

Unofficial

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES Town Hall 35 Main Street Thursday, February 18, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

J. Pieroni called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Chairman J. Pieroni, J. Danforth, N. Comai, S. Doyon, J. Hyde, K. Hughes, J. Hyde, M. Miville, JR Ouellette, and D. Argo, School District Rep.

Absent: Bill Gahara, and Michael Pischetola

APPROVAL OF MINUTE

February 6, 2010

M. Miville motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by D. Argo.

Vote unanimously in favor

PUBLIC INPUT

M. Sorel, 54 Cross Rd: At the last meeting I questioned the legality of public members speaking on a public forum. Did you check with LGC?

J. Pieroni: No

M. Sorel: M. Miville identified himself as Rudy who posts on the Internet chat.

In my opinion, the Budget committee is one of the most important committees in any town. It is not in the best interest of the town that three (3) members discuss, or vote on the police budget. They are D. Pearl, M. Miville, and Jr. D. Pearl. D. Pearl maintains a website that contains misinformation. The video he posted is an example. There are criticisms of the police department and it's expenditure. His individual postings interfere with him meeting his responsibilities on the Budget Committee in an unbiased manner. M. Miville is in the same category. His ignoring the RSA 673:14 provides that he meet the qualification of a juror RSA 500-A which says he may not give his opinion or be prejudice in any way, he could not be a juror. He is incapable of making unbiased decisions. JR is a family relation biased. A person always has an interest in the affairs of the spouse. His wife is in the business of destroying the reputation of the chief. I request these three (3) members be disqualified and not participate in any discussion or decision on the police budget. M. Sorel read from Riggins Rules on conflict of interest. (see attached comments)

D. Hess: I haven't been to these meetings in 10-25 years and have not been involved in School politics since I am the Moderator. I have steadfastly tried to not get involved in town matters because of my position as a State Representative. I am here concern about the Sunday news article that I read about the police budget and their expenditures. I was on this committee in the 70's. At the time, I was chair and David Cawley was the Superintendent and we had serious problems with the Manchester tuition. We had an understanding with Mr. Cawley and the School Board when I was the chair. We don't give you what you need because you may need it on one condition, you use it on what it was intend or you turn it back to the town. That was honored and they returned the money every year. There is something wrong, if the news report is correct,

when for the past two years in a row, the police department finds \$43,000 or some more money that is floating in the budget to put up a granite sign and money for a van. The department is getting so much money that they can spend it on these things that have not been approved by the taxpayers. That is just not right. I suggest 2 options:

1. If you are going to fund anticipated costs, get a promise from the Police Commission that it will not be spent for any other purpose. If they break that promise, there will be consequences in the future.
2. Look at the Police Department's needs right now for boots on the ground right now and not a penny more. If we have 23 officers, fund 23 officers and no more. You pay for the gas and not one penny more. I saw the rationale for the purchase of the van, which were based on the rumors of the court closing. If that was true, the chief could have called me and I would have told him the Court was not closing. I would like to know the timeline of when the van was purchased and I will fill in the gaps for the discussion between the Court closing and this purchase. I don't remember any serious discussion in Concord about closing the Hooksett Court. I think the Hooksett Police are out of control because too much money has been given to the Police Department. Cut the budget to the bare bones. There is no reason why Hooksett employees should get a 2% increase when they got a 2% in June. People can't keep up with their property taxes and they can't keep up with their bills. If I get the information on the purchase of the van, I will tie those two dates together. This budget needs a hard look and a big ax.

Maura Ouellette: I'm concerned with the raises that were given to the Command staff. I spoke to the Police Commission and the Town Council about these concerns as well. These are astronomical raises.

On July 1, 2009, all non-union employees were given a 2.5% raise which was voter approved. Then on January 4th, 2010, in a non-public meeting, the Commission granted the Chief, 2 Captains and one lieutenant the following raises:

Police Chief 9.95%

Captain 11.76%

Captain 12.70%

Lieutenant 10.12%

In this tough economic times this, increase was given without input from the Town Council, the Budget Committee or the taxpayer. I look in town and teachers took a wage freeze, the Budget Committee voted not to recommend any raises in the town offices, and because the teachers took a freeze, the school administrators did not take a raise. Then you have the police department that is out of control. That along with the mass exodus in the department means they should get no raise.

Ironically, the command staff gets these astronomically raises while the union negotiated a 1.5% raise.

Greg Matakus: I strongly encourage you to pay close attention any budget that chief Agrafiotis brings forward to you. I was a member of the Hooksett Police Department for nearly ten years and left because of him. I am well aware of the radical spending he does at the end of the fiscal year. Chief Agrafiotis is well known for asking for a wish list to purchase items and sue what money is left over. As a citizen and taxpayer, I feel that this radical spending must stop. The police commission is not doing their job or monitoring him as they are supposed to.

The most recent controversy over the sign and now the transport van is a clear example of how radical his spending is. These two items should have been on the ballot to be voted on by the citizens of this town. The pay raises for the police chief and administration should at the very least be voted on by the citizens of this town. I strongly encourage you to remove any and all money related to their pay raises. The police department has been the center of controversy for the last several years and continues to be. The turnover rate is the highest in the State. The police chief wants a raise, well lets see why he deserves it:

Is there a productive SRO system? No. Is there a canine? No. Is there an association? No. Does he communicate with any other agency to have a good working relationship? No. Is the department accredited?

These are programs that even the smallest of agencies have. I was told that Chief Agrafiotis compared Hooksett to Goffstown to justify his pay raise. Goffstown welcomes the community into their agency, yet Hooksett is guarded like Fort Knox with cameras everywhere. Chief Agrafiotis does not deserve a raise of any kind, nor does his staff. By virtue of their own job descriptions they are not even doing their jobs. They are supposed to promote harmony and a positive working environment, which is far from what they have there.

In closing, I encourage you to take away the pay raises as well as any excessive legal lines. All Chief Agrafiotis to do his job like he is supposed to be doing, not utilizing an attorney for everything he does. If that's the case, fire him and allow the attorney to be Chief. You will save \$100,000 there.

BUSINESS

Budget Review

Police Budget

J. McHugh: I believe the chief distributed a list of the police fleet from L. McNeil. This list includes the mileage of each vehicle. There is additional information on the maintenance of the vehicles as well. Also in the packet is information regarding the cost associated with hiring the officers and the testing which is required associated with the cost to hire new. Finally, there are some uniform costs.

The final document is on the salary matrix for the contract.

The contract for 2007-2010 was 6/3/3. On the subsequent pages are dispatch and their increases, which were 6/3/3.

The non-union wage increase for 2009-2010 was 2.5 percentage.

The Executive Assistant also supervises the administrative assistants and clerk and does the financial portion, the payroll, human resources and updates the policies. Her job is not just an executive assistant. The prosecutor, who is an attorney, has a salary. That document represents today's rate of pay.

Vehicles:

There are 2-3 patrol officers plus a sergeant on the day shift and the detectives utilizing unmarked vehicles, therefore a minimum of 4 marked vehicles plus any details and a van to transport to court.

We have 12 marked cars and 2 vans. One cargo, one transport van, and 4 detective vehicles plus 3 Administrative vehicles (chief, and a pool for the rest of the Administrative staff)

A van was purchased this year and there is money in the budget for one more vehicle. In 2008, we purchased 3 vehicles. 2 vehicles are not in use because we have cars lasting longer than we anticipated. So there are two vehicles that that have not been put on the road and one more that is funded in the budget but not purchased. The reason for the purchase of the van this year is to make the arrest on the street and transport the prisoner back to the station.

J. Hyde: You have \$28,015 in the budget for vehicles. Why would you need another vehicle?

Chief Agrafiotis: When the budget was put together, the commission put one through, but with the increase mileage of the vehicles, we do not need that. I have no problem taking that vehicle out this year. You may however see this back in the budget next year.

D. Pearl: Can you have 3 prisoners in the van with one officer?

Chief Agrafiotis: Yes

D. Pearl: Is the canine vehicle, without a dog, usable as a vehicle?

Chief Agrafiotis: Yes

Chief Agrafiotis: The money for the command staff pay raises came from the wage line?

J. McHugh: When this budget was prepared, the discussion came up about the salary for the command staff. It began as what figure should be placed in the budget.

J. Pieroni: When you brought forward the budget, did you incorporate those wages? If you increased their salaries, did you boost the number?

Chief: The adjusted salaries were put into the budget and the 2% was put in for a merit.

J. Pieroni: And this budget includes 27 officers which is one more than last year. The 29 officers doesn't exist, we only have funding for 28.

J. McHugh: It wasn't that they would rather have equipment than staff; the point was you need both.

J. Pieroni: I'm having a problem that money for those 28th officers went to pay raises mid year. I don't know how many communities you looked at and who picked Goffstown, but I'm having a problem with that level of an increase in these economic time. We're hearing we need 29 officers to get full coverage when this money is being used for raises. We put money for 28 and there are 23 officers now and that money is being spent on increases. If there is an inequity, it didn't happen overnight because no else is out there giving out 10% raises. I'm having a problem with figuring out how much to put in the budget because we don't know what it will be spent on.

J. McHugh: We currently have 23 officers and 4 positions that we are in the process of filling.

J. Pieroni: Could you have given this raise if you were at full staff all year?

Chief Agrafiotis: Yes, because the overtime line has been less than anticipated.

J. Pieroni: Why the sense of urgency with this raise and why not let the voters vote on it?

J. McHugh: The adjustment came up because a memo came from one of the captains regarding the inequity of the salary they were receiving. The discussion began as a result of that and the Chief presented a proposal on how to address that inequity. It didn't go anywhere at that time and the Chief was told to go back and work on it. I then went to the LGC site and looked at the different position as well as other communities. We had another workshop and this time the discussion resulted in information and the fact that the community swells in size during the course of the day. We had another discussion and I don't believe it was voted at that time, there was some consensus on how to proceed. At the end of the meeting, there was no firm decision. We met again for the 3rd or 4th time and discussed the adjustments that would be needed to maintain the staff. We looked at the police and dispatch increases as well. At that time, the decision was made that there would be a pay equity adjustment.

Chief Agrafiotis: The inequity had been building for a while. It came to the commission when it did because when the captain did the memo and I talked to a current sergeant because with the pay that a sergeant gets hourly with overtime, training time etc. that to go from a sergeant to a lieutenant would be a pay cut. So we looked at our current supervisors and looked at those moving into a higher category. Why would a person take on more responsibility to move to a salary position without overtime for less pay? That was an issue, that sooner or later, that would have to be adjusted. No one at the sergeant level would have a desire to move up. Our Captains were making less than our sergeant because of the overtime. The message to the younger officers is if I do a good job, I can move to a sergeant but after that, I am stuck. Seeing these discrepancies, it pointed out how far the inequity had become disjointed.

J. Pieroni: To do that big of an increase, mid year, in the midst of this economy, I'm flabbergasted. This didn't happen overnight. Last year we added money in for the library staff to finish what was started the previous year. We let the voters decide and they decided to go

forward. This is in the middle of the year. This didn't happen immediately and to do it at this time, without the voters a chance to weigh in, is unbelievable. With all the issues discussed with the police department recently, didn't you think people would be up in arms?

J. Hyde: Wages – bringing these command staff to equity.
We've done it with the town employees to bring them to equity.
This was arrogant and rude to do this without going to the taxpayers. It is above and beyond any normal business practice in the middle of the year and you made it higher than average.

D. Pearl: It was stated at the Town Council meeting by M. Pischetola, this puts our chief over the Manchester's police department. I looked at the Goffstown website and it isn't a good comparison because they have different command structure. We need to look at actual comparisons.

D. Argo: Can you tell us the total cost of the combined July and January raises for the command staff?

Chief Agrafiotis: I don't know

J. Hyde: It was \$26,000 just for January.

Chief Agrafiotis: The lieutenant that wasn't given a raise is an administrative lieutenant and doesn't supervise anyone. He is writes grants and does administrative work. The lieutenant that supervises on the road deserves the equity.

M. Miville: By the Commission giving 3 people a raise, they've put that increase in the budget and therefore in the default budget and that was decided 3 people. I don't buy the argument that because a different department somewhere else pays more, that should justify matching that salary.

J. McHugh: It didn't originate with, look at what they are making in another community. The memo came first. It started because there was no incentive for a sergeant to move up. Then we looked at aligning with other communities.

J. Hyde: 2% increase to all non-union employees?

Chief Agrafiotis: That is a wage pool and it is merit based. We try and find out what the Town Council's goal is and not knowing what that number would be we put it in ours at 2%. If the Council lowered that number, we would adjust it.

J. Hyde: Is there enough money in the \$34,000 increase for the 2% to cover the 2% increase for the non-union and the command employees.

Chief Agrafiotis: The budget brought to the council had enough for what the wage adjustment cost and 2% and 27 officers.

J. Hyde: The argument that we need to raise a lieutenant's salary to give incentive to a sergeant to move up is a fallacy.

N. Comai: On the health insurance for the town side, did you consider the value of the health insurance increase because that is also an increase in benefits. What is the increased value of the health insurance from last year to this year?

C. Soucie: The insurance increase was 20.4%.

JR: The only information on the equity raises was in a non-public forum. Was there any evaluations done in association with these raises?

Chief Agrafiotis: Evaluations are done yearly. The commission asked if all the individuals getting the raises were working to their potential. They were based on prior performance evaluations.

J. Pieroni: Equity raises are based on what the job required and merit raises are performance based.

D. Pearl: Regarding the equity raise, I haven't heard anyone speak to the urgency, mid season.

J. McHugh: From a standpoint of the discussion centering around fairness, it wasn't about what other towns got but the percentage increase that was given over time in the police contracts. That brought it to the forefront and it was a matter of being fair.

N. Comai: Supplies and related equipment, there is a major increase in 08-09. What percent is spent now?

Chief Agrafiotis: 54.18% as of week 31, which is on schedule.

J. Hyde: Overtime line, it was zero and is now \$200,000?

Chief Agrafiotis: In the past, it was included in the wage line. Now we have broken it out. That is to cover vacation, court time, and some to cover the understaffing issue.

J. Pieroni: You have money in wages for the extra staff and now you have money in the overtime for the under staff.

Chief Agrafiotis: When there is a need for extra coverage for anything like town events or snowstorms, we use overtime.

JR Ouellette: The overtime line, I received some information from the town for expenditures in 2008-09 which was \$20,000; the Chief's requested was \$74,000. The amount of overtime for police was \$122,000 and budgeted \$165,840. The total overtime expended for 2008-09 was \$183,000 and budgeted is \$240,000.

J. Hyde: Police equipment spent \$14,000 last year and now requesting is \$30,000.

Chief Agrafiotis: Line 713, a large cost in this line is the Commission wanted to put in the cost of a new K-9. I did not agree with that decision. My goal is ultimately to have two dogs. My comment to the commission, when you have someone doing K-9, there is a lot training required and with the budget year, that wasn't a need.

J. Hyde: That is only \$8200. What about the rest?

Chief Agrafiotis: Batteries for the tazzers are needed.

J. Hyde: Same question for personnel equipment, which increased from \$15,000 to \$23,000.

Chief Agrafiotis: Bulletproof vest have a 5-year life. 7 will need to be replacement.

J. Hyde: There are in the budget twice for \$2500/a.

Chief Agrafiotis: The contractual uniforms are for money to maintain. These are for new uniforms for new officers.

N. Comai: How many people have cell phones?

Chief Agrafiotis: 15 cell phones plus one. The average line officer is not issued a cell phone.

N. Comai: \$9731 can't be just for calendars?

Chief Agrafiotis: It also includes other items like subscriptions.

JR Ouellette: Last year we talked about the firing range. Does that actually get used?

Chief Agrafiotis: Account 443 is for ammunition, which is used at the range. There is no maintenance on the building. It is a freestanding building and we use the facility. We go about 3-4 times per year. We had a goal of once a month but that was difficult with scheduling. Next year we would like to go every other month.

JR Ouellette: There were cuts in the training ammunition. Was that because of lack of use?

Chief Agrafiotis: The last time the armory flooded, the insurance paid to replace the ammunition and we could still use the damaged ammunition for training.

J. Hyde: Phone – 433, have you done any research into other companies?

Chief Agrafiotis: We didn't but the Town a few years ago and we followed the Town.

Carol Granfield: The last time the town did that was in 2007.

J. Hyde: Between all the departments, it is over \$30,000. There has to be a better way.

Carol Granfield: We recently consolidated our cell phones and changed to Verizon.

J. Hyde: How many officers have you had over the last four years on average?

The Chief will look into buying shredders rather than hiring a shredding company.

Union contract – Police

C. Granfield: The Town Council approved the contract last night. The contract represents a 1.5% increase and includes steps, which will activate the Evergreen Clause.

Chief Agrafiotis: This year the teamsters offered a teamsters' backed insurance plan and we looked at that but what they offered was more expensive than what the Town offers. The Health benefits are tied to the Town.

D. Argo: What is the breakdown of the cola at 1.5 and the step costs.

Chief Agrafiotis: I do not know.

J. Hyde: Any changes in benefits, vacation, and vehicles etc. in this contract?

Chief Agrafiotis: I think the clothing went from \$725 to \$750 per officer. That increase is in the benefits.

M. Miville: How many people are included in the contract?

Carol Granfield: 21

M. Miville: Is there additional benefits for education?

Chief Agrafiotis: We changed the language of the education. There was a cap of \$1200 and now it is up to \$1500 and is still maxed at the budget, which means that less people can take advantage of that reimbursement.

Budget Review and Recommendations

Administration – \$1,150,380

J. Hyde asked of the first public official's salary, is that obligated by the Town Charter?

Carol Granfield will check the Charter.

J. Hyde motioned to reduce lines 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, and 200 to zero. Seconded by M. Miville.

J. Hyde: I propose this because these are volunteer positions, and if we are asking our employees to accept no pay raise, it is only fair that the people we elected or appointed do the same.

J. Pieroni: We have trouble getting people to serve now, if you cut this out, it will be even more difficult.

Carol Granfield: Some of the commissions are paid stipends and I tried to remove this and it was not supported.

JR Ouellette: I think there should be compensation. This does cover gas and copies.

J. Hyde: State Legislatures get \$250 dollars for a two-year term plus mileage. This would send a huge message to the citizens that we do this for town.

Vote 1:8 Motion fails

J. Hyde motion to reduce line 226 for record archiving from \$5000 to zero. Seconded by M. Miville

Carol Granfield: Each year we put \$5000 in the budget for the town clerk to archive the records and for codification of the ordinances. This is the second half of the payment for the codification.

Withdrawn motion and second

N. Comai motioned to accept the Administration Budget for 1,150,380. Seconded by K. Hughes.

Vote 2:7 Motion failed

J. Hyde motioned to reduce printing from 8800 to 8000. D. Pearl seconded.

C. Granfield: That line was already reduced \$7000.00 by placing the Town report on CD and reducing the number of paper copies.

Vote 1:8 Motion failed.

J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 253 advertising from 1800 to \$1600. Seconded by M. Miville.

C. Granfield: This is for notification of public hearings required by RSA.

Vote 5:4 (1 abstained) Motion carries

***J. Hyde motioned to reduce postage from \$15,000 to 14,000. Seconded by D. Pearl
Vote 1:9 Motion fails***

J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 531 from 1600 to 800. Seconded by N. Comai.

C. Granfield: The Town related has an agreement with the Town Administrator with regard to mileage when using her personal vehicle. The town vehicle is a pool vehicle and used by the Assessing Department.

Vote 2:8 Motion fails

***J. Hyde motion to reduce line 745 from \$4000 to \$1000.
No second Motion fails***

J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 711, new equipment from \$4268, to \$4000. Seconded by D. Pearl.

That is the quoted cost for 20 election booths.

Vote 1:9 Motion failed

***J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 951 from \$66,000 to \$60,000.
No second Motion fails***

***J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 910 from \$12,217 to \$12,000.
No second Motion fails***

***J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 911 from \$2250 to \$2000.
No second. Motion fails***

***J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 916 from \$1250 to 0.
No second Motion fails***

***J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 918 from \$500 to 0.
No second Motion fails***

***J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 919 from \$3500 to 0.
No second Motion fails***

***J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 920 from \$750 to 0.
No second Motion fails***

J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 101 from \$5000 to \$2500. Seconded by K. Hughes

C. Granfield: That cost was the hiring of the Administrative position.

Vote 1:9 Motion failed

J. Hyde motioned to reduce line 102 from 2500 to 0. Seconded by K. Hughes.

J. Hyde: What have we gained from the Economic Development Commission.

M. Miville: They have started the Ambassador program, which has been very successful in bridging communication between area business and the town. They also have been involved in website design.

Vote 1:9 Motion fails

N. Comai motioned to recommend Administrative budget at \$1,150,180. Seconded by J. Danforth.

Vote 9:1

Assessing

D. Argo motioned to recommend \$180,989 for Assessing. Seconded by JR Ouellette.

J. Hyde: Why did the wage line increase?

Carol Granfield: We have a contract with the Assessor.

M. Miville motioned to amend Line 713 (camera and office chair) from \$1000 to \$350. Seconded by J. Hyde.

Vote 8:2 Motion carries

J. Hyde amended to reduce the training and dues line from \$3040 to \$1000. Seconded by D. Pearl.

Carol Granfield: We are in the process of certifying our appraiser to become an assessor.

Motion withdrawn.

J. Hyde motioned to amend the motion to reduce the overtime line from \$2009 to \$1500. Seconded by N. Comai.

Vote 8:2 Motion carries

M. Miville amended line 541 training and dues line from \$3040 to \$2040. Seconded by D. Argo.

Vote 5:5 Motion failed

M. Miville motioned to reduce 541 from 3040 to \$2500.

Vote 3:7 Motion failed

Vote unanimously in favor of the original motion as amended.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan