

Draft Minutes for North Hampton Budget Committee:
Mary Herbert Room, 7:00 PM, August 25, 2008



Attending Committee Members: Robert Copp, Michael Golden, Emily Creighton (Board of Selectmen), Robert Hamilton (Little Boar's Head), Jim Maggiore, David Peck (Chair), Kari Schmitz (School Board) and Jennifer Simmons

Others in Attendance: Town Manager Steve Fournier, Police Chief Brian Page, Police Lieutenant John Scippa and SAU 21 Business Administrator Robert Berry

Not Attending Committee Members: Larry Miller

David Peck called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M.

1. Steve Fournier gave an end of year (7/1/07 to 6/30/08) report for the Town Budget. Major items included:
 - a. The total Town budget (excluding school) was \$5,179,836 with \$4,902,151 being spent, leaving a surplus of \$276,749.
 - b. Line items with the largest surplus were Legal Expense (\$64,028), Police (\$42,956), Fire and Rescue (\$85,585) and Solid Waste Disposal (\$32,142).
 - c. Line items that went over budget most significantly were Financial Administration (\$82,970) and Insurance (\$47,658).
2. Police Chief Brian Page presented highlights of an MRI report commissioned by North Hampton. He explained that MRI is a company in Meredith, NH which provides three people, a New Hampshire retired chief of police, an out of state chief of police and a city manager, who examine a community's police system and make recommendations. Chief Page reminded the Committee that under his watch North Hampton would "never be a minimum standards department". The Report bore this out in that, for each area considered, the North Hampton Police Department is as good as or better than the median for police departments in New Hampshire. Even so, Chief Brian reported that some areas should have immediate attention while other areas could be addressed over time. Communication between police in North Hampton and Rockingham County dispatchers might be improved by installing a repeater in Rye. If this does not work then the Hampton Police Department, being larger, might be used to dispatch our officers. The jail and septic system also need immediate attention. Looking to the future, a larger public safety facility housing fire and police should be considered. With respect to personnel issues, a part-time clerical person, a prosecutor and a school resource officer would also eventually be needed.
3. Kari Schmitz reported that the School Board would attempt to use fewer special warrant articles next year. She also suggested that the School Board might need only December 4, 2008 to present its budget, not December 2 and December 4. Dave Peck questioned whether this would be adequate. With the support of other BudCom members, including Kari, it was agreed that both nights would be reserved with a decision to be made on December 2 whether a meeting was needed on December 4.
4. Bob Copp brought up the need for the Town to provide somebody take minutes of BudCom meetings. It is difficult to participate and keep track of financial details at the same time.

Other major boards in Town have such support. Dave Peck, along with other members, gave their support.

5. Bob Berry offered an end of year report on the school budget. Highlights included:
 - a. Approximately \$79,000 (\$27,000 from revenue and \$50,000 surplus) would be returned to the Town. Line items, which enjoyed major surpluses, were Special Ed (\$21,588), Improvement of Education (\$22,418), Grounds (\$66,998), Transportation (\$5,524) and Employee Benefits (\$144,902). The largest, Employee Benefits, was due in large part to newer single teachers needing less insurance coverage than retiring teachers who tend to have family coverage. Line items that went over budget were Student Activities (\$7,657) and Buildings (\$159,689). Buildings included \$144,950 for necessary roof repairs, which had not previously been budgeted. Members of the BudCom encouraged the School Department to physically maintain the school building. Students would be well served while in the long run money would be saved.
 - b. Looking to the future, Bob reported that the North Hampton School could save heat by resealing the windows to the building. The cost would approximately \$18,000 per building side and might be done one side per year.
 - c. Looking further into the future, Bob reminded the committee that a school bond, costing the Town about \$400,000 per year, would be paid off in 2012. Whereas North Hampton needs a full time kindergarten and additional space now, 2012 might be a better time to consider additional expense as year-to-year cost to taxpayers would remain more constant.
 - d. Of particular interest to those residents who heat with oil, Bob confided that SAU 21 feels that on or about September 5 may very well be the best time to lock onto a yearly oil price contract. Keep these minutes for future reference.
6. After Bob's presentation, Kari reported that to comply with the new warrant article on requests for bids, the School Board would send "a courtesy copy of RFP's over ten thousand dollars to the BudCom on items that were not already discussed during the budget cycle." Dave replied that he thought that would be fine and within the spirit of the Warrant. He expressed that it was his understanding that "if items are budgeted and amounts sequestered for those items are at or under the budgeted amounts then no need to send out courtesy copies of the RFB, however, if something that is going to bring it above that then you would do so. It's an extraordinary event". Kari agreed, "It would be..., I think it will be".
7. The Committee examined and unanimously approved the July 30, 2008 BudCom minutes.
8. This BudCom is always looking for ways to do its job more effectively. Toward this end two members of the BudCom each introduced guidelines, which might help two areas in need of attention.
 - a. Mike Golden has given considerable thought to how Warrant Articles related to funding might be presented to the Committee. He offered a comprehensive "Proposal for Warrant Article", being a guideline requiring uniform input of information, that the BudCom could use to better understand the merits of Warrant Articles presented to it. Feeling that all well thought out ideas should be tried, and perhaps modified over time; the BudCom unanimously passed a motion to request that all interested parties in the future use this Proposal form when introducing Warrant Articles to it. Emily Creighton, representing the Board of Selectmen, offered her support.
 - b. Dave Peck has, for the past two years, encouraged a system whereby a member of the BudCom would become a "committee expert" of those organizations, which affect the Town Budget the most, i.e., fire, police, town etc. In order to improve this

approach, Dave offered the Committee a “BudCom Departmental Project Leader Concept” which would be a guideline the “committee expert” might follow in order to not only formalize their report but also to make it more effective. A motion was made and unanimously passed to accept this guideline.

c. Bob Hamilton suggested that two meetings might be exclusively dedicated for the “committee experts” (in 7b, above) to present their information to the BudCom and in order to provide a time for unrushed informational exchange and consideration of the most important budget items facing the Town. It was agreed that October 14 and October 21 would be set aside, allowing for two meetings, if needed.

10 The Budget Committee was adjourned at 9:22 P.M.

This document represents a draft of the BudCom meeting minutes. It will be reviewed, modified and formally approved at the next scheduled meeting. Both this draft and the approved minutes will be archived.