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**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday – February 15, 2012
356 Main Street - Farmington, NH**

Members Present: Arthur Capello, Brian St.Onge, Ann Titus, Steve Henry, Gail Ellis, Cindy Snowdon (arrived at 6:36pm) and Neil Johnson

Members Absent: Mike Morin (excused), Sam Cataldo (excused)

Selectman's Rep: Paula Proulx

School Board Rep: Joe Pitre (excused)

Public Present: Dave Connolly, Carol O'Connell, Laura Beard, Gerry Lynch, Charlie King (Selectmen), Gerry McCarthy (Selectmen), Joan Funk (Selectmen), Jim Horgan (Selectmen) and Deb Christie (Librarian).

Town Staff Present: Pam Merrill, Kathy Seaver, Scott Hazelton, Rich Fowler, Rick Conway

Chairman Arthur Capello opened the meeting at 6:05pm and opened the public hearing.

1. Public Comment:

Carol O'Connell, resident, asked why the Budget Committee voted to not recommend the Teacher's Collective Bargaining Agreement. Gail Ellis stated that she did not feel comfortable recommending the CBA because she did not have the opportunity to review the agreement since it was given to them just before the meeting. Neil Johnson added that he also was not comfortable recommending the CBA for the same reasons as Gail but also because the original budget had a \$0.92 increase and the proposed budget with the warrant articles had a increase of \$2.24 and then the Budget Committee did not have the opportunity to look further into the budget to find other cuts to help reduce the increase. Paula agreed with the comments and added that it was unfortunate that the information was not ready in a timely manner for the Budget Committee to review. Carol then stated that she wishes the School Board, SAU and Budget Committee could communicate and work together better. Arthur responded that the Budget Committee is always willing to accommodate others but has to work with the information they receive.

2. Budget Review:

Paula reminded the Committee of the changes that were brought forth at the last meeting; 1.) Ballot line 16 on page 2 was increased to \$3500, 2.) Line 58 – Park Maintenance was reduced by \$20,000, 3.) line 134 – overtime for police was increased and line 167 – NH Retirement police was increased due to a calculation error, 4.) line 216 – interest page 16 was increased for the interest on the second bond on the tax payer side, 5.) line 200 – principal on page 20 was increased for the principal of the second bond on the tax payer side and 6.) line 304 – bond principal & interest on page 23 has an increase to reflect other half of second bond on the user side.

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Arthur stated the total town budget to be raised by taxation is \$3,476,777 which is a \$0.21 increase on the tax rate.

Steve Henry asked why the trees under Park Maintenance are still being budgeted for when the fence at Edgerly Park is being cut. Scott Hazelton explained this line is to purchase four trees to replace the dead trees at Fernald Park. Brian asked why electricity and fuel for the CAP office is being budgeted for when it is not in the agreement that the town would supply them. Gail added that in the agreement dated December 17, 2003 the heat and electricity were not included as being paid by the town. Arthur stated he would like to know the cost of those items before they are cut and should be looked at next year. Gail noted that the Selectmen should probably look at this and make a new agreement. **Arthur Capello motioned to cut \$2000 from line 58 – Park Maintenance (page 3), 2nd Steve Henry.**

Discussion was followed where Steve asked if the current trees would still be cut down if new ones couldn't be purchased and Scott Hazelton replied yes. **Motion carried with Arthur Capello, Paula Proulx, Gail Ellis and Ann Titus in favor, Neil Johnson, Steve Henry and Brian St. Onge opposed and Cindy Snowdon abstaining.**

Brian St. Onge motioned to reduce line 103 – Culverts and Catch Basins (page 6) to \$9,000, 2nd Ann Titus. Motion carried with all in favor. Brian asked Scott Hazelton if he looked into the price of purchasing the appropriate size furnace in lieu of the modine heaters and Scott replied yes, it would be about \$1,000 cheaper but the modine heater dealer said he could work with him on the cost. Arthur asked what the cost would be to only do one of the roads listed on the rebuild/repave road line and Scott Hazelton explained that this budget line is only for ½ mile of road and each road is in desperate need of repair. **Arthur Capello motioned to reduce the rebuild/repave line on page 6 by \$30,000 with the recommendation the Selectmen take the \$30,000 needed from the Road Improvement Capital Improvement Fund, 2nd Neil Johnson.** Discussion followed where Gerry stated he did not feel it is fiscally responsible to take the funds from the capital reserve fund. Charlie added that the recommendation is to rebuild/repave roads on a 20 year schedule and the town has not even been able budget for a 30 year schedule. **Motion failed with Arthur Capello and Ann Titus in favor, Neil Johnson, Steve Henry, Brian St. Onge, Gail Ellis and Cindy Snowdon opposed and Paula Proulx abstaining.**

Brian asked why the street lighting cost is \$42,000 and in 2011 we paid \$46,400. It was discussed that the line is for the lighting upgrade and probably should be the same. **Steve Henry motioned to increase the street lighting to \$46,400 and the motion failed for lack of a second.**

Neil questioned if the part-time landfill line is correct because there was a request to increase the line at the last meeting and Paula explained the Selectmen chose to not increase the line. A discussion was then held on the animal control officer position. It was explained that there currently is not an Animal Control Officer but the police department is supposed to be bringing in candidates after Town Meeting. Currently the Police are handling the burden of the calls but the extra duties like follow-up on licensing are not being done and licensing is down.

Arthur Capello motioned to reduce the Police New Equipment line to \$5,000, 2nd Neil Johnson. Discussion followed where Charlie explained that the intent of purchasing the additional tazers is to eventually have every officer outfitted with a tazer. **Neil Johnson offered a friendly amendment to reduce the line to \$5,500 to allow the purchase of two tazers and Arthur Capello accepted the amendment. Motion carried with Neil Johnson, Brian St. Onge, Arthur Capello, Ann Titus and Gail Ellis in favor, Cindy Snowdon and Steve Henry opposed and Paula Proulx abstaining.**

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Steve asked why the town is paying for the crossing guard and not the schools and Charlie King explained the Selectmen posed that question and the school did not agree to take on the responsibility.

Arthur Capello motioned to cut \$948 from the Boys & Girls Club line because they have not requested the funds, 2nd Neil Johnson. Discussion followed where Gerry stated that the 500 Boys and Girls Club do a great job in town and provide a great resource for the kids in town. Arthur stated that they did not provide a letter to the Board requesting the donation. Charlie then noted that there is no paid staff under the 500 Club unlike the other non-profit organizations and shouldn't be treated the same way. **Motion failed with Arthur Capello and Brian St. Onge in favor, Neil Johnson and Cindy Snowdon opposed and everyone else abstaining.**

Fire Chief Rich Fowler explained that in October of 2012 the AmeriCorps grant will be eliminated and therefore there will be a \$20,000 shortfall to keep the current staffing. The Selectmen and Rich will work over the year to find the savings to keep the current staffing level but in 2013 there will be an approximate \$80,000 budget increase to keep the current staffing. Charlie King stated that the Selectmen are hoping to make up for some of the short fall in 2012 by collecting some of the uncollected ambulance bills/fees with the hiring of a part-time administrative assistant.

Brian asked why the town is giving Strafford County CAP \$2,880 this year when we provide them space and utilities and are collecting rent from the SAU. Charlie explained that the Selectmen did discuss this but no decisions were made. **Brian St. Onge motioned to reduce the Strafford County CAP line to zero since they are collecting rental fees from the school now (\$2200 a month), 2nd Gail Ellis.** Discussion followed where it was discussed that the CAP office is receiving the \$2200 a month from the SAU starting this school year. Gerry noted that they provided over \$70,000 to town residents last year and it would be a shame to cut such a great program. **Motion failed with Brian St. Onge in favor, Cindy Snowdon, Steve Henry and Neil Johnson opposed and Gail Ellis, Arthur Capello and Paula Proulx abstaining.**

Neil Johnson motioned to level fund the civil defense line at \$1500, 2nd Arthur Capello. Discussion followed where Rich Fowler explained that the requested \$3000 was to bring the stipend in line with other towns. **Motion carried with Neil Johnson, Brian St. Onge, Cindy Snowdon, Ann Titus and Arthur Capello in favor and everyone else abstaining.**

Neil Johnson motioned to cut the overtime line in the Recreation Department budget to zero, 2nd Arthur Capello. Discussion followed where Neil asked why bother budgeting for one hour of overtime a week. Rick explained that it isn't necessarily one hour a week. It was also noted that there was \$4000 put in the budget last year to assist with the additional administrative duties that would be covered under the overtime line this year. **Motion failed.**

Arthur Capello motioned to reduce line 137 - equipment under Building inspection to \$0 at the recommendation of the Director of Planning and Community Development, 2nd Neil Johnson. **Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.**

Brian St. Onge motioned to reduce the telephone line under the Building Inspection to \$700 at the recommendation of the Director of Planning and Community Development, 2nd Steve Henry. **Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.**

Deb Christie, Librarian, respectfully requested the Budget Committee increase the library budget line

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by \$5,464 for a total request of \$275,464 because the request was to keep the current level of service. 40% of the community has active library cards and they have 700 people on a weekly basis which are then exiting into the downtown area and therefore supporting the downtown businesses. ***Steve Henry motioned to increase the library line by \$5,464 and the motion failed for lack of a second.***

Cindy Snowdon motioned to increase the library line by \$2,700, 2nd Steve Henry. Discussion followed where Charlie stated that the Selectmen did not level fund the library recognizing their needs and gave them a \$6,000 increase where many of the town departments have a decrease. ***Motion failed with Cindy Snowdon in favor, Steve Henry, Ann Titus and Brian St. Onge opposed and other abstaining.***

At 8:20pm Arthur recessed the meeting for a short break.

At 8:27pm Arthur reconvened the meeting.

Arthur Capello motioned to cut the Hay Day line down to \$2000, 2nd Brian St. Onge. Discussion followed where Rick Conway explained this line is just for the fireworks for Hay Day. Rick then added that on Friday night money is raised for Hay Day by selling t-shirts and glow necklaces. Brandy Sanger added that Friday night many community organizations hold fundraisers that bring in a lot of money to fund their organization for the entire year. Joan Funk commented that Hay Day was created to bring the community together and it does just that. ***Motion failed with Brian St. Onge and Arthur Capello in favor, Neil Johnson, Steve Henry and Cindy Snowdon opposed, others abstaining.***

Ann Titus motioned to cut the Hay Day line by \$500, 2nd Neil Johnson. Motion carried.

Arthur Capello motioned to cut the summer program line in its entirety, 2nd Neil Johnson. Discussion followed where Rick explained that the kids summer program bring in the funds to reduce the costs of the senior activities over the year. Paula further explained that there are some programs that make money in the rec. and others that do not. Neil stated that Rick's letter stated that if the summer programs line was cut he would have to cut senior programs that are being offset by the summer programs money. Rick explained that he has made changes to the summer camp program already by reducing the number of trips and where those trips are going. Paula further explained that this line is not specifically for the summer programs and the line should probably be titled rec. revolving assistance. Brian asked for an example of what programs are not self-supporting. Rick explained in each group of programming there are programs that are not self-supporting like senior theatre trips. ***Motion failed with Steve Henry, Brian St. Onge, and Arthur Capello in favor, Cindy Snowdon, Ann Titus, Neil Johnson and Paula Proulx opposed and Gail Ellis abstaining.***

Neil Johnson asked why we are printing Rec. brochures instead of monthly paper newsletters and Rick explained it gets the information for six months out at a time.

Brian asked about the secretary line and Dave Connolly explained he budget for twelve regular meetings and two special meetings. Pam Merrill noted there is an error in the FICA and such calculations so \$51.00 could be cut. ***Arthur Capello motioned to reduce the Conservation Commission line to \$600, 2nd Neil Johnson. Motion carried with Paula Proulx and Neil Johnson abstaining.***

Arthur Capello motioned to level fund the Coast Bus line at \$14,084, 2nd Neil Johnson. Discussion

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followed where Joan Funk stated Coast is a non-profit that offers a service to our residents to get to and from work and doctors and they even added an additional stop to Market Basket. If the stops are cut some people might not be able to get to work and therefore our welfare line might increase.

Motion carried with Arthur Capello, Neil Johnson, Cindy Snowdon and Brian St. Onge in favor, Gail Ellis opposed and Paula Proulx and Ann Titus abstaining.

The new bottom line is \$6,083,739 with \$3,452,570 being raised from taxation which would be a \$0.22 tax increase.

Brian St.Onge motioned to reinstate the \$2,000 for the park maintenance line for the trees, 2nd Steve Henry. Motion failed.

Arthur Capello motioned to recommend the bottom line budget of \$6,083,739, 2nd Neil Johnson. Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.

3. Review of Warrants:

A. Article 4 – Public Works Truck Lease – Neil Johnson motioned to recommend Article 4, 2nd Steve Henry. Discussion followed where Arthur asked if Scott looked into the cost of outfitting the vehicles that were obtained through police surplus and Scott explained yes, but it would not be cost effective. ***Motion carried with Neil Johnson, Steve Henry, Ann Titus and Gail Ellis in favor, Brian St. Onge and Cindy Snowdon opposed and Paula Proulx and Arthur Capello abstaining.***

B. Article 5 – Collective Bargaining Agreement – Police Department – Ann Titus motioned to recommend article 5, 2nd Neil Johnson. Discussion followed where it was asked if a warrant is needed after this one to allow for a special meeting if this warrant does not pass. Kathy Seaver will check with DRA to see if the additional warrant is needed. Selectmen McCarthy noted the agreement is a really good deal for the town. ***Motion carried with Neil Johnson, Ann Titus, Steve Henry, Gail Ellis, Arthur Capello, Cindy Snowdon, and Brian St.Onge in favor and Paula Proulx abstaining.***

C. Article 6 – Public Buildings Maintenance CRF – Neil Johnson motioned to recommend article 6, 2nd Ann Titus. ***Motion carried with Paula Proulx and Steve Henry abstaining.***

D. Article 7 – Fire Vehicle/Equipment CRF – Steve Henry motioned to recommend article 7, 2nd Ann Titus. ***Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.***

E. Article 8 – Town Employee Financial Obligation CRF – Ann Titus motioned to recommend article 8, 2nd Steve Henry. ***Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.***

F. Article 9 – Highway Equipment CRF – Gail Ellis motioned to recommend article 9, 2nd Ann Titus. Motion withdrawn. Discussion followed where it was noted that there is not a Highway Equipment fund but a Highway department motorized equipment fund. Pam Merrill did some quick research and found that the \$11,000 should be used to pay for the lease truck and the article 4 should be amended. This article will be deleted.

G. Article 10 – Technology Fund CRF – Arthur Capello motioned to recommend article 10, 2nd Steve Henry. ***Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.***

H. Article 11 – Police Cruiser – Steve Henry motioned to recommend article 11, 2nd Ann Titus.

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Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.

I. Article 12 – Ambulance – Gail Ellis motioned to recommend article 12, 2nd Neil Johnson. Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.

J. Article 4 – Public Works Truck Lease – Arthur Capello motioned to amend article 4 to raise and appropriate \$19,000 and have \$14,000 come from the capital reserve fund and recommend it, 2nd Steve Henry. Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.

K. Article 13 – HVAC System – Gail Ellis motioned to recommend article 13, 2nd Neil Johnson. Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.

L. Article 14 – Highway Garage Capital Reserve Fund – Gail Ellis motioned to recommend article 14, 2nd Ann Titus. Motion carried with Paula Proulx abstaining.

4. Review of Minutes:

Arthur Capello motioned to table the review of the minutes until the next meeting, 2nd Steve Henry. Motion carried with all in favor.

Arthur Capello closed the public hearing.

At 9:55pm, Neil Johnson motioned to adjourn, 2nd Cindy Snowdan. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger
Recording Secretary