

# BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING – February 20, 2014

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**Unofficial**

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**HOOKSETT MUNICIPAL OFFICES  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**35 Main Street**

**Thursday, February 20, 2014**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

Pledge of Allegiance

### **ATTENDANCE**

Chair M. Miville, K. VanHorn, D. Pearl (School Board Rep), N. Haas, C. Morneau, JR Ouellette, J. Pieroni, T. Jennings, and T. Lizotte (Town Council Rep)

Absent – Central Water Precinct and Village Water Precinct

Excused: F. Bizzarro, S. Peterson, C. Akstin

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**February 6, 2014**

*C. Morneau motioned to approve the minutes of February 6, 2014. Seconded by T. Jennings.*

*Vote unanimously in favor.* (T. Lizotte, J. Pieroni, N. Haas abstained)

**February 7, 2014**

**Table to next meeting by T. Lizotte seconded by C. Morneau**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Budget Presentation by the following Departments:

**Tax Collector** – K. Blichmann

The increases were mostly insurance. New equipment is for credit card machines (3) \$60/ea. for the maintenance fee and \$1600 for the equipment purchase. Everything else is the same with the exception of cost increases.

The customer would pay the 2.9% of the credit card fee. The town does not gain or lose.

T. Lizotte: The Credit Card is convenience for the customer and provides the ability to pay on time.

K. Blichmann: I was looking to change the tax software but it was taken out of the Tax Department's budget and possibly put in the Technology budget.

C. Soucie: It was decided to hold off on that cost.

N. Haas: The Postage increased?

K. Blichmann: Since we have had default budgets, the price per unit has gone up. The current budget reflects a default budget and the certified mail has increased. Deeding has also increased the postage costs.

K. Blichmann: Professional Services went up because of tax deeds which were a notification service which was not in the default budget. The process, by law, is all taxes unpaid must be sent to lien and then in two years and a day, if the bill is unpaid, the tax lien is made and the Council must decide if they want to deed the property. The money pays for the title search as well as notification to mortgage holders.

T. Lizotte: Can you explain, using that process, how much of the back taxes have been collected.

K. Blichmann: Large amount were collected from a small number of commercial properties. Residential properties have payment plans. We have collected more revenue as a result of deeding.

T. Lizotte: The \$5000 increase is facilitating the ability to go out and collect unpaid taxes. That service is needed to do it right to get the hundreds of thousands in back taxes.

C. Soucie: We had a large commercial owner pay over \$100,000 in interest due to deeding.

#### **Town Clerk – T. Rainer**

T. Rainer: A large part of the increase is due to insurance. The additional items adding to this budget increase is Supervisors of the Checklist requesting an increase of \$100 from \$600 to \$700 per year? There are very old voting booths that date to the 50's which should be replaced.

New Equipment in the amount of \$2482 which will get 13 new booths. There are 50 older booths which are deteriorating.

T. Rainer: The increase in the election – this year's elections are in September, November, and May.

#### **Fire- Rescue –Chief Williams**

M. Williams: The Budget increases are due to NH Retirement, the Health Insurance increases and the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the firefighter's contract which is the last year. Some of the lines that stand out, our current secretary works 35 hours and we increased her hours to 40 hours to open the office on Wednesday. There was a proposal for a warrant article to start replacing the radios for fire apparatus and after a discussion with the Administrator

we decided to start putting it in the operating budget with 3 new mobile radios. Instead of a larger warrant to replace all the radios we decided to start replacing a few each year. Training – we received a lot of grants through the State.

Professional Services – Dispatching services decreased

Surviving Spouse Benefit was transferred to our line from Administration. That stayed the same.

Forest Fire Warden budget is unchanged and there will be a decrease in the following year.

Emergency Management-This was transferred to Chief's job description.

M. Miville: Firefighter new position?

Chief Williams: That was removed.

J. Pieroni: There is one dollar in medical supplies?

Chief Williams: We keep that line open. All the medical supplies come out of the Ambulance Service Account.

N. Haas: The new equipment line; in the back up, it went from \$3399 to \$15,399?

Chief Williams: We had a CIP presentation to replace the radios in a warrant article and now we will replace them through the operating budget. (3 or 4 radios a year at 3-4 thousand each for a total of over 20)

T. Jennings: The telephone line shows \$12,000 and last year only \$8900 was used?

Chief Williams: All of our CAD monitors in the vehicle operate off of wireless air cards. Last year we purchased new software. The increase is mainly air cards.

M. Miville: There is a decrease in the internet of \$1600 for recalculating the connection at both stations.

Chief Williams: This has something to do with the packages through Comcast. There are better deals available with going to a faster speed.

K. VanHorn: The fuel prices have gone up and you have \$3.52 for diesel. Is that the State price?

Chief Williams: We go out on State bid and it is stabilizing. This is just for Fire Apparatus Fuel, not the Ambulance which is separate.

CIP – Fire

1. SCBA – Fire Breathing Apparatus - \$20,000, with \$133,000 in the account. We want to replace the full fleet in 2020.
2. Putting money away for the larger equipment

Family Services – D. Shankle

The Hooksett PD is now on Twitter.

D. Shankle: The budget had minor changes and went welfare from \$190,000 to 180,000. It is level funded.

**Finance – C. Soucie**

C. Soucie: There is a part time employee for a bookkeeper for 10/hrs. a week to help with accounts payable. We process 4000 checks each year. We currently utilize volunteers for filing and stuffing but we need someone to look at invoices. The other increases are health insurance. The Auditing fees went up. We are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the contract. Banking fees have gone up. In the past banking fees were offset by interest. When interest rates went down, they started charging the town 3 years ago and since then we have had a default. Two years ago our Treasurer sought an RFP for banking services and cut that fee in half. We now have a check scanner that gets the money in the bank sooner with less check cashing fees.

N. Haas: What were the increases in the auditing fees?

C. Soucie: The contract had an increase in fees every year for 3 years.

**Warrant Article for Town Engineer**

D. Shankle – Information was distributed.

D. Shankle: We felt this position could pay for itself. The hours for Stantec plus the last two years, they have gone down because DPW has been doing the monitoring for about 15 hours per week. The hours times \$80.00 which is what we think we can charge to save the contractors money, at 25/hr./week – it would generate \$106,000 and there is still 15 hours a week to do other projects.

The breakeven point is 22 hours per week.

J. Pieroni: The warrant article says it is a .06 tax impact. That is not a total picture.

D. Shankle: We will explain in the voters' guide.

**Warrant Articles**

Revaluation -\$30,000 to save for the next reval. in the next 5 years.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*JR Ouellette motioned to adjourn. Seconded by N. Haas.*

*Vote unanimously in favor.*

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan