

**BUDGET COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 13, 2008  
DPW – 6:00 PM**

**Members Present:** Lee Carrier (Chair), Don Crate (Selectman), Judy Finsterbusch, Shirley Green, Gayle Hulva, Gail Malz, Richard Martin, Roberta Morse, Lori Saladino, David Stewart (Vice-Chair)

**Staff:** Steve Schneider

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 pm.

**1. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 30<sup>TH</sup> MINUTES**

**It was moved by FINSTERBUSCH, seconded by MORSE, to approve the minutes of October 30<sup>th</sup>. The Motion carried.**

**2. ESTIMATED 2009 REVENUE**

The Committee reviewed an updated handout of 2008 Budget vs 2009 Budget by Category. The 2009 appropriations for Insurance (\$60,000) and Dispatch Services (\$60,000) continue to be estimates. The Water and Sewer appropriations were further updated to:

- Water: reduce from \$200,000 to \$167,000
- Sewer: increase from \$300,000 to \$309,000

The proposed 2009 appropriations total \$5,278,958, an increase of \$117,802 over 2008.

**3. ESTIMATED 2009 TAX RATE**

The Department Managers were asked to scale down their individual budgets. Limits were set for level budgeting, 2% increases or 2% decreases depending upon the department. The Police and Public Works departments have the hardest time developing budgets within those guidelines. Every year the Budget Committee calls into question a good portion of what's presented from staff in an effort to achieve a targeted tax rate. Last year, the Committee knocked out \$250,000 from the proposed budget to reach the 6.84 target. That rate was later increased to 6.86 at Town Meeting following motions from the floor to increase expenditures.

The Committee reviewed a handout of 2008 Tax Rate Compared to 2009. The current 6.86 tax rate is based on 2008 revenue totals of \$2,847,000 which include \$813,000 of funds from the Undesignated Fund Balance and Capital Reserve accounts. The current projected 2009 tax rate of 8.13 is based on decreased revenues of \$1,760,000. To keep the tax rate at 6.86,

the Committee must find reductions totaling 10% (\$500,000+) by way of increasing revenue and/or decreasing spending.

CARRIER polled the Committee members for comments on the 2009 tax rate. SALADINO said she wants the budget to be as lean as possible, even more so than last year to protect against potential spending increases proposed and approved by Town Meeting. GREEN agreed, stating that everyone is affected by the current economy. HULVA said she was hearing from people that it may be time to cut services. MORSE spoke in support of setting a tax rate goal and working to achieve it. STEWART said the Committee would be able to reach any target set. He suggested increasing revenue by instituting a pay-as-you-throw program for garbage pick up. MARTIN expressed concern for cutting services. He questioned the impacts of having to reinstate any reductions made. FINSTERBUSCH agreed with setting a target. She said the Committee would need to be judicious about the way in which they trim the budget. She suggested making more of an effort to educate the taxpayers about the Committee's recommendations before Town Meeting. CRATE said he wants to reach a lower tax rate without having to take away too many services. He opposes having to let personnel go. MALZ said she wants to see cuts imposed evenly throughout the town departments. Schneider said the Committee must balance their actions to reduce the budget against maintaining a good quality of life for Enfield residents; Achieve affordability while maintaining the best services possible.

CARRIER recapped that reserve account balances are down. He encouraged the Committee members to look at the big picture as they review the budget and to be creative to lessen the impact to the tax rate. Committee members were asked to come up with cuts in appropriations and revenue increases totaling \$560,000 for consideration at the next meeting.

#### **4. #4197 REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

The Committee agreed last year to fund all agency requests at the same level. That resulted in some agencies receiving more funding than they requested.

Advanced Transit (\$5,250): The Committee discussed AT's resistance to charge passengers for their services. It was suggested that donations from private donors were contingent upon the free ridership. STEWART said this was not a necessary service; funding should be cut to zero. He favored charging the passengers. MALZ agreed, stating it was time these agencies sought creative ways to reach their budgetary goals as well. CRATE cautioned that a petitioned article would be submitted if zero funding is proposed. SALADINO suggested reducing funding to \$1,000. The Committee agreed to fund \$4,120 (2007 appropriation).

LISTEN (\$2,900): the Committee agreed to fund \$3,106 (2008 appropriation).

HEADREST (\$5,150): CRATE questioned the number of Enfield residents who benefited from Headrest's services. STEWART said there was no way to verify the information provided by the agency due to confidentiality laws. The Committee agreed to fund \$2,500.

VNA/VNH (\$18,751): MARTIN and STEWART spoke in opposition to cutting VNA funding. The Committee agreed to fund \$18,000.

Senior Citizens Council (\$6,650): The Committee agreed to fund \$6,000.

WISE (\$2,300): The Committee agreed to fund \$2,300.

Enfield Shaker Museum: Did not submit a funding request this year but have indicated they will seek funding in 2010.

ACORN (\$2,500): The Committee agreed to deny the funding request citing an overlap of services provided by other agencies.

West Central Services (\$5,491): The Committee agreed to fund \$3,500.

Enfield Village Association: Review deferred to a later date.

Mascoma Valley Health Initiative (\$3,463): Funding request is for newsletter production and mailings. The Committee agreed to fund \$1,000.

Tri County Cap (\$0.00): The Committee agreed to fund \$2,000.

Bonnie CLAC (\$0.00): The Committee agreed not to provide funding to Bonnie CLAC.

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Planning Commission: Review deferred to a later date.

Enfield received three new funding requests:

- Court Appointed Special Advocates - \$500
- Friends of Grafton County Drug Court - \$1,500
- Upper Valley Humane Society \$2,500

The Committee agreed not to accept any new funding request due to the current economical situation.

These agency funding appropriations will be reviewed again as the budget is finalized. Schneider suggested the City of Lebanon's response to agency funding requests will set the tone for what the rest of the Upper Valley should expect.

The Committee members accepted the following assignments to prepare arguments in support of their funding recommendations if they are challenged at Town Meeting:

Advanced Transit:	STEWART
ACORN:	FINSTERBUSCH
LISTEN:	SALADINO
VNA/VNH:	HULVA
West Central Services:	MALZ

Senior Citizens Council: CARRIER  
WISE: MORSE  
MVHA: SALADINO  
Tri-County Cap: MARTIN  
Headrest: GREEN

CARRIER said it will be very important for the Selectmen to be on board with the Committee's recommendations. A suggestion was made to add a letter to the Town Report in an effort to circumvent motions for increased spending and to encourage private contributions to these agencies.

## 5. ACTION ITEMS

~~10/30/08: All departments are to submit their budget numbers to the Committee by the next meeting.~~

~~10/30/08: DPW is to provide a breakdown of their proposed \$180,000 funding request.~~

11/13/08: Members are to come up with \$560,000 in budget cuts.

6. **ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Rivard, Secretary