

ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE
December 5, 2009 Meeting Minutes
DPW Building – 8:30 am

Budget Committee Members: Judy Finsterbusch, Shirley Green, Gayle Hulva, Lori Saladino, Roberta Morse, David Stewart, Doug Pettibone, Gail Malz, Fred Cummings (Selectman), Paul Mirski

Administration: Steve Schneider (Town Manager), Wendy Huntley (Recorder)

Others: Leah Woods, Richard Martin (Fast Squad Chief), Kim Withrow (Fast Squad Asst. Chief), and Dave Crate (Fire Chief), Ken Daniels (DPW Director)

Administrative:

Pettibone called the meeting to order at 8:37am

Hulva move to approve minutes from 11/19/09 Finsterbush seconded.

Green offered an amendment as follows:

Green commented that she is inclined to agree regarding most organizations, but would need more information to make a decision on others. One solution could be that some of the people who stand up in support of certain RAs could make a private donation instead of relying on taxpayer funding.

Eight votes in favor of approving minutes as amended. Mirski and Cummings abstained.

Pettibone informed the committee members that with the total town assessment valued at \$540,000,000 the tax rate is officially at \$19.02/1,000 with the town portion at \$5.51/1,000.

Schneider added comments regarding the meeting held with DRA and Doug Pettibone in setting the 2009 tax rate. The town has a higher undesignated fund balance now than it did last year at this time, reasons being that the 2008 revenues were up and the spending was less than appropriated.

Malz questioned if the overlay and undesignated are the same?

Schneider answered no that the overlay is for tax refunds and abatements.

General discussion followed regarding the tax abatement process.

Mirski asked what was the increase due to from the state revenue?

Schneider responded that the rooms & meals tax came in higher than expected.

General discussion followed regarding state revenues.

Morse asked what the period is that this new tax rate covers.

Schneider answered that the property tax year runs from April 1st to March 31st.
[The town's fiscal year runs January thru December.]

Pettibone made the statement that this is the last meeting for gathering proposed spending plan information from Departments and then opened the floor to Chief Richard Martin and Kim Withrow.

Fast Squad (01-4215-###)

Supplies (01-4215-620)

Martin explained that the squad does not get supplies from the hospital anymore and so the cost for supplies is up.

General discussion followed on the squad's process for purchasing supplies. Suggestions included looking for donations/purchases and different vendors.

Uniforms and Safety Gear (01-4215-680)

Martin explained the need for two new portable radios, each costing about \$2,600. The squad has two new members coming on and with these new radios requested, everyone will have the ability to communicate with each other.

New Equipment 01-4215-740)

Withrow explained that the squad is requesting fund to upgrade the Zoll defibrillator. There is a pending change coming in May (from the state) and the squad will have to upgrade to a twelve lead defibrillator, as we are a paramedic ambulance. This cost to upgrade the Zoll is \$7,500 versus \$41,000 for new one.

Mirski requested that the information on the source of who creates the requirements for the department be submitted.

Cummings asked why the department can't use the balance left of the 2009 budget to upgrade the Zoll since there is a balance enough to cover?

Schneider recommended waiting till closer to the end of the year to see how the total town budget comes out before we obligate 09 funds for this. Potentially 2009 funds could be encumbered for the upgrade of the Zoll.

Ambulance Personnel (01-4215-110)

Martin explained the increase is to include the time spent for members to get recertified and in hopes that the town squad will be able to answer more calls instead of having Lebanon answer so many of them.

General discussion of Lebanon responding and Enfield responding to runs.

Pettibone asked for a quick discussion of insurance reimbursements for ambulance services. General discussion was had on the history of the question, "To bill or not to bill?" for ambulance services. Chief Martin explained that historically there have been no payments made to the F.A.S.T. squad by individuals who have used the service or from reimbursements by insurance companies. The amount of money potentially available from insurance company payments is about \$35-40,000 per year. The F.A.S.T squad has been evaluating this new potential revenue source. A 'soft-billing' approach would allow for insurance payments while not requiring payments from uninsured individuals.

Pettibone opened the floor to Fire Chief David Crate

Fire Department (01-4220-###)

Telephone/Communications (01-4220-341)

Crate explained that this expense total may change. Crate plans to check with Wendy on Monday for details on the expenses listed in this line.

Clothing (01-4220-680)

Crate explained that the fire department has three new members that came on board. It now costs the department about \$2,000 plus to outfit each member and the department is still planning on replace two sets of outfits.

New Equipment (01-4220-740)

Crate explained that most items requested are replacements and upgrades.

Finsterbush noted that budgeted amount for 2009 is considerably less than the actual spent so far in 2009 and asked if the money for this 2010 request can be used with 2009 funds.

Schneider responded that the money in the -740 line will be used to upgrade and retro fit the "new" (used) rescue truck recently purchased and some monies may be put into capital reserves. At the first meeting in January the committee will get the actual amounts for 2009 expenditures.

General discussion ensued regarding the pro/cons of funding capital reserves or bonding for new equipment.

Saladino asked if the fire department has trust funds.

Crate answered no.

Saladino asked if the fire department charges for fire calls?

Crate answered no.

Union Street Station (01-4194-436)

Crate explained that a room was built for the new washer at the Union Street Station. The station still needs to redo the kitchen. Currently, there are cupboards that have donated. The kitchen is still the original from way back (1960's).

Stewart asked if the fire house is equipped with a generator.

Crate responded no. There has been discussion on getting a portable generator, but one has not been purchased yet. Union Street Station is wired for one already. Crate feels that a portable generator may be more beneficial for the town. It could be used to keep heat going at different buildings to keep them from freezing should power be out for a significant amount of time. The cost of a new generator is about \$26,000.

Schneider added that funds may be able to come from Capital Reserves for a generator.

Morse asked about the washer and what was the cost.

Crate answered that the washer cost \$8,000 and it was budgeted in 2007.

Mirski asked what the town does in an emergency without a generator.

Schneider responded the DPW facility is the emergency operations center. There is a large generator at DPW.

Stewart questioned which buildings are used as shelters.

Schneider answered that the schools are used by the Red Cross as shelters.

Break 10:10-10:19

| Pettibone opened the floor to Ken Daniels, DPW Director

General Government Buildings (01-4194-###)

Daniels explained that the individual facilities have fallen under each of the department heads. The building that he currently oversees is the Community Building, DPW facility, Whitney Hall, the Veterans' Park, the chemical toilets and the reservoirs & dams.

Reservoirs & Dams (01-4194-441)

Daniels explained that the \$1,000 increase is for taking over the Smith Pond Dam.

Mirski questioned what sort of deed will the town have for the Smith Pond Dam.

Schneider responded that the Town will be taking over the maintenance of the dam, but not sure if the town wants ownership of the dam. The dam is really owned by the landowners. The town

is pursuing some sort of a trust account for the maintenance. One of the trade-offs for the town inspecting the dam is that the pond then will become accessible to the public.

General discussion followed regarding Smith Pond. What the original use was, who the current landowners are and such.

Utilities/Electric (01-4194-410)

Pettibone asked if the town receives its electricity from an electricity wholesaler.

Daniels answered that National Grid supplies the town.

Pettibone asked if there had been any recommendations from the energy committee.

Schneider answered yes. The Town has applied for an energy audit of Whitney Hall as it is currently the oldest building used and an audit would potentially have would have the biggest impact there. Monday night (12/07/09) the energy committee is coming in to talk to the Board of Selectmen regarding energy.

Stewart asked about the acoustics at the community building and if any alterations for acoustics would be paid for from the **Community Building Maintenance line (01-4194-420)**.

Schneider answered possibly but the town is also working with the Lions Club.

Hulva asked why the requested budget for the **Center [Town] Hall (01-4194-432)** is higher than usual.

Schneider responded that there is a need for windows being re-glazed, and basic maintenance for the building to keep the elements out.

General discussion followed regarding the Center Town Hall.

Highway Administration (01-4311-###)

Personnel: Fulltime (01-4311-110) Daniels informed the committee that the Mechanic has gone from working fulltime (40 hrs) to part-time (32 hrs).

Personnel: Part-time/Seasonal (01-4311-112) Daniels informed the committee that this line includes the seasonal worker for cemetery and grounds.

Highways and Streets (01-4312-###)

Pavement Maintenance (01-4312-613) Daniels and Stewart stressed that there is a need to keep up with the pavement maintenance or the base of the road degrades and it costs much more to rebuild it instead of maintaining it. The \$190,000 requested is for general maintenance such as shimming and crack-filling. It would take \$300,000 to get things all caught up. No funds are requested again this year for any major repaving projects.

Pettibone inquired as to what the state highway block grant does.

Daniels explained that the highway block grant funds are put against the highway maintenance not just paving.

Schneider explained that the state has increased the cost to register vehicles and a portion of that should be given back to the municipalities in the form of the highway block grant.

Finsterbush questioned the purpose of the **Vegetation Maintenance line (01-4312- 631)**.

Daniels explained that funds are used for the rental of roadside mowers and hired out tree work. There hasn't been much roadside moving done in 2009.

Stewart asked if some of those funds could be used at the cemeteries.

Schneider answered no.

Stewart commented that the highway department did a nice job on George Hill Road.

Gas (01-4312-635) and Diesel (01-4312-636)

General discussion followed as to the cost of fuel and how it's accounted for. Basically, when the bulk tanks are filled, the costs are charged to the highway department and as other departments fill their vehicles & equipment, their actual costs are then transferred to the appropriate departments.

Veg. Mgmt.-Special Projects (01-4312-731) Daniels described this line as being for plantings. The town is in the process in getting with the New Hampshire Forest Service to become a 'Tree City'. The requirement for this designation is a certain % of the town's expenditure has to be allocated for tree maintenance and tree planting.

Schneider added that the town also received a town beautification award from the state resulting from the plantings.

Mirski inquired whether there is a net benefit for being a Tree City.

Schneider responded that these are things that the town does anyways, but this gives us recognition. It reflects more on morale and quality of life.

Stewart noted that the line **Vehicle/Equip. repairs/Maintenance (01-4312-660)** keeps going over budget and wondered if there enough budgeted for 2010.

Daniels explained that the figure is a best guess. It's probably about \$20,000 lower than it should be. For example, if the holder goes down, the town does not have a back up for sidewalk snow removal.

New & Replacement Equipment (01-4312-740)

Cummings asked what the purpose of this line is.

Daniels responded that the three major items charged to this line are saws, mowers, and plow mounts. We also had to replace six tires on the grader this year at a cost of \$1,200 per tire.

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Daniels affirmed that the highway department will be replacing the guardrails on the bridge for Crystal Lake on Lockhaven road (by the Mud Pond dam).

Street Lighting (01-4316-410) Schneider explained that the energy committee came to Board of Selectmen regarding the street lights in town. An inventory of all the street lights was done and there is talk about turning some lights off and putting some new lights in different locations. There needs to be more discussion about this between the energy committee and the public safety departments.

Stewart commented that when the energy committee did the survey that it didn't seem to him they had set criteria.

Schneider believes that the energy committee did firm the criteria up a bit, but that it's still a work in progress.

Daniels cautioned that the federal highway administration is pretty specific with lighting requirements.

Mirski commented that there must be some other type of lights the town could use.

Schneider explained that National Grid is not willing to make changes for directional lighting, or low energy lighting. There is no incentive for National Grid to change. The town would have to undertake the expense.

Sanitation Administration (01-4321-###)

Cummings informed the committee that this is the item that was impacted when the Board of Selectmen made the decision to have the transfer station open on Sundays for the summer. In 2010 the hope is to utilize part-time help for Sunday labor. The town has a decision to make, to either change the current open days (Wed. & Thurs. noon – 7pm, Fri. & Sat. 8am-4pm), or to open for an additional day on Sundays.

Sanitation Overtime (01-4321-140)

Schneider commented that the funds requested includes having workers do additional time on Sundays.

General discussion of Sunday hours and staffing of the transfer station followed. It was noted that there needs to be one licensed personnel always there during operational hours.

Solid Waste Collection (01-4323-###)

Pettibone noted that the major cost is for the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) contract.

Daniels commented that the town has not gone out for new MSW contract bids as he is waiting on a directive on which way the town is headed (pay as you throw program, discontinue curbside, include recycling curbside pickup, etc) and therefore the town also cannot renew the current contract. The town has a verbal extension currently.

Mirski asked how many different MSW contractors the town can obtain bids from.

Schneider answered that two years ago only two companies picked up bid packets and only one submitted. There is basically only one company.

General discussion followed on trash pickup including the pro/cons of pay as your throw and continuing curbside pickup.

Schneider cautioned that if the town stopped curbside pickup then some other expenditures would increase. If there were no curbside pickup more residents may go to the transfer station and therefore the tipping fees, personnel costs and recycling charges would increase.

Pettibone reminded the committee that this will be discussed at the Board of Selectmen meeting Monday night (12/07/09) and that at next budget committee meeting (12/17/2009) this topic could be revisited.

Solid Waste Disposal (01-4324-###)

Landfill Costs (01-4324-490)

Pettibone questioned the increase.

Daniels explained that the increase is due to an anticipated cost increase by the city of Lebanon

Recycling Processing (01-4324-492)

Daniels again explained that his department is waiting for a comprehensive plan on recycling and any potential charges.

Schneider added that the solid waste committee will hopefully come to come to the Board of Selectmen soon with their recommendations.

Cummings asked what the plan was for purchasing new equipment for DPW.

Daniels distributed an equipment replacement plan 2009 listing all the equipment. Currently he is still waiting for quotes from vendors for pricing. Roughly, the estimated cost for all the equipment is \$732,000.

Pettibone suggested that one idea for town meeting would be to work up an operating budget as level funded as we can and then work up warrant articles for the special needs such as this equipment.

Pettibone informed the committee that the meeting scheduled for Thursday December 10th will be cancelled. The next meeting will be held on December 17th. Pettibone requested that members come back on the 17th with ideas on where the town can find the \$400,000 needed in

spending reductions, or other revenue generating items. He requested hard numbers and prioritization on equipment requests. The meeting will be for recommendations and guidelines for creating a final budget.

Pettibone requested updated 2009 and 2010 revenue numbers and actual expenditure numbers for 2009 for the 17th's meeting.

Stewart commented that the committee needs to face up to hard decisions and keep our equipment up to date.

Cummings noted that he would have problem funding Regional Associations (RAs) if the town does not give employee raises and is not funding things, as they should be.

Mirski commented that he would like accountability from RAs before money is given to them and suggested that having a written contract would be good.

Public Comment: none

1. ADJOURN: Morse made a motion to adjourn at 12:15 pm. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Huntley