

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES
January 21, 2008**

A Budget Work Session was called to order at 3:17 PM in the New Durham Town Hall located off Main Street.

Present:

Ron Gehl, Chairman
David Bickford, Selectman

Excused:

Peter Rhoades ~ on vacation

Also Present:

April Whittaker, Town Administrator
Vickie Blackden, Financial Assistant

Meeting with Mark Fuller, Road Agent

The Board met with Mark Fuller, Road Agent to seek his advices regarding potential cuts to either the proposed 2008-truck acquisition or paving schedule. Mr. Fuller strongly advised not to delay the truck acquisition. He countered that the current truck would need an estimated \$30,000 to effect needed repairs to the frame rails, transfer case and a general tune-up ~ Mr. Fuller produced a cost estimate for the board to back up the repair to the '96 International truck from Diprizios of Middleton. Mr. Fuller pointed out that the actual truck portion of the proposed acquisition was \$93,000 thereby making the repair proposal to the '96 International one-third of the cost of new, which did not represent a good investment.

Questions were asked regarding sale of the '96 International and ideally Mr. Fuller would like to instigate a private bid sale estimating a second hand value of about \$15,000. However, given the current economic and market conditions, he supported the board in placing \$10,000 into the revenue estimates under "Sale of Town Property."

On the paving schedule, Mr. Fuller advised the board that he could support a cut of \$75,000 provided he could use the 2007 FEMA funding reimbursement of \$41,000 together with the block grant money. The paving schedule for 2008 indicates paving for Ridge Road, South Shore Road, and Powder Mill Road. The proposed cut would therefore leave the program approximately \$30,000 less towards paving, which Mr. Fuller agreed the department could live with provided, during 2008, the schedules were updated with reconstruction needs on the town' s roads.

At 4:00 PM Motion Gehl, second Bickford to enter into Non Public Session under the terms and conditions of RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) Employee compensation, vote 2 - 0.

Roll Call: Gehl ~ yes, and Bickford ~ yes

Discussions ensued regarding equitable pay raise for the road agent position given the lack of opportunity to fulfill compensation (comp) time and the actual number of overtime hours devoted to the position.

Motion Bickford, second Gehl to return to regular session at 4:30 PM, vote 2 – 0.

The board returned to regular session and determined to take the compensation discussion under advisement for further discussion upon the return of Mr. Rhoades.

The board thanked Mr. Fuller for his advices.

Meeting with the Chief of Police, Shawn Bernier

The Board met with the Chief of Police, Sergeant Lamontagne, and Assistant Woods to review with the Chief potential cut targets and seek his advices as to cause and effect.

The Chief advised that he had reviewed his budget and made the following suggestions to the board for lightening the budget impacts.

- ❑ Cut the proposed new security Video System \$8,000
- ❑ Cut the new flooring \$6,500
- ❑ Cut the Training line due to lack of canine use \$1,000
- ❑ Cut acquisition of one computer \$ 900

- ❑ Total \$16,400

With respect to the cruiser replacement, Chief Bernier offered up leasing alternatives which the board declined and clarified to the board why 5 cruisers were available to the department instead of 4 advising that the so-called 5th cruiser represented a vehicle needed for the animal control collection. He noted for the board that the fifth cruiser still required to be fitted out with siren and lights etc in case the officer on duty receives a service call while out completing an animal control problem. He noted therefore that the emergency call out would take precedence. Also he noted to the board that the 5th cruiser acts as the “special detail” cruiser in which the town is reimbursed by outside agencies. He confirmed that three of the cruisers are currently taken home by himself, his sergeant and his officer investigator leaving the fourth vehicle available at the station.

Selectman Bickford raised the issue of officer replacement in light of the recent resignation of Officer Koch, and whether or not the department should roll back one man. The Chief was adamant that this would be a retrograde step and that the position was approved by town meeting voters. He noted to the board that the calls for service were up 40% over the 2006 figures, and that juvenile cases had now been moved to Dover District Court from Rochester thus impacting officer’s time availability. Rolling back one man from the department would mean instigation of on-call time and more use of the part-time officers. Following discussion, the board asked the Chief if he could delay hiring until June 1, 2008 thus saving four months of wages and benefits given that the previous officer had not taken up the option of town health coverage which would

now need to be added back into the Personnel Administration account 4155. The Chief advised that he could support the later hiring date and that he was comfortable with the money currently requested to cover part-timer use.

The board thanked the Chief for his help and advices with respect to the budget cuts.

Other Miscellaneous Budget Decisions

- ❑ The board determined to keep \$80,000 in the Fire Department's compensation line following said recommendation from the Assistant Fire Chief.
- ❑ The Board followed with a philosophical decision regarding repair costs of \$18,000 to the Fire Department's ladder truck, noting that the repair was a safety issue as the current ladder was torquing carrying water loads, indicating lack of structural support . Following discussion as to whether or not the requested repair funding should be a stand alone capital article or rolled into the operational budget, the board determined that (i) it was a safety issue that could be problematical should it be voted down, and (ii) therefore, to place the appropriation into the Fire Department's operational budget. Mr. Bickford advised that while he favored individual voting for the residents at town meeting, he could support placing the repair into the operational budget given the safety concerns.
- ❑ The board noted that the Budget Committee had raised the Library budget by \$500 to cover the costs of heating the building. **Motion Bickford, second Gehl to amend the library budget total to \$86,741, vote 2 - 0.**
- ❑ The Board was apprised of the survey results from town employees indicating support for the option of direct deposit. Note was made that the cost of the software for the town's payroll system was \$1500. Mrs. Whittaker advised that with the deletion of two computers she felt that the program costs would simply roll into the budgeted amount in the Office Machine Maintenance expendable trust fund thus causing no impact. **Motion Bickford, second Gehl to roll the costs of the software acquisition into the aforesated expendable trust, vote 2 - 0.**
- ❑ The board revisited the Conservation Commission budget noting that \$10,000 had been placed in the budget as a place holder for any required work prior to acquisition of land deemed for conservation, pending clarification of the Land Conservation Fund i.e. how it was formed, and how it may be used etc. Mrs. Whittaker advised that town records had been reviewed and the fund was established in 1977 under the terms and conditions of RSA 36 -A, thus enabling the Commission to expend from said fund for any and all intended acquisition purposes of land deemed for conservation. Copies of the funds history will be placed on file in the Board's office and Conservation Office. **Motion Gehl, second Bickford to amend the Conservation Commission account to \$2,250 from \$12,250, vote 2 - 0.**

- ❑ The Board finalized the Capital Reserve Account namely 4915 supporting \$70,000 for the Highway truck account and \$40,000 for the equipment account. **Motion Bickford, second Gehl to approve a bottom line total of \$264,800 for Account 4915, vote 2 - 0.**
- ❑ The Board reviewed the Expendable Trust Account, namely, 4916 : following discussion the board supported \$5,000 for the Office Systems Maintenance Trust, \$3,000 for the accrued liability trust, and \$3,500 for the Forest Fire Control trust. Town Buildings Trust was taken under advisement, but town hall interior painting (\$10,000) was cut together with \$20,000 for the Police building.
- ❑ Following up with the discussion with the Police Chief, the board supported placing 8 months of health insurance for a family plan to coincide with a June 1 hiring date.
- ❑ Audit Increase: Following recommendations from the town's audit firm, the board supported placing an additional \$5, 000 to the already budgeted amount of \$8,000. Mr. Gehl advised Mr. Bickford that the recommended increase was due to a higher level of audit practices because of the financial problems that the Town of Newmarket had recently experienced. **Motion Bickford, second Gehl, to amend the Financial Administration Account 4150 to \$99,646, vote 2 - 0.**

There being no further business, the town administrator advised the board that she would rework the estimated tax rate calculations based on the new cuts, revising the principal and interest calculations for bonding of Marchs Pond Dam, and working with \$50,000 in the Expendable Trust Fund, pending the board's decision.

The work session adjourned at 6:58 PM to prepare for the Selectmen's regularly scheduled business meeting.

Respectfully submitted
April Whittaker, Town Administrator