

**UNOFFICIAL  
AS OF 2/20/09**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
Hooksett Public Library  
Thursday, February 19, 2009**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman J. Pieroni called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance: Chairman Pieroni, K. Hughes, D. Argo, J. Danforth, JR Ouellette, S. Doyon, J. Gorton, N. Comai, M. Miville, and D. Pearl

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

January 15, 2009

***J. Danforth motioned to approve the minutes of January 15<sup>th</sup> as presented. Seconded by JR Ouellette.***

***Vote unanimously in favor***

January 22, 2009

***J. Danforth motioned to approve the minutes of January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Seconded by JR Ouellette. Vote unanimously in favor.***

**BUSINESS**

Warrant Articles

**Library**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$31,955 (Thirty One Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Five Dollars) for the salary, benefits and taxes for a full-time Children's Librarian for the Hooksett Public Library. This appropriation is for six months of the first year's wages, as the employee will be hired in the last six months of the 2009-10 fiscal year. Should this warrant article pass, the full annual amount for salary and benefits will be included in subsequent operating budgets. **RECOMMENDED BY TOWN COUNCIL (6-2)**

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Taxes</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
2009-10	\$19,500	\$1,492	\$10,963

***J. Danforth motioned to recommend as written. Seconded by JR Ouellette.***

M. Miville: If there is one part I have a problem with can we change it?

J. Pieroni: These are the Council's warrants and we can only recommend or not recommend.

M. Miville: I am in full support of a children's librarian but I don't support the salary of \$64,000, which is more than police or firefighters. I think we could do it more inexpensively.

M. Farwell: The salary is \$39,000 annually and the other cost is for benefits assuming a family plan. We have to assume the highest cost. If we end up only paying a single plan, we will see a

Hooksett Budget Committee Meeting  
Minutes of 2/19/09

savings of \$10,000. \$39,000. is based on the wage scale for the town. The Planning Coordinator starts at 35,000.

H. Shumway: We did a pay equity study, which showed we are a little low with most of our pay scales and we think that we will get someone for that salary.

**Roll Call vote unanimously in favor**

**Library Budget**

M. Farwell: When the town adjusted salaries based on a equity study, the library was left out. We then worked to make the adjustments and found we were \$34,000 below other surrounding towns. The Council said they couldn't support the whole sum in one year and stated that they would include \$20,000 in the operating budget and come back for the balance the following year. Since we got a default budget, we never saw that increase.

**Fire Union Contract**

To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost item included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Hooksett and the Hooksett Permanent Firefighters Association Local 3264, IAFF which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Taxes</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
2009-10	\$48,412	\$1,053	\$54,441
2010-11	\$87,283	\$1,624	\$61,326

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$103,906 (One Hundred Three Thousand Nine Hundred Six Dollars) for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels paid in the prior fiscal year. **RECOMMENDED BY TOWN COUNCIL (7-0)**

J. Gorton: This is a two-year contract. There was a salary comparison done by D. Jodoin and the Chief, which showed the firefighters were below the average and the captains and lieutenants were high. The conclusion was to give the firefighters 3% and the captains and lieutenants 1%.

C. Granfield: It is actually a 3-year contract.

D. Argo: What is the total percent increase?

C. Granfield: We don't have those figures but the larger percent of personnel will receive the 3%.

J. Pieroni questioned the increase in the salaries the second year? The second year appears to be a 70% increase. The second year should increase only 3% plus 1%.

C. Soucie: There were incentives for EMTs. Those incentives are no longer lump sums; they are added to their base pay. They get the 3% and the incentives that changed from a lump sum to a percentage.

J. Pieroni: If you use that formula the first year, it should not increase that much the second year.

C. Soucie: If you give them 3% and then add 2% for EMTs the first year; those individuals are possibly getting 5%. In the second year they get the 3% on top of that and then the incentive in that year.

J. Pieroni: I have never seen such a large in increase for the second year. I would request these numbers be reviewed before we vote on this warrant.

Hooksett Budget Committee Meeting  
Minutes of 2/19/09

Tabled to verify salaries.

**Sewer Bond**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$9,444,200 (Nine Million Four Hundred Forty Four Thousand Two Hundred Dollars) for the purpose of constructing the upgrades of the Hooksett Wastewater Treatment facility and Compost facility. This amount to be funded by a Grant from the State of New Hampshire through the stimulus package being funded by the Federal Government in the amount of \$7,083,150 (75%) and to authorize the issuance of not more than the remaining \$2,361,050 (25%) of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act RSA 33 and to authorize the Town Council to issue and negotiate such bond or notes and determine the rate of interest thereon. Repayment of the bond amount will come from sewer system development and user fees. (Passage requires a 3/5 ballot vote). This article is contingent on the stimulus grant and if the Grant is not received, this article will be null and void. **RECOMMENDED BY TOWN COUNCIL (7-0)**

J. Pieroni requested that the Sewer Commission and the Economic Development Committee attend the February 26<sup>th</sup> meeting to present this bond to the Budget Committee.

B. Kudrick: This may not happen. We will not know until April.

**Budget Review and recommendations**

**\$14,432,031 Default**

**\$14,608,499 Town Operating Budget plus Capital Leases and not including Sewer Dept.**

***J. Danforth motioned to recommend the Operating Budget of 14,608,499. Seconded by K. Hughes.***

**Administrative –**

Finance –

Assessing

Building

Tax/Town clerk

Family Services – There was a question of whether the welfare line was sufficient. We had already spent \$80,000 of the \$150,000 budget at midyear.

C. Granfield felt that even if it over runs, they would have to pay it and they would fund it in another part of the budget.

JR Ouellette: If we keep increases the budget and we get further from the default number; we may end up getting a default budget. I suggest we table this until we get to the bottom line.

Fire – \$2800 can be reduced for the diesel fuel

***M. Miville motioned to reduce the Fire \$2800. Seconded by JR Ouellette  
Vote unanimously in favor***

Forest Fire

Highway - \$8640 diesel reduction

***M. Miville motioned to reduce Highway \$8640. Seconded by JR Ouellette  
Vote unanimously in favor***

Solid Waste –\$3360 reduction in fuel

***M. Miville motioned to reduce Solid Waste \$3360. Seconded by JR Ouellette  
Vote unanimously in favor***

Hooksett Budget Committee Meeting  
Minutes of 2/19/09

Park & Rec this \$1015

**M. Miville motioned to reduce \$1015. Seconded by JR Ouellette**

N. Comai asked if the shifting of the Highway has been done.

C. Granfield: We are looking to put a line item for the reallocation of the Park & Rec wages to Highway.

J. Pieroni: This will not affect the bottom line.

C. Soucie: We will have that correctly reflected before the vote. I will have the new numbers for this departments and Highway next week.

JR Ouellette: Are you just moving the overtime from Park and Rec?

C. Soucie: Dale said he uses the staff where they are needed. Often they move from Highway to Park and Park to Highway, so it was decided to budget their regular wages in their home department and just have the overtime reflected in the correct department.

**Vote unanimously in favor**

M. Miville: Can the Budget Committee stipulate that the Fire Works budget be only used for that?

J. Pieroni: No, we cannot direct the spending. Only if the item is in a warrant article are they restricted on where to spend.

Community Development

M. Miville: Vacation coverage \$1485.

C. Granfield: We reduced the floater to part time so this money is to cover this department's vacation.

**M. Miville motioned to reduce Community Development \$1485 from the vacation coverage line. Seconded by D. Pearl.**

**6:4 motion carries**

\$215,036.00 new Community Development Budget

Emergency Management

Cemetery

Budget Committee

Town Buildings – the warrant article will address many of the building maintenance issues. The warrant article is for \$130,000 to come from fund balance.

Capital Leases – These are contractual

Capital Purchases

S. Doyon: How does the ambulance work into the budget?

J. Pieroni: It is being purchased with impact fees so it is not in the operating budget.

Chief Williams: the money allocated for Tri Town, \$79,000 which is in Administration will be allotted to the Fire Department and this will not begin until 2010.

Police

N. Comai: The two (2) people who have not been hired, in these economic times, in looking at comparable towns, it seems like we could do with a few less chiefs and a few less Indians.

I would like to reduce that wage amount \$128,004.

Hooksett Budget Committee Meeting  
Minutes of 2/19/09

J. Pieroni: This budget allows for 29 officers. They presently have funding for 28. This budget reflects an increase of one officer. Regardless of how many are filled, the funding is for 29 in this budget.

JR Ouellette: What they are missing is a lieutenant and two (2) patrol officers. They have one (1) supervisor for dispatch. They have 28 sworn officer positions and 7 budgeted dispatch positions.

J. Pieroni: The proposed budget is 29 sworn officers and 7 dispatchers.

JR Ouellette: Over the last five (5) years, their wages were \$300,000 to \$400,000 on average not spent in wages.

J. Gorton: The number of 29 officers was voted and passed on a warrant article so that is what he is required to fund by State Law.

J. Pieroni: If that is the case, why are only 28 in this year's budget?

D. Pearl: If we reduce a dollar amount, we are not directing the number of officers hired. If the warrant was passed for a certain number of officers, can't we still cut the wage line.

J. Pieroni: Yes, this is a new year and we are not bound by that. That was five (5) years ago. I'm confused why the 29<sup>th</sup> officer isn't in the default if it was a binding warrant?

N. Comai: Was there an amount of building maintenance being moved to Administration?

C. Granfield: The maintenance amount is only for Police Department issues.

Communications

***M. Miville motioned to reduce the wage and benefits \$73,010.00 for the dispatcher which is currently unfilled. Seconded by D. Pearl.***

C. Granfield: I believe the Chief has filled the supervisor's position and there is still a dispatcher position, which is unfilled.

***Vote unanimously in favor***

***JR Ouellette motioned to reduce the wage and benefits \$95,201.00 for a lieutenant detective.***

***N. Comai seconded.***

***Vote unanimously in favor***

***J. Danforth motion to reduce the miscellaneous line \$13,330.00. Seconded by J. Pieroni. Vote unanimously in favor***

***JR Ouellette motioned to reduce wage and benefits \$90,515. for one patrol officer. Seconded by D. Pearl.***

S. Doyon: The chief stated that due to the growth, he has to position an officer on the west side of the river. We may need this position sooner than you think.

J. Pieroni: He also has money for a vehicle, which he will have to use if needed.

JR Ouellette: He has had over \$300,000 excess over the past five (5) year to do with what he wishes.

Hooksett Budget Committee Meeting  
Minutes of 2/19/09

D. Pearl and N. Comai stated that if we could protect the wage line and know that the wage line would only be used for wages, they wouldn't reduce this line.

**Vote 5:5 motion fails**

M. Miville: My concern is that the legal line is not just about legal issue but management issues. If management reviews their legal line 18 months in advance and believes they will have that significant a cost, they need to review their management practices. I believe there are employee and management issues. The turn over is very high and it is to such an extent that the Police Commission needs to address this.

K. Hughes: I think we need to ask if this is poor management.

M. Miville: I believe I stated that. It is not just the employees submitting grievances; it is about management doing investigations. It is about using speed dial with the attorney for every issue rather than looking at their management practices.

D. Pearl: One thing the chief said was that at the first sign of an incident, he brings in the attorney. As long as management is following contractual practice and union procedures, there should be no need to bring in an attorney. I think this would not always be required.

M. Miville: I don't think he should be calling an attorney for every incident. There was a situation where at a Commissioner called an attorney regarding putting pin stripes on uniforms. That is unnecessary.

D. Pearl: At the Budget Workshop, the Police was already over 50% expended for this line after six (6) months and was predicting exceeding that line.

JR Ouellette: I agree that we need to send a message that we should trim the legal line.

M. Miville: We have repeatedly requested sub categories. I sent a message to the Administrator with those requests. To this day, we still don't know where those legal funds go. How many are management initiated issues and how many go to grievance and legal action? When we asked this question, he sent us to talk to the lawyer.

**M. Miville motioned to reduce the legal line \$35,000. Seconded by D. Pearl.**

S. Doyon: I think managing a Police Department is more difficult than managing a store. Legalities must be through the roof compared to managing employees at Wal-Mart. And what happens if they get into a position like the Hooksett Four? I don't think \$75,000 is a lot to cover a large legal issue.

J. Danforth: We heard that there are five (5) issues currently being litigated. One of which is Officer Beauchemin who will probably fight the Town and cost a great deal in legal cost.

D. Argo: The School has a legal line of \$25,000 with over 200 employees. There are always issues but the Police have 30 employees.

D. Pearl: The other side must also pay their lawyers. If there is a procedural problem, they many have a point to argue. It may be the way it was handled. If we are spending money on lawyers, the other side must have grounds to expend their attorney fees.

J. Pieroni: These are police officers that have arrest powers and carry guns and are different than other departments. We have a Police Commission that feels this line is necessary. I think this too much of a cut. I would like to send a message that we believe there is a problem but not

Hooksett Budget Committee Meeting  
Minutes of 2/19/09

as large as this. I think we have to provide some support and therefore I cannot support this large of a cut.

D. Pearl: These are law enforcement officers and the chief is also a law enforcement officer and should have some knowledge of the law and should understand the problems and issues that arise.

JR Ouellette: Even if Beauchemin moves forward with a lawsuit, wouldn't the Town's liability insurance kick in?

C. Granfield: The Town's Insurance would kick in for settlement costs depending on the circumstances. They cover the end result but they don't cover the cost to get to the agreement.

M. Miville: This is taxpayer money. I threw out a number as part of a discussion. Since January, the Budget Committee, in an attempt to understand where these legal fees are going, in good faith, have asked where these costs are going. I asked him last week, "are you qualified to handle Human Resource Issues and hypothetically where does an employee go to resolve an employee issues?" The answer was through management. I suggest there be a third party to go to as an avenue. We can establish any number we want.

***I withdraw my motion.***

***D. Pearl withdrew his second.***

D. Pearl: Based on the graph showing a sharp increase in legal costs over the past 10 years, I think we should be given some explanation.

***D. Pearl motioned to reduce the legal line \$25,000. Seconded by J. Danforth.***

J. Pieroni: To force some clarity and transparency on this issue, I will support it.

***Vote 8:2 motion carries***

Total Police reduction \$206,511.

**Library**

K. Hughes suggested put 17,475 back into the budget for wage adjustments.

***K. Hughes motioned to increase the wage line \$17475. Seconded M. Miville***

***Vote unanimously in favor***

**Conservation Commission**

**ADJOURMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan