

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 1, 2007
DPW – 8:30 AM**

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

Staff: Steve Schneider, Town Manager

Guests: Ken Daniels, Mike Mehegan, Kimberly Witherow

Committee Chair, Lee Carrier, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

1. 4215 Ambulance

Mike Mehegan, EMS Chief, and Kimberly Witherow presented the proposed Ambulance budget. They handed out updated figures of the funding requests and vehicle specifications for the proposed ambulance purchase.

CARRIER asked why they were requested \$200 for the New Hire Physical/Medical appropriation when only \$18 had been spent year-to-date. Mr. Mehegan said the majority of their new hires were associated with local hospitals that provide their shots and physicals for free. Ms. Witherow said they had new people coming who did not have those associations. The Town would have to pay for those items.

CARRIER asked why they were requesting \$3,800 for Supplies when only \$418 had been spent year-to-date. SCHNEIDER said there was some reluctance to spend in 2006 due to events that occurred in 2005. Ms. Witherow said she would be placing a supply order on Monday, 12/3, totaling around \$1,000. Mr. Mehegan said the \$418 was spent to replace the ambulance's converter. He provided a list of supply items carried in the ambulance. He said some of their equipment was over 10 years old and needed to be replaced. CARRIER asked for a breakdown of the \$3,800 purchase items. He suggested he may be able to get a lot of their supplies for free.

CARRIER asked how often the defibrillator was used. Mr. Mehegan said it had not been used. Its gel pads had to be replaced every 2 to 3 years regardless of use. CARRIER suggested he could obtain those for free as well.

CARRIER asked why \$200 was needed for Office Supplies when only \$23 had been spent year-to-date. Ms. Witherow said the funds would be used to purchase a copier/scanner/printer. She said a lot of their office equipment was second-hand items donated by the staff.

CARRIER asked what the \$1,000 Repairs & Service Contracts would go toward. Mr. Mehegan said the proposed new ambulance would be under warranty. Its maintenance would have to be done by Ford certified technicians to protect the warranty. That money would pay for the certified technician's services.

CARRIER asked why \$2,000 was needed for Diesel Fuel when only \$472 had been spent year-to-date and \$912 was spent the year prior. Mr. Mehegan said that number was an estimate.

CARRIER asked why \$3,000 was requested for Uniforms & Safety Gear when only \$966 was spent year-to-date. Ms. Witherow said she had just ordered 5 new jackets at a cost of \$500 each. New hires would also need boots, jackets, etc.

SCHNEIDER said the \$36,750 request for Mutual Aid Ambulance Svcs was not a solid number. The Town would not be billed for the 2007 total until late December. HULVA commented on the rate per call increase in 2008 to \$217. SCHNEIDER said the rate was \$201 per call in 2007. HULVA asked how many calls the Town received. Mr. Mehegan said 214. Ms. Witherow said they averaged 3 calls per week. Mr. Mehegan said Lebanon had received roughly 100 Enfield-generated calls from January to October.

SCHNEIDER asked about the proposed \$4,800 New Equipment appropriation. Ms. Witherow said that would pay for MAST trouser replacements and new splinting materials. Mr. Mehegan suggested that number could be reduced to \$1,000.

Mr. Mehegan spoke about a petition that was allegedly being passed around for a warrant article to change the ambulance service from non-billing to billing. He said if approved, they would have to hire additional staff to conduct the billing and their supply expenditures would increase by about \$5,000. He explained that the non-billing status allowed them to receive free supplies and defibrillator upgrades from the local hospitals. Once they begin billing they would no longer be entitled to those free supplies. SCHNEIDER said Bob Cusick raised the issue during the Public Comment portion of the last Selectmen's meeting. Mr. Cusick wanted this on the 2007 Town Meeting Warrant. STEWART said it was unfortunate that the Ambulance Department was not able to participate in Mr. Cusick's discussion with the Selectmen, given Mr. Cusick's chosen approach. GREEN asked if a study had been conducted of the benefits of changing to billing. SCHNEIDER said no. CARRIER said he supported the billing option last year but agreed a study of call numbers versus earnings should be done. PAYNE said the issue was finding a collecting agency that would only collect insurance payments and not seek payment from uninsured patients. They wanted the Town to decide the issue. HULVA asked of the expenses to hire the collecting agency. CARRIER said they would charge 8% of the collections. GREEN suggested the Town would have to hire another full-time person to do this work. Mr. Mehegan said the Ambulance Budget was created on the basis that it would provide free services to the town residents. Ms. Witherow added that some of their volunteers would quit if they went to billing. Mr. Mehegan expressed concern that people would hesitate from utilizing the ambulance service if it was not free.

CARRIER asked if any other local communities did not charge for ambulance runs. Mr. Mehegan said no. CARRIER asked how many were volunteer departments. Mr. Mehegan said Canaan had one full-time position, the rest were volunteers. Ms. Witherow said Canaan was not eligible for the free supplies because of that one full-timer. Their ambulance was stocked to the bare minimum. CARRIER suggested scheduling a meeting for all interested parties to discuss the issue. SCHNEIDER said the discussion should take place at a Selectboard meeting.

CARRIER asked about the proposed \$131,983 Ambulance Equipment expenditure. Ms. Witherow said safety was the main reason to purchase a new ambulance. They were currently unable to take accurate blood pressure readings while in transport, they could not hear lung sounds, they have to stop the ambulance and turn it off to use the defibrillator, and have to yell to one another to communicate between the front and back. She said the current ambulance had several lights out, rust spots, leaks, and lacked compartment space. They may be eligible for a various discounts to bring the cost down.

Ms. Witherow said the proposed ambulance was in the mid-price range and would come with a 10-year paint warranty, which was rare and a lifetime electrical warranty. It would also have more compartment space, seatbelts that would allow them to assist patients while buckled in, less blinding LED strobe lights, sound reduction, and no vibration. She said if approved, the ambulance would be purchased from PL Customs who will come to Enfield to service the ambulance for any item Ford will not fix for the life of the vehicle. FINSTERBUSCH asked if they sought letters of reference for PL Customs. Ms. Witherow said yes. SALADINO asked if they looked at other companies. Ms. Witherow said yes.

PAYNE said this was a good purchase given the proposal to utilize the reserve funding. He said he would approve the purchase. MORSE asked if they sought bids. Ms. Witherow said yes; they talked to 3 companies; PL Customs came in midline. MARTIN said this was the best built ambulance all around. FINSTERBUSCH spoke in favor of the purchase. She said ambulance service was one of the most critical services. GREEN agreed and asked about the life of the vehicle. Mr. Mehegan said Lebanon replaced their ambulances every 5 to 7 years. CARRIER added that Lebanon tallied 125,000 miles on their rigs in that time period. SCHNEIDER said they were typically traded in at that mileage. MALZ spoke in favor of the purchase given the proposed use of reserve funding. SALADINO asked if this would cash out the reserves. CARRIER said yes. STEWART said staff had done the necessary research. It was time to make the purchase.

It was moved by CARRIER, seconded by FINSTERUSCH, to approve the ambulance purchase. The Committee voted unanimously.

CARRIER said he was going to update the budget figures assuming the purchase would occur.

2. 4220 Fire

No one was present from the Fire Department to speak about the Fire budget. MARTIN said they did not have all their figures yet. They would be provided soon. CARRIER said the CIP Committee was not going to approve their \$350,000 request for a supply truck. They wanted the department to look at less expensive solutions. SCHNEIDER said \$225,000 would be used from reserves for that purchase. CARRIER suggested reviewing the Fire Department budget 12/11.

STEWART said building repairs were needed at that building. Things were always put off. A current project to bump out a room for a washing machine area was being done on a volunteer bases in an effort to save money. The downside of that was the time it was taking to get the work done. STEWART said there was a big hole in the building. He

suggested hiring a contractor to finish the job. PAYNE said that was a matter for the Fire Warden to address. MARTIN said that project should have been started earlier in the year.

3. 4311 Highway Administration

The Committee did not raise any questions about the proposed Highway Administration budget.

4. 4312 Highway Streets

STEWART asked of the total of the Highway Block Grant. Ken Daniels, Director of Public Works, said it varied year to year. SCHNEIDER said it was usually around \$120,000.

5. 4199 Hydrant Maintenance

The Committee did not raise any questions about the proposed Hydrant Maintenance budget.

6. 4316 Street Lighting

CARRIER said this was a payment to Granite State for the lamps on the bridge. MORSE asked about a plan for a new street light. Mr. Daniels said a stop sign would be posted. PAYNE said it was required by the State.

7. 4321 Sanitation

CARRIER asked why the proposed Personnel increase was greater than 4%. SCHNEIDER said employees were pulled from other departments and paid overtime rates to staff the stump dump.

GREEN asked if composting was done there. SCHNEIDER said no, they were still working on that. Mr. Daniels said they accepted yard waste. GREEN asked if the stump dump was needed. SCHNEIDER said they were debating whether to take stumps anymore; whether this was a service the Town needed to provide to a majority of citizens. The Town was working with the Upper Valley Land Trust to find space to bring brush that would be chipped yearly and would have compost and mulch available. The chipper size will determine the amount of land needed. Mr. Daniels said he was looking for a chipper with an 8 to 10 inch throat. SALADINO asked if he would keep the small one. Mr. Daniels said no.

8. 4323 Waste Collection

CARRIER asked what the charge would be for Municipal Solid Waste. Mr. Daniels said \$159,000. HULVA asked if the Town changed vendors. SCHNEIDER said no.

SALADINO asked why the Town provided this service. She suggested waste amounts would decrease if people had to pay for it. This was an environmental and fiscally responsible issue. The Town needs to raise a level of consciousness regarding what was being thrown out. GREEN agreed that people may be more apt to recycle if the waste was not collected. PAYNE suggested they speak with the Selectmen about that. He said the Solid Waste Committee conducted a study and found that Enfield residents liked this service. GREEN asked how many people responded to the study. PAYNE said it was a good study. The bottom line was that tax is a big deal in Enfield. This was a perk residents wanted. He said the recycle rate was only 22%. FINSTERBUSCH spoke about Piermont's program and the utilization of special bags that must be purchased from the town. SCHNEIDER said having one provider reduced the number of trucks needed to do this.

HULVA said Enfield had to close their dump years ago and were now hostage to Lebanon to provide these services. STEWART said Lebanon was running out of space. He agreed charging for the service may reduce waste. SCHNEIDER said there had been a lot of resistance to these ideas. The Town tried to take commercial businesses out of the curbside pick-up program. CARRIER asked if someone could look over trash as it's dropped off and require people to recycle stuff they throw away. Mr. Daniels said he did not have the space or man power to do that. PAYNE added that there was no law mandating recycling. He agreed this was an education issue.

9. 4324 Waste Disposal

The Committee did not raise any questions about the proposed Waste Disposal budget.

10. 4901 Capital Outlay

CARRIER questioned the proposed \$75,000 appropriation for Sidewalk Construction. He asked if a condition of approval for the Laramie Farms development was that they construct sidewalks. SCHNEIDER said the Town had to provide matching funds in order to receive the Transportation Enhancement grant. The match would be provided by the contractor.

11. 4902 Machinery

Mr. Daniels said figures for this budget were not yet ready.

12. 4909 Improvements

Mr. Daniels said the \$30,000 appropriation would pay for base maps for the police, fire and public works to keep tabs on existing infrastructure. SCHNEIDER said this would be an

interactive tool to put anything/everything on a map. Mr. Daniels said once built, there would be on-going maintenance/update fees. GREEN asked of the cost to update. Mr. Daniels suggested it would be a third of the cost. SCHNEIDER said the larger expenses occurred when software changes were implemented.

13. 03-4321 Sewer

CARRIER said the proposed budget totaled \$268,348. \$275,882 was appropriated in 2007. HULVA asked if this could be an enterprise fund. SCHNEIDER said there was reluctance to change this to an enterprise fund because there was no safety net for the Town to reimburse the fund if a major catastrophe occurred. FINSTERBUSCH asked if Lebanon had an enterprise fund. SCHNEIDER said he did not think so.

CARRIER asked if the Town was collecting enough revenue for the sewer services. Mr. Daniels said the rates were developed on a projected budget.

GREEN asked of improvements. SCHNEIDER said improvements made at the Lebanon plant would trickle down to Enfield. The rate was not entirely based on the funds paid to Lebanon. The Town would be able to do some things to offset increases.

14. 02-4331 Water

CARRIER said the proposed 2008 budget totaled \$145,033. \$149,534 was appropriated in 2007. Year-to-date spending totaled \$102,485. FINSTERBUSCH commented on the 4% increase to Insurance – Health. CARRIER said he was surprised it was so low.

SALADINO asked if people that did not utilize municipal water services were charged. SCHNEIDER said no.

MARTIN spoke in favor of the \$20,000 proposed expenditure for a utility vehicle. He said they had been trying to get this truck for years. CARRIER said the Vehicle and Equipment expenditures would be reviewed later in the month.

15. Miscellaneous Items

Regional Associations (excluding the Shaker Museum proposal):

CARRIER proposed setting a baseline for future regional association funding requests by giving each agency a 4% increase over the 2007 appropriations rather than debate each individual request. He said the Town’s overall budget was up 3%, CPI would increase 3%, Social Security 1.9%, and Town salaries could go up 4.5%. 4% increases would total:

	2007 Funding	Request for 2008	4% increase
AT	\$4,120	\$5,006	\$4,285
LISTEN	\$2,900	\$2,900	\$3,016
Headrest	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$5,200
VNA/VNH	\$18,030	\$18,030	\$18,751

	2007 Funding	Request for 2008	4% increase
Senior Citizen Council	\$6,450	\$6,650	\$6,708
WISE	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$2,392
ACORN	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$1,040
WCBH	\$5,280	\$5,280	\$5,491
MVHI	\$1,000	\$3,463	\$1,040
Tri County Cap	\$2,280	\$2,580	\$2,371
Bonnie CLACC	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,560

The Committee agreed with the concept of providing a flat amount across the board. PAYNE commended the Committee's efforts to reach out and obtain the background information in support of these requests. He said he was not opposed to a flat rate increase as long as it was fair and no one was shorted. He said the Selectmen were interested in meeting the Committee halfway. MORSE said she felt that Enfield gave to too many regional agencies that provided overlapping services. HULVA said the agencies that followed the request submittal rules would be shorted. She said she would vote not to fund some of the requests. FINSTERBUSCH said the Committee needed to be hard-lined in letting these agencies know that there has to be a cut-ff. She said the agencies could always address Town Meeting to plead their case. FINSTERBUSH agreed that some requests should not be funded due to duplication. She asked if the benefit of the duplication was that there was just more providers of the same services to help people.

SALADINO suggested 4% was too high. She said it might be helpful to compare services provided by each agency to eliminate the duplication and determine who deserves the funding most. CARRIER said it would be difficult and complicated to research the duplicated services. FINSTERBUSCH said a task force tried to do that last year and got nowhere. PAYNE said he had good knowledge of most of the agencies represented. Duplication was not an issue. Many offered similar services but from different perspectives. STEWART also questioned the 4% amount. He said the 4.5% salary increases would be based on merit. That should be the case here as well. STEWART said the Committee should present a united front to Town Meeting on these recommendations. He suggested not funding the ACORN or AT requests. STEWART said if people felt strongly about one agency or another they could always contribute privately. GREEN said the voters should also be made aware of the fundraising efforts these groups were conducting.

MARTIN said he did not want to spend 3 meetings discussing these agency requests. The Committee had to reach consensus on a modest increase. MARTIN said the amount should be only what the Town could afford. SCHNEIDER said the Committee did not have to require the agencies to personally present their annual requests. Instead, the Town could make a general statement in support of regional agencies and commit to a certain percentage increase annually. The agencies would still need to submit information in support of their requests. All new funding requests and those that implemented significant program changes should appear before the Committee and plead their case. MALZ favored the proposals that identified specific funding targets rather than those that picked a number to meet a projected budget.

MARTIN suggested more should be given to MVHI. The pandemic plan they were drafting was crucial. MARTIN said he attended an MVHI meeting and was very impressed. The Town had to have this service. STEWART agreed. He suggested taking overages from this year and giving them to MVHI. FINSTERBUSCH disagreed saying that would be a show of favoritism.

CARRIER asked for suggestions for the proposed percentage increase. PAYNE, MORSE, HULVA, GREEN, and MARTIN spoke in support of a 4% increase. PAYNE said the across the board approach would work if specific exceptions could be made, such as the case for additional funding for MVHI this year. MARTIN agreed stating that the work MVHI was doing would benefit everyone in town. He suggested raising the MVHI funding \$2,000 this year only. GREEN opposed allowing exceptions. She asked if \$2,000 would make a difference. PAYNE said yes.

FINSTERBUSCH, MALZ, SALADINO and STEWART spoke in support of a 3% increase. FINSTERBUSCH, MALZ and SALADINO opposed exceptions. MALZ asked if giving 3% would provide a cushion for those that might appeal to Town Meeting for additional funding. SCHNEIDER said they couldn't have a cushion. STEWART favored providing additional funding to MVHI. PAYNE cautioned against going too low. SCHNEIDER pointed out that the difference between 3% and 4% was \$500.

It was moved by CARRIER, seconded by PAYNE, to fund each organization (not including the Museum) 4% over their 2007 appropriation. The Committee voted 9 in favor 1 opposed (SALADINO).

It was moved by MARTIN, seconded by PAYNE, to fund \$3,000 to MVHI this year and 4% the following year. The Committee voted 6 in favor, 4 opposed (SALADINO, GREEN, FINSTERBUSCH, HULVA)

Enfield Shaker Museum (Requested \$5,000; did not request funding in 2007):

CARRIER provided a brief history of Town funding for the Museum including a \$10,000 appropriation 6 or 7 years ago and several \$5,000 appropriations following that. The Town also agreed to tax abatements for the Museum when they were unable to pay their taxes. SCHNEIDER said all of the Museum buildings were now tax exempt. PAYNE said the Museum did not pay taxes on these buildings because they were used for public purposes. FINSTERBUSCH suggested some of the buildings were not open to the public.

All of the Committee members except CARRIER spoke in opposition to providing any funding to the Museum. MARTIN questioned their business planning and expressed concern for the tourism revenue figures they reported. He also questioned the benefit to the Town. STEWART also questioned what the Town benefited from the Museum. He suggested supporting those organizations that helped people. He said he joined the Museum when they were in tax trouble. He encouraged others to contribute privately. SALADINO said there were other educational revenue resources available to them. FINSTERBUSCH credited Ms. Boswell and her husband for their efforts but said the Town should not commit tax payer money to something that was probably going down the tubes. PAYNE said the Museum had intrinsic value to the town. It was part of the charm of Enfield and was a real benefit to some families but it was not working financially. He said

he was not opposed to future funding. CARRIER agreed the Museum was an asset to Enfield and that they had a tough road ahead of them financially. He said he would contribute personally.

It was moved by PAYNE, seconded by MARTIN to fund the Museum request at 0. The Committee voted unanimously.

Heritage Commission (Requesting \$16,200; Received \$500 in FY2007)

CARRIER said the Commission was asking for a one-time \$15,700 contribution to hire a consultant to add the Enfield Historical District to the National Register. The major benefit of this is the 25% tax investment credits afforded for improvements to historical structures identified within the District. This increases property values and tax income. PAYNE said he was initially concerned about unintended consequences that may result (further regulation or restriction of land uses). He said it was important to note that property owners were not required to participate and could opt out of the program.

HULVA asked if district boundaries had been identified. SCHNEIDER said yes and they would be shown to the voters at Town Meeting.

CARRIER asked if the Selectmen had endorsed this expenditure. PAYNE said no. CARRIER suggested deferring review of this until the Selectboard endorsed it. He did not want to spend time reviewing something the Selectmen didn't want. The rest of the Committee agreed.

SCHNEIDER said the Selectmen were aware of the Heritage Commission's work but not the funding request. PAYNE asked why this was being pushed through; why Enfield had to have this. SCHNEIDER said there was concern that the village character may be lost. This was a tool to help people preserve village buildings. MARTIN said the owner's could still opt out, and continue to do whatever they wanted with these properties. STEWART said this had worked in other towns with historical districts, including Canaan, to foster improvements in the designated area.

Adjourn: It was moved by FINSTERBUSCH, seconded by GREEN, to adjourn the meeting at 11:57 am. The Committee voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Rivard, Secretary