

Budget Committee
Fire Station training room
7:30pm December 10th, 2008

Approved: January 14th, 2009

Present at this meeting: Budget Committee Members: Judith Brotman, Richard Jones, Earl Strout, Charles Justice, William Lewis, Josh Kilham, Jeff Lehmann, Elizabeth Glenshaw, Freda Swan, and Mark Schiffman. Scribe: Dina Cutting. Selectmen: Charles Ragan. Employees: Patty Jenks, Steve Williams, Fred Stearns, William LaBombard, Russell Stearns, Scott Bailey, Pauline Field, Elise Garrity, Francesca Latawiec, and Andrea Colgan. Community members: Cynthia Bognolo, Ben Henszey.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brotman at 7:35pm.

Ms. Brotman gave opening remarks.

Budget review:

The Budget Committee reviewed various budget lines. Followed was a length discussion concerning bond cost, police vehicles, and Capital Reserve funds. At this time Mr. Jones reviewed and responded to questions raised at the last Budget Committee meeting. After a lengthy discussion concerning employee wages, the Budget Committee heard comments from the following employees: Pauline Field, Russell Stearns, Steve Williams, Elise Garrity, and Fred Stearns. Some members of the Budget Committee noted their concerns about the declining economy. It was again noted that the Selectmen have come back to the Budget Committee with a proposed budget less than the initial guidelines that were set.

Followed was a discussion concerning voting just the bottom line of this proposed operating budget.

- Mr. Justice moved to recommend a bottom line and leave the allocation of the cuts up to the Selectmen. Seconded by Mr. Lewis. Following a lengthy discussion, an amendment was made to clarify this as a vote on the operating budget only. This amendment was accepted by Mr. Justice & Mr. Lewis. Voted 7 in favor, 2 opposed (Swan & Jones). The motion passed.
- Mr. Justice moved the operating budget total at \$1,974,380.00 a cut of \$50,000.00. Seconded by Mr. Lehmann. Followed was a lengthy discussion concerning where the reductions in funds would/should come from. Concerns were noted about the cost of the employees' benefits package, salary increases, and the 3rd police officer. At this time Ms. Glenshaw, Mr. Schiffman, Ms. Swan, and Mr. Kilham all noted they were not comfortable with this. The motion was voted 2 in favor (Lehmann & Justice). 7 opposed. Motion did not pass.
- Mr. Lewis moved to reduce the proposed 2009 operating budget to \$2,000,000.00. Seconded by Mr. Strout. This motion was voted 4 in favor, 5 apposed. Motion did not pass.

- After further discussion concerning wages and benefits, Ms. Glenshaw moved to include a suggested 3% COLA for the employees and a bottom line of the operating budget at \$2,005,000.00. Seconded by Mr. Kilham. The motion was voted 5 in favor, 2 opposed (Swan & Jones) and 2 abstentions (Lehmann & Lewis). The motion passed.

Capital Reserve Budget:

- Mr. Lewis moved Total Capital Reserve expenses at \$525,000.00. Seconded by Mr. Justice. It was noted at this time that a committee worked for over 1 year to come up with the figures for the Town's Capital Improvement Plan. These figures are from this plan. The motion and second were withdrawn.

Followed was a discussion concerning the Capital Reserve Funds, depreciation of equipment and how to eliminate a line from the CRF budget. The need for the purchase of a new police cruiser was also discussed.

- Mr. Lehmann moved line 455 at a total of \$280,000.00. Seconded by Mr. Lewis. The motion was voted 4 in favor (Lehmann, Strout, Justice, & Lewis), 5 opposed. The motion did not pass.
- Mr. Shiffman moved to recommend the Capital Reserve portion of this budget as the Selectmen and CIP have presented. Seconded by Ms. Glenshaw. The motion was voted 5 in favor, 4 opposed (Lehmann, Strout, Justice, & Lewis).

Public Comments:

Ms. Field expressed her concern about the Budget Committees procedures.

Ms. Elder had prepared information concerning the Land Use Change Tax. This was distributed to Budget Committee members. Ms. Swan noted she hoped the Selectmen would consider this.

Mr. Lewis noted that RSA 32 has a provision for removal of Budget Committee members that do not show up for meetings regularly. Concerns were expressed that someone could miss all discussions and show up and vote on the budget. Ms. Brotman noted that Budget Committee members who had missed meetings had been in contact with her. Ms. Brotman will check on this procedure.

Mr. Schiffman wanted to clarify what the guidelines are concerning the school budget. The Budget Committee will be focusing on the bottom line. The Budget Committee should expect the school budget to be below last year's increase of 2.7%. A brief discussion followed concerning the schools proposed budget.

Ms. Swan moved to adjourn at 9:35pm. Seconded by Mr. Kilham. Voted unanimously in favor.

Next meeting January 7th, 2008 School Budget presentation.

Respectfully Submitted, Dina Cutting