

**OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
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Selectmen's Budget Workshop

December 10, 2009

MINUTES

Present: Selectmen: Karel A. Crawford, Joel R. Mudgett, Vice Chair, Edward J. Charest, James F. Gray; Betsey L. Patten; Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator.

Advisory Budget Members: Jean Beadle, Ed Marudzinski, Allan Ballard.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Carter updated the Board of Selectmen on some responses from the Police Department as a result of their budget reviews. (Clothing Allowance pg 87 can be reduced from \$11,580 to \$10k; Equipment pg. 90, Modo Remote Control Target, can be cut by \$1,900).

Human Services: Rae –Marie Davis reviewed her request noting that while her caseload had lost a few families while she had also gained 15 families. Her initial request was \$65K on rent for FY 2010 but she noted she has now spent \$76K year to date. In fact she may need another \$8K yet. She suggested this account might now actually need to be set at \$85K (which the Board seemed receptive to). Ms. Crawford observed that the total Human Services budget when she came to the Board was only \$80K. Ms. Davis observed this is due to the state of the current economy and the fact that many of the jobs in our region are in the service sector.

Discussion turned to the programs for seniors. Topics of discussion were: Roles of the staff, progress to date, how to attract more attendees, the possible need to rethink where we start up the programs and how we get the word out, and ways to possibly get better circulation of information out through Meals on Wheels (noting we do not administer this program).

In closing out this budget review the Town Administrator noted that we had not reviewed our rent schedule in over five years. This is something we need to do in the near future. He suggested possibly tying our schedule to the HUD Fair Market Rent schedule. This agency has far more data than we can easily compile and it is a recognized standard. If we tied our schedule to it there is the added benefit that we are always current and such lags would not occur again. This will be reviewed in the first quarter of 2010.

Visiting Nurse Service: Debbie Peaslee gave an overview of the department's budget, first noting that on page 152 the Per-Diem hourly rate of \$21.98 should actually be \$22.53. She added that there was no need to change the overall total and just want BoS to know. It was noted that the Professional Services expenditure rate was low and the difficulty in projecting this from year to year. Ms. Patten noted that Overtime seems to be well controlled. Ms. Peaslee and the Administrator commented that the strategy of switching one nurse position (w/benefits) to a schedule of Per-Diems (provided we can keep a well qualified roster of at least three with good availability) was working out well, both money wise and work-load wise.

Mr. Mudgett asked how the Point of Care computer system that had been included in this year's budget was working out. Ms. Peaslee said that despite its acquisition mid-summer, it was not yet in use in the field. Medicare was making a major change in their assessment program so it had been decided to wait for that. However it is all being fully loaded on the 15th which was good timing. This gave the Nurses better training time and practice before rolling the program out on or about January 1 of the New Year.

Discussion turned to how Ms. Peaslee thought the Community Services Team was working out and the programs to date for seniors. She noted the real hit so far had been a program on slips, trips & falls. The program of Tai Chi now being put on by Recreation had come out of this. The important thing was to have a program plus activity. It was noted the team was now meeting monthly and the TA was sitting in to guide the group on planning for longer range programs.

Tax Collector: Heidi Davis sat in for Tax Collector, Susette Remson who was unavailable. The only question was whether or not the step increase for the Assistant was recommended based upon timing or was it a request for a second step as well, based upon their achieving their Collector Certification. (It was later reported in the session that this was just a single step request. The certification and time eligibility just happened to coincide).

Town Clerk: Barbara Wakefield reviewed her budget and asked the Board the current status of implementing the Thornton Study. The Chair advised her it had not yet been fully deliberated upon. Mr. Marudzinski asked if there had been any increase in the hours of operation this year. Ms. Wakefield responded that with the added staff this year she was now open all five days a week, from 9 a.m. to noon and 1- 4p.m. Mr. Marudzinski asked if those hours could be expanded with Ms. Wakefield giving her explanation of why she does not believe it is feasible.

Ms. Beadle asked if she had considered closing a different hour other than noon to 1p.m. in order to accommodate residents who have that as their work lunch hour. Ms. Wakefield responded with her view that the current arrangement seemed to work out well overall. There was general discussion of Mr. Ballard's inquiry of what it would take to open, how people know they can renew on-line, and when Town Clerk might do boat registrations (the state is not letting new Towns in so only those who are doing it now can continue, however the Clerks tell residents where they can register in Town so we can get a share of those revenues and we may eventually be able to do it). This session closed with a review of the Elections budget which had been prepared by the TA with review and input from the Clerk. Ms. Wakefield again discussed the Thornton study and the importance of it to retaining staffing.

The Chair recessed the session at 12:00 p.m. for lunch and it was reconvened at 12:40 p.m.

Town Officers: Ms. Davis reviewed that the TA had been folded into this section which will be known as Executive Officers. Ms. Beadle asked if the contingency was enough. The TA responded that as long as we viewed the budget in totality and shifted dollars during the course of the year if needed (as we had this year) he was comfortable with the contingency being .5% to 1% of the operating budget. He noted, given the importance of the effort, he had increased our contribution to the Coalition Committees from \$4K - \$5K. Mr. Marudzinski asked about the involvement of the school in the Coalition. There was a discussion of their role (no other SAU's were participating) and a possible joint meeting with the SAU, inviting Pat Remick to join us.

Administration: There were no questions on the general review. The TA noted that our email service (WorldPath) has been discontinued as of January 1. The Recreation Department had been converted to moultonboroughnh.gov emails as had the Fire Chief and staff and all of Town Hall except for one office which remains on its own. Recreation was now being folded into the VTH site and should be

completed by January 1st as well. During 2010 we might fold in one of the other freestanding departments and their emails. Once those had been done we would revisit aligning all of Town Hall. There was general discussion of VTH and progress to date.

Assessing: The new Assessor, Craig Nichols joined the meeting and reviewed the changes to the Vision contract just approved and future cost reduction possibilities. There were questions on the low expenditure rate in the Computer Support line item which will be researched.

Accounting System: Ms. Davis and the TA spoke again of the need for an early decision on whether or not the BoS was agreeable to the proposed account consolidations as this required substantial lead time and was best to implement with the new accounting year. As an overview there had been roughly 40 departmental accounts (for accounting purposes) consolidated to about 20. Those 40 dependents had used roughly 175 subsidiary accounts which would be reduced to roughly 20 as well. The consensus of the Board was to approve this change.

Fox Hollow: Mr. Mudgett and the TA reviewed their recent meeting with DOT, the department's willingness to accept the 45 mph design criteria as Phase 1 of a process where Phase 2 would have to be implemented at the 55 mph design criteria as the area was further developed. The TA pointed out the important thing to keep in mind was this was more than just a Fox Hollow issue as the basic design/development criteria would be the same along the entire corridor. He also pointed out the need to involve the Planning Board in the decision as they ultimately were the ones who could extract the exaction/impact fees. This would be on the BoS agenda of 12/17.

Ms. Patten moved and Mr. Gray seconded to adjourn at 2:30 p.m. All were in Favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved: December 17, 2009

Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator

Karel C. Crawford, Chairman