

Approved Minutes

NORTH HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting

Tuesday, November 1, 2005

Attendance:

Attendees: Ms. Mary Pat Dolan, Chairperson; Andrew Hart, School Board Representative; Mr. Paul Marston, Member Mr. Terry Conklin; (6) Ms. Susan Spencer; Mr. Peter Simmons, Little Boards Head Commissioner, Mr. Don Gould, Board of Selectmen Chairperson, Mr. Robbie Robinson, Mike Pardue, Town Administrator

Meeting Called to Order:

Ms. Dolan called the meeting into session at 6:35 p.m. in the Mary Hebert Conference Room . Ms. Dolan motioned to defer approval of 10/06/05 Meeting Minutes until end of session due to some necessary revisions. Second by Mr. Conklin. All in favor. None opposed.

1. **Library Trustees Budget presentation** by Ms. Linda Hillier, Trustee & Chair, Ms. Emily Creighton, Treasurer and Ms. Pam Schwotzer, Director. Budget increase reflects a 7.14% increase.

The Library Trustees presented a handout of information for the Budget Committee. The following points were made:

For every \$1.00 in taxes the typical resident received \$26.95 in services. The typical North Hampton resident pays \$64.55 per year for library services. For further detail reference the blue handout (see attached).

Ms. Hillier reviewed the key increases in line items. Three items account for 3% increase: Health Benefits, Heating Oil & Maintenance. Only gave Cost of Living increase for salaries, although Consumer price index up 3.4%, did not give merit or bonuses.

2. **Town Clerk & Tax Collector Budget Presentation** by Delores Chase, Town Clerk & Margaret Neves, Tax Collector.

a. Margaret Neves, Tax Collector noted that there is 5% increase from last years budget which includes increase in Tax Collectors salary, Registry of Deeds, and office supplies. She noted however, that printing fees have gone down due to the new form being used.

b. Delores Chase, Town Clerk noted a 5% increase from last years budget which includes salary increase for the Town Clerk and the Deputy (who is part-time), retirement, office supplies, postage and printing (due to the new ballot programming and printing of ballot, which includes three elections and a handicap ballot machine). It was also noted that a new fax machine will need to be purchased and will be shared by the Town Clerk & the Tax Collectors offices.

3. **Fire Department Budget presentation** by Chief Thomas S. Lambert. Over all budget increase of 8-½% which includes energy related costs, utilities and fuel for vehicles (which is up \$2.00 per gallon). Mr. Gould stated that the School & Town has the same fuel contract with Lamprey for \$2.25. Chief Lambert also stated that there is a salary increase for a full-time staff due to new employees ending their probation period. Pay increases are not issued until probation has ended. The increase in salaries is due to this pay increase, which also includes additional benefits. Chief Lambert responded to a question, explaining that

if an employee works on a holiday, they would get holiday pay plus regular pay. Employees are paid hourly, they are not non-exempt and sick days are use or lose. He also responded to questions about the level of mutual aide between North Hampton and Hampton.

4. Police Department Budget presentation by Chief Brian Page and Lieutenant John V. Scippa. Chief Page reviewed the budget increases:

- The police department budget increase includes hiring of two (2) extra officers who are still in training and are scheduled to be active by April 2006.
- All cruisers are heading for 100,000-mile mark and will become extremely unsafe to operate.
- There is a 7.24% salary increase (10-Union, 3-non-union), which includes benefits. Overtime increase of 10.4% (this is based on contractual and seniority). The District Court moved to Seabrook (close to Massachusetts border), which has put a burden on salaries and travel costs.
- He noted a 4.1% increase in the Health Plan, 15% in retirement, 5.4% increase in holiday pay, fuel (already discussed) and 15% increase in building maintenance, which includes electricity.
- Discussed the possibility of leasing two (2) new cruisers opposed to submitting as a warrant article. The cost would be \$35,800 annually for two cruisers (after 3 years buying for \$1.00) in lieu of purchasing two for \$68,500. The lease has a 100,000-mile warranty, which would mean a drop in the maintenance line item. The Board of Selectmen recommended leasing option.

5. Highway Department Budget presentation by Robert Strout, Road Agent.

Overall budget increase of 7.87% in the following line items: salaries, benefits, salt & sand (up \$43.00 per ton) materials, fuel oil and recycling. Overtime was up by 250 hours due to the winter months.

The Highway Department does not have an adequate building to use during the winter months. A search was done for a site location and has been unsuccessful to date. The Planning Board is now taking the initiative for a long-range plan.

Mr. Strout stated that the recycling program is losing money due to curbside services from Waste Management and other similar recycling companies. The net deficit is two times more to recycle than last year. The Recycling Program is not making any money and it should be dismantled if this cycle continues. Mr. Gould advocates shutting this facility down if the trend continues to go the other way in the next year.

6. Recreation Department Budget presentation by Diane Wheeler, Recreation Director. Diane stated that her position went from part-time to full-time. Her hourly rate changed from \$20.00 per hour to \$18.00 per hour to offset the increase in salary and the benefits package. There was an increase in FICA and health insurance. The Rec Dept has submitted a warrant article for "Web Track" which allows participants in the recreation program to be able to register on-line. If this warrant article is approved the "Web Track" line item will be deleted from the Recreation Budget. Diane stated that there was an increase in utilities due to the toilet facility maintenance at Dearborn Park. There was an increase in the general maintenance line item and improvements at Dearborn Park.

7. Building Inspectors Budget presentation by Richard Mabey. Increases are due to additional costs that would be incurred if the proposed signage proposal is approved. Additional staff required to survey all signs on Route 1. Mr. Mabey said a proper inventory, which would be a one-time event and that all signs need to be measured. The second is the cost of policing once the inventory is completed.

According to Mr. Gould this is an ordinance that will be passed and the town has 120 days to comply with the ordinance. Mr. Mabey said this was a one-time cost of \$10,000 for listing the existing signs. The \$14,000 for additional staffing would be a continuing expense that would be reviewed yearly.

Mike Schwotzer was introduced as the UNH intern developing a new Budget reporting format for the Budget Committee.

Mr. Hart stated that the School Budget would be completed by 11/2/05 and would seek assistance from Mr. Swartzter in conforming to the new reporting form, if agreed to by the SAU and board.

There was an overall discussion regarding the presentation of the Department Budgets and concern regarding the increase in the Health & Benefits package and also the annual percentage rate used for salary increases.

Mr. Pardue stated that the health benefits package comes from the New Hampshire Municipal Health Trust, which there are 200 towns in this trust and he feels the benefits are considerably high.

Ms. Dolan stated that there was work that needed to be done on the health benefits cost but it would not be done for this year.

Ms. Dolan stated that the next Budget Committee Meeting will be on Tuesday, December 6, 2005 @ 6:30 p.m. Agenda items will be the Warrant Articles, Tax Rate and the School Budget. A second meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 13, 2005 @ 6:30 p.m. to review all the Department Budgets.

Ms. Dolan entertained motion to adjourn. Mr. Conklin approved motion. All were in favor.

Budget Committee adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Jeanne M. Beaulieu
Office Team Recording Secretary

Revised: Mary Pat Dolan