

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Saturday – February 2, 2013
356 Main Street - Farmington, NH**

Members Present: Sam Cataldo, Gail Ellis, Brian St.Onge, Gerry McCarthy, Steve Henry and Neil Johnson

Members Absent: Cindy Snowdon and Ann Titus (excused)

Selectman's Rep: Arthur Capello

School Board Rep: Kathy King

Public Present: Town Administrator Keith Trefethen, DPW Director Scott Hazelton, Planning Director Kathy Menici, Conservation Commission Chairman Dave Connolly, Selectmen Paula Proulx, Police Chief Kevin Willey, Water/ Wastewater Superintendent Dale Sprague, Fire Chief Rich Fowler, Parks and Rec. Director Rick Conway, Librarian Deb Christie, Finance Administrator Pam Merrill and Detective Jay Drury

At 9:00am, Chairman Brian St.Onge opened the meeting and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Overview of 2013 Town Budget:

Keith explained that the Board of Selectmen have met several times to go over these budgets to bring what they feel is a comprehensive and responsible budget. The current proposed budget has an increase of \$93,189 from 2012's actual approved budget which is a 1.4%. Gail asked for the breakdown of the percentage the employees pay for their health insurance. Keith explained that the figure is actually a dollar amount based on the type of plan and noted that the insurance plans had a 10% increase in their rates. Further the Selectmen have plans to review the current insurance policies in July to see if there are more economic choices. Arthur then explained that the Selectmen chose to take 2% of the total cost of town salaries to place in line 01-4155-30-190 2013 wage adjustments for merit raises. Department heads will complete their employee reviews and make recommendations for merit increases from 0-3%. Keith then added that there was a 19% increase to the fire retirement and 24% increase to the police retirement systems.

A. Review of Conservation Commission Budget:

Dave Connolly, Chairman of Conservation Commission, explained his budget request in that the Commission has a lot of outreach programs that have planned and also work diligently to be good stewards of the town's conservation lands.

B. Planning Department:

Kathy Menici explained that the \$2500 on the Master Plan line is for the town match of the two grants the Planning Department will be applying for this year. Neil asked what they have planned for the Strafford Regional Planning Commission budget line and Kathy explained the Planning Board is planning on having additional maps created for the town. Sam asked if the town has a representative on the Strafford Regional Planning Commission and Kathy said no, not right now because the Selectmen have not been able to appoint someone as of yet. Neil asked what line 01-4191-10-565 Board's Printing and Ads is for and Kathy explained that this line is for posting of ads in the newspaper of the Planning Board public hearings.

C. Building Inspection:

Keith explained that there was a large increase in the health insurance line 01-4241-95-210 because the Selectmen agreed to offer a 25% of the cost of the plan buyback. Gail asked how much is in the building fees special revenue fund for the Building Inspector's salary and Arthur explained there currently is not any money in this fund.

D. Election, Registration & Vital Statistics:

There were no questions on this budget request though it was noted the total budget line is \$165,280.78.

E. General Government Buildings:

Neil asked if the gazebo repairs line is to cover the vandalism to the gazebo and Scott Hazelton replied yes. Gail asked what longevity/buildings line 014191-95-190 is for and Keith explained that this is for the longevity for the full time maintenance person. Neil asked if line 01-4194-10-341 elevator phone is correct at \$450 and Arthur stated no, it should be \$150.

F. Administration, Highway and Streets:

The total budget request for this section is \$536,261.24 and has no significant changes. Steve asked why the highway water line 01-4311-10-412 is at \$250 when historically less than \$100 has been spent and Scott explained that he has implemented a new practice of washing the trucks down after every storm to promote a longer life of the truck and therefore this line will have an increase. Gail asked about the plow truck that was recently totaled and Keith explained the town received a check for \$43,136 and were allowed to keep all the plow attachments. Keith and Scott are currently investigating several vehicles to replace it.

Steve asked what is happening with the old fire trucks that are parked up at the DPW and Keith explained there is a warrant article to request permission for the Selectmen to be able to dispose/sell town property with a public hearing. Steve suggested creating a warrant that states any money that is raised from selling town property would go to a new equipment capital reserve account.

G. Highway & Streets:

Arthur explained that line 01-4312-10-630 rebuild/repave/repair roads is a combination of two previous lines (highway paving and rebuild/repave/repair). Scott explained that

the town needs to start making strides to repair/rebuild the roads in town. His plan for this line is to make some good strides on Hornetown Road and Chestnut Hill Road. Keith explained that UNH will be conducting a study for the town on our roads and create a 10 year road maintenance plan for the town free of charge. Neil noted that the contract sweeping line is down and Scott stated that he is reallocating these funds to have town forces do the spring cleaning with our town staff and have the contract sweeper come in the fall to clean up the leaves because town equipment is not capable of that.

Brian noted that the tree cutting line was zeroed out and Scott stated that the town staff is going to take care of the tree cutting and if there are any larger trees that need to be taken down PSNH can respond to them and take care of them. Arthur suggested putting \$1 in this line to keep it open.

It was discussed that the town is part of a grant with the Stafford Rivers Conservancy to do river maintenance to the area around the St. Peter's Church parking lot.

H. Solid Waste Disposal:

It was noted that the landfill closure monitoring line 01-4324-20-310 has been zeroed out because the Selectmen have created a warrant article to have this paid through the landfill closure special revenue fund. Gerry asked who we are contracting with and Scott replied a contract was signed with Waste Management of Rochester.

At 10:33am the Committee took a short recess.

At 10:40am the Committee reconvened.

I. Police:

Kevin Willey explained there are only a few increases to his budget and one is the School Resource Officer position. Neil noted the math is incorrect for the 80/20 split with the school is incorrect. The school portion should be \$51,852.80 and Kevin will have a conversation with the Superintendent and the School Board on Monday to see if they are willing to change their line to this amount. Keith also pointed out that the \$64,816 is budgeted for the SRO position with the highest medical plan and could come in lower depending on who is hired. The other line item with a significant increase is the police grants line 01-4210-10-832 which is to replace the in car laptops that are 10 years or more old, DWI and speed grants, MDT grant, EUDL (underage drinking laws) grant and purchasing new kevlar vests. This line is budgeted at \$35,116 but has revenues to offset it at \$23,100.

Steve asked why the crossing guard line was zeroed out and Kevin explained that the fire department has volunteers who currently man the crossing guard position and have agreed to continue to do so. If a situation arises whereas the fire department can no longer man this position than he would come back to the Selectmen and ask them to find the money within the budget to hire someone. Arthur suggested budgeting one dollar in this line to keep it open.

J. Animal Control:

Kevin explained that the only change to this section is the salary for the officer because the Selectmen last year voted to change the salary of this position to bring it in line with the wage and salary study the Board adopted. Kevin further explained that the town has made a change to do sheltering with Cocheco Veterinary Hospital on Rte. 11 instead of Cocheco Valley Humane Society. It was noted that the animal control training line 01-4414-10-243 currently has nothing budgeted however this appears to be an error and should have \$500 budgeted.

K. Wastewater Department:

Dale explained that the wastewater plant upgrades are essentially complete and this year's budget is based on some real figures from last year but also some of the line items are still based on educated guesses until more historic data can be realized for the plant. He further added that the town will be receiving a \$50,000 electrical rebate from PSNH because the plant is energy efficient. Gail asked what Dale expects the revenue to be and Dale replied \$410,000 so he anticipates a rate increase as previously discussed over the past several years. Paula pointed out that the 2% that could be used for salary increases in the water and wastewater departments need to be factored in to his budgets and out of the previously discussed personnel liabilities wage adjustment line so that it is budgeted in the enterprise fund and not placed in the operating budget.

L. Water Department:

Dale explained most of the budget is the same except he might need to purchase a new hand held water meter reader because the current one is no longer supported by the company and if it fails he might need to replace it. Steve asked why the fire hydrants are paid for directly by the enterprise fund instead of some by the general taxation and Dale explained that this conversation has been held many times over the past twenty years and has not been resolved.

M. Fire/Ambulance Departments:

Rich Fowler explained he does not have many changes to his budget except for the Americorp grant no longer exists so to keep the same staffing the per-diem fire day coverage line has a slight increase. Neil noted there is a new line item fire department overtime line 01-4220-10-140 and Rich explained it should not be there he does not have an overtime line.

Rich explained there is a warrant article to enter a lease/purchase for a new Rescue/Pumper truck. The purchase of this truck will help save wear and tear on the older Engine 1. The first payment for this truck would not be due until a year after the closing and he believes there will be to year's worth of payments saved in the capital reserve account.

At 12:10pm, Steve Henry motioned to break for lunch, 2nd Neil Johnson. Motion carried with all in favor.

At 12:53pm the Committee reconvened.

N. Library Budget:

Librarian Deb Christie explained that have presented a bare budget. She noted they have dropped their book budget again from \$30,000 to \$16,000 but only because it is one of the few lines they have control over. Arthur noted that the library came to the Selectmen with a \$23,000 increase but the Selectman split the difference and gave them an increase of \$11,118. Brian asked what percent of increase was given in the salary lines. Deb replied they have plugged in a 3% increase and noted the staff has not received an increase to their salary in two years.

O. Recreation Department:

Rick explained there have been a few changes to the Rec. department. The Selectmen have decided that all events that people are charged for will include the cost for fuel and mileage for each individual trip. As well as the hay day fireworks program was budgeted at \$1500 and he was able to raise \$1500 last year so he will put out an RFP for a \$3000 fireworks show.

P. All Other Budget Sections:

Brian asked why the appraisal line is not a contracted set amount and Arthur explained it is a contract price but based on the number of pick-ups and not a total amount. It was then noted there is a large increase to the properties and liability insurance through Primex and Keith explained that it was a rate increase but the Selectmen have plans to restructure town staff/departments and insurances. Arthur informed the members that the Selectmen voted to level fund all outside agencies and Steve asked for copies of the request letters.

Gail asked what the tax impact of the budget is. Keith explained the tax impact is \$0.79 though the Selectmen historically buy down the tax rate so they expect it to be a \$0.10 increase. If the budget was 100% level funded and the Selectmen did not buy down the tax rate the tax impact would be \$0.69 because they did buy down the tax rate last year.

2. Review of Warrant Articles:

Keith reviewed the warrant article content and noted the language would be corrected by Kathy Seaver before the February 15th public hearing.

3. Any Other Business To Come Before the Board:

- A. The public hearing for this budget is February 15, 2013.
- B. The School Deliberative Hearing is February 9th at 9am at the high school.
- C. The next regular meeting of the budget committee is February 27, 2013.

At 2:15pm, Gail Ellis motioned to adjourn, 2nd Kathy King. Motion carried with all in favor.

Accepted 3-6-13

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger
Recording Secretary