

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 18, 2008
DPW – 6:00 pm**

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

Excused: Don Crate (Selectman)

Staff: Steve Schneider

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM.

1. APPROVAL OF 11-20-08 MINUTES

It was moved by MARTIN, seconded by FINSTERBUSCH, to approve the minutes of 11/20/2008. The Motion carried.

2. APPROVAL OF 11-22-08 MINUTES

It was moved by FINSTERBUSCH, seconded by MARTIN, to approve the minutes of 11/22/08 as amended. The Motion carried.

3. 4210 POLICE

The proposed Police budget totals \$653,585, an increase of \$15,471 over 2008. Chief Richard Crate was present to answer questions.

CARRIER explained to the staff members present that the proposed general budget for 2009 is \$485,000 over the 2008 budget, a 9.2% increase resulting in an 18.2% tax increase. A lot of funds were used last year from the Undesignated Fund Balance and Capital Reserve accounts to reduce the tax impact. Revenue projections for 2009 are down. Every department is being asked to help reduce the 2009 budget. The goal is to keep tax rate at 6.86. Schneider said he went over the Budget Committee's suggested cuts and revenue shortages with town employees so that they may start to think about changes without having to compromise level of services. Schneider said he is confident staff will meet its budget challenges for 2009.

Relative to the Police Department, the Budget Committee is requesting the implementation of a hiring freeze and a 3.7% decrease in the overall department budget (cuts to be determined by Chief Crate). Chief Crate expressed concern for the suggested hiring freeze of the patrol position that will be vacated in January. He said aside from this vacant position, his department will be short another officer while his newest hire attends the 14-week Police

Academy, also beginning in January. Another officer is going to be deployed into active military duty in 2010. Chief Crate said it can take up to 6 months to get a new hire out on the road alone. His staff has also accrued 800 hours of vacation time which requires coverage.

CARRIER asked how other local police departments raise revenue. Chief Crate said some charge for pistol permits, motor vehicle VIN verifications, and/or fingerprint services, all of which Enfield does not.

The Committee questioned:

- The New Equipment line item (\$24,000)
 - These funds will cover the replacement of one cruiser and the purchase of a radar display board.
 - Display boards record statistics (time, speed, vehicles, etc.) and display traveling speeds.
 - The Town is eligible for 50% funding grant from the State for the display board.
- Overtime (have overspent \$1,294 to date in 2008)
 - Overspending is due to court appearances.
 - Largest need for overtime is to cover patrol (sick time, or when extra coverage is needed to execute warrants).
- Contracted Services (\$40,285, an increase of \$7,653 over 2008)
 - These funds cover membership to Lower Grafton County Prosecutorial Association, Special Operations, and use of State Police On-Line Telecommunication System.

FINSTERBUSCH asked the need for Enfield to participate in the regional SWAT program. Chief Crate said the regional SWAT programs provide very specialized training and availability to much more sophisticated equipment the local agencies are unable to obtain. Enfield has one officer in the program. The Chief briefly spoke about the recent publicity the regional SWAT program has received. He said the SWAT unit is doing a very good job and is supported by the Commissioner of the NH Public Safety.

- Gasoline (only \$7,930 of the \$15,500 2008 appropriation has been spent)
 - The Chief suggested not all gas receipts had been accounted for.

4. 4212 POLICE REIMBURSIBLE PROJECTS

Level funding is proposed for Police Reimbursement Projects (\$3000).

5. 4290 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The proposed Emergency Management funding totals \$3000, a decrease of \$200 from 2008.

The Committee questioned the proposed \$2,000 Hazmat Team appropriation. MARTIN said the Hazmat Team is similar to the SWAT program but is associated with the Fire Department.

6. 4299 DISPATCH SERVICES

The proposed Dispatch Services funding totals \$60,030, an increase of \$2,030 over 2008.

7. 4550 LIBRARY

The proposed Library funding totals \$175,049, an increase of \$778 over 2008. Marge Carr and Bart Thurber were present to answer questions.

The Committee questioned:

- The proposed \$10,543 Library Personnel increase
 - This covers the same personnel increases proposed in other town departments.
 - There is no proposed increased in staff count or hours.
 - The library has 2 full-time staff members and 3 part-time members.
- Whether consideration has been given to utilizing volunteers?
 - Libraries today are far more technically oriented than in the past.
 - It is better to have staff continuity to meet the needs of the public.
 - It often creates more work for staff to manage a volunteer force.
- Whether the part-time employees receive benefits?
 - They receive vacation, sick, and holiday time; they are not provided medical insurance.
- The library fee schedule?
 - There are no membership fees (including for non-residents).
 - Fees are imposed for overdue books.
- The proposed \$10,000 Special Projects appropriation?
 - These funds will be used to hire a construction manager to provide cost estimates while the project develops.

Schneider and Ms. Carr will meet to review further library budget reductions.

FINSTERBUSCH asked about the status of the fundraising efforts. Mr. Thurber said it is in a silent phase now. They continue to hope to break ground on the new construction in 2010. Consideration was given to scaling the project back, however they decided not to. The plan is to construct the first geothermal library in New Hampshire. Schneider spoke favorably of the partnership with the Energy Committee on the library project and the possibility of putting in a micro/hydro-plant that will lessen the need for energy.

STEWART asked if there is any possibility the fundraising efforts might allow the library to pay back some of the \$400,000 provided from the Town in 2008. Mr. Thurber said no; the goal is to raise in excess of what is needed to offset maintenance costs and possibly reduce the Town's annual commitment to library. STEWART asked if there is any chance the library could become autonomous. Ms. Carr spoke in opposition to that.

8. 4589 HISTORICAL RECORDS

The proposed Historical Records funding totals \$605, a decrease of \$310 from 2008. Marge Carr was present to answer questions.

STEWART asked if records are being preserved. Ms. Carr said preservation is expensive. Most of her efforts go toward purchasing supplies to preserve collections, and archive papers and photos. Some funding is used to buy books of particular interest and some is donated toward other preservation efforts.

STEWART expressed concern for the conditions of the Civil War items located in the 3rd floor sitting room and whether they were protected. Ms. Carr said there is not room enough in the vault to relocate those hangings. The new library vault will be bigger.

9. 4195 CEMETERIES

Level funding is proposed for the Cemeteries budget (\$695). The Trustees were not present to review this budget or explain the \$3,613 year-to-date over expenditure.

10. 4130 EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The proposed Executive Office funding totals \$182,330, an increase of \$4,201 over 2008. The Executive Personnel line item requests the largest increase (\$6,280 over 2008).

11. 4131 TECHNOLOGY

The proposed Technology funding totals \$19,500, a \$10,426 decrease from 2008.

CARRIER suggested utilizing \$19,500 from Capital Reserves to offset this budget.

12. 4140 ELECTION & REGISTRATION

The proposed Election & Registration budget totals \$69,032, a decrease of \$3,971 from 2008. There will be fewer elections held in 2009.

13. 4150 FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The proposed Financial Administration budget totals \$195,310, an increase of \$20,889 over 2008.

The bulk of the increase (\$15,000) is attributable to the change in audit companies. A \$1,250 increase is also proposed in the Treasurer Salary appropriation.

14. 4153 LEGAL

The proposed Legal funding totals \$15,000, a decrease of \$2,000 from 2008.

These funds are used to defend the Town against law suits. CARRIER suggested moving the prosecutor fees from the Police budget to this budget. Schneider said moving the expenditure will not reduce costs.

It was noted that only \$3,821 of the \$17,000 2008 appropriation has been spent. Schneider said the current Selectboard has not been eager to utilize the Town's legal services. Staff utilizes free legal services as much as possible.

15. 4155 PERSONAL ADMIN.

The proposed Personnel Administration funding totals \$735,257, an increase of \$6,776 over 2008.

Employer Paid IMCA is a new line item. The proposed \$11,024 funding is the maximum spending if all employees participate in the matching-contribution program.

Schneider reported that health insurance costs decreased 0.5%. The Town has one less employee to cover this year. If a hiring freeze is implemented, salaries and personnel figures will be affected. The goal is to charge adequately to cover services, without becoming so oppressive that people cannot afford filing fees. The Town's fee schedule was increased 2 years ago. Schneider said further increases may not have a big impact on the overall budget.

The issue of instituting a pay-as-you-throw rubbish program was again discussed. Schneider reiterated that such a program will increase revenue but not affect costs. An unintended consequence may be illegal disposal of trash.

16. 4196 INSURANCE

The proposed Insurance funding totals \$60,051, an increase of \$8,351 over 2008. This funding covers property liability.

17. 4240 BUILDING INSPECTION

The proposed Building Inspection funding totals \$62,128, an increase of \$14,363 over 2008.

The bulk of the increase is attributable to the \$14,488 increase to Building Inspection Personnel. Schneider suggested there was a misappropriation in the 2008 budget. Actual spending year-to-date totals \$41,897.

18. 4651 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Level funding is proposed for Economic Development (\$14,000).

Schneider handed out a marketing brochure of product development. He reported that a new restaurant is coming in March and that there is a serious buyer for 78 Main Street.

19. 4711 DEBT SERVICE

Level funding is proposed for Debt Services (\$112,963). This is a fixed number, most of which is attributable to the bond for the Public Works' building which will be paid in full in two years.

20. 4721 INTEREST BONDS NOTES

There is no funding proposed for Interest Bonds Notes. There was no discussion on this budget.

21. DISCUSSION ON MISCELANEOUS ITEMS

CARRIER reported on his meeting with the Board of Selectmen held December 15th. The Selectmen may attend the Budget Committee's January 8, 2009 meeting to discuss their proposal to reduce the 2009 budget \$550,000 to \$600,000.

Updated budget books will be distributed at the next meeting.

22. 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.~~

- ~~11/20/08: Stewart will take up preservation concerns with the Library staff during that department's budget review.~~
- ~~11/20/08: Schneider is to provide stats on the number of employees per department.~~
- ~~11/20/08: STEWART was asked to follow up with Library staff concerns about preservation of WWII articles during the Library budget review.~~
- 11/22/08: CARRIER will provide an organization chart to Committee in the future.
- 11/22/08: Schneider will provide a list of the DPW Special Projects.
- 11/22/08: Mr. Daniels will provide calculations of savings from the reclaimer.
- 11/22/08: Mr. Daniels will provide a report on pothole maintenance.
- 11/22/08: Mr. Daniels will research other municipalities that have the infrared unit and how it is working for them.
- 11/22/08: Mr. Daniels will provide the cost to complete the Tax Mapping project.
- 11/22/08: CARRIER will provide a list of DPW equipment (vehicle inventory).
- 12/18/08: Beth is to email Lee Hanover rates/fees for permit applications.

23. ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Rivard, Secretary