

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Saturday – January 28, 2012
356 Main Street - Farmington, NH**

Members Present: Arthur Capello, Sam Cataldo, Brian St.Onge, Ann Titus, Steve Henry, Gail Ellis, Cindy Snowdon and Neil Johnson

Members Absent: Mike Morin (excused)

Selectman's Rep: Paula Proulx

School Board Rep: Joe Pitre

Public Present: Dave Connolly

Town Staff Present: Kathy Menici, Pam Merrill, Kathy Seaver, Scott Hazelton, Rich Fowler, Dale Sprague, Rick Conway, Scott Roberge

Chairman Arthur Capello opened the meeting at 9:15am and opened the public hearing.

1. Conservation Commission Budget Review: (Dave Connolly, Chairman presenting)

Dave Connolly, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, explained that the Commission requested to have the same amount budgeted as 2011 which was \$4,551 in order to keep the up the good work the Commission has been doing. It was discussed why the secretary line has stayed at \$651 when that amount has not been expended last year. Dave explained that he budgeted a small contingency for special meetings and a 2% increase.

2. Planning/ Codes Budget Review: (Director of Planning Kathy Menici presenting)

Arthur explained that he will be abstaining from any voting for this particular budget because he has a personal relationship with Ms. Menici's family. Arthur then asked why \$1000 is being requested for SRPC when it was not expended last year and Kathy explained that the line is for special requests/projects from SRPC. Arthur then asked why the dues line was not expended in 2011 and Kathy explained she did not but that she does plan on paying for those memberships this year. Neil then asked why the supply line has increased and Kathy explained that the line includes \$600 for a new laptop for the planning secretary because her current computer will not last much longer. Joe asked if the Planning Department has a representative on the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) and Kathy explained no, because the town does not pay the \$6,500 a year to be a member.

The Committee then reviewed the Building Inspection section and Kathy explained line 137 (replacement equipment) should have been removed. Sam asked why the vehicle gas line has been reduced so drastically and Kathy explained the line has been separated among the separate function areas so this is a true figure for the account. Brian asked why the telephone line is budgeted \$300 over what was expended this year and Kathy replied the line can be reduced now because they made the best guess back in October and the final figures are in now in. Sam suggested looking into a TracFone for the Code Enforcement Officer to see if it is more economical.

3. Town Clerk/Tax Collector: (Kathy Seaver, Town Clerk)

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Kathy explained that line 19 (Ballots) needs to be increased to \$3,500 because she accidentally omitted one election ballot printing. Paula asked Kathy what “payment of lieu of taxes” is and Kathy explained that is the yearly payment from Frisbee for the family practice on Route 11 because they are a non-profit.

4. Review of Revenues:

Neil asked why the highway rental line decreased by so much and Scott explained last year he rented an additional excavator of which they will not be renting this year. Also, the PD was able to obtain a roller so the department will not need to rent one. Neil then pointed out that he feels \$18,000 is a lot for two modine heaters and Scott explained the figure is based on an actual cost. Arthur asked if Scott looked into updating the heating system to put in a proper size furnace to heat both bays and Scott said he could do that. Sam asked why there is a decrease in telephone and Scott explained the line previously included a cell phone at the landfill and it no longer does.

Brian questioned line 88 (contract sweeping) why the line has increased even though additional sweeping was needed in 2011 to cover the heavy amount of debris from the snowy winter. Scott stated the line has been under budgeted and the line is budgeted for the bi-annual sweeping. Arthur asked what work is planned for the rebuild/repair line and Scott explained he requested funds for a section on Hornetown Road and Chestnut Hill Road (two half mile sections).

Arthur asked if it is necessary to paint all the lines on the back roads and Scott explained the town has repainted lines for several years but he is looking at discussing the option of not painting fog lines on some of the roads with the Selectmen. Arthur asked Scott to have this conversation with the Selectmen prior to the February 15, 2012 meeting and come to the Budget Committee with a new line cost with the reduced painting. Scott explained he would do that and noted the cost savings would be \$1500 to \$2,000 approximately. Arthur then asked if the Committee could get a copy of the list of equipment the PD was able to get through surplus.

Neil asked why the paving line has increased and Scott explained that he needs to chip seal the Rochester side of Ten Rod Road. Scott then explained the cleaning culvert/catch basin line should be reduced to \$9,000. He then explained that the next line for culvert/catch basins is low this year as it has been for the past several but noted this is because the town has been able to utilize FEMA funds to mitigate drainage in the town. In the future, FEMA funds will likely not be available and therefore the line will go up dramatically.

Arthur asked why money was encumbered last year for the replacement of the guardrails on the Hornetown bridge that were noted to be of insufficient size and unsafe. Scott explained that the guardrail funds were utilized on Sheepboro Road because he did not want to put money into the Hornetown bridge when it needs to be replaced. Arthur then asked why the street sign line is so much and Scott explained that he needs to change a number of street signs to meet the new E911 requirements. Arthur then asked Scott if he could encumber the 2011 line in order to reduce this year’s budget and Scott said he will try to get a commitment from the sign company on Monday.

Arthur asked what the bridges line is for and Scott explained that this line is for the refurbishing/sealing of the wooden deck on the wood bridges in town. Currently there is one bridge on the red list and Scott is trying to get the Hornetown bridge on the red list in order to move the town up for replacement funding.

Under the landfill budget Scott noticed there is an error in the part-time because it should be \$41,808 because he used to have two full time attendants and two part time attendants but now he has one full time position and three part time positions. Joe asked how much is in the landfill closure fund and Pam Merrill

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said \$1,300,000. Joe then asked how much it will cost to close the landfill and Scott said the contract is for \$963,000.

At 11:10am, Chairman Arthur Capello recessed the meeting for a short break.

At 11:15am the Committee reconvened.

Scott reviewed the repairs he is expecting like the fire escape repairs, ceiling fans and handicap ramp at the Town Hall. Also the \$22,000 line item for the park repairs is for \$2,000 for tree replacement for Edgerly Park and \$20,000 (which is a hard number) for the fence repairs.

5. Police Budget: (Police Chief Scott Roberge presenting)

Arthur asked why the training line is staying the same this year even though the line has historically not been expended. Scott explained that the department takes advantage of all the free/ grant supported trainings that are available each year but also this year particularly they need to focus on internet based crime investigation training. Steve asked why the office supply line is funded at the same amount when the line was not expended entirely this year. Scott explained this is a guestimate and in 2011 they did not spend as much because they were able to have some savings by using the new copiers for color pictures in lieu of the printers. Arthur then asked if the \$15,000 on the PD building maintenance line is for the new building that was obtained through surplus and Scott said yes.

Neil asked how much of an impact the loss of the School Resource Officer had on the department and Scott replied it has had a huge impact. The PD have spent an average of 6-8 hours a week over the past several months responding to issues of assault, follow ups, interviewing and such. Also the DARE program is no longer being run. Brian asked what the previous SROs work schedule was and Scott explained it was a full time position in which the PD used him for two months over the summer. Cindy pointed out that one part of the discussion that is missed that the students had a rapport with the SRO so that he had a heads up of issues that he could deter. Steve asked Scott if he had a choice between a full time department officer and an SRO which would he choose and Scott explained he would choose the SRO because of the loss of the position has had a huge impact.

Neil asked if \$800 is going to be enough to fund the food for the canine and Scott said yes because he is planning to retire the canine by the fall. Arthur asked how often the dog gets called out for duty. Scott stated all the communities share their dogs so sometimes he goes to another town and sometimes other town canines come here. Scott stated he would like to add \$5,000 to the overtime line because they just spent over \$5,000 on the recent homicide and therefore he will not have enough. He further explained that \$18,000 to \$20,000 of the overtime line is just for court issues and does not include Hay Day, Halloween issues and bigger crimes.

Scott explained that he has requested a new cruiser this year. He also has reduced the animal control officer line because he the position will not be filled until spring.

6. Fire/Ambulance Budget: (Fire Chief Richard Fowler presenting)

Rich informed the Committee that the town experienced 904 medical calls and 426 fire calls in 2011. Arthur asked how many thermal imaging cameras the department currently owns and Rich explained they have two but the oldest (12 yrs. Old) works sporadically. Arthur asked if the camera can be purchased from the capital reserve fund and Rich replied it could but the department will need a new fire truck in the next few years. Steve asked why a truck would be needed when the PD was able to get a used truck. Rich explained it is a pumper truck that needs to be tested in the spring when there is open water but it is

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13 years old and would not be a frontline truck size wise.

Arthur asked why the building maintenance line is still at \$8,000 when it has not been historically been expended. Rich explained that he has plans for this money but this line is where he has had to pull from to pay the overspent per-diem line. Rich has budgeted for a new ambulance

At 12:10pm the Committee broke for lunch.

At 12:50pm the Committee came back to order.

7. Water/Sewer Budget Review: (Superintendent Dale Sprague presenting)

Dale explained line 291 (consultants) in that he has hired a water exploration company, Emery and Garrett, to look for water within the town for future needs. Also line 297 (pump repair) is to clean the screen and well at well #5 because it is not working to capacity. Arthur asked when the new wastewater treatment plant will come online and Dale said substantial completion is due on October 11, 2012. Arthur asked what the cost for non-water users is going to be and Dale said the town will need to generate \$139,000 through the tax rate for the bond. This bond is for 28 years. Pam stated that the increase is included in what is presented today. Cindy asked how much the sewer rate when up and Dale said this year it went up 25% though it should have gone up more but the Selectmen chose to use some of the cash reserve from the wastewater department this year. Then Dale stated that line 304 (Bond Principal and Interest) should be \$139,000 because the \$111,642 currently budgeted was only for one of the bonds.

8. Library Budget Review: (Librarian Deb Christie presenting)

Deb explained that the Library requested \$275,464 though the Selectmen cut \$5,000. Cindy asked if the library increased their fees as suggested last year and Deb explained they increased the book late fees by 100% and the video fees by 500% though patrons have been more diligent in bringing their items in on time since the fees increased. Also, circulation increased 38% over the year. Gail asked if Deb could bring copies of the revenue/expenditures for 2011 to the next budget hearing and she said she would.

9. Parks & Recreation Budget Review: (Director Rick Conway presenting)

Arthur asked what the free events are, that are budgeted for and Rick explained they are the family nights in the park, fall festival and free events like the flashlight egg hunt. Arthur asked why we are subsidizing the summer camp program and Rick explained the \$6000 helps to keep the cost from increasing. Neil asked if this line was cut what would the new cost be and Rick replied that he would look hard at what expenses/activities he could cut before increasing the cost. Paula added that over the past several years the Rec always got a grant to subsidize the program and this year they have not received anything yet. The committee asked Rick to provide them with the predicted cost of summer camp if the \$6,000 is cut.

Neil asked what the software line is for and Rick explained that he was able to purchase two laptops much cheaper than originally thought and then the town administrator told him he could purchase the software program he needed for the laptops. Neil asked if Rick checked to see if the town had a blanket software license and Rick replied he is not sure he was told by the interim town administrator to go ahead and purchase the software.

10. Welfare Budget Review: (Welfare Director Erica Pratt presenting)

Brian asked if people who receive assistance are required to look for employment and Erica replied yes. Patrons are required to apply for five jobs in person each week and turn in paperwork by Tuesdays to her office. If someone does not supply the correct information then their services are suspended. Sam asked how many residents receive assistance in town and Erica said she could get that figure to the Committee.

11. Administrative Budget Review: (Finance Administrator Pamela Merrill presenting

Pam explained the maintenance agreement line is for software the town requires for assessing, taxing, accounting and such and for the server contract. Cindy asked what the employee classification line is for and Paula explained that there are a few people in town that are potentially under paid according to the wage/class study that was done and this is the money to bring those positions up to the minimum. However, the Selectmen have not decided yet on how to proceed.

Paula informed the Board that the Selectmen flat funded all the health agencies. A discussion was held that the town is giving the CAP office free space and they are collecting rent from the schools. Brian asked for a copy of the agreement with CAP. Arthur stated he would like to know if that agreement included the town providing utilities for the CAP as well.

Arthur asked why civil defense (emergency management director) was increased and Paula explained that an employee came in and was going to take health insurance from the town when he used to take the \$1200 buyback. After a discussion it was decided to increase the civil defense stipend to make it worth it to him to stay on his spouse's insurance therefore saving the town thousands of dollars in insurance. Pam noted that at no time did the employee say this stipend had to increase in order for him to not take the town insurance. Pam also stated that a survey went out to town employees in December to see if they would be interested in the buyback if it was increased but the response was that it was too late to make that decision for this year. Sam asked for a print out of what the duties of the emergency management director. Then Paula added that the Selectmen are still going to have the discussion about increasing the buyback to entice others to take it and therefore save the town money. The Committee held a large discussion on whether or not they felt this was correct or not since all the employee's did not have the same opportunity.

Arthur asked if Scott Hazelton can get an obligation for river maintenance since only \$400 was expended and Scott has a plan for river maintenance based on a report from the Army Corps of Engineers.

At 3:06pm, Sam Cataldo motioned to adjourn, 2nd Cindy Snowdon. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger
Recording Secretary