

**OFFICIAL  
AS OF 1/24/08**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
HOOKSETT TOWN HALL  
Thursday, January 3, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair, S. Oliver called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

S. Oliver, T. Keach, V. Lembo, J. Hyde, J. Danforth, S. Doyon, M. Sorel, J. Pieroni and G. Kearney.

Excused: C. Humphries

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 12/27/07**

*V. Lembo motioned to approve the minutes of December 27, 2007. Seconded by M. Sorel.*

*Vote unanimously in favor J. Hyde and T. Keach abstained*

**DISCUSSION**

Peter Farwell re: Community Access Cable Channel

P. Farwell addressed the board with regard to the lack of Public Access or (PEG) Many other communities have public access television. A few years ago, there was an attempt, via a warrant article to pass this. It failed. About six (6) months ago, a group got together to bring this forward again. The Council has been approached and they felt this was a good direction and they have done some preliminary work and have spoken with Comcast. A letter was sent to Comcast for costs and the School Board has documented their support. Very few people have been opposed to this.

Supporters have been the athletic and civic organizations, the library, and the Fire Department to name a few.

We went out and visited communities that currently provide this service. One proposal presented to the Council was to hire someone, even part time, to keep this running smoothly. If we are going to do it, we need to do it right. Having a good sound system is important. The suggestion to the Town was to have a studio at the Village School and eventually at the Cawley School. The Council agreed to put a line item in the budget. No cost has been developed yet. The operation will be 30,000, which is the cost to hire a full time person and a part time technician to do the electronics. The first year cost will be \$100,000. The following years will be approximately \$30,000. This can be paid for through franchise fees. Comcast collects, from the town customers, approximately 3%, which is given back to the town. This is approximately \$110,000 per year. Not everyone pays these fees. Since this money is going into the General Fund, it supports townspeople who are not paying in. By using this fee for public access, a service would be returned to the users. We hope that eventually we could stream this on the computer.

We also are hoping to raise the fees to 5%.  
We hope to have some firm cost by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

J. Hyde: With regard to franchise fees, they are not dedicated solely to running access TV. It is a consumption tax for Comcast to do business in town. That money is not necessarily earmarked for the consumer. As a former technician, in nine (9) years as a tech, the number of trouble calls related to the access channel was zero. My point is there is little viewership. To get actual cost, I suggest you talk to people in Bedford and Raymond.

P. Farwell: We have done that.

V. Lembo: What was the opposition from the Council?

P. Farwell: The opposition was because this was turned down by the voters twice.

T. Keach: Do you know the percentage of viewers in Hooksett?

P. Farwell: We will try and get that information.

P. Farwell: The cost is based on quotes that were obtained two years ago. We will ask the Town Council to have the Human Service person join us in determining what personnel will be needed.

T. Keach: What is different now from two (2) years ago.

P. Farwell: It may not get passed and I don't have the resources to do a large-scale campaign. I feel that with the money in the franchise fee, it could be done at minimal cost.

G. Kearney: How many broadcast locations will there be?

P. Farwell: Initially, the Village School and eventually Cawley.

G. Kearney: Does this cost cover both locations?

P. Farwell: No. They haven't estimated the cost to run the fiber up to Cawley.

J. Hyde: If you are talking about fiber, it will be much more than 30,000.

P. Farwell: Comcast gave us that cost for fiber.

J. Hyde: There would need to be additional gear and additional equipment for off site live broadcasting.

J. Pieroni: Have you considered doing a survey to get a sense of the demand. Is there a market for this? Is there anyway that you can tape and have Comcast play it.

P. Farwell: No, that isn't possible.

J. Pieroni: If the franchise fee increases, does it directly impact the users. It's a direct tax to the townspeople.

S. Doyon: I would suggest taking a poll on the Town's website and possibly in the Banner to get an idea of who is in favor of this. How often would this run?

M. Sorel: The issue here is communication. The television is a powerful tool. We need a way to keep the people of Hooksett informed. Other communities get participation or they wouldn't have them. We need to have this to keep up.

S. Oliver: I find it boring. I think it's a waste of money and the internet is much faster.

P. Loiselle: There seems to be too few people attending meetings. If there is an issue like the tower, or the politics or planning board issue, people focus in on those items of concern. If they know that will be brought up at a planning board, they will tune in.

G. Kearney: With the Internet, you decide what time you will view vs. the television is programming schedules.

## **BUSINESS**

### **School District**

#### **Warrant Articles-**

Item #2 – Budget \$25,343,966 with a default of \$25,085,174.

D. Argo reviewed itemized list of cost, which were included in the default budget. (see file)

Textbooks are included as per our attorney's opinion because it is in a buy cycle.

J. Pieroni: If you bought last year, my understanding was you didn't need to take it out of the default, but I didn't think you could add more.

G. Kearney: The \$91,793 is an increase over the \$130,000 savings.

J. McHugh: The projected increase for insurance is 11.4%.

J. Pieroni: Did the \$130,000 get taken out of the general operating budget? That obligation is no longer there. The insurance bill decreased, therefore it should come out and then the \$91,000 goes back in as the increase.

**D. Argo will email the board with the answer to whether the \$130,000 is in the budget.**

***J. Pieroni motioned to present to the public Article #2 as written. Seconded by G. Kearney.***

G. Kearney: I believe that if the default budget is overstated by \$130,000, then the Operating Budget is also overstated by \$130,000.

***Roll Call***

<b><i>M. Sorel</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>	<b><i>S. Doyon</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>J. Pieroni</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>	<b><i>J. Hyde</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>
<b><i>D. Argo</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>	<b><i>T. Keach</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>
<b><i>J. Danforth</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>	<b><i>G. Kearney</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>
<b><i>V. Lembo</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>	<b><i>S. Oliver</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>

***Motion failed***

***G. Kearney motioned to reduce the operating budget by \$130,000. J. Pieroni seconded. \$25,213,966.00***

<b><i>M. Sorel</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>	<b><i>S. Doyon</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>
<b><i>J. Pieroni</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>	<b><i>J. Hyde</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>D. Argo</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>	<b><i>T. Keach</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>J. Danforth</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>	<b><i>G. Kearney</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>V. Lembo</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>	<b><i>S. Oliver</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>

***Motion failed***

***V. Lembo motioned to reconsider and reduce the operating budget \$130,000. Seconded by M. Sorel***

***\$25,213,966.00***

<b><i>M. Sorel</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>	<b><i>S. Doyon</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>
<b><i>J. Pieroni</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>	<b><i>J. Hyde</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>D. Argo</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>	<b><i>T. Keach</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>J. Danforth</i></b>	<b><i>No</i></b>	<b><i>G. Kearney</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>
<b><i>V. Lembo</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>	<b><i>S. Oliver</i></b>	<b><i>Yes</i></b>

***6: 4 Motion carries.***

\$130,000 to be removed from the insurance line.

Item #3 –

Expendable Trust -

For technology – 60,000 funded balance

(No vote required for the hearing)

Item #4

19,500 for a box van – from funded balance

The state bids are not yet out, but this was a number that was received from Merchants.

The Budget Committee would like more specific information regarding the specifics of the truck. Backup information is needed.

(No vote required for the hearing)

M. Sorel would like this article reworded to be more specific.

Item #5

Kitchen - \$300,000

\$250,000 to come from Capital Reserve Fund

\$50,000 to be raised by taxation

D. Argo: The School District is working on getting firm bids.

Language to say, "Not to Exceed" will be drafted.

V. Lembo: The School Board stated that there was a \$84,000 overrun on the Underhill School due to the unanticipated amount of asbestos. The number presented last week didn't reflect that. There were over expenditures on many items including the sprinklers, the asbestos, the HVA system and the bathrooms. The roof was the only item that dropped.

The maintenance plan should have been covered in the 1.1 million

J. McHugh: When the first Warrant Article came through, it included repairing the SAU. At that meeting, voters decided against that. Only in subsequent years was that separated. The statements made were that these are the items that are critical and need repair at the school. We said we wanted the lunch line changed but they weren't able to do it. They never said they would change the whole kitchen. Last week, it was proposed to cost \$29,000 it actually cost 1.1 million for a difference of 300,000. there were areas that we ran over on, not just the asbestos. We ran over on the HVAC, the sprinkler system.

V. Lembo: R. Dion said 1.1 million will fix the school.

J. Pieroni: That is being taken out of context. The number was never to replace the whole roof and it was never to fix everything at Underhill. There were deficiencies noted in 2000.

G. Kearney: You need a well defined scope and a fixed price bid. If the scope changes, there should be some accountability for developing that scope and responsibility of the developer to follow through.

V. Lembo: Is there a State Statute that requires 3 bids for a project of this magnitude?

D. Argo: It's not the bid but the scope that is critical.

T. Keach: I did some research and found that you were bidding for a Cadillac and you can get something in the midrange for less.

J. Hyde: There needs to be a “Not to Exceed” language. A \$300,000 overrun on a 1.1 million project is ridiculous. You need to have better numbers.

J. Pieroni: Has the School Board discussed hiring an engineer to oversee the renovations. With Memorial, it was easy to do, because an architectural firm did the bids and they were more precise. Trying to do this piecemeal is not outrageous. All of the work needed to be done. They didn’t know the entire scope of the work. The money wasn’t wasted; the total scope of the project wasn’t appreciated.

M. Sorel: There is a new ordinance that unrestricts the number of apartment buildings in the community.  
This leaves Hooksett wide open for apartment buildings. We need to have the Planning Board change the ordinance to allow no more than twelve units in a building.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan