

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
HOOKSETT MUNICIPAL OFFICES
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
35 Main Street
Thursday, February 19, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER

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

Pledge of Allegiance

ATTENDANCE

M. Miville, F. Bizzarro, T. Jennings, C. Morneau, JR Ouellette, J. Pieroni, K. VanHorn, D. Winterton, Town Council Rep. and A. Boilard School Board Rep.

Excused: J. Pieroni (6:47), S. Peterson

Absent: P. Gosselin, Village Water Precinct and Central Water Precinct.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 12, 2015

Tabitha Jennings motioned to approve the minutes of February 12, 2015. Seconded by Kevin VanHorn.

Vote unanimously in favor

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

NEW BUSINESS

Municipal Budget Review

Public Works

Highway Department – Leo Lessard

All lines are fairly level. It is the same as the last year with the exception of salaries.

M. Miville: The vehicle maintenance line has gone up.

L. Lessard: We have spent more to maintain older vehicles that have been neglected.

J. Pieroni: The resurfacing budget – are there roads that are so expensive to repair that you don't even want to touch them?

L. Lessard: Yes, I pay attention to the main artery. There are roads that haven't been paved in 30 years. In a perfect world, we would keep them all in good shape. We've got

89 miles of road and in the budget we have enough for 2 miles a year. Some of the roads in town need to be totally rebuilt before they get paved.

J. Pieroni: An example that is in bad shape is Prescott Heights. What would it cost to pave?

L. Lessard: We started a few years ago doing S. Bow Road. We are now working on it for pipe upgrades. We will be doing Morrill next.

J. Pieroni: Do we have a plan to address all the roads?

L. Lessard: Corriveau Drive is an example of a road that needs to be done but it isn't a trunk line. I want to work with Dr. Shankle and put a plan together and have a goal for bonding for 10 years to get all the roads done.

Dr. Shankle: Merrimack did that but first you need to prioritize your roads. Once you decide the order, you need to stick with it. It will cost 5-10 million dollars. That's the only way to do it right.

Park & Rec.

F. Bizzarro: There is a long line of new equipment listed but the line is 0?

L. Lessard: That was removed from the budget. The original amount was \$42,250.

F. Bizzarro: It was removed; was it more of a want than a need?

L. Lessard: It is a need but after discussing with Administration we decided to put it out for a year to keep the budget down.

C. Morneau: How much does it cost to rent the sod cutter?

L. Lessard: About \$3,000 to \$4,000 to rent. It cost \$7800 to purchase. It was in the budget a few years ago but that year we got a default budget.

F. Bizzarro: What line does it come out of in the budget for rental?

L. Lessard: Ground maintenance.

Town Buildings

M. Miville: Building maintenance was increase for the old town hall \$10,000?

L. Lessard: That is for maintenance to begin to prepare the building for renovations.

T. Jennings: If we are using taxpayer money for the renovations, are there set plans for the use of the building after the renovations are complete?

Dr. Shankle: The Old town Hall Committee has been working for a couple years. An architect looked at it and we are trying to do those things we can do before we spend money. I think we can make the space usable without spending a lot of money. There is a Grant to do the tin ceiling. We will be taking out the second floor and we will make the building usable. Rather than rush in and ask the people for \$150,000, let's make it usable and let the town use it before we put a lot of money into it; plus it will preserve it by using it before it is too run down.

K. VanHorn: Building maintenance has a line item for maintenance of \$7000. In the detail it says just \$1? The Council budget is \$7000 and the department budget is 1?

L. Lessard: That is for Fire Station #1's new generator.

JR Ouellette: How much is fuel now?

L. Lessard: We get it from Diane Boyce. She purchases all the fuel.

T. Jennings: Is there money to repair the roof at Town Hall?

L. Lessard: The Capital Reserve money will fund the roof repair which is scheduled for this year.

D. Winterton: Ms. Boyce uses the State bid and sometimes can get more competitive bids. The Council looked at reducing that number but were cautious about cutting too much and will return any surplus funds to the general fund.

Warrant Articles – DPW

Overall Capital Reserve for vehicles - \$200,000

L. Lessard: There is a \$100,000 that works to replace a dump truck every three years. There's an extra \$100,000 to start to save to replace a loader. We will have another \$200,000 next year and then it should go back to \$100,000 the following year.

Park and Rec. Facilities fund

L. Lessard: We want to put bathrooms down on the fields.

Highway Union Contract

Dr. Shankle – There is a 3% raise with their health care contribution going from 10% to 12%. The Second year another 3% raise and health insurance going to 15%. We gave them the opportunity to be part of a committee to look into less expensive insurance and an opt out after one year.

Library Trustees

M. Farwell: We are coming with a lean budget. We made a change in the health insurance line. It was reduced by \$15,214 because the new children's librarian did not select a family plan. The Town Council has not seen this reduction yet.

Library Budget-

Mac Broderick: We had some changes in salary. We did a pay study and determined Library employees were not paid similar to both other library staff in other towns and other town employees. We spoke to the Administration and Council and found that in two positions, over a period of time those positions evolved and those position's wages should have been changed along the way due to the change in responsibility. For the budget, we included the changes in wages due to differences in job responsibilities.

M. Farwell: Some increases are contractual. Automation is a contractual item with GMAL.

K. VanHorn: Why did books go up \$4000? What is the impact of e-books?

M. Farwell: We have not increased the books and material line. We prioritized what we needed to do this year and we decided to focus on the staff.

J. Pieroni: Can you talk about changes in positions?

Mac Broderick: We have a few positions that have supervisory responsibility. The desk staff is being supervised by the head of circulation services. We have one of the positions deals with the technology at the library. With the increased use, he has done most of the maintenance in house and conducted training. This is saving us from an outsource tech help. We don't have a technology support line. The Library staff often provides assistance to other departments in town.

Library Budget Complete

Petition Warrant Article

Mac Broderick: We have a warrant article by petition that was submitted yesterday to the town. It was presented with over 100 signatures when 25 were required.

Read article into the record.

We did this because we spent all last year reviewing the pay for our employees. We were awarded library of the year and we wanted to maintain the high level we attained. The reason we were so successful was the quality of our staff. We compared our staff to other libraries and we were surprised at the salaries as well as the number of staff. We then realized that our pay was in disparity and some of that was addressed in the budget. We picked towns about our size. Our study is in the book we distributed. Tab 1 is the basic comparison to other libraries. The population is comparable. We have 1.8 less employees than other towns. The operating budgets of the libraries show we are clearly less than others. We have the smallest operating budget and the second smallest staff. We also decided compare our employees to other town employees in Hooksett. Within the town there should be some consistency. We worked with the town 7 years ago to do a minor review. We put together a request and we were asked to break it down to a couple years. It took three years to get to about 10% equitable. We are trying to recognize that we need

to get it to current levels. We also tried to account for time in service. We tried to adjust for differences in experience and longevity to accurately compare positions.

Example is a circulation clerk (tab 4) – looking at the classification chart for town employees, we determined that similar positions might be the clerk in the town clerk's office. Put all our library employees in to the classifications.

K. VanHorn: When comparing to other library employees and town employees, were you looking at the averages? I understand that you have to figure where you're job classification fits. Each one of these represents a range of salaries that should be part of seniority.

Mac Broderick: We contacted other libraries to address years of service. We put it over a 20 year period for the minimums and maximums.

D. Winterton: If this warrant passes and there is a warrant for a 3% raise, which will come first, the 3% or these raises? If that happens, you will have employees that will have 44% increase.

H. Shumway: This is an equitability issue.

Mac Broderick: The large increase speaks to how much out of line these salaries are.

D. Winterton: The purpose is to attract and retain the people that you want. You have been able to keep people and retain people. Is that good enough to retain who you have?

Mac Broderick: We have had some turn over in the Children's Librarian position. We do have dedicated employees. The question becomes how much are we taking advantage of people and now is the time to do the right thing.

D. Winterton: That is why the petition article is the way to go to let the population decide.

Mac Broderick: You would adjust the equitable amount and then add the 3%.

T. Jennings: I can get behind the inequality particularly compared to other libraries. I have a hard time with the classifications as they compare to other town employees whose lives are put at risk. I wonder what information the public is getting. What are you doing to get this out to the public? I wonder if showing them a comparison of a library employee to a Fire Chief will not be supported.

Mac Broderick: There are few approaches; we looked at other towns for approaches. The job duties are different but the classifications are similar.

J. Pieroni: The 3% should be based on the present pay because that is how you come to the \$88,423. That is how that number was determined. A reason you adjust pay raise is not just for equity but also to look at hiring someone if there is a need to fill a position.

M. Farwell asked if the Budget Committee will be making a recommendation on this warrant article.

The Budget Committee is required to make a recommendation on all money articles.

OTHER BUSINESS

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

ADJOURNMENT

*T. Jennings motioned to adjourn. Seconded by K. VanHorn at 8:30 pm.
Vote unanimously in favor.*

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan