

North Hampton Budget Committee  
MINUTES  
November 10, 2004

Chairman Robbie Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Terry Conklin, Mary Pat Dolan, Paul Fitzgibbons, Don Gould, Henry Marsh, Larry Miller, Robbie Robinson, Peter Simmons, Sue Spencer

1. Review minutes 11-04-04

Three minor changes were made; motion by Don Gould to accept the minutes with changes, seconded by Paul Fitzgibbons. Passed 8-0. (Henry Marsh was delayed due to another meeting.) There was a brief discussion of the budget review process.

2. Review proposed Highway Dept. budget for FY 2005-06

Road Agent Bob Strout presented the proposed Highway Dept. budget with explanations of each account; Town Administrator Mike Pardue and Administrative Assistant Jan Facella were also present.

Mr. Strout noted that the major budgetary increases this year were contractual and for utilities for the 205 Lafayette Rd. property. Highway dept. employees are in the first year of a five-year contract. There are 4 full-time employees, plus 2 part-time recycling and 1 part-time brush and compost.

The Highway Department is leasing its current space on Route 1; March warrant article(s) may authorize purchase of that space, or the construction of new facilities on town-owned property on Cherry Road or Cedar Road. Fall-back location is the old facilities behind the town offices.

Options, pros and cons were discussed. Terry Conklin advised that the town conduct focused of the preferred option, which is presumed at this time to be purchase of the Route 1 leased property. The proposed operating budget applies to any location; if more money is needed, it will appear in the warrant article.

Mr. Strout led a line item review of the proposed budget. The equipment maintenance account is up, though the collective age of the equipment is now lower (after new purchases) because the cost of parts and labor is up. The hydrant expense account exists because the town pays hydrant rent to Aquarion water company. This is offset by the roughly \$90,000 in taxes Aquarion pays the town, said Selectman Don Gould.

Peter Simmons noted that, in his 20 years of experience, the highway department budget "always has the least amount of fat" and that Mr. Strout has done a great job.

Mr. Conklin asked if the highway dept. had explored revenue opportunities serving the commercial private sector. Mr. Strout said the dept. lacked the capacity and was concerned for liability.

Recycling volume is down due to curbside recycling, with an income of around \$7,000 last year. A recent report showed the town lost money on recycling last year.

Larry Miller asked Mr. Strout if there was any reason he wouldn't support this budget at the deliberative session and Mr. Strout said there was not.

### 3. Review proposed Police Department budget for FY 2005-06

Chief Brian Page and Lt. John Scippa presented the proposed budget for the North Hampton Police Department. Several line items are impacted by the \$130,000 proposal for two more police officers, including salaries, specials pay, health insurance, retirement, holiday pay and uniforms.

Chief Page said the increase in Route 1 businesses from 377 in 1990 to 470 in 2004 has increased calls. Sixty-five to 70% of police time is spent on Route 1.

He shared a history of department staffing, which was authorized at 11 full-time officers in 1988 and has not increased since then. At 2.3 per thousand, North Hampton has fewer officers per thousand population than the standard for the Northeastern U.S. If increased to 2.8 as per the proposal, it would be the median for Seacoast towns.

Lt. Scippa presented comparisons with other towns in N.H., in particular Tilton, with a similar population and number of businesses, which has 15 full-time police officers. There was discussion of Rye and Hampton staffing, including part-time summer officers. Currently, after 2 a.m. only one officer is on duty in North Hampton; the increase would allow at least two officers 24 hours per day.

Statistics were shared on the amount of time spent on arrests and booking. Larry Miller asked if the chief needed more officers or this was adequate and he would support it at the deliberative session. Chief Page said two more officers would be adequate. He offered more statistics on crime and motor vehicle stops. He noted a school safety plan has recently been completed for emergencies. Information was shared on antiterrorist training.

Budget committee chairman Robbie Robinson said he was pleased with the preparation and professionalism of Chief Page and Lt. Scippa's presentations.

Motion to adjourn by Larry Miller, seconded by Paul Fitzgibbons. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Kane  
Recording Secretary

(Minutes were approved by the budget committee at their 11/17/04.)