

Budget Committee

Public Meeting

November 8th, 2005

Chairman Carrier convened a business meeting of the Budget Committee at the Community Building located at 308 NH Route 4 on Tuesday November 8th, 2005 at 6:06 PM.

Present:

Lee Carrier - Chairman, Gayle Hulva - Vice Chair, Eric Crate, David Stewart, Shirley Green, Dominic Albanese - Selectman, Lori Bliss Hill, Richard Martin, Chris Christopoulos, Judy Finsterbusch, Steven Schneider – Town Manager, Wendy Huntley – Recorder

Guests: David J. Crate, Sr. – Fire Chief/Ward, Timothy Taylor – Fire Ward

- **Administrative**

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 27th, 2005 meeting was made by Lori Bliss Hill. Dominic Albanese would like to have the minutes amended as follows:

1. Delete line on page 2 that reads: *Dominic Albanese to look into allowing the Community Building to be used for the summer program.*
2. Page 2, under the title Conservation Commission 01-4611- add that *Dominic Albanese reminded the Budget Committee that they have the prerogative to put the \$1500 back into the Conservation Fund (line 01-4611-890).*
3. Page 2, change Lee Carrier suggested #1 not hiring new personnel to read *any new personnel need to be justified.*
4. Page 2, change Dominic Albanese suggested that maybe taking the average amount of the last 5 years surplus, divide that in half and use that amount to reduce the budgeted amount in 01-4155 to read *in an effort to align the budget up closer with actual, one way might be to take the average amount of the last 5 years surplus, divide that in half and use that amount to reduce the budgeted amount in 01-4155 .*

A motion to approve the minutes as amended of the October 27th, 2005 meeting was made by Lori Bliss Hill and seconded by Dominic Albanese. Nine in favor, one abstain. Motion carried.

Ambulance 01-4215-

Steven Schneider spoke with Fred Cummings last week regarding the budget. There has been a big jump in the personnel line. Fred Cummings explained that he would like to establish different pay grades for basic, intermediate, and paramedic personnel. Fred Cummings would like to establish the department more in line with professional departments in the area. Steve Schneider agrees with having different pay grades for different positions. Currently we have no paramedics on staff.

Richard Martin informed the Budget Committee that there is one employee taking the paramedic training.

Lee Carrier questioned what does the Town get with these large increases?

Dominic Albanese explained that Charlie Harrington did a lot for free. When Fred Cummings come on, he immediately wanted to go to two full time personnel. He may have been a little

anxious but the direction was a good one. Fred Cummings was not supported and managed as other department heads by the prior manager. Dominic Albanese spoke about how he had received emails in June about the overages. He then forwarded the emails to April Whittaker, (former Town Manager), Lee Carrier and the Board of Selectmen. April Whittaker then spoke with Fred. They both agreed to freeze the budget and not do any non-essential training, purchase clothing or any other non-emergency things. In the future, the Town Manager is to review budgets monthly and give a report to the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee quarterly.

General discussion of charges from the City of Lebanon for ambulance runs.

Chris Christopolous spoke about the Enfield Town Manager given a number to use as a budget figure in January based on the number of calls the previous year. As of 10/31/05 there were 131 ambulance calls to Enfield from Lebanon.

Lee Carrier suggested that the budget committee do nothing on 01-4215. Let the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager go back and get better understating to avoid being in the same boat next year with overages.

Dominic Albanese has no problem with holding off with a decision.

Gayle Hulva reminded the committee that she was the representative to the Ambulance and thought that the Town needs to come up with a policy on how employees would be paid while at training. Believes that personnel should have to submit a request to attend classes.

Steven Schneider noted that the most one person had in for time with the Ambulance in one year was 287 hours.

Dominic Albanese recommended that Steven Schneider look into creating a policy for attending classes. There needs to be a balance between departments.

Chris Christopolous recommended that the continued education hours be separate from call hours.

Dominic Albanese stated that Fred Cummings has been asked to provide the Board of Selectmen with a graph showing what level the members of the FAST squad are at, and what the required training schedule is.

Dominic Albanese spoke about how in Charlie Harrington's days, Canaan would call for assistance and a member would respond. Now, he has been told, that it is safer for personnel and for liability reasons to have 2 people ride in the back of the ambulance and one up front driving. When Fred Cummings was asked who authorized this, the response was nobody. The Selectmen have told Fred that he cannot make those kinds of decisions. Fred has been instructed to consult with the Town Manager in the future.

Steven Schneider believes that the big issues are the personnel and training lines. The rest of the ambulance budget seems to be constant.

Lee Carrier recommended that Steven meet with Fred and get a budget together that Fred can work with and then the Budget Committee would review.

01-4215-690 (Miscellaneous)

Lee Carrier noted that \$2,500 in this line is a 10% match on a grant for AEDs. Lee is in favor of having AEDs.

David Stewart questioned how many AED kits does this grant include?

Richard Martin answered twelve.

Christopher Christopolous added that the current cost share to a community for the Federal Grants is 5%.

Lee Carrier asked where the Selectmen stood on charging the public for Ambulance Services?

Dominic Albanese responded that the Selectmen have not voted on this issue. May want to have a warrant article for Town Meeting. If nothing else, just as an advisory warrant article.

Christopher Christopolous also wanted the Committee to keep in mind that the estimate for Ambulance charges from Lebanon in 2005, is not taking into account that Whaleback Mountain is reopening.

01-4220- (Fire Department)

Dominic Albanese informed the Committee that the Selectmen are supportive of the Fire Department budget except for the request for laptops.

01-4220-114 (Training)

David Crate told the Committee that the amount requested for training is to train 5 people.

01-4220-740 (New Equipment)

David Crate told the Committee that the department needs new lights

Lee Carrier questioned the request for SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus.)

David Crate responded that the department still needed four more SCBAs. The department wanted 17 total. The new ones are different from the old style in that the old ones don't have gauges. Want all the SCBAs to be uniform.

Dominic Albanese questioned if it was still a good time for getting grants?

Christopher Christopolous responded that the money is still there, but cautioned that if we were to be audited, and certain requirements have not been met, we would be obligated to return the amount of the grant. Audits are not a question of if, but when.

David Crate explained that ISO had recommended the hoses and hose clamps be purchased.

Lee Carrier questioned what the department would be looking for next year for equipment?

David Crate informed the Committee that the SCBAs were put off from last year as well as the hoses.

01-4220-660 (Vehicle Repairs/Maintenance)

Lee Carrier questioned David Crate about the status of the repairs on the fire truck.

David Crate answered that the truck is currently at Dingee and being done.

Dominic Albanese would like the money to be encumbered if the bill is not in by Dec. 30th.

Lee Carrier questioned David Crate what the \$10,000 requested would be for?

David Crate responded that if a truck had a major breakdown, such as it loses a rear end, or a pump it would be charged against this line.

Dominic Albanese thought an expense like that would be a good candidate for a contingency line.

01-4194-437 (Enfield Center Fire Station Maintenance)

Lee Carrier asked about the status of the Enfield Center Station renovations.

David Crate explained that there was still trim work, electrical and painting to be completed.

Dominic Albanese recommended that the line be raised from \$500 to \$1,000.

01-4220-740 (New Equipment)

Dominic Albanese spoke about laptops being requested are not for the fire trucks, but to do paperwork with.

David Crate replied that last year's request for laptops for the fire trucks were chopped. For 2006, one laptop requested would be for David Crate and the other to one of the guys to help with paperwork. We would try it with one laptop and see how it goes.

Gayle Hulva questioned how many computers the fire department has already.

David Crate answered, one at the station and it has never work right since it was installed there.

Dominic Albanese heard that the computer at the station has never worked properly.

Dominic Albanese informed the Committee that he hears nothing but positive remarks regarding the Fire Department.

David Stewart sees that the hoses are important. The laptops are not critical and could possible be cut. The replacement of the lights is important.

David Stewart questioned how many SCBAs are used on one time?

David Crate responded that it depends on the size of the fire. Had to use all the SCBAs during the Murphy fire.

David Stewart asked whether the Fire Department would be requesting the hoses and clamps if ISO had not recommended them.

David Crate responded no.

Steven Schneider questioned whether having the ISO recommended hoses would give a better insurance rating?

Christopher Christopolous answered no. Not for the areas where there are no hydrants.

David Crate informed the Committee that ISO also recommended that the Town have a ladder truck due the amount of buildings over 2-1/2 stories in town.

Richard Martin abstained from making comments on the Fire Department requested budget as he is a Fire Ward.

Eric Crate wondered if there were any computers in Town that are being replaced and could one of the old ones go to the Fire Department. Eric felt that the laptops could be taken out of the budget and that one each of the ISO items could be removed also.

Tim Taylor explained that only one truck has the ISO recommended 2-1/2" hoses and that ISO recommended that all the trucks have the 2-1/2" hoses.

Christopher Christopolous stated that it all comes back to nationally recognized standards.

You're barely meeting these standards by meeting the ISO requirements.

Dominic Albanese restated that the Selectmen support the Fire Department proposed budget for all except the laptops.

Eric Crate questioned why the Fire Department needed to get twelve outfits.

David Crate responded that the Local Government Center (the Town's Insurance Company) recommended that each fire fighter have two sets so that when one outfit goes to be cleaned, another one is available. The request for twelve outfits completes getting everyone two sets. After this, there will just be the regular replacement schedule of every two years and cleaning costs.

Christopher Christopolous offered the use of Lebanon's extractor/dryer (gear washer). Five sets can be washed at one time. Three sets can be dried at one time.

David Crate explained that the Fire Department currently uses Bergeron's for cleaning services and minor repairs. It's about a one-week turn around time.

Lori Bliss Hill felt that the Committee should have a better idea what the Town's policy was going to be regarding upgrading of computers before a decision be made on the Fire Department's request for laptops. Recommends that this issue be parked and revisited later.

Shirley Green recommended putting laptops off one more year till expenses for outfits is gone. Would like to follow ISO recommendations.

Gayle Hulva questioned whether the five people put in the budget for training in 2005 actually went.

David Crate answered that all five did go, but only three completed the course.

Lee Carrier requested that David Crate give his recommendation on his budget.

David Crate responded that each year I come in and the budget committee says cut, cut, cut. Soon we'll be back to where we started. We don't ask for pay increases, we ask for equipment to do the job.

Tim Taylor responded that there was a lot of concern from April Whittaker (former Town Manager) that contact was difficult with the Fire Department. Laptops would accomplish fixing this.

Richard Martin added that the second laptop would also be for training. The Fire Department now has a training committee and would like to keep the training active.

Dominic Albanese stated that the laptops could come from the Technology Capital Reserve funds.

Lee Carrier asked Tim Taylor how he feels about the ISO recommendations.

Tim Taylor responded that it was a hard question. We've lived this long without the recommended equipment but how long can we continue to live below the minimum standards? We are okay till something goes wrong.

Christopher Christopolous stated that he is of the theory that – are we paying a lot for the service we're getting or is this a pay now or later situation. Christopher would support the entire budget request. Feels that the Fire Department should be reporting under the National Fire Incident Reporting System.

01-4194-436 (Union St. Fire Station Maintenance)

David Crate informed the Committee that the Union Street Station roof has a leak and any potential repairs for this are not included in the requested budget. The Department would also like to purchase tables and chairs for training. 10 tables for \$800: 43 chairs for \$1,015.

David Crate went on to further explain that the roof leak is due to the seams splitting in the rubber roofing. The roof was originally done in 1994 or 1995. The estimate to repair, or re-seam the roof, is \$3,360. David is researching to see if there is any warranty left.

Christopher Christopolous noted that the Town was looking at putting \$80,000 into Capital Reserves for Fire Vehicles/Equipment. **(01-4915-743)**

David Crate stated that the Fire Department will be looking to replace the rescue truck in 2007.

Dominic Albanese spoke about the Selectmen endorsing the money to go into Capital Reserves for Fire Vehicles/Equipment. Prefers saving now and not purchasing new at this point.

Understands that the Town will be looking at replacing a Fire Truck in about five years.

David Crate responded that currently the two engines the Fire Department has, are both the same age and that they should be put on a staggering replacement basis.

Break 8:00-8:05

General discussion of Capital Reserves.

Action Items

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn came forward at 8:12 PM from Lee Carrier with a second from Lori Bliss Hill. Motion carried.