

Unofficial

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
Town Hall
35 Main Street
Thursday, March 4, 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: B. Gahara

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:03 PM

J. Pieroni presented the Operating Budget, which was recommended by the Town Council for \$9,505,389. The Operating Budget was reduced and recommended by the Budget Committee at \$9,498,231.

Including Capital Leases, Capital purchases, Debt, Cemetery, Conservation, Police, Library, and Sewer, the total Town Council recommended budget was \$16,169,796. The Budget Committee recommended \$15,809,770.

Revenue estimates including motor vehicles, dog permits and grants – budget for 2009-2010 was 6,321,549 and \$6,189,745 estimated which is a \$130,000 decrease in the revenues.

Questions on the operating budget

J. McHugh, Police Commissioner: At the last meeting there were questions I was unable to answer. I went back and research those questions and I would like to respond before you do your final recommendation. One question was in regard to the estimated amount that the police would be spending over the course of the year.

Pending obligations that the commission has:

Users fees: \$4500 and we pay \$1125/quarterly to date 3375.

Digital recording \$2500 yearly

Communication Equipment contact \$13900

Fingerprinting \$180

Police network \$13,592

Scanning \$1800

Fire Wall \$400

Cruiser purchase \$28,964 if one were to be made

\$62,492 not paid as of yesterday.

Another question posed was when an officer is hired, what is the timeframe for coming on line? An officer hired today will not have an impact on the patrol schedule for 27 weeks. This includes field training and academy time. A previously certified officer's impact is less due to the fact that they are not required to attend the academy if they are from NH.

The other question was regarding the number of people in the command staff. The committee was looking to put funds into the budget for 25 officers. I went back to see, first of all, how we are addressing it this year with the shortage of officers and how that is impacting things. The west side sector car is not staffed for over a year. The midnight shift is short staffed in the middle of the week and only staffed with two officers. If someone calls in sick the shift goes unfilled or officers are ordered to hold over depending on availability. Command staff are filling position as patrol supervisors. Detectives have been moved to patrol divisions to fill in as officers in charge and sometimes as patrol officers. In snow or emergency, personnel from detective division are moved to the patrol division. This results in criminal investigations slowing down, and less priority cases getting a lower priority. Overtime is used to cover schools, vacation and sick time. This is all that we can cover without burning out the officers. This will be a substantial problem come summer. This could lead to vacation requests by officers not being granted. Motor vehicle work is slowed with officers tied up with calls for service. Paperwork service is being done but the ability to accomplish things on a daily basis has shifted to several days to be accomplished. Emergency business information cards are not being updated resulting in calls being made to employees that are no longer there. More calls are being stacked and mutual aid is used more often. This results in time delays. If a dispatcher calls in sick other than on the day shift with a supervisor on shift, overtime is ordered to cover. Coverage from dispatch is sought from outside the communication division. That is the result of the short staff.

J. Pieroni: This is not as are result of budget cuts.

J. McHugh: No that is due to short staff. There was a question on the amount of overtime but the average, yearly figures on what was spent:

2005- 2006	\$231,161.
2006- 2007	\$242,625
2007- 2008	\$270,379
2008- 2009	\$208,756

If the budget remains as recommended, I think that some of the officers' vacations might be denied due to staffing issue and this won't help with moral or turnover problems. The SRO position will help with some of these issues over the summer but it will be hard to reinstate the program next year. More calls will be stacked resulting in slower response time and mutual aid will need to be used more often. More mutual aid will be used. Officer burnout will continue and get worse. Training for officers will slow down with the exception of mandatory training. With an inexperienced patrol division, this will not help the agency in the long run and could lead to injuries and possibly some liability. If these trends continue, our safety will be greatly affected or compromised due to staffing issues. This will also result in less that adequate coverage to effectively meet the safety needs of the town and its citizens.

J. Pieroni: Are you reading on behalf of the Commission or the Chief? Is that the Commission's position?

J. McHugh: After the last meeting with the Budget Committee, I read the minutes of the meeting to see where the cuts were being made. I requested the overtime figures at the last Commission meeting. I felt the number stated at the Budget meeting was not correct. It was only for the past six (6) months. I received those numbers. I sat down with both captains, and asked them the issues that might be encountered. I asked them to put it in a simplistic point of view. This is not the Chief's statement. Is it the commission's views; the commission discussed the budget and we did talk about what might happen but the Chief did not write it. The other document regarding the pending obligations, I was concerned with the expectation of what we might spend. That was me.

JR Ouellette: I have a couple of requests. After reviewing the minutes from last weeks meeting, I would like to suggest we make a change to the police departments budget. This change will not affect the bottom line. It is just a shifting of funds from one line to another. It is my understanding

that when we made the cuts to the wage line, that all the funds came out of the wage line, without removing funds out of the budget line. \$166,000 out of the wage, it included benefits so I think we need to take a portion of the benefits out of the benefits line rather than coming out of the wage line. The reason I'm saying that is the Police Commission has an agreement with the town that they are going to return the excess funds from the benefits line and therefore what happens is by taking the funds out of the wage line, it doesn't give them enough funds to fund the 25th officer. Because that money is sitting in the benefits line, I will make a motion to just shift lines but it will not affect the bottom line.

I attending the Police Commission meeting last Tuesday night and the Chief spoke about the amount of overtime expended in the 2008-2009-budget cycle. I questions these overtime amounts because they were different from the amounts I received through a Right To Know request from the Finance Department. I contacted the Finance Director to determine where the discrepancy was. Due to the type of software the town uses, the discrepancy, as a result of the software, was expended for the current year. We will need to amend the overtime line to correct this.

N. Comai: The patrol only overtime is \$134480.

J. Pieroni: I have a concern with zeroing out the vehicle line, and after this budget, if we get a default budget, we will not have an appropriation line. I'm concerned with going a couple of years without that line. I want to put a dollar in there. This police budget is so different on what was raised and appropriated compared to what's been spent. I'm concerned if we cut too much. I think there is an expectation on what they want. Crime is going up and there is no coverage on the west side with a new business going up. I'm concerned with that but also concerned with how the spending has been done. I think the committee should put a police contingency line in the administrative budget and if needed they could go to the Council and ask it to be transferred. It would be required to request from the Town Council and the Commission could report monthly on how they are doing. They would only get the money if they have the officers and are patrolling the streets as planned. I ran it by DRA and they had no problem. The Council can spend it however they want, but I would hope after all this discussion, they would not spend it in any other manner. It doesn't need to be put in the police budget. There seems to be a backlash to eliminate the Police Commission, this may slow that down and give some oversight to the Council on the spending of the Police budget. I propose \$100,000 be added.

JR Ouellette: Could those funds be used for overtime?

J. Pieroni: The Council can give that money for any use to the Police but I hope the Council would decide wisely.

D. Argo: I appreciate your concern and I have the same concerns as well, but I think we did the right thing. The present budget has enough in the budget for 28 officers for this year and there are only 23. It is my understanding that the Budget Committee's recommended budget has 25. It is not like we are reducing the current staffing. I question Jo Ann's comments and your comments because we are proposing funding that will increase from where they are now.

J. Pieroni: Last year, we said 28 was the right amount. Is 25 the right number? We picked that number because they are at 23.

J. Hyde: If we give them an inch, they will take a mile. I don't trust the Council. They like to spend money. That money comes from taxation. Adding another \$100,000 defeats the purpose of the past weeks.

D. Pearl: I find this concept interesting. Maybe we can compromise and the money from the benefits line and JR's overtime adjustment can be locked into the Town Council but I'm not in favor of going past where we thought we were last week.

JR Ouellette: I don't understand how they can say we will compromise safety. The wage line has been under expended by \$300,000 for the past six (6) years. How can he say now with How can now, 25 officers, we will compromise safety. It doesn't make sense. In 2005 the warrant article was approved to add the 3 officers. You are looking at 2006 budget and they still did not add those officers and they still had excess funds. We are looking at \$300,000 annually. Back in 2005, they had a full complement, which was 25 officers and back, then they had excessive funds. Even when they had those positions, they didn't fill them. I don't understand how safety will be compromised.

M. Miville; I appreciate the chairman's comments for a compromise with a Council line and JR 's comments regarding an error of line funds to be adjusted. My perspective is I'm concerned about the process and concerned we are usurping some of the budget committee's authority to the Council. I would give the authority to the Budget Committee or the Budget Committee and the Council.

J. Pieroni: We have no authority. Once the budget goes to the voters, our job is done. The law allows the Council to spend. We can ask questions after this but we have no authority to ask how the money is spent. The Council can ask those questions.

M. Miville: If we add \$100,000 tonight under the purview of the budget committee and if we give it to the Council, we are giving that authority up to the Council.

D. Pearl: I am confident this budget is adequate.

JR Ouellette. The HPD has 30 officers with 22 on the road. There will be burnout. The make up of the HPD is different than other PD's. The commission should look at that. I looked at comparable towns and our population is 13,483 and 17,605 in Goffstown. They have 28 officers. They were funded for 30 but I don't know if they are still funded for 30. Just based on those numbers, based on their size and officers, it would bring us to 22 officers using their information. They use comparisons for wages. 2008 populations for Exeter were 14497 with 23 full time officers and 1 part time officer.

Pelham	12454	19 officers
Amherst		11594 23 officers
Milford	15164	24 officers
Durham	14148	20 officer
Windham	12823	17 officer

Based on this information, even adding all the populations and dividing by the number of towns, the average number of officers is 22-23 max. We are funding 25, so I don't think we have an issue here.

S. Doyon: I don't believe these towns compare to Hooksett with the number of businesses on Hooksett Road and Exit 10. I don't think those figures are accurate. I'm feeling that due to the number of business that we have and these towns don't, we need more officers.

JR Ouellette: That is why I compare to Goffstown with the commercial and Glen Lake; they have a very similar situation. Their matrix is different and the command staff is less. The make up of the department is so different. I think Goffstown is a great comparison and we are still looking at 22 officers.

J. Pieroni: Do you have a budget for Goffstown?

JR Ouellette: No, but the Goffstown Chief is making \$89,000 per year.

J. Hyde: All the towns JR named are not all that far off with regard to commercial and population. They are running lower. It isn't our job to make these decisions but we hold the purse. If you get rid of the upper level, you can hire more officers. I think there are some options. We are leaving funding at 25 and if you average all those communities, JR is close with his averages in southern New Hampshire. I don't think we need to add anything back.

J. McHugh: I don't want to be argumentative. I am the rep. from the commission and I'm not here to say that someone's statement is not correct. Last week, something was said regarding Goffstown regarding captains. To verify the information, the Administrative Assistant stated they have 2 captains, one is in charge of operations and one is support and administrative. The rest are 2 lieutenants, 5 sergeants, 16 union, and 2 detectives. They are authorized for 30 and have 29 with one opening. The one thing she said was their health benefits are different from Hooksett's. The supervisors may unionize because of those benefits. That is different from what the town use to offer. The other thing they offer, if certain officers take different duties, they are compensated \$750.00 biannually over an above their salary. If they have degrees, they are compensated \$500 with a bachelors. There is extra if they get their masters and if they move up the ranks there is compensation. There is also longevity at the 7th year and again after 10 years.

JR Ouellette: I met with the Chief from Goffstown for an hour and they have 2 captains, 2 detective, 2 lieutenants and a chief. We have 9 for a department that should be 30% smaller.

D. Pearl: Goffstown also is internationally accredited. They have a citizen, volunteer, and other programs that I would like to see here. They manage it quit efficiently.

Article A - Bond

Read into the record by J. Pieroni

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,538,000 for the reconstructive renovations of the Safety Center, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$1,538,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Council to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; furthermore, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$56,000 for the purpose of paying the first year's bond issuance costs and interest payments on the bond. (3/5 ballot vote required) **RECOMMENDED BY TOWN COUNCIL (9-0), RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (8-1)***

Note: Estimated tax increase is \$.03 for the first year.

15 year bond with principal payments of \$101,600 plus interest of \$80,000(estimated tax impact is \$.11 each year).

Article B Operating Budget/Default

Read into the record by J. Pieroni

Shall the Town raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amount set forth on the budget posted with this warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$15,809,770? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$16,228,947, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of Town Meeting or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Note: This Article does not include special warrant articles #X through #XX.

Article C - Merit wage pool

Read into the record by J. Pieroni

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$63,463 (Sixty-Three Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Three Dollars) for salaries and benefits to be set aside in a merit wage pool for non union full-time and part-time Town personnel.

Fiscal Year

Salaries

Benefits

2010-11 \$54,477 \$ 8,986
RECOMMENDED BY TOWN COUNCIL (9-0), NOT RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-9)

Note: Estimated tax increase is \$.04.

This article provides an average increase of 2% based on merit to non-union personnel.

B. Kudrick: From what I understand at the last meeting, the Budget Committee zeroed out that line in our budget for the wage increase. If article C passed, we don't get any money out of that, so the Sewer department employees don't get a raise?

J. Pieroni: The Sewer Commission can still give a raise within their budget.

B. Kudrick: I think the Chairman of the Sewer thought you took out ½ percent. If the wage increase passes for the employees we get nothing. I just wanted to make it clear to go back to the chairman and tell him what the Budget Committee did.

J. Hyde: Why don't we have the tax impact on the Article B?

C. Soucie: You can't put the tax impact on the ballot, the notes are just informational.

Article D- Police Contract

Read into the record by J. Pieroni

To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost item included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hooksett Police Commission and the Hooksett Police Union which calls for the following increases in salaries, taxes, retirement and other benefits at the current staffing level:

Estimated increase over prior year

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Taxes, Benefits & Retirement</u>
2010-11	\$16,080	\$ 2,987

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$19,067 (Nineteen Thousand Sixty Seven 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), NOT RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (1-10)

Note: Estimated tax increase is \$.01.

Reflect a 1.5% increase and Steps.

Article E

Shall the Town, if article #D is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article #D cost items only?

Note: *This articles is required to hold a special meeting if Article D is defeated.*

Article F - Road Impact Capital reserve

Read into the record by J. Pieroni

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 (Ten Thousand Dollars) to be placed in the Road Impact Fee Traffic Study Capital Reserve Fund already established.

RECOMMENDED BY TOWN COUNCIL (8-1), RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (9-0)

Note: Estimated tax increase is \$.01

Balance held by the Trustees as of February 28, 2010 for this fund is \$29,564.24.

A study is required before roadway impact fees may be spent and the town must refund fees collected if they are not spent within six years.

Article G - Park and Rec.

Read into the record by J. Pieroni

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 (Ten Thousand Dollars) to be placed in the Parks and Recreation Facilities Development Capital Reserve Fund already established. RECOMMENDED BY TOWN COUNCIL (8-1), NOT RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-9)

Note: Estimated tax increase is \$.01

Balance held by the Trustees as of February 28, 2010 for this fund is \$82,601.17.

This reserve fund is utilized for improvement of facilities or to create additional facilities.

D. Hemeon: As a taxpayer and not a department head. I look at the budget and the CIP budget which says zero. The Administrator and the CIP Committee did a great job so when a Fire Department asks for money to plan for a truck for 7 years the money would be available. If the Budget Committee and the CIP committee met together, you would have a better understanding and the same opinion.

C. Granfield: It was suggested for the last two (2) years that we hold a joint meeting to hear the same information. You can consider this next year.

M. Miville: Could there be a Charter change to have the CIP committee present directly to the Town Council.

N. Comai: Can we put the fire truck back in?

J. Pieroni: We cannot put warrant articles forward and the town is now looking to purchase a truck with impact fees.

C. Granfield: We are looking at what is available with impact fees and encumbered funds from this year. This would have no tax increase.

D. Hemeon: My point is that the budget process should start with a CIP budget. The point was a 1985 vehicle was trying to be replaced back before Mike Williams was here. CIP is important to the community and if we met at the same time, they would have a better understanding. That way we won't get hammered later.

J. Pieroni: I understand what Dale is saying but I disagree. I think the budget process and the concept of the Budget committee looks at all the budgets and doesn't co-mingle with the Council and the School Board. The statute says you receive the budget from the School and the Town Council. You keep the process separate, following the municipal budget act.

D. Hemeon: I just want you to hear it at the same time.

J. Pieroni: It is the Council's budget. They need to decide what they want and send it on to the Budget Committee.

D. Pearl: I agree with John, however like to hear the information and that way the departments wouldn't have to come twice.

M. Miville: I think you need to take into account what is going on at the other meetings including Council and CIP. I have brought that information to the Budget Committee and brought more insight to the committee.

Article H – Traffic impact Fee

Read into the Record by J. Pieroni

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 (Twenty Thousand Dollars) to be placed in the Town Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund already

established. **RECOMMENDED BY TOWN COUNCIL (9-0), RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (5-4)**

Note: Estimated tax increase is \$.01

Balance held by the Trustees as of February 28, 2010 for this fund is \$220,234.43.

This reserve fund will be used for major maintenance required at all town facilities. The Town has eight major municipal buildings and 21 minor buildings with a total insurance value of \$28,932,701.

Close public hearing at 8:05 pm

BUSINESS

JR Ouellette motioned to decrease the police department budget line 202, 204, 206 and 208 a total of \$50,818 and increase line 111 \$50,818. Seconded by D. Pearl

The cuts we made from the wage line and should have been to the benefits line. The calculation was \$50,818 that should be taken from the benefits line and put back into the wage line.

Votev10:0 unanimously in favor

JR Ouellette: The information that I received was not clear regarding the amount of overtime expended for 2008-2009 budget cycle.

JR motioned to increase the overtime (line 112) \$42,127 (185,000). Seconded by K. Hughes.

JR Ouellette: After attending a Police commission meeting and the amount the Chief stated that was expended in 2008-2009 was different from the Right To Know request that I received from the Finance Department. That number I received was for the 2009 year.

D. Argo: You brought the overtime number to the number of 2009, which was the number expended to date and didn't represent a year.

N. Comai: J. McHugh stated the number was \$208,000.

JR Ouellette: Yes, I wanted to get closer to the \$208,000 number. When I made the motion to reduce, I based it on inaccurate information and would not have made as big a cut.

M. Miville: This brings us the current expenditure of overtime and 25 officers? Is this funding for 25 officers?

JR: I believe it is more than that.

D. Argo: If we stay at 23, there will be additional funds in the wage line for overtime. If we staff, we will spend less overtime. I question whether we have to increase money.

JR Ouellette: I made that based on information that was incorrect and I wanted to give them the same as last year and that's not what I did. I want to make my original intent correct. You are currently at 22 officers on the streets. They could take from the wage line since they are funded for 28.

D. Pearl: The prior motion freed up \$50,000 from the wage line and that is now available to expend on wages without any Council restrictions. Although the bottom line didn't change by moving that money, they could only expend the benefits if they had the officers, now they can expend that \$50,000 if needed.

J. Hyde: When Jason made the motion to reduce the 2 officers by \$70,000, that was based on entry-level position. We do have to keep in mind that the officers that left are higher paid salaries and they can hire experience officers to take those spots.

J. Hyde: How much money did the police department return to the town last year?

\$292,000

J. Hyde: How much was encumbered?

\$53,000.

JR Ouellette: The cCouncil deducted \$63,000 out of their budget.

Vote 5:5 motion failed

***J. Danforth motioned to add \$300 to the Building Department's telephone like (\$158,948)
Seconded by K. Hughes***

J. Danforth: This department was the only department cut for telephone.

J. Hyde: I only say that the \$1500.00 is a little more than what was spent last year.

C. Granfield: We are going to look for a better arrangement.

J. Danforth: I want to be consistent with all departments.

Vote 8:2 motion passes

M. Miville: With regard to Highway, I asked for information regarding the paving line and how it is fulfilled. I know he returned a lot of money last year due to an error in calculating.

M. Miville motioned to reduce the resurfacing line \$85,000. Seconded by J. Hyde.

M. Miville: Bicentennial and Smyth Road will be complete and Goffstown Road will be started. Is there a chance that we can encumber funds this year and start Goffstown Road this year?

D. Hemeon: I have \$34,000 left in my paving budget that I save for salt. Photos of Goffstown Road were distributed. It was \$220,000 in 2000 and now the budget is \$150,000 and the cost is increasing. Pembroke has a \$600,000 paving budget. I wanted to pave all of Benton Road this year but didn't have the money. The roads are worst this year than I've seen in years. It must be due to the rain.

Vote 0-10 motion failed

J. Danforth motioned to increase the Police Department line 481 \$1.00. Seconded by JR Ouellette.

Vote 9:1 motion passes

N. Comai motioned to decrease line 711 \$5000.00. Seconded by J. Hyde.

D. Hemeon: When Carol gave me town buildings, everyone sent in their requests and station asked for new cabinets, flooring, stove, etc. They wanted new counter tops. The cabinets are in rough shape. We did cut a lot of requests. The maintenance person thought he could make them.

Vote 7:3 motion passes

New Final Operating Budget \$15,805,071.

N. Comai motioned to accept the Operating Budget at \$15,805,071. Seconded by J. Danforth.

Vote unanimously in favor.

Reconsideration of Warrant recommendations

None

M. Pischetola new information

Library correction

J. Danforth motioned to approve the minutes of February 25, 2010. Seconded by N. Comai.

Vote unanimously in favor. (S. Doyon abstained)

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan