

Official

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING Hooksett Town Hall 35 Main Street Thursday, February 9, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Miville called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

ATTENDANCE

M. Miville, Chair, T. Keach, Vice Chair, K. Hughes, Secretary, D. Pearl, JR Ouellette, N. Haas, F. Bizzarro, G. Smith, and T. Lizotte, Council Rep

D. Argo arrived at 7:00 pm

Absent: Village Water Precinct and Central Water Precinct

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 19, 2012

*T. Lizotte motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by D. Pearl.
Vote unanimously in favor.*

February 4, 2012

T. Lizotte motioned to table. Seconded by K. Hughes

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Presentation

Administration

Dr. Shankle

Line items moved:

Agencies were moved to the appropriate budgets. For example, Community Action was assigned to Family Service's budget and the Red Cross was moved the Emergency Management Budget. The Town Moderator and Supervisor of the Checklist were moved to Administration.

Increases include:

Workers compensation, unemployment, and a 1% bonus pool which was recommended by the Administrator. There is money for the Veterans Memorial and extra money for computers specifically software service contracts and internet service to improve communication. Internet is for live streaming and purchasing an online citizen request and complaint process for tracker. Currently, there is only the ability on the website to send the Administrator email but to track them after they are sent out to department is difficult and this is a service that will track that.

Questions:

T. Keach: Under the benefits line 927 (pg. 3 of 23) – unemployment increased \$16,000? I understand that the town has an insurance rider for that benefit. How many people does it cover? Does that include Library and Sewer which also have a line in their budget as well?

Dr. Shankle: Unemployment is based on the number of employees.
The Sewer and Library do their budget separately from the Town.

T. Keach: I would like to know the number of employees. I believe we pay for the library.

C. Soucie: I can provide the number of employees. The bill is sent to the Town of Hooksett and includes the Library, Sewer and all town departments except the Water districts. We, the town, pay the bill and then send an invoice to the Sewer and Library and that money goes back to the town. This line only has the town employees in it. The \$16,000 does not include the Sewer and the Library because we bill them out. Police is included in the \$16,000.

JR Ouellette: How will the one-time bonus pool be determined and how will it get distributed?

Dr. Shankle: I have started to work with the Department heads and I'm in the process of working with the Council on goals for the year. Once goals are established for the Administrator, there will be goals for the departments. I will make that determination. It will be based on the goals set for the departments and helping them achieve those goals.

D. Pearl: Unemployment, why did it go up?

C. Soucie: They extended the unemployment benefits.

K. Hughes: I brought up the postage and some departments seem high in comparison to what has actually been spent.

C. Soucie: In the spring, we have the Council newsletter that goes out in the mail and the tax bills that go out twice a year.

K. Hughes: Last year they only spent \$800 for the tax office.

C. Soucie: The Tax Collector's postage is for liens which must be sent by certified mail.

K. Blichmann: I'm required by law to send out certified mail to impending mortgagee for liens. That is done in the spring. Last year we spent \$946 and that doesn't include certified for returned checks. Certified mail has gone up to \$5.75/letter.

K. Hughes: You only spent \$800 in Administration to date and you have \$6500 budgeted.

T. Lizotte: Do you anticipate a larger number of liens this year?

K. Blichmann: We had 432 lien in 2009 and 472 in 2010.

D. Pearl: What triggers the lien?

K. Blichmann: Every year you lien the previous year's taxes.

T. Lizotte: Uncollected taxes are 1.8 million?

K. Blichmann: Correct.

T. Keach: In Administration there were computer purchases. One is for the Fire Department laptops. Why were they not in the Fire Budget?

Line – new equipment – why isn't that under the Fire Budget?

12-711

Dr. Shankle: A couple years ago, the town replaced all the computer equipment to bring everything up to date and make sure our copies of the software were legal. They also came up with a replacement schedule to replace computers every 4 years. We looked at that replacement schedule and saw those items were next on the list. That has historically been done out of the Administration budget.

N. Haas: Permanent Record Archiving.

C. Soucie: We have encumbered the funds for Municipal Records.

Dr. Shankle: Before I got here there was an effort to pull all Municipal Codes and put them together in one book. We have a contract and I want to get out of it and I would like to get an electronic version on our website and then we can keep up. It doesn't make any sense to create paper copies that continually change.

M. Miville: One-time bonus pool - How was the number determined?

Dr. Shankle: It is 1% of everyone except Police and Library, non-union.

M. Miville: There is a 2% merit pool as well?

Dr. Shankle: Correct

M. Miville: Mileage for municipal has decreased?

Dr. Shankle: We are trying to establish pool cars to minimize personal use of vehicles.

M. Miville: Conferences for \$2995?

Dr. Shankle: LGC annual Conference as well as other miscellaneous conferences, unspecified.

T. Lizotte: We are talking about software for finance and GIS. There might be specialized training to drive more efficiencies.

M. Miville: Drug and Alcohol testing, \$4000?

New Equipment for Laptop for the Supervisor of the Checklist?

T. Lizotte: I suggested using some of the legacy equipment. I looked at the equipment and I was able to only get one to function. The risk of making an error at the election warranted new equipment. We took Mr. Pearl's suggestion of looking at off lease equipment and are now looking at getting 3.

C. Soucie: The Council's recommendation is \$1 in that line because we plan to purchase those computers this year.

D. Pearl: Software services for vision for assessing; it went up by \$5000. Having been a person that challenged their assessment, it provides no history. If you comp. your property against 3 properties, you cannot go back and see if those property assessments were changed. It makes you rely on having to research that and not use the system. When a system purges data, with system storage cost so low, I question it.

Dr. Shankle: If you look back, a sizable portion is for BMSI. I agree that Vision software has problems.

M. Miville: The Volunteer Appreciation Night is \$500 and you will look for volunteer funding. Do we need the \$500 if it will be supplemented?

T. Lizotte: The Council's position is to keep the \$500 and with the Appreciation, there are some things that the Town should fund and some can be donations.

M. Miville: The Amoskeag Rowing goes back and forth from \$5000 to \$1.

T. Lizotte: They still haven't paid the \$5000.

Dr. Shankle: I contacted the person on the last correspondence from them, and she said she no longer is involved and was going to forward to a new person. They are supposed to pay us by the end of December and have always done so. This is the first year we didn't receive that money.

D. Pearl: The Farmer's Market, was that supposed to be self-sufficient. Why is there \$2000 in there? Why are we sponsoring it?

If they generate \$2000 in fees, is that coming back to the town?

T. Lizotte: Some of the Council believed this was only to be for one year and then self-funding. Moving the Farmer's market down to the plaza gives some stimulus for that area. The feeling is, give it one more year, based on the transition, and then after this year, it will be a difficult struggle to get the Council to fund this in the future.

T. Keach: What about the \$6000 for the pension for the retirement Firefighter's spouse?

C. Soucie: We had a firefighter that was disabled a few years back while on duty and couldn't retire, so Council, years ago, decided to give them a sum of money which has grown to \$6000. He passed away 2 years ago and the spouse came and requested the continuation of that money and the Council agreed to continue that payment.

More information will be provided to the Budget Committee regarding this agreement.

Economic Development Committee – was cut from \$2500 to \$1500. The actual is considerably less. Do they really need the money and what does it actually go to.

Dr. Shankle: I don't know what they've done with the money in the past. In our discussion, they are trying to get their arms around what area could they be most helpful and how can they move the Town forward. They have, in the past, had Developers in for lunch or they may do mailings but I don't think they have a specific plan for the money.

T. Lizotte: Speaking as a Councilor from District 1, there is a lot of money being spent on many things that never materialize like development of websites, etc. There are a lot of reports that were generated. I'm glad they are now talking about developing a plan but it must be comprehensive before I would support any spending. I would rather have the Administrator monitor it and have the EDC work piece by piece on specific projects. I think there has been a waste of money in the past.

D. Pearl: There was a recent open house for the Exit 11 plan. I didn't see anything there that our own people couldn't handle. I hate to bring in specialist at the first hint of something happening. I think some of that money should be planned for first and spent after.

M. Miville: Is your legal services sufficient?

Dr. Shankle: Probably not. I am trying to keep us out of legal issues. If you look where the money is going, a lot of the money is going to assessment and abatements to battle big companies. Besides that, there are little things that we are trying to clean up. We did get out from under the person suing us for copies. We agreed to send the copies for free and the judge dropped the suit. We will live with the \$75,000

Dr. Shankle: I will sit down with the Finance Director and revisit the actual costs for legal and bring back a number that I can support.

Tax Clerk

One major increase which was in health insurance due to a change from single to family plan on staffing. There is an increase in Professional services from \$5000 to \$7500 due to the BMSI software and the increase for Motor Vehicle Values Data. Mortgage lien notification service is a service we use to title search a property for lien holders on a property we will tax lien. The company charges \$14/search and those charges are rolled into the tax lien. The tax deed process is a company that also does the title searching.

Revenue from vehicle registration has seen a slight decrease.

Community Development

J. Duffy: There was an addition for dues for Southern NH Planning Commission.

I tried to use the actuals as a starting point. Some things that are uncertain are the hearing expense line, which has been moved down to Planning.

Postage is unpredictable because we must send certified mail for all abutters and depends on the applications and the number of abutters. We pay up front and the applicant pays for the mailing. That money goes back into the general fund.

Advertising is for hearings for Zoning Amendments and other public hearing notices.

The GIS maintenance is something we want to look at further. It has been moved to Professional Services. It is hard to track because these expenses have been moved around. The GIS maintenance is being looked at this year and we will have the files on the server upgraded so everyone is sharing the most updated information. We are working with the company doing our online GIS mapping and expand that area.

We will also need a new plotter which is a few years old.

Training - we have some new Planning Board members so we put money in for training. We encourage training as much as possible and the cost for the training is always going up.

D. Pearl: What is GIS?

J. Duffy: Geographical Information System. They flew the town last year. The state flew the corridor along 93. We have the most recent update. There are two types of systems; one is online where you can access on our website. There are different layers. We have layers for the Manchester Water System, the Sewer Department, and another layer that shows drainage and culverts. We have the prime wetlands. You can go to the site and ask for the information you need. That information must be kept up to date. That has recently occurred. We also have an in house system that creates the large maps and is run on different software. The in house system is for the creation of the maps.

M. Miville: New equipment line?

J. Duffy: The chair has been cut because it will be purchased this year. We actually bought the printers this week as well so we don't need that money.

Family Services

Welfare: T. Keach: There is \$153,000 recommended. Last year it was \$170,000. Why in this economy, would we under budget?

Dr. Shankle: I work off of actual rather than budget numbers for the past five (5) years. The back-up shows the trend. The \$153,000 is an average of the last 5 years.

T. Keach: The Welfare Director recommended \$170,000. Why was it cut?

T. Lizotte: We followed the Administrator's recommendation and we mandated a level budget or below. I like to look at the trends. There was a lot more funds coming from other sources so it is a combination of things.

Dr. Shankle: Hooksett has a tremendous resource with the Kids Closet and the Food Pantry.

Finance

C. Soucie: The Treasurer and I have been requesting quotes for banking services which provide offsetting revenues. We were paying between 17 and 20 per year and the costs that came back were better, so we reduced our original request.

Debt Service

C. Soucie: This current fiscal year we paid off the Safety Center bond and 2012-2013 will be the last TIF district payment.

Tax Rate

The two (2) union contracts for Fire and Police are not included in the rate.

Fire Contract

Dr. Shankle: The contract was negotiated without attorneys. In terms of final numbers, there were a number of concessions regarding insurance which were established. There were concessions on Holiday pay. There was a cost saving of \$14,000 for training. Insurance concessions total \$60,000 for the 3 years of the contract. No holiday pay for two days. The first year increase is a pay matrix. As we negotiated down, and they conceded, they really wanted the matrix. Over a number of years, they were bringing people in at what the lowest next guy was. They were trying to fix that. Some people, actually the officers (in the union) are getting smaller pay raised (2%) and some are as high as 12%. The average is 7.5%. Over 3 years it is a 12% increase which is an average of 4% per year. Everyone thought it was the best contract we were going to get.

T. Keach: Is that in addition to steps?

C. Soucie: They don't have steps. They have extra pay for paramedic and EMT and that is included in the extra pay.

Dr. Shankle: The Contract and the summary are on the website.

Default Budget

C. Soucie: The Default Budget is \$18,645,938 based on this year's budget and contractual items with the removal of one time expenditures. That is \$322,069 below the proposed budget.

Revenues

C. Soucie: On the first page are the taxes, other than property, license and fees, state and federal money. That is consistent with 2010- 2011 and 2011-2012.

Second page, from other governments-

\$82,000 from plowing for school has been removed

Charges for services –

Largest decrease was in Ambulance because they are being put in fund

Page 3 –

Highway and Miscellaneous

Interest

Sale of Property

Grants

They were consistent except sale of property because the Peterbrook was removed.

Overall the revenues are consistent except for Ambulance, Peterbrook, and Plowing.

The other item is on the last page on the Operating Transfer for Special Revenue. It was \$974,000 from the offsetting TIF District to pay the bond and the one-time expense for the Automated Trash.

Police Budget

T. Keach: Two areas, one is part time position for Police Officer. A record error, the part time should be 7.65 which is \$2291.32

The next issue is the fuel. If you average the mileage out, they short changed themselves by \$3000. The average \$27,477. I recommend that be increased by \$2962.

D. Pearl: Didn't they say they anticipated using more fuel because they are adding a patrol to the west side?

M. Miville: They actually calculated down to the dollar and it is a six (6) month State bid. They did all the calculations and they felt this was appropriate and they put \$80,000 in the budget.

T. Keach motioned to increase Line 424-01-311 by \$3000. Seconded by D. Pearl.

T. Lizotte: I think it should be left as is. They brought this forward and we need to keep it lean. They didn't do a hot spot analysis. They may be more efficient by not going back and forth from one side of the river to another.

JR Ouellette: I think there are extra funds in the wage lines for the command staff. With the hiring of a new Chief, the salaries may be variable. I think there is money available if needed.

D. Pearl: Can the hot spots be analyzed with the use of the GIS?

T. Lizotte: I talked to Captain Daigle and they can look at it through the use of excel. But yes, the GIS can be used.

M. Miville: I also want to express my commitment to their detail and firm determination to the numbers presented. I am going to trust that \$80,000 is accurate.

Vote 1:9 motion failed

D. Pearl: I'm concerned with the command staff salaries. We asked Mrs. McHugh and we didn't get a response. Do we look at those lines and share our concerns?

JR Ouellette: I did a Right to Know request for the information used to warrant those raises and the information not substantiated those raises. Those raises were also discussed in non-public and they should have been in public.

D. Pearl: I don't know if we will get any more information from the Police Commission. This is now our budget which has been handed to us from the Police Commission.

K. Hughes: Can we official request the Police Commission provide information for the new Chief's salary and how the reorganization of the command staff will affect the wage line.

JR Ouellette: The positions have been restricted but the salaries haven't change. The Chief's salary and the new lieutenant's salary can be restructured. This would be an effort to recover the 10-12% given to the command staff in the past. Also if you have seven (7) employees not working and those positions will be filled, what salary level will they be starting at?

N. Haas: Could we request a salary savings report as a result of the open positions.

D. Pearl: They will hope to file and fund those positions in this budget.

T. Lizotte: The restructuring took the wages down \$22,000 by removal of some positions. You can send a leadership statement stating you anticipate reductions in salaries.

Tax Impact due to the decrease in revenues.

ADJOURN

Budget meeting was recessed at 9:30 and will reconvene following the Deliberative Session at Cawley Middle School, 89 Whitehall Road on February 10th at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan