

Budget Committee Meeting
Minutes of
January 9, 2012

Members Present: Robert Balon, Robert Demers, Jay Holmes, Lisa Kardell, Bruce Lary (Chairman), John Losier, Terry Oliver, Terry Rhoderick, Steve Roy, Jeff Schall

Others Present: Robin Frost, Denise Vallee, David Graham, Don Provencher, Steve Gauthier, John Lapierre, Sr., Grace Lapierre, Diane Labbe, Paul Robitalle, Mike Waddell, Ron Donato

Press: Melissa Grima, Berlin Daily Sun

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lary at 6:30 pm

Meeting Minutes. Robert Demers made the motion to accept the minutes, after wording on how the Town Garage does not charge an hourly rate for repairs made to other department's vehicles.

Finance Department Budget: Denise Vallee presented all board members and the press with the Budget Worksheets she will be working off of tonight, and then proceeded to review it line by line. She stated it was trimmed the best it could be. They were able to trim 1.67% where there is usually a 4-5% increase. The questions were answered to satisfaction of the committee.

Robert Demers requested the wording, under GB Town Hall Inspection (01-4194-1-690) Fire Annual, that Annual be changed to alarm. Denise agreed and will make the requested change to clarify line.

General Gov't Building- the approximate 12% increase is due mainly to the increase in oil and electricity.

Property Tax: January 24, 2011 6.89% outstanding where as of today 7.03% outstanding. Town is pretty much in line with last year. Same people as last year are late.

Robert Demers questioned the Highway Departments vehicle maintenance program. Why don't they charge the other departments for the labor? Their budget is being spent maintaining the vehicles and this is affecting the Highway Department. Shouldn't the other departments be paying to maintain their own fleet? Jay Holmes stated they need to run their departments like a business. Robin stated that this can't be changed right now, but can be worked on.

Robert Demers questioned the metal at the Town Garage and if it was being converted to cash for the town. Grace Lapierre informed the board that Mr. Abbott buys it from the town.

John Losier questioned the Freon cost and how accounting is done for this cost. Robin stated they have someone come in to drain freon from units prior to disposing of unit. Terry Rhoderick suggests, to offset the cost, charge \$20/item then transport it to Berlin for disposal. Terry Oliver thought they charged Top's Furniture. Denise stated nobody at the Public Works Garage is bonded; this was discussed in the past. Robin agrees this needs to be addressed, quickly.

Capital Reserve: Denise Vallee handed out 2012-2016 Capital Improvement Program and the 2011 Summary- Capital Reserve Funds & Trust Sheets and reviewed both, line by line.

Jay Holmes asked about Solid Waste/Recycling. If the town did away with curbside pick up, could monies be put elsewhere? And if they could add a warrant article in case need to put it elsewhere? Denise stated no, monies were for a vehicle only.

Terry Rhoderick wanted to know if we really need a new police cruiser? Could we do with two rather than four cruisers? Put the money off for another year? Robin stated it's not good to get behind, selectman already looked at doing this but it's not wise.

Jay Holmes requests the number of calls the #2 Fire Truck has responded to. Denise will get this information for the committee.

Steve Roy asked about the abatements both Wal-mart and Top Furniture received. Diane Labbe responded that Wal-mart got \$5.8M and Top Furniture just a minimum change due to the property they are on, an old landfill.

Old Business: Terry Rhoderick asked if the dredging had any guarantee and for how long if it did. Robin stated the work will be inspected before they leave and that all work is being done to engineering specs.

Public Comments: Mike Waddell "stated" they did the best they could (\$765,000) they have a significant problem in the Moose and Peabody River areas. Not all areas have been addressed. Could have potential problems in 20-30 years. Case in point, the debris under the bridge by the fire station, there are no plans to take care of this. Town Garage is another one, if you are familiar with the new map. I hope they lower the elevation. Wal-Mart case: it was less expensive to settle than to fight. This is a 1- year settlement, next year will be different. Dealing with a large corporation is not like dealing with a resident. I don't think they made a bad decision.

Jay Holmes asked what percentage of the population is in mandatory flood insurance areas? Hope they lower the flood levels.

Paul Robitaille stated Hurricane Irene was similar to the flood of 1958. The same areas were affected by flooding. Tax Abatements: are not take these lightly. It cost the town money. If we feel it can be won we go to the DRA, if not we settle. Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund: No. 2 truck went out last night, it's in sad shape but it is a benefit to the town. National Fire Standards Act helps keep taxes down; benefits all in town. Capital Reserve Funds: in the long run saves us money by keeping to the plan, we have the monies when needed.

Jay Holmes asked if No. 2 Fire Truck passed inspection this year. Paul said it did.

Adjournment: Terry Rhoderick made the motion, seconded by Terry Oliver; all in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Amero

Amended Approved 11/11/2012