

Budget Committee
Fire Station training room
7:30pm October 22nd, 2008

Approved October 29th 2008

Present at this meeting: Budget Committee Members: Judith Brotman, Richard Jones, Earl Strout, Freda Swan, Charles Justice, Josh Kilham, Jeff Lehmann, Elizabeth Glenshaw and Mark Schiffman. Scribe: Dina Cutting. Department heads: Fred Stearns, Highway. Francesca Latawiec, Planning and Zoning. Library, Judy Russell and Betsy Eaton. Community members: Simon Carr, Peter McGowan, Michaela Ragan and Caroline Watson.

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

Department head budget presentations for 2009:

Highway: Fred Stearns presented the proposed Highway budget. Mr. Stearns reviewed individual lines that increased or decreased from the 2008 budget. Questions were asked by the budget committee members concerning the number of employees, price of sand and materials for the highway department. Followed was a discussion concerning the snow removal for town roads and the responsibility of the town to make sure emergency vehicles can get to where they need to go during the winter months.

Planning & Zoning: Francesca Latawiec, Planning and Zoning Administrator presented the proposed Planning & Zoning budget. Ms. Latawiec reviewed individual lines that increased or decreased from the 2008 budget.

Library: Judy Russell, Library Trustee and Betsy Eaton, Librarian presented the proposed Library budget. It was noted the salaries were figured at 2.5% COLA and the social security COLA (which is what the town traditionally goes by) is 5.8%. This will need to be adjusted. Questions were asked concerning the number of hours worked by all library employees, the price of fuel oil and sharing a janitor with the school.

Administrative budget: Mrs. Cutting reviewed various lines for this department. At this time Mr. Jones reported that the pay and benefits for the Administrative Assistant, Selectmen's Clerk, Assessing Clerk and Bookkeeper were not included in the budget proposal. The Selectmen are in the process of re-structuring these position and do not have things finalized. They plan on having these numbers ready for next week's meeting.

Tax Collector: The budget lines associated with the Tax Collector were reviewed. The budget committee would like the Tax Collector to answer the following questions. How many hours do you work? What does the Tax Collector do?

Town Clerk: The Budget Committee referred to the written description from the Town Clerk. The budget lines associated with the Town Clerk were reviewed. Questions were asked concerning the benefits, salary and hours of the Town Clerk by budget committee members. Mr. Jones responded to these questions.

Assessing Department: This department is also waiting for the Selectmen's re-structure document. The budget committee would like to know what the utility appraiser does for the town, what do we get for the added expense?

LCAB: The written request was reviewed.

Cemetery: The budget lines associated with the Cemetery were reviewed. The budget committee would like to know why both the maintenance & repair line has increased and a new mower is being requested. The budget committee discussed the possibility of having all the town mowing done by a private company. They would like to see the numbers for this and compare this to the cost of wages and benefits paid out.

At this time Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes of the September 17th, 2008 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Swan. It was reviewed and confirmed that the budget committee voted to have the department heads come in with a budget request of not more than a 4.5% increase.

Questions answered and discussed from last meeting:

- Can Town meeting and School district meeting be held the same day?

Chair Brotman reported that we can hold the school district meeting at the same time as Town meeting. The Town meeting date is mandated by law so the school would have to consider moving the School District meeting to Town meeting day. Followed was a discussion concerning the logistics of changing these meetings around. The town could also change to an SB-2 town and this would allow the town to meet and discuss topics one day and vote a different day. No decisions were made at this time.

- Can budget committee members hold small neighborhood meetings?

Chair Brotman reported the real purpose of the budget committee is to do the budget committee's business in a public setting. We should be encouraging people to come to these open meetings. It is not a good idea to have 1, 2 or 3 members holding private meetings at their homes. Followed was a discussion on how more people could be informed about the budget process and get involved.

The minutes of the September 17th meeting were approved unanimously.

Chair Brotman reported the Fire department would be coming to the next meeting. It was noted at this time some budget committee members would like the police department to come to the next meeting.

Mr. Shiffmen reported the school ended the year better than expected. There is a surplus of \$110,000.00. It is believed at this time the surplus will go to the towns undesignated fund balance. It was noted that you need a warrant article to put money into a Capital

Reserve Fund. Mr. Shiffmen will check with Mr. Schnare to see if any additional amount can be put into Special Education or High School Tuition CRF.

Mr. Jones distributed the draft CIP. The planning board will be meeting Thursday evening to vote on this draft document.

The budget committee had questions concerning cost sharing of the police department with Orford. How do we look at what kind of a police department the town wants? Having the police covered by the sheriff/State police and how this works. It was noted that the Community attitude survey (which is on the town web site) has answers to some of these questions.

At 9:30 Mr. Lehmann moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Jones. Voted unanimously in favor.

Respectfully Submitted, Dina