

B U D G E T C O M M I T T E E
P U B L I C M E E T I N G M I N U T E S
July 16th, 2008

A business meeting of the New Durham Budget Committee was called to order at 6:35 PM in the Town Hall located off Main Street.

Present:

Cecile Chase, Chairman, Budget Committee
Peter Rhoades, Selectmen's Representative
David Curry, Budget Committee member
Lois Parker, Budget Committee member
Dean Stimpson, Budget Committee Member

Excused Absences:

Ann Brady, Budget Committee Member
Cathy Orlowicz, Budget Committee member

Also Present:

April Whittaker, Town Administrator
Vickie Blackden, Financial Assistant
Peter Varney, Fire Department Chief
Mark Fuller, Road Agent
David Bickford, Selectman

Approval of Minutes:

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the July 16th, 2008. **Motion David Curry, second, Dean Stimpson to approve the minutes as written, vote unanimous.**

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the September 30th, 2008. **Motion Dean Stimpson, second David Curry to approve the minutes as written, vote unanimous.**

Third Quarter Review:

Cecile Chase started the review by thanking all the department heads that presented a budget report to the committee, and confirmed that the Moderator was actively seeking a budget committee replacement in view of Mrs. Orlowicz's resignation. April Whittaker explained the break down of account 4153, legal expenses, as presented on the report given to the committee members (See Attached). April advised the committee that the Town has gone out to bid for home heating oil, gasoline, and diesel fuel. Given the economy and market fluctuations, she was not hopeful for a bid response. April Whittaker asked, with the committee's permission, that she would like to attach a copy of the department head reports to the minutes to make them available to the general public as part of the public record.

David Curry stated that he was looking for areas in the budget where recommendations could be made to cut back on expenses. He explained that last year the committee accommodated most requests, but due to the state of the economy and unexpected legal expenses, he feels the committee should be looking at where they can make recommendations to departments and the Board of Selectmen to effect savings. Mr. Curry opined that if a proposed purchase had not been

made by this point in the year, he queried, if the acquisition was truly needed. He asked that the committee look carefully at each budget for areas that could be saved to defray the overages in the legal budget and highway department.

Account 4210 Police Department:

Chief Bernier provided a report showing a break down of expenses to this point and expected expenses (See Attached). There were no questions about this account.

Account 4520 Parks & Recreation:

The committee discussed the necessity of the retaining wall at the beach. (See Attached) **Motion David Curry, second Dean Stimpson to recommend to the department head and the Board of Selectmen that we not proceed with the retaining wall at the beach for this fiscal year and save \$4000.** Discussion pursued as to whether or not to encumber funds. **Vote was 4 to 1 in favor of the motion.**

Mrs. Whittaker did caution that subject to a grant potential, which the Parks and Recreation Department had just become aware of, it may be necessary to encumber the money as a source of our share of grant funding in 2008. This matter was now being pursued.

Account 4220 Forestry:

Discussion ensued as to what is necessity and what is a want in the forestry budget. (See Attached). Emergency Management was also discussed. It was agreed the monies should remain in place for Emergency Management.

Motion David Curry, second Dean Stimpson to recommend deferment of Forestry training expenses and equipment maintenance expenses in the amount of \$2000. Vote was unanimous.

Account 4312 Highway Department:

Mark Fuller provided the committee with a report showing the estimated over budget amount of \$37,500. He explained the equipment went over due to the fact that a loader had to be rented for snow removal because of last winter's heavy snowfall. Gas was over budget due to the summer price increases. as was diesel and salt. Sand and calcium chloride are expected to be over budget due to the fact that the sand was depleted at the end of winter as was the calcium chloride. He went on to explain that there are several line items that will not be expended to help offset over-expenditures. The proposed saving would help to reduce the amount from \$ 37,500 to \$19,500. There may also be some highway block grant money left over that can go towards the overage. There is still the possibility of FEMA reimbursement (tornado & flood) money, which would also help reduce the overage amount, but staff advised that this money may or may not become available in fiscal 2008. The committee thanked Mark Fuller for taking the time to come and talk to them and for all his efforts in trying to safe money wherever possible. Mark Fuller asked the committee for their opinion on how they would feel about less road maintenance during the winter. The general consensus of the committee members was that New Durham has the best-maintained roads in area and would hate to see that change. Cecile Chase stated that it should be left up to Mr. Fuller and his professional opinion to decide where it would be safe to cut back.

Account 4140 Election & Registration:

Carole Ingham reported that she is within budget and does not foresee any overages at this time, although noted that overtime would be over as an individual budget line. (See Attached).

Account 4550 Library:

The committee reviewed the report supplied by Max Crowe and commended him for the efforts the library has made to be more energy efficient (See Attached)

Account 4240 Building Inspection:

The building inspection budget is under budget due to the fact that there was a portion of the year the Town was without a building inspector. **Motion David Curry, second Dean Stimpson to recommend the building inspection office to expend only the wages and minimal expenses and the balance be retained for the fiscal year. Vote was unanimous.**

Account 4299 Other Public Safety:

April Whittaker explained that the overages were defrayed by incoming revenue.

Account 4316 Street Lights:

The Board of Selectmen has completed a tour to determine streetlights that could be turned off and are working with the NH Electric Co-Op in this direction.

Account 4220 Fire Department:

Chief Varney was present, and explained that the department is under budget at this time because the ladder pipe has not been purchased yet and it could be as much as \$20,000 - \$25,000. Thus he thought it very appropriate to conserve the money until the method of repair for the Ladder Truck is resolved. He explained the department also had to have a ladder rung replaced which cost approximately \$2,500. He stated that protective clothing had been ordered in late summer in the amount of \$10,000, but has not been received yet. Cecile Chase asked if there were any areas in the budget that could be cut or reduced to save money at this stage. Chief Varney stated he will review the budget to see if there are any areas where cuts can be made without jeopardizing safety. Chief Varney explained that he is trying to co-ordinate medical training with other towns such as Alton and Gilmanton. Kevin Jencks is qualified to teach these classes and the department would be able to charge a fee to the other towns that participate in the training. There was also discussion as to charging a fees for mandated fire inspections. This will be reviewed with the Board of Selectmen during the 2009 budget deliberations. Dean Stimpson asked how much the emergency calls have increased. Peter Varney stated they are about the same as they were last year.

Account 4319 Equipment Mechanic:

The equipment mechanic did not provide a report to the committee. It is anticipated that this budget will be over due to unexpected repairs such as the solid waste loader and the cost increase of parts. Mrs. Parker raised the issue of a report that Mr. Valladares had discussed with members of the Advisory Capital Improvement Plan Committee whereby a comparison of anticipated equipment costs i.e. repairs etc to the current equipment and trucks could be evaluated against the costs of leasing to purchase new equipment. She queried if such a report might be available soon.

Account 4324 Solid Waste:

The solid waste manager did not provide a report to the committee. The question was asked about privatization of solid waste. April Whittaker commented that for the most part, her experience with privatization had been solely as an interested on-looker. For the most part, private companies would be looking to make a profit as opposed to strict service. Generally, the companies operated in towns and cities with residential trash collection, which is not the case in New Durham. She stated several other towns/cities had tried this, but found complaints increased and the town had no control to improve the quality of service. She noted that many had returned to local control. Peter Rhoades told the committee that a tour of the Alton facility had

taken place to get ideas on how to make our transfer station more efficient. He also explained that the Town, in approximately 18 months, must cease burning and hence the board is looking at private chipping. As of this week there is no burning and when there is enough brush stockpiled they will bid out for getting it chipped.

Account 4415 Health & Other Agencies:

April Whittaker advised that monies allocated to non-profits was not paid out until the end of the fiscal year, in case of emergencies.

Account 4441 Welfare:

April Whittaker feels there will be some money left over in this account and is anticipating using any extra monies to help balance the budget. She explained that people are referred to CAP for fuel assistance. Laura Zuzgo stated that while attending a meeting she had learned there is a chance Cardinal & Glidden will do a minimum drop of 50 gallons of home heating fuel, and stated she will be contacting them to confirm this information.

Account 4583 Historian:

There was some discussion as to the amounts of money left in the historian account. **Motion David Curry, second Dean Stimpson to recommend to the Historian to save \$1200 from her budget. Vote was unanimous.**

Account 4612 Conservation:

Noted to the Budget Committee that any unexpended funds lapse to the Conservation Fund per statute.

Account 4723 Interest on TAN:

Vickie Blackden explained that thanks to the bond money in the bank for March's Pond Dam, the town had maintained a reasonable cash flow to operate, hence there had been need to borrow short term in anticipation of taxes from the bank, saving \$5,000.

Selectman's Report:

Peter Rhoades informed the committee that the additional emergency appropriation request of \$180,000 for Marchs Pond Dam had been approved by DRA and they are anticipating that the contract, and performance bond will be in place within the next two weeks. It was noted that because the town must assess, as is, as of April 1 of any given year, that the abated assessments abutting Marchs Pond will remain in place at least one more year.

The question was asked as to if a decision has been made yet as to the extent of the revaluation the Town will have to go through. It is, as yet, undetermined.

Peter Rhoades spoke of new employees, and commented to the committee, that Arthur Capello is reviewing all the old building permits and sending letters to people whom never had a final inspection or a permit on record. He is doing an outstanding job for the Town.

Capital Improvement Plan Update (CIP)

The CIP recommendations have been approved by the Planning Board. Lois Parker, as the Budget Committee representative, explained to the committee that unfortunately she was unable to attend all of the meetings. She opined that she felt like some of the department requests were more of a wish list than necessities, although softened the comment that much of the building needs had been due to past deferment, and that now unfortunately, we were all feeling the effects of "catch up." She feels the budget committee needs to look at the budget requests based on need

versus want. Mrs. Whittaker commented that much of the plan deals with replacement of aging vehicles and equipment and deferred maintenance, rather than new buildings at this time, and is a recommendation.

New Business:

April Whittaker asked if the committee would like her to make up a tentative agenda of department meetings based on the selectmen's schedule. The answer was in the affirmative.

Cecile Chase expressed a desire to see the Chairperson position rotate through the other members of the committee. She feels that two years is sufficient for one person to serve.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on *Wednesday, November 12th at 6:30 PM* at the Town Hall. The committee will be meeting every Wednesday night through the end of the year with the exception of November 26th.

Adjournment:

Motion by Dean Stimpson, second by Lois Parker, to adjourn. Vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Laura Zuzgo*

***Next Meeting: 6:30 PM Wednesday, November 12th, 2008
at the Town Hall***