

**OFFICE OF SELECTMEN
6 HOLLAND STREET
PO BOX 139
MOULTONBOROUGH, NH. 03254**

Selectmen's Budget Workshop

December 11, 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 10:07 a.m.

Library: Phyllis Prouty gave an overview of the proposed budget and where they were with this year's as being on budget. Karel asked about the proposed personnel line as the BoS was not going to support any COLA this year. Ms. Prouty said that the Library never does a COLA but is strictly on "Merit". She continued that 3 years ago a study showed deplorable pay conditions and the upgrades had only brought them up to low/average. There was discussion of the Thornton Study with Karel explaining the BoS has not yet decided on many aspects.

Ms. Crawford said she would like to see boards eventually on one page as we are the "same team". To do otherwise pits people against each other. It's hard to tell our people no COLA if your folks are getting raises. Ms. Patten said she understood the Library is lowering their operations budgets to cover this, but the perception in the public is important. She said, this is not a reflection on the Library or how much we support them but a 3% across the board does not seem appropriate.

Roger Simpson said that except for fringe benefits the increase is .45%. He challenged any other department to meet that and the bottom line needs to be considered. Ms. Patten said it's a philosophical view of how do our employees get raises when those on the outside are losing their jobs. Jean Beadle said that historically the Library has never expended those dollars and they are just coming down to those more realistic numbers. She continued that the ABC firmly believes, given the climate, no increases across the Board, COLA or steps and pointed out that the Library employees got over an 8% raise last year.

Ms. Crawford said that unlike the Library employees, the Town employees do not receive a pay increase every year. The BoS has supported the Library every year, but this year they are just not feeling comfortable with a COLA. She continued that they are just hoping that all can be on the same page.

Mr. Charest said he hoped the BoS can level fund our budget this year and keeping it in balance is a struggle. He said this is not a reflection on the Library but, we have to look at the impact on the community. Joel commented there were many ways of looking at a pay raise. Many think we should look at increasing the contribution rate on the insurance. Barbara Sheppard said that with the new building we have more traffic and the work has gone with the same staff. Ed observed that the Town was also facing the same increases of work load without adding staff.

Jim said he cannot support any across the board increases. Ms. Prouty said the Trustees would regroup, digest, and get back to the Board. Karel said it's the goal of the BoS to be able to recommend the Library budget, but they are struggling to do so. The TA suggested the BoS complete its consideration of the Thornton study and then it could better advise the Trustees.

Recreation: Donna Kuethe gave an overview of her budget and spoke to the importance of the Thornton study and its impact on morale from the current system. She noted her proposals for new software for on-line registration and credit card payment didn't get past the TA, but wanted to keep this approach front and center. She also noted the States Landing study did not get recommended. She understood the cut, but said we can't lose sight of the need to restore and save this swimming area. Joel spoke to a desire to have a sense of revenue versus expense on the trips.

Ms. Kuethe said the budget showed an increase in 2 counselors and added that the registrations are up which offsets it. The additions were to keep staff/participant ratios recommended by Primex. She spoke to the trade-offs in upgrading the docks getting a new raft (same capital but possibly a difference in the annual operations cost). There was a discussion of the likelihood of the Town getting a grant to upgrade the Pathway Phase II (unlikely) or Phase III (more potential but yet unknown). The TA said the funds requested could totally match the TEA funding, but the Board would need to deal with the idea that the volunteers may not be able to raise their portion of the Phase III local match if Phase II remained problematic. He noted we would need to tackle Phase II on our own, perhaps a little each year until we had completed the work. Donna noted that no money had been requested on the fields as we were not yet at the stage of knowing if we could fill the gap as described last year without the sources or volunteer efforts.

A proposed mini-van would replace the old cruiser and dead truck. The truck was on schedule for replacement. Ms. Kuethe also noted there is a reason for retiring these old cruisers. This proposed vehicle really is a better fit for Recreation's staff, hauling equipment and allows smaller trips w/out having to rent a vehicle. It would have a radio in it, the same as the town's frequency. Ms. Kuethe noted that during the ice storm, Peterborough actually did the house checks using their recreation department's vehicle which is the same type as what is proposed.

In the discussion of resurfacing of the basketball/tennis courts, it was pointed out they had been done about five years ago but that the drainage and wet area had heaved much of the coating. There was discussion from the ABC of potential duplication between schools and Recreation. The TA suggested that the ABC get copies of each set of programs and review them in a side by side sit-down with representatives of both. There was a question on the Transportation budget not being highly expended. Donna explained she had lost one bus company this year part way, which set them back and now new companies will be much more.

Developmental Services: Mr. Merhalski was out sick so the TA distributed a series of questions on the Master Plan for the Board to rate and turn back in on 12/17. There was a discussion of the LRPC and finding out which services the Town had used as part of its annual fee in order to see if the membership fee was worthwhile. We would also look at the services we acquired from them through grants they got and fee for service contracts.

There was a lengthy discussion of how we pay volunteers to go to seminars and the like, with one position expressed that volunteering should cost people time, energy and commitment, but not out of pocket money. There were also questions as to how we keep one committee from using all the money (perhaps we just give them all a heads-up at the start of the year of what their allotment is and track it on a simple excel spreadsheet in-house). There were also some questions on the Heritage

Commission's \$2k request with no decisions made. The TA pointed out the need to add the CEO uniform allowance of \$550 and to decide on the vehicle vs. mileage issue.

The meeting was recessed at 12:20 p.m. and reconvened at 12:50 p.m.

The TA reviewed the Capital Program at Tab 7 and was asked to bring the chart back with the amount in the relevant trust funds for the next meeting. He reviewed three items on the Warrant, permanent retention of certain tax parcels for Town use, the roads program, and the Sense of the Meeting resolution on the budget conversion. Ms. Beadle reviewed what she saw as some upcoming recommendations by the ABC including a greater sharing of the cost of benefits with employees and an outsourcing of payroll. She also asked for a review of proposed revenues.

For 12/18 we will start with a discussion of the proposed mini-van & DPW equipment as well as review the roads program. It is anticipated all personnel matters will be reviewed at the conclusion of that in non-public.

Mr. Mudgett moved and Mr. Gray seconded to adjourn at 1:50 p.m. All were in Favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved: December 17, 2009

Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator

Karel C. Crawford, Chairman