 9, Nay: 1, Abstained: 1- Motion Carries**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Informational Technology budget in the amount of \$55,974.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson states that the primary increase is with respect to the part time employee. There has not been a raise proposed but rather an increase of an additional 4 hours per week for the part-time employee for a total of 24 hours.

Chairman Spillane asks if this increase will ensure that the webpage is kept up to date.

Mr. Robertson states that it will help. The Board is also looking into a web design company which would make it easier to update the webpage.

I. Scott asks Mr. Robertson what additional tasks the part time employee will receive or is it to cover maintenance and troubleshooting.

A. Robertson defers to Ms. Jan Foisy, Town Administrator.

Ms. Foisy explains that the Police Department will have new software on the server that will need to be installed and get up and running correctly. He will also work on the website, town newsletter, troubleshooting computer problems in the building.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks if the increase is for an additional employee.

Ms. Foisy responds that it is not. The increase is for 4 additional hours a week for the current part-time employee.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks if it would be cheaper to increase this position to full-time.

Chairman Spillane states that it would also then require benefits.

Ms. Foisy states that she does not believe that there would be enough to keep a full-time employee busy at

this time.

Chairman Spillane asks Ms. Foisy to address previous inquiries about having an on-call IT person instead or sharing an IT person with the school.

Ms. Foisy states that having an on-call person would deal with just computer problems. Whereas the current employee deals with problems with the phones, video, cellphones, newsletters, etc.

A. Robertson responds that the school currently has a full-time IT employee and would not be able to share with the town.

I. Scott suggests to Ms. Foisy that another look be taken at the option of having an on-call IT service. He comments that there are many companies now that manage and support the equipment that she mentioned. Chairman Spillane states that he has been made aware that as occasionally old equipment is replaced, it is sold but there is not an income line to reflect this revenue.

Ms. Foisy states that the majority of the equipment is gutted and surplus and what is left goes to the transfer station. She comments that the town is fortunate that the IT employee often times is able to find needed equipment through his business at no charge to the town. He brings it in and refurbishes it.

Chairman Spillane asks if there is a master list of inventory.

Ms. Foisy states that the IT employee maintains an inventory list,

**Vote to approve the Informational Technology budget in the amount of \$55,974: Yay: 11, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0- Motion Carries.**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Revaluation of Property budget in the amount of \$82,162

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson states that most of the expense in this budget is due to the contract with the assessing company, Avatar. Background information including the contract is included in the back-up. He also comments that Ms. Penny Touchette, Assessing Specialist, is available to answer questions.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks what is the timeline of the contract.

A. Robertson states that the contract is 2015-2019.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks if there is a year on year increase.

A. Robertson states that with the exception of the first year the remaining years are all \$28,344 each year Chairman Spillane confirms that 2015 was higher because there was a major revaluation.

A. Robertson states that it is a four to five year circuit and do 20% of the town at a time.

**Vote to approve the Revaluation of Property budget in the amount of \$82,162: Yay: 11, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0- Motion Carries.**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Insurance budget in the amount of \$478,294.53.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson states that the increases are in health insurance and worker's compensation. The current plan was Harvard Pilgrim the jump was too expensive. Eight or nine different options from a variety of providers were reviewed and decided on Anthem Blue Cross. Worker's compensation rates change each year based on claims.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks Mr. Robertson if there was an increase in worker's compensation claims this year.

A. Robertson defers to Ms. Touchette.

Ms. Touchette states that there were a couple of claims this year as opposed to years past when there have not been any.

A. Robertson also points out that the rate last year was artificially low due to a premium holiday.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks if there has been corrective action made regarding risk management on

these worker's compensation claims.

Ms. Touchette confirms that corrective action has been made.

A. Robertson comments that Primex provides resources for this as well.

Chairman Spillane states that when reviewing the budget vs actuals, this line is consistently over budgeted by \$100,000.

A. Robertson states that the extra money is in the line to allow for changes throughout the year that may cause increases, i.e. employees change status, a police officer leaves for a couple of months or the fact that worker's compensation is an auditable policy.

Chairman Spillane reiterates that the line budgeted is consistently \$100,000 over the actual spend.

K. Verville states that the increase in health insurance, worker's compensation and the retirement increases account for 1/3 of the 4.9% budget increase as it was presented at the previous meeting. Salary adjustments account for nearly \$72,000 39% of the 4.9% increase. If the committee does not desire a 4.9% increase, there are not a lot of places to make cuts. He comments that there is already a decrease in Highway.

Chairman Spillane points out that there is an \$18,000 proposed increase in the Health Insurance line item but this line is consistently overfunded by \$100,000. He questions if this line should be decreased.

K. Verville points out that historically if the committee votes on the bottom line of a budget, that prohibits reopening a budget for discussion. There would need to be a majority vote to reopen that budget for discussion. He is unclear if it is required to be a member from the opposition side.

Chairman Spillane agrees that is common procedure and then a final vote on the budget and warrant articles is held.

A. Robertson the best estimate is made for insurance cost using expert advice.

Ms. Touchette states that the actual policy costs have changed this year and there are five positions that are empty and do not know if they will be a single, two-person or a family so it is figured on the higher end.

Chairman Spillane asks how can this be explained historically.

Ms. Touchette responds that Ms. Foisy had completed this budget in the past. Ms. Touchette figured this budget by taking the actual known cost and then estimating high on the five unknown to arrive at the final budget.

K. Verville comments that this is essentially risk management so that this doesn't come in over budget. Barring 2007 and 2008 (flooding, tornado and ice storms) there is always a large amount returned \$62,000, \$95,00+, \$173,00 or more. This shows that there is a way to cut the budget. Unless we chose to overbudget and underspend.

C. Levesque asks Ms. Touchette with the spend so far this year of \$124,586.66 what will next month bring for spend.

Ms. Touchette responds that it should be between \$12,000 and \$13,000. It could be more because the Board of Selectmen cover part of the deductible.

C. Levesque asks Ms. Touchette what numbers are used as a buffer.

Ms. Touchette figures everyone at a family plan which is \$1700-1800 total cost per employee.

C. Levesque states that approximate 21 full-time employees are eligible to receive health care.

A. Robertson states that he can provide a breakdown of what was used as an estimate for family plans and costs associated with them.

**Motion:** K. Verville moves to reduce 01.4196.09.210 by \$15,000, .230 by 5000, .260 by \$30,000 for a total of \$50,000.

**Second:** Vice Chairman von Hassel

A. Robertson states that he is unsure of what estimates were used to figure the retirement worker's

compensation. He asks Ms. Touchette what those numbers were based on.

Ms. Touchette responds that those numbers are based on current salaries.

A. Robertson states that there is much speculation in those lines. He also does not believe that information from 2015 and 2016 budget vs. actual is a very long history on which to base a judgment.

K. Verville states that the MBC simply approves a bottom line budget. His opinion is that the voters will not pass a budget that is 4.9% over last year. Therefore, if that number is not reduced, the budget is likely to go to default. If the budget goes to default, it is left to the Select Board to move individual lines around to have the budget balance. He understands Mr. Robertson's concerns that the worker's compensation and retirement lines may not be the best lines to reduce and he welcomes an amendment to the motion.

Vice Chairman von Hassel states that line .260 is not negotiable.

**Motion:** Vice Chairman von Hassel moves to amend 01.4196.09.210 to remove \$50,000 from that line.

**Second:** I. Scott

K. Verville confirms that the motion to amend is to put the \$5,000 back in to .230 and \$30,000 back in to .260 and add an additional \$35,000 reduction to line .210 for a total reduction of \$50,000 from .210

Z. Langlois states that upon reviewing the information and proposed change it is important to realize that the town is budgeting for a worst-case scenario as best practices.

S. Giovinelli comments that he does not necessarily disagree with Mr. Langlois but he believes that Mr. Verville has a valid point that the town is unlikely to pass a budget at a 4.9% increase.

Vice Chairman von Hassel states if he saw that the actual expenditures were even close to what is budgeted he would be more likely to agree with the idea to keep the amount in the line. However, this line is consistently underspent.

Z. Langlois comments that his concern is that the cutting the budget may not allow to fill positions or require cutting positions.

K. Verville states that comparing budget vs. actual shows that this track record if it holds true there is more than adequate to cover the line.

A. Robertson reiterates that what is being looked at is a small snapshot of two years. All that is needed is a year with bad weather, storms and the end of the year return won't be there as it has in past years. He also comments that this surplus is what has kept the tax rate level year to year.

I. Scott states that he understands concern that other committee members have but with the recent national election, health care will only become less expensive.

K. Verville states that last year there was a road maintenance warrant article that was passed by the voters. He comments that if the concern is what impact the weather could have on Highways, then a reduction in the Highway budget is ill-advised.

S. Giovinelli states that it is necessary to accept some risk somewhere to be able to make cuts. He believes that benefits is a reasonable place to make these cuts. With this cut, almost 25% of the 49% increase will be removed.

Vice Chairman von Hassel reiterates that he understands Mr. Robertson's concerns but believes this is the best course of action.

I. Scott states that even with this \$50,000 reduction there is still a \$152,000 cushion to the bottom line.

K. Verville comments that he does not agree with that statement since the majority of the increases in the budget are due to non-touchable retirement and worker's compensation, salary increases. Therefore, if those are left in, but the will is still to cut some of the 4.9% increase, this is a reasonable place to do so.

I. Scott clarifies to Mr. Verville that his point was based on if this cut was to be made.

**Vote to amend the motion to only remove \$50,000 from line 01.419609.210: Yay: 8, Nay: 3,**

**Abstained: 0- Motion Carries**

A. Robertson reiterates that he urges the committee to not pass this motion for the previously stated reasons.

**Vote to remove \$50,000 from line 01.419609.210: Yay: 9, Nay: 3, Abstained: 0- Motion Carries**

**Vote to approve the Insurance budget in the amended amount of \$428,294.53: Yay: 8, Nay: 3, Abstained: 0- Motion Carries**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Legal budget in the amount of \$23,572.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson notes that the town is always facing on-going legal challenges and the budget will be spent by the end of this year.

I. Scott asks for Mr. Robertson to explain the difference between the \$13,300 actual last year and this year's actual.

A. Robertson responds that the town is currently involved in a Supreme Court case and there are other potential costs on the horizon.

I. Scott asks Mr. Robertson if he is confident that this year's budget will not be overspent.

A. Robertson states that he is not confident the at this year's budget will not be overspent but it a best estimate.

K. Verville asks Mr. Robertson if any of this money is spent on Northern Pass issues.

A. Robertson states that the Board has walked a careful line to not spend this money in direct opposition of Northern Pass but rather seeking legal counsel to find out about what position the town is in with regard to taxation.

S. Giovinelli asks about the nature of the legal challenges.

A. Robertson responds that as he stated before, there is a court case currently in the NH Supreme Court regarding warrant articles changes at deliberative session. There may also be some employee appeals. Legal advice is also sought when dealing with some Human Resources type issues.

**Vote to approve the Legal budget in the amount of \$23,572: Yay:11, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0- Motion Carries.**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Personnel budget in the amount of \$84,877.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson states that this pertains to the FICA and Medicare lines based on salaries presented in this budget.

**Vote to approve the Personnel budget in the amount of \$84,877: Yay: 10, Nay: 1, Abstained: 0**

**Motion:** K. Verville moves the Supervisors of the Checklist budget in the amount of \$2,624.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson states that Ms. Harriet Cady, Chairman of the Supervisors of the Checklist, is present and can be available to answer any questions. He comments that the reduction is due to the reduction in the number of election for the coming year.

**Vote to approve the Supervisors of the Checklist budget in the amount of \$2,624: Yay: 10, Nay: 1, Abstained: 0**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Town Meeting and Election budget in the amount of \$9,089.

**Second:** Z. Langlois



A. Robertson notes that the reduction is due to the reduction in the number of election for the coming year.

**Vote to approve the Town Meeting and Election budget in the amount of \$9,089: Yay: 10, Nay: 1, Abstained: 0**

**Motion:** K. Verville moves the Emergency Management budget in the amount of \$7,363.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson states that Mr. Kevin Barry is present for any questions.

Mr. Barry states that the \$100 increase in the mileage line is to cover mileage to conferences. Supplies has been reduced by \$50. The diesel line has been reduced based on lower cost of diesel.

**Vote to approve the Emergency Management budget in the amount of \$7,363: Yay: 11, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0**

**Motion:** A. Robertson moves the Zoning Board budget in the amount of \$3,366.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson states that this line is a hit or miss depending on the number of lot line disputes. With the increase in housing developments this line is likely to increase.

**Vote to approve the Zoning Board budget in the amount of \$3,366: Yay: 10, Nay: 1, Abstained: 0**

**Motion:** K. Verville moves the Highway Safety budget in the amount of \$5.

**Second:** Z. Langlois

**Vote to approve the Highway Safety in the amount of \$5: Yay: 11, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0**

#### 8. Citizen's Comments

Ms. Harriet Cady asks for clarification about the Town Clerk raise and whether it is in the budget or not. Chairman Spillane states that he saw that there is a raise but not overtime for the Town Clerk.

A. Robertson states that the \$5000 overtime was removed and there was a small raise included in there.

#### 9. Adjournment

**Motion:** K. Verville moves to adjourn

**Second:** Z. Langlois

**Vote to adjourn: Yay: 11, Nay: 0, Abstained 0: - Motion Carries**

*Next Meeting: Saturday December 3, 2016 at 9:00am*