

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Saturday – January 22, 2011
356 Main Street - Farmington, NH**

Members Present: Arthur Capello, Brian St.Onge, Ann Titus, Chris Somma, Steve Henry, Cindy Snowdon, Ken Dickie (arrived at 10:45am), Neil Johnson and Mike Morin

Members Excused: Chris Biron

Selectman's Rep: Gail Ellis

School Board Rep: Ken Dickie (absent)

Town Staff Present: Public Works Department Scott Hazelton, Deputy Fire Chief James Reinhardt, Recreation Program Supervisor Carla Smith, Fire Chief Rich Fowler, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Kathy Seaver, Recreation Director Rick Conway, Welfare Director Jennifer Adams, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Dale Sprague and Finance Administrator Pam Merrill.

Public Present: Selectman Gerry McCarthy, Anna Dickie, Mr. Vachon and
Selectman Paula Proulx

Chairman Brian St. Onge opened the meeting at 9:07am and it explained the public hearing is scheduled for February 8, 2011 at 6pm.

1. Public Works Department:

- A. Brian asked why the budgeted salt line does not match the historical usage and Scott Hazelton explained he has encumbered funds from 2010 to utilize first.
- B. Arthur asked if there are any changes to personnel with hours or salary and Scott explained he cut the part-time summer help in half and will make sure the work is completed more efficiently. Also the secretarial position has been reduced to 10 hours from 15 hours which is more in line with what is needed.
- C. Scott explained line 70 (Rebuild/repave roads) was derived after he drove the roads and evaluated their needs. His goal is to develop a 10 year road and sidewalk maintenance plan but for this year he came up with a list of prioritized repairs. The focus of this line will be for Hornetown Road, Meetinghouse Hill Road and a few others. Arthur asked why the line is reduced when the line was overspent by so much last year and Scott explained the paving for the landfill was taken from this line by the Selectman for a financial aspect. Pam explained that the Town is \$300,000 short for the landfill closure and since the town had a surplus at the end of the 2010 fiscal year they moved the paving expenditure to the operating budget.
- D. Scott explained line 80 (sidewalks) is to do some repairs to the S. Main St and N. Main St. sidewalks and he will do as much as he can with the \$20,000. Cindy commented the sidewalks are in very poor condition and Scott replied that he will do as many repairs as he can and will also be applying for grants.
- E. Scott explained line 83 (paving) is to pave River Road that was dug up and rebuilt and also to pave from Cocheco Road to the new pavement at the landfill.

2. Review of Bridges Budget:

- Scott Hazelton explained the bridges budget this year is for new guardrails for the Hornetown Road Bridge. This is a need that was identified by the engineers and Scott.

3. Review of Landfill Budget:

- Arthur asked why the landfill stickers are budgeted for and Scott explained he budgeted the cost of the stickers.
- Arthur asked why the tire removal line does not match the historical expenditure. Scott replied that the charge offsets the cost except for the tires that are picked up on the side of the road
- The loader repair line is for piston repair and replacement and filling of the tires. Cindy asked if the loader will have a resale value next year once it is no longer needed and Scott replied it will have a resale value but he is also looking at maybe utilizing it within the town.
- Arthur asked if the town mechanic has time in his schedule to do the maintenance, like oil changes, to the school bus fleet and Scott replied he is really busy so probably not.

4. Review of Fire/Ambulance Budgets:

- Fire Chief Rich Fowler explained his budget is done from last year and is a maintenance budget with no frills.
- Brian asked what the increase is for in the Americorps line and Rich replied there was an increase to the cost but gives the town three full-time positions for \$30,000 which is relatively cheap.
- It was discussed that the Selectman did increase the protective gear line back up from Rich's suggested cut so the department can purchase the required gear and keep the personnel safe.
- Cindy stated that the schools' had budgeted defibrillators and these were cut from the budget and she asked Rich for his opinion. Rich replied that in his opinion every public building should have a defibrillator and there are grants available for this purchase.
- Arthur asked how the town is doing with EMS billing and Pam replied this year almost \$200,000 was received back.
- Mike asked when the full-time deputy chief position was added and Rich replied it was several years.
- Arthur asked if everyone is now off the old alarm system and Rich replied that there are two buildings still on the old system that are very close to the station. Ann stated that the town made the schools change to the digitized system and should require the same of these last two entities. Rich replied that this would be a question for the Selectmen.
- Gail asked Rich to speak to the VNA services while he is present, as he sits on their Board. Rich explained that he supports their program and believes they do a spectacular job but he does not support their fiscal responsibility as they gave out bonuses in the amount of \$72,000 and a 12% salary increase for an administrator. Neil stated that he was at the Selectmen meeting where the Board asked the representative from VNA if they gave out any bonuses and her reply was no. He also added that she went into detail on the money they lose on Medicaid but did not give any detail on the profits they make. (Ken Dickie arrived at 10:45am)
- Mike asked if the capital lines are sufficient and Rich replied the figures are in line with what the town can afford at this time.

5. Planning & Codes Budget Review:

- Arthur and Cindy both recused themselves from this review.
- Planner, Kathy Menici, explained the budget and how several of the lines are reimbursed from the applicants (postage, copying, some salary).
- Training was increased because many of the Planning Board members are taking advantage of the yearly trainings that are provided.
- Kathy explained that she budgeted monies for memberships this year that will allow her to take advantage of several free workshops and trainings.
- Kathy explained that the secretary position salary has been split between the two departments which is a change from previous years.
- Mike asked if the salary for the Code Enforcement Officer is paid for through the special revenue fund and Pam explained it is until there is no money left in the fund and then the budget line picks up the remainder.

6. Recreation Department Budget:

- *Ann Titus motioned to move Kathy Seaver ahead of Rick Conway on the agenda, 2nd Arthur Capello. Motion carried with all in favor.*

7. Town Clerk/Tax Collector Budget Review:

- Kathy explained the budget is down this year because there are fewer elections but the town has to do a purge for the voter list (it is a year ending in “1”)
- Gail asked if there has been an increase in tax liens and Kathy replied there is less this year than last year because of all the foreclosures and the banks have to pay the taxes.

8. Recreation Department Budget Review:

- Recreation Director, Rick Conway, presented his budget.
- Arthur asked if there were any increases/decreases in personnel to the Rec. Rick replied after several budget meetings with the Selectmen the Program Supervisor position was reduced to part-time and will be paid through the recreation revolving fund as a point of service position. The administrative duties of that position will now be the responsibility of the assistant director and the director. Gail added that the Selectmen originally discussed cutting one position all together but after several discussions found this to be the best possible solution to manage the budget. Cindy commented that she was not impressed with the way these cuts came about. Rick replied that he proposed what he thought was best for the town noting that he as a salary employee can pick up the additional work without an additional cost.
Gail stated that her original suggestion was to cut two positions at the rec to 32 hours and therefore also removing the benefits. Rick explained that if the assistant director position is cut the cost of the senior programs will increase. Arthur stated he would like to see what the budget looks like with the assistant director hours being reduced to 32 hours also. Neil asked for Rick to provide the Committee with what services would be cut as a result of the 32 hour position.
- Steve asked if the town has sent a letter to Middleton requesting they pay a portion of the administrative costs for the programs they are participating in and Rick replied not that he is aware of.
- Chris stated he thought this was a fair budget as it is a 12% decrease with cuts that are

providing the same services.

- Mr. Vachon, resident, stated that a lot of money could be saved if we use volunteers and Mr. Conway does not like to use volunteers because “they don’t listen to him.” Mr. Vachon also stated he does not feel the Program Supervisor position should be reduced. Gail noted that the Selectmen have discussed the volunteer issue with Rick. Rick replied that as far as volunteers go for trips he needs two people on each trip but he also needs CPR/first aid trained staff in the event of an emergency.
- Anna Dickie, resident, stated that over the past two years the senior citizen programs have decreased immensely and she really feels this is too bad.
- Carla Smith, Program Supervisor, stated that she feels her position has been misrepresented. She stated that she currently works 40 hours plus each week and does the toddler, after-school and summer programming. She would like the committee to consider keeping her position at least 35 hours so that she can keep her sick, vacation hours and such.
- Arthur asked how much was raised in donations to the fireworks last year outside of the Fire donation and Rick replied about \$320 was raised from private donations.

9. Welfare Budget Review:

- Jennifer Adams, welfare director, stated that she is surprised the Selectmen cut the welfare rents line to \$65,000 because she had suggested \$75,000. Gail noted that the Selectmen cut the line to be more in line with historical figures. Jen stated that she is concerned with this line because she was able to find a lot of help for residents through the Community Action Program through a ARRA grant and also the federal welfare budget has been cut tremendously this year.

10. Police Budget Review:

- Police Chief Scott Roberge stated his department has an \$11,000 decrease.
- Arthur asked if the department is following the step plan that was created and Scott replied that due to the economic constraints his department has agreed to forego any raises for the past two years.
- Brian asked who pays the actual retirement for the police department when an officer retires and Scott replied the State does. Brian then followed up by asking if the police details are added into the police retirement and Scott replied yes but our town does not have that many details.
- Brian asked why there is an increase in food for the dog officer and Scott replied that the cost of the food has increased.
- Steve stated that a few years ago he voted in favor of adding officers in order for the department to be proactive and then questioned if the department is now more proactive. Scott replied they are certainly able to be more proactive into the community now.
- Arthur asked if the grant money that was not expended needs to be returned and Scott explained that the department has to budget for the grants and then get reimbursed for them and last year a grant was not received so the funds were not expended.
- Gail asked if Scott spoke with the school department because they had decreased their School Resource Officer budget line. Scott replied that he spoke with the Superintendent and they are supposed to increase the line because the agreement is 80/20.

- Steve asked if the department is purchasing tazers and Scott replied that he is purchasing three tazers with cameras this year using the drug forfeiture funds and hope to purchase more through the budget in 2012.
- Cindy asked what the department was able to purchase through grants last year and Scott replied, they were able to purchase in car computers, in car gun safes and do under-aged drinking details.

The Committee recessed for lunch at 1pm.

The Committee reconvened at 1:45pm.

11. Water/Wastewater Department:

- Dale Sprague, Water/Wastewater Superintendent, reviewed his budget with the Committee.
- Dale noted that all the bonds for the water department are now paid off and therefore lines 289 and 290 for the bond principal and interest are zeroed out.
- Dale explained the consultant line is to finance a study and analysis of alternative water supply sites in town that will be used to set up a water supply plan for the future.
- Gail asked what the projected revenue is for the water department and Dale replied \$302,000 to \$303,000.
- Arthur asked where the town is in regards to the water rates in comparison with other comparable towns because maybe we could have a slight increase to the user fees and then place that extra monies into a capital reserve fund for the future water main replacements.
- Arthur asked when the first tax impact for the wastewater upgrade is expected and Dale replied in 2013.
- Cindy questioned if the uniform line needs to be changed because the Selectman discussed that all uniforms line should be \$300/pp. Gail agreed that this was supposed to occur and the lines need to be changed to \$750 for both water and wastewater.

12. Executive, Administration Budget:

- Brian asked if the drug tests that are paid for in line 40 (wellness) are for new hires only and Pam said no, all CDL drivers have to have random drug tests.
- Pam informed the Committee that the Selectmen are currently interviewing assessing companies for the next contract.
- Arthur asked why the Selectmen budgeted funding for the 500 Boys and Girls Club when they said two years ago that they didn't need it and haven't requested the funding this year. Gail replied that they did request the funding through Rick Conway. Arthur stated he would like a representative from the 500 Boys and Girls Club to come and state what they need the money for.
- Chris stated that when looking at the organizational donations he is concerned with giving funding to agencies outside of town before those who deal directly with the town. It was decided that a letter requesting a donation for the 500 Boys and Girls Club should be received at the very least to be consistent. Paula Proulx stated that the 500 Boys and Girls Club has historically been part of the Rec. budget because the Selectmen recognized the great program and service. Gerry McCarthy, Selectman, stated that he went down to see Danny Woodman, President of the 500 Boys and Girls Club, and

- Steve asked why COAST was not cut by 20% as the other agency donations were. Pam will contact COAST and ask them what will occur if the town cuts the funding by 20%.

13. **Conservation Commission:**

- Dave Connolly, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, explained that historically the Commission had about a \$5000 budget and did not spend it but over the past two years they have become much more active. The Commission is currently active in managing the town's conservation lands. For this year, they have created a budget sheet to show how they expect to spend their funding. They have an advertising line for RFPs, and postage/mailings for abutter notifications when maintenance work is being done on the town properties. Dave stated they have also budgeted funds for education and Hay Day, to inform Farmington residents about all the conservation efforts in town and how people can use the town properties. They also have \$600 budgeted for cameras because of the substantial dumping of trash in town. In 2010, the cameras the Commission does own and maintain was able to photograph people dumping trash on Conservation land and then prosecute those two people.
- Arthur asked if the town receives revenue from the timber harvesting and Dave explained the first one has just been approved and the revenue from the harvest will come back to the town and put into the conservation fund.

Ken Dickie motioned to adjourn, 2nd Chris Somma. Motion carried at 3:34pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger
Recording Secretary