

B U D G E T C O M M I T T E E
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A business meeting of the New Durham Budget Committee was called to order at 6:00 PM in the Town Hall located off Main Street.

Present:

Cecile Chase, Acting Chairman
Ann Brady, Budget Committee member
David Curry, Budget Committee member
Cathy Orlowicz, Budget Committee member
M. Dean Stimpson, Budget Committee member
Ron Gehl, Selectmen's Representative to the Committee

Also Present

April Whittaker, Town Administrator
Vickie Blackden, Financial Assistant.

Administrative

Acting Chair Chase welcomed Theresa Jarvis to the meeting and took to the opportunity to express the committee's condolences on the loss of her husband, Mark Jarvis. Chair Chase expressed how much the Committee had been taught by Mark in his role as Chairman of the Budget Committee, and she thanked Mrs. Jarvis for allowing them to share Mark with her. Mrs. Jarvis presented to the committee papers drawn up by Mark for the next budget meeting which she felt would be personal for all. Acting Chair Chase asked for a moments' silence in memory of Mark.

New Member Introduction: Acting Chair Chase introduced new member Lois Parker. All extended a warm welcome.

Approval of Minutes: The Board reviewed the minutes of August 14th, 2007. Motion Dean Stimpson, second Ann Brady to approve as written, vote unanimous.

Capital Improvement Plan Review: Acting Chair Chase invited CIP budget committee representative to provide a presentation of the CIP as composed by the Advisory CIP committee. He stated that he had enjoyed his experience on the capital committee, and enjoyed greatly the interaction and interviews with the department heads in planning for both replacement equipment schedules and capital asset provisions as a whole. He advised of the challenges in establishing the CIP Committee's role as an advisory group

and refinements with regards to what truly were the definition parameters of a “capital asset.” In response to a question regarding “wants” versus “needs”, he confirmed that he felt that much of the asset structure and allocation was very definitely in the “needs” definition. Hence the initial uploading of the plan in terms of dollar amounts to make up for lack of financial savings in the past. He advised the fellow budget committee members to review the replacement spreadsheets, which were fairly self-explanatory in terms of the equipment and infrastructure improvements and easily identifiable on an annual basis. All present recognized the evolving and dynamic nature of the plan and he highly urged fellow members to participate in the future.

Selectman Ron Gehl established that upon finalization of the 2007 plan, the board recognized the importance of an annual review process but were respectful of the work loads of the planners and therefore suggested the advisory CIP committee formation to the voters to aid the planners without taking away any of the statutory responsibilities of the planners.

Mrs. Orlowicz in her role as Planning Board Chairman, confirmed that with the workloads of the Planners, they would have been hard pressed to complete the work requirements of the Capital Improvement Plan, and she expressed gratitude to the work of the advisory group.

David Curry drew attention to the last page of the CIP documents denoting the graph, which succinctly showed the reasonable future flattening of the tax rate with a good savings plan versus the past spikes to the rate due to one time capital acquisitions.

Tax Rate Update and Selectmen’s Update: Mr. Gehl took the opportunity to work the committee through the tax rate paper work denoting that much of the town increase was in fact due to raising capital dollars to the reserves per the town meeting vote to more accurately reflect planned replacement and having adequate dollars for said replacement. The committee duly noted that much of the increase was confined to the school and county portion.

Selectman Gehl also took the opportunity to apprise the members of the re-designation of Marchs Pond from a low hazard to a high hazard and what this would mean in terms of potential dam redesign and construction costs which at this juncture were not anticipated to be of high dollar impact and probably well within the conservative guesstimate of costs already calculated. Mrs. Whittaker will forward the last timeline schedule to the budget committee members.

Selectman Gehl also advised that the board had not yet made any personnel decisions with respect to pay raises for 2008 hence the gaps in the personnel lines of the budget.

Budget Committee Interview Schedule: Acting Chair Chase polled committee members as to what nights and times worked favorable for all and the enclosed scheduled was drawn up.

Chair and Vice Chair: Acting Chair Chase requested to legitimize chairmanship of the budget committee; motion David Curry to nominate Acting Chair Chase to Chairman, second Dean Stimpson, vote unanimous

Motion Ann Brady to nominate David Curry as vice chair, second Cecile Chase, vote unanimous.

3rd Quarter Review: Chair Chase requested Mrs. Whittaker to overview the third quarter departmental expenditures report.

Chairman Chase requested Mrs. Whittaker to overview some of the General Government accounts;

- **Acct 4130 Executive:** Noted that the personnel lines were blank pending the board's pay raise decision. Noted that the printing line may be subject to change, and that bids received had a large dollar range from \$4,000 to \$8,000, which was of concern. Also, the board favored an 8.5" x 11" format, which Mrs. Whittaker will pursue re pricing. Mrs. Whittaker drew the budget committee's attention to the "Back up Rationale" regarding the fixed costs within account 4130 i.e. equipment leasing, web site support, community TV. Budget committee also emphasized the importance of getting the new web site up and running as soon as possible. Mrs. Whittaker reminded all that this would require a departmental group effort, but had spoken with the vendor to hasten the process.

Mrs. Whittaker advised that long distance telephone costs would also be placed under the microscope as the town was currently paying 10 cents a minutes.

- **Account 4150 Financial:** Noted that the account generally holds monies for elected financial positions i.e. treasurer, tax collector, trustees of trust funds together with fulltime financial position, and budget committee administrative costs. Noted also, that audit costs had been reduced due in large part to excellent bookkeeping records by the financial assistant.
- **Account 4152 Assessing:** Noted that the account holds town assessor's contractual stipend together with mileage rates, and assessing clerk rates. Operational assessing costs related to Vision Appraisal software and web hosting also noted. David Curry questioned the allocation of \$250 for training re the vision software and noted that annually only \$65 had been expended.

Explanation: Training programs not always conducive to staffing requirements at Town Hall.

- **Account 4153 Legal:** Level funded per 2007 request. Noted best guess at this juncture. Questions raised if more would be required re the recent 157-lot Red Oaks Open Space subdivision proposal. Mrs. Orlowicz advised that third party consultants acting on behalf of the town's interests, if required, are costs borne by developers. Selectman Gehl confirmed that prosecutorial expenses are fixed costs to the town for police department representation. **Motion by Ann Brady, second by Dean Stimpson to approve Acct 4153 legal expenses with an appropriation of \$22,500.**

Per the budget committee unwritten policy to end the session at 8:00 PM, motion Curry, second Stimpson, to adjourn at 8:10 PM, vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted
April Whittaker

*Next Meeting: 6 PM Monday, November 19th, 2007 in the upstairs Conference room,
Town Hall*