Town of Farmington
Budget Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 23, 2015

**Committee Members Present:**Ann Titus, Chairman
Sylvia Arcouette, Vice Chairman
Neil Johnson, Selectmen’s Rep.
Stephen Henry
Stan Freeda, School Board Rep.
Sam Cataldo

**Committee Members Absent**:
Jodi Connolly, excused
Resta Detwiler, excused

**Others Present:**Town Administrator Arthur Capello

**1). Call to Order:**Chairman Titus called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment**: None.

**4).Resignation:**Chairman Titus announced member Resta Detwiler has submitted her resignation from the committee due to health concerns effective immediately.
**Motion:** (Henry, second Arcouette) to accept the resignation of Resta Detwiler passed 6-0.

**5). Review of Minutes**:
*November 18, 2015*- Remove Superintendent Steve Welford from the list of members absent. Mr. Welford was absent from the meeting but is not a member of the committee.
**Motion:** (Johnson, second Arcouette) to accept the minutes as amended passed 5-0-1 (Henry abstained).
*December 5, 2015*- Amend to fill in blank spaces in the minutes. Change Resta Detwiler to absent.
**Motion:** (Johnson, second Arcouette) to table the minutes passed 6-0.

**6). Review School Reports:** Members reviewed the Year to Date Expenditure Report-General Fund, the All Funds-Revenue Report and the Year to Date Expenditure Report-Grants Special Revenue Funds for the Farmington School District. There were no questions or comments.

**7). Review Town Reports:**Town Administrator Capello presented the proposed 2016 budget as approved by the Board of Selectmen. He asked the committee to review the budget and e-mail any questions to him prior to their next meeting on January 27 so the department heads do not have to attend another night meeting.
*New Positions*- Capello then told the members that Selectmen created two full time positions from two existing part time positions and added one new position. The Welfare Director is now working full time and will perform Economic Development duties in addition to her welfare tasks. The Assessing Clerk is now also full time with additional accounting tasks as assigned by the Finance Administrator with the goal of becoming a back up for the finance position. He said the Selectmen also added a Deputy DPW Director in preparation for the future retirement of the current DPW Director. He added with the amount of institutional knowledge the current Director has, it may take several years for the Deputy Director to become ready to take over that position.
Chairman Titus asked if a candidate has been chosen to fill the Deputy Director position and if the plan is to hire from within the dept. Capello said the position has not been advertised yet and was budgeted for 10 months of salary as it will take some time to find the right person. They will wait to see who applies for the job before making any decisions he said.
*Budget Increase*- Capello said that even with the new positions and the insurance increases the budget is only up by approx. $14,000 over last year’s budget. The dept. heads and Selectmen deserve major kudos for working hard to deliver a “bare bones” but yet workable budget he said.
*Public Hearing*- Capello said a Public Hearing on the$2.363 million bond for the proposed Public Safety Building will be held on January 25 at 6 p.m. in the Municipal Office Building. In addition to himself and the Board of Selectmen, the project architect will also be at the meeting to answer any questions. There will also be other meetings to discuss the proposal as well as a presentation at the March Town Meeting he said. He added that the proposed price for the project is reasonable especially when you consider that two towns paid $1 million for similar projects 10 years ago. The building will be state of the art construction with insulated concrete forms so “you will be able to heat it with a candle” Capello said. He encouraged residents to attend to learn more about the plan and said he hoped they filled the room.
*Coast Bus*- Chairman Titus asked if the town has been contacted by the bus company following the cut in funding by the Selectmen. Capello said the board level funded the contribution request to last year’s amount. The company sent a letter of request for funds and has not appeared before the board or contacted the town since the Selectmen made their recommendation he said.
Chairman Titus noted this is a continuing issue where the company continues to increase contribution requests each year but don’t come before Selectmen or the Budget Committee to discuss the matter. Capello said he advised Selectmen that if they are considering increasing the contributions to the agencies they should first increase the dept. budgets. Take of your own first he said.
*Parks and Recreation*- Members received the November monthly Rec. budget report from Director Rick Conway for review. Chairman Titus asked about the warrant article for the purchase of a van to replace the vehicle recently taken out of service. Capello said there is no warrant article as Selectmen decided to purchase a vehicle for the Rec Dept. He said the board is considering a 2008 Ford 20-passenger, two wheelchair capacity mini bus at a cost of $15,000. The mini-bus was previously used as a shuttle for college students and has approx. 56,000 miles on it. The town mechanic has inspected it, the needed repairs will be made and the mechanic will inspect it again. If it all works out the town will buy it he said.
*Remittance Report*- Members reviewed the report and noted some of the tax liens were listed for high amounts. Capello said the Town Clerk has been doing what she can to collect the back taxes. Sylvia Arcouette asked if the Selectmen have decided to auction off the tax deeded properties. Capello said the board has a list of the properties but has not decided what they want to do yet.
Stephen Henry asked how many properties are eligible for sale. Capello said there are about 10 properties that can be put out to bid or sold at auction.
*Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrances*- Capello told the committee that next month they will see money shifted around as they have to move funds for the purchase of the mini-bus from the Planner and Welfare- Rents line to the Recreation Dept. to cover the $15,000 cost. The previous Planner resigned at the beginning of the year and the town is now using a contracted Planner service so there was money left in the Planner salary line. He added the town has a great welfare person who is keeping the budget well under control. That line is expected to be reduced again next year he said.

**8).Old Business:**  None.

**9). New Business:**
Meeting Schedule-
A). Public Hearing, School Budget, Jan. 15, 2016 at 7 p.m. at the Henry Wilson School - Snow date Jan. 19
B). Regular Bud Com meeting, dept. heads workshop, Jan, 27, 2016 at 7 p.m. at the Muni. Office Bldg.
C). Deliberative Session- Jan. 30, 2016, 9am
D). Public Hearing, Town budget, Feb. 9, 2016 at 7 p.m. – Snow date Feb. 12, 2016 at 7 p.m.
E). Regular Bud Com meeting, Feb 24 at 7 p.m.

**10). Any Other Business before the Committee**: None

**11). Adjournment:**
**Motion:** (Arcouette, second Cataldo) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:20 p.m. `

Respectively submitted
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary