

Farmington Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2003

Attendance: Chairman Walter Mills, Gail Ellis, Sylvia Howard, Tom Huse, Arthur Capello, Ruth Scruton, Kristine Bolstridge, Bernie Nason
Town Administrator: Ernest Creveling
Town Clerk Tax Collector: Kathy Seavers

The meeting convened and was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chairman Mills.

Chairman Mills made a motion for Budget Committee Meeting minutes to be taken by Catherine Plourde. Gail Ellis seconded the motion and there were no objections.

Pg 1, Executive (4130)

Line 23, Moderator: Kathy stated that there is only one election this year, Moderator to be decreased to \$50 instead of proposed \$150. Ballots proposed stayed the same as previous year.

Pg 2, Election-Vital Stats (4140)

Kathy explained that the Ballot Clerk explanation needed to be changed to \$30 each for 5 clerks, totaling \$150 for the total year. *Motion made by Tom to keep pay for ballot clerks at \$50 each for 5 clerks, totaling \$250 for the year. Kristine seconded the motion and there were no objections.* Discussion on Line 7, Rep Records. Kathy explained the cost of \$2000/year is used for keeping items in the safe from getting mildew and preserving records. Arthur asked if \$2000 was enough to preserve records or is the town losing anything. Kathy stated that the town is not losing anything; all records can be moved to the new safe. She said the only place the town is losing records is in the old police dept safe where records are getting moldy. The records need to be brought upstairs to prevent further damage. She further explained that the new safe needs to be equipped with proper shelving and it's being looked into. Tom would like to double the proposed preservation cost of \$2000. Kathy stated that there are grants available to be looked into. Arthur asked about microfilm for preservation. Kathy says that optical scanning is the better way to go but it is extremely expensive. Arthur asked about climate controlled offsite storage and Kathy stated that there isn't one close by. Somersworth has one but it is inconvenient when records are needed. Kathy stated that the only people who have access to the records are she and her staff making offsite storage not an option at this point. *Motion made by Arthur to increase records preservation from \$2000 to \$4000. Tom Huse seconded. Tom, Arthur, Sylvia and Kristine in favor. Gail opposed. Bernie Nason abstained.* Sylvia would like to explore options of grants. Arthur asked Ernie to investigate offsite storage in climate control. Discussion ensued regarding Line 11 for Bad Check Charges. Explanation that \$150 is budgeted for charges from Bank of New Hampshire for bad checks passed.

Pg 1, Administration (4155).

Discussion ensued regarding health/dental insurance and why it is so cheap for town employees. Arthur asked Ernie if the low cost is helping in retention of town employees. Ernie stated that there is only a high turnover rate in the police department but doesn't know if the low insurance costs are helping in retention of other town employees. Arthur wants to know how much an employee is paying of their insurance cost. Ernie calculated and estimates 6-7 %. Walter stated that it is low, but salaries are low also. *Arthur made a motion to open up discussion on insurance costs when a selectman is present. Kristin seconded motion. All in favor.* Discussion on revenue surplus of \$50,000. Question asked by Matt Lumm, reporter from Foster's Daily Democrat, if he were to understand that per the discussion that the town has a \$50,000 surplus. Ernie responded by stating that opposed to other years, the town came in above the estimate and yes, there is a budget surplus but exact figure has yet to be determined.

Pg 1, Executive (4130).

Line 5, 6, and 7 combined for Selectman's salary. Proposed budget for 5 selectman members is \$2,581.40 each, totaling \$12,907 combined. Tom stated that selectman shouldn't be paid as town employees and that it should be a volunteer position. *Tom made motion to reduce pay to \$500 each per year including the chairman. Seconded by Gail.* Kristine asked what is required of the 5 selectman now as opposed to the previous 3. Is the same amount of

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work being spread between the 5? Discussion ensued and the resulted understanding is that all duties are spread equally between the 5 selectman. Arthur asked if selectman get any perks with the position. Ernie replied stating that they do not except for a \$10/mo membership to planet fitness. *Vote for reduction of selectman pay to \$500 each resulted in Gail and Tom for the reduction and Arthur, Bernie, and Sylvia opposed. Motion not passed. Bernie made a motion to reduce to \$7952 to be split between the 5 selectman resulting in 1590.40 each. Motion seconded by Tom.*

Discussion ensued regarding mileage reimbursement as well. Ernie stated that the reimbursement is taken sporadically. *Vote resulted in Tom, Kristine, Bernie, Gail and for the motion, Sylvia and Arthur opposed. Motion passed.* Discussion ensued regarding Line 8 for Budget Committee Secretary explanation and change. New line in Executive budget for this position is proposed at \$1350. Walter stated that because budget is so involved, a budget committee secretary that is a neutral party whose sole purpose is to take minutes and be responsible for them has been added to the budget. Since Catherine was approved at the beginning of the meeting, she will continue in that title until the committee, or she feels otherwise. Line 8 is strictly for the budgeted salary of the secretary for budget committee meetings. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed \$1350 and if it would be enough for salary of the part time position. After calculating by Ernie for 25 meetings per year at \$14/hr billed by Seaside Associates and 6 hours per meeting it was determined that a higher salary of \$2100 would be more appropriate. *Arthur made motion to increase budget committee secretary from \$1350/yr to \$2100/yr. Motion seconded by Tom.* Kristine asked what the responsibilities of the secretary would be. Ernie responded stated that the duties would include attending the meetings, taking minutes and typing, giving to committee for approval as draft and making available at municipal office. *Vote resulted in all for except for Gail who abstained. Motion passed.* Discussion ensued on lines 9-17 with no opposition. Line 11 for Telephone, no opposition but item discussed. Proposed budget is \$7,860 and is actual figure after plans for disconnecting one fax machine. Line 14 for Office Supplies, no opposition, but item discussed. Office supplies are purchased jointly with the school and the cost to the town has reduced substantially. Discussion on S.E.S fees being paid school. Request made that Ernie look into those fees. Line 16 for Mileage, no opposition. Discussion ensued regarding mileage not being reported on time. Ernie is making sure that the mileage is reported in a timely manner. Arthur asked whether there was a policy on a time limit when submitting mileage. Ernie responded stating that there currently was no policy but it is understood that the 3rd week of December is when the final P.O.'s are submitted. Arthur stated that there should be a policy on time limit when submitting mileage for reimbursement. Discussion ensued with no result. Line 18 for Advertising opposed. Tom would like to see the advertising budget increased and the budget committee included in description of cost. Tom stated that previous problems had occurred when it came to the budget committee wanting to submit items in the newspaper and not having the budget to do so. *Sylvia made a motion to add the budget committee to the line description of Advertising. Motion seconded by Tom. Vote resulted in all for except for Arthur who abstained. Motion passed.* Line 19 for RSA's, no opposition. Discussion ensued regarding use of lexis law and how it can be accessed. Line 20 for office equipment, no opposition. Discussion ensued regarding what the proposed cost covers. Ernie tried to explain the use of toggle switching in regards to motor vehicle. Ernie suggested that Kathy Seaver write up an explanation of how toggle switching is used and will discuss with her regarding this. Ernie stated that there is an expected decrease by next year for Office Equipment. Line 21 for training administration, no opposition as projected cost reduced. Line 22 for Maintenance Agreement, no opposition. Discussion ensued regarding exactly what the Maintenance agreement entails. Ernie explained that the proposed budget covers any maintenance costs incurred for 5 copiers, postage machine and applicable software. Does not cover cost of supplies such as ink, toner, and paper.

Pg 3, Financial Administration (4150).

Discussion ensued with Treasurer stipend. Arthur asked why there was such an increase as opposed to last year and Ernie explained there was an error in budgeting last year causing the increase. Discussion ensued in regards to other standard increases in salary for Bookkeeper and Assess. Clerk, however resulting in no opposition. Walter requested copies of the Hourly Rate Step Plan for Employees, Debt/Lease Purchase Schedule, Tax Rate Estimate, Payroll Cost and Health Insurance.

Pg 4, Revaluation of Property (4152).

Assessing budget proposed has been decreased. No opposition.

Pg. 5, Legal Services (4153).

\$50,000 proposed budget for 2003 resulting in no change from last year and no opposition. Discussion ensued regarding landfill issues. Walter asked if it has ever been put to a vote to the town members whether to close the

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landfill and make it into a transfer station or is it an executive decision by the selectman. Ernie stated that it will go to the town meeting this year but so far it has been a decision made by the selectman. Walter stated the town is not mandated by law to close the landfill however if the town wants "free money" from the state of NH that are required to close it by December 2003.

Pg 1, Administration (4155).

Line 33, Retirement increase proposed based on salary and 4.15% increase for each employee. No opposition. Discussion ensued regarding Lines 34-47 and all proposed costs accepted with no opposition. Line 39, Health-Medical Insurance agreed to be discussed with Selectman present. Line 47 for Personnel Liability discussed in regards to outsourcing of payroll. Arthur would like bi-weekly payroll looked into.

Pg 3, Gen'l Gov't Buildings (4194).

General discussion ensued in regards to increases, no opposition to proposed costs. Line 40 discussed for Emergency Call. The proposed increase is necessary for the responsibility given to individual who carries emergency pager. Individual is on call and paid overtime for duties that include staying in an hour and half radius of town for any emergencies that may arise. No opposition.

Motion to adjourn by Tom. Seconded by Kristine. Meeting adjourned at 10:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Plourde

Accepted as Per Vote of the Budget Committee:

Walter Mills, Chairman

Date

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