

Budget Committee
Fire Station training room
7:30pm December 3rd, 2008

Approved: December 10th, 2008

Present at this meeting: Budget Committee Members: Judith Brotman, Richard Jones, Earl Strout, Charles Justice, William Lewis, Josh Kilham, Jeff Lehmann, and Mark Schiffman. Scribe: Dina Cutting. Employee: Shaun O'Keefe. Community members: Julia Elder, Cynthia Bognolo, Mardi Bowles, Judy Russell.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brotman at 7:30pm.

Mr. Lehmann moved to approve the minutes of September 17th, 2008. Seconded by Mr. Kilham. Followed was a discussion concerning Budget Committee gatherings and E-mails outside of the regular meetings according to the right to know law. Mr. Jones & Mr. Lewis offered corrections to the minutes.

The motion was voted unanimously in favor with corrections noted.

Mr. Lewis read from a statement (see attached document)

At this time some members of the Budget Committee questioned if it was appropriate for Officer O'Keefe to be at this meeting while he was on duty. Officer O'Keefe offered to leave the meeting but was persuaded to stay.

Public Comment: Mrs. Elder noted she would like to pursue the idea of having some of the money from the land use change tax come back to the town for special projects. She wanted to know if the Budget Committee and Selectmen supported this. She is willing to pursue this more. The Budget Committee was supportive of her investigating this further.

At this time Mr. Lewis passed out a copy of an e-mail that was communicated between Mr. Jones and Mr. Lewis (see attached document). Mr. Lewis reviewed this information concerning town computers, employee benefits, and Police issues.

Followed was a lengthy discussion concerning the Budget Committee reconsidering their position pertaining to the increase in the proposed budget, employee benefits, and employee proposed wage increases. Cynthia Bognolo stated that it is time for all employees to have to share in the cost of benefits. Mrs. Brotman noted that the town has a sliding scale for its insurance contributions. Depending on the longevity of the employee the contribution vary from 0% to 15%.

The Committee continued discussion on the financial responsibility of the Budget Committee.

It was the sense of the Budget Committee to review and take advisory votes on the proposed budget at this time:

- Mr. Lewis moved to approve line 22 Executive, with a 5% reduction of \$2,250.00. This amount is to come out of salaries and benefits. Seconded by Mr. Justice. Followed was a discussion about possible other areas to cut. The Motion voted 4 in favor, 2 opposed (Mr. Jones & Mr. Kilham), 1 abstention (Mark Schiffman).
- Mr. Justice moved to cut line 40: Election Registration & Vital Statistics by \$2,500.00. Followed was a discussion concerning different percent for employee raises. Some of the Budget Committee members were interested in what the savings would be to the town if there was a 15% contribution by the employees for insurance benefits. Committee members discussed the option of a 2% increase in wages and what this would be in dollar amounts. Several members of the Budget Committee wanted to make sure they made a clear statement that they are concerned about the amount of increases in salaries and benefits. After a lengthy discussion it was the sense of the Budget Committee to have Mr. Jones come back to the committee with the following information:
 - 1) 2% COLA and what each 1% increase in wages represents in dollar amounts.
 - 2) What a 15% insurance contribution from all employees would represent.

Mr. Jones wanted to make it clear that the Selectmen have made their recommended budget to the Budget Committee and that these new figures will be brought for the Budget Committee's use only.

At this time the Budget Committee declined to take any more advisory votes, instead they moved to review and discuss various lines within the proposed budget. The fuel line for several departments was mentioned as an area to re-visit now that gas prices have fallen, possibly saving some money in this area.

The Budget Committee will meet next week with the goal of taking an advisory vote on the proposed budget.

At 9:25 Mr. Justice moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Kilham. Voted 6 in favor, 1 opposed (Mr. Lewis).

Respectfully Submitted,
Dina Cutting