



*Budget Committee Meeting
January 25, 2011 7:00 PM
Mary B. Herbert Conference Room
Approved Minutes*

1. Call to Order

Chair Paul Martino called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Those in attendance were, Larry Miller, David Peck, Paul Martino, Bob Hamilton, Bob Copp, Jennifer Simmons, Dickie Garnett and Select Board representative Jon Rineman. Absent from the meeting was Michael Golden.

2. Review Minutes from January 18, 2011 Meeting

Mr. Miller suggested that adding who was absent from the meeting to the minutes would be helpful.

Motion by Selectman Rineman to accept the minutes from the January 18, 2011 Budget Committee meeting. Seconded by Dickie Garnett. Motion carries 6-0.

3. Review the Town Budget with Steve Fournier

Town Administrator Fournier distributed the default budget to the Budget Committee members. He explained that there were very few reductions made because there were not many onetime expenditures last year and that the default budget is arrived at by using the previous year's budget and reducing it by any onetime expenditures, and then increased by any contractual obligations.

Chair Martino stated that he would like to have a summary by department for years 2005-2010.

Town Administrator Fournier reviewed the Executive Department and stated that the Select Board is asking for a reduction of \$6,000 in account number 01-4130-10-550, Community Newsletter. He stated that the Select Board is looking to do the newsletter electronically, and that there have been issues trying to have information published in the newsletter.

Mr. Miller disagreed with Town Administrator Fournier on changing the way it is currently published, and stated that he believes a lot of senior citizens are not going to have access to the newsletter if it is changed to electronically only.

Allison Robie, Chair of the Library Trustees stated that the Children's Librarian, Lorreen Keating is the editor of the newsletter and that the public is not aware of how much time is put into producing the newsletter, and wonders if there is a plan in place for someone to take over.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the newsletter is an extremely effective way to get information out to the community, and that no one would read the email.

Susan Grant stated that she felt some sort of mission statement and or guidelines need to be developed as to what is published in the newsletter. She further reminded the committee that this is not a library newsletter, it is a community newsletter.

Motion by Bob Hamilton to increase account number 01-4130-10-550 to \$6,000. Seconded by David Peck. Motion carries 8-0.

Mr. Peck stated that he felt the Select Board were very deserving of being compensated and felt that \$8,700 should be added back to account number 01-4130-10-150, Salaries- Selectmen.

Motion by Chair Martino to raise account number 01-4150-10-150 to \$8,700. Seconded by David Peck. Motion carries 8-0.

The next account discussed was 4140 Town Clerk/Elections. Town Administrator Fournier stated that the bottom line reflects a reduction of 1.5%.

Chair Martino stated that he is not in favor of having two separate elections.

Town Administrator Fournier next discussed an increase in account number 4150 Financial Administration in the amount of \$8,587 or 5.82%. He explained that \$25,000 has been reclassified to account number 01-4150-60-330 Software Support to more accurately reflect amounts being expended for software support and upgrades, technology as well as hardware upgrades. Software support covers the Assessing, Financial, Police, Fire, and Recreation departments.

Mr. Peck asked why account number 01-4150-10-302, Financial Management Services showed a proposed increase of \$4,000 as he felt it shouldn't be this high of a number when the Finance Department is wrapping their hands around things now. Chair Martino suggested taking a look and review the Financial Management Services.

Town Administrator Fournier reviewed account number 4152 Property Valuation and stated that he would have a proposal for the next Select Board meeting regarding setting up a Capital Reserve Fund for the town wide revaluation that is to be conducted in 2013. Expected costs for an update only are \$80,000 and a full list and measure of the town \$160,000.

Town Administrator Fournier reviewed account number 4153 Legal Expense stating the line is staying flat. He further stated that negotiations are currently in progress. Mr. Peck asked what the year to date total was in the legal expense line item and Town Administrator Fournier stated that he would get that information to him.

Mr. Copp stated that the line item number 01-4155-10-190 Merit Pool isn't transparent and felt that when you go to the voting booth you should have an idea of what people are getting for raises. He further stated he does not want to see a lump sum in the merit pool; he would like it by department.

Mr. Hamilton asked how the employees felt about the merit pool and that he has mixed feelings about requesting where the merit pool went for each employee.

Town Administrator Fournier discussed the Planning and Zoning account number 4191 and stated that the Zoning Board of Adjustment is looking to increase the line item number 01-4191-10-335 Training and Education.

An increase to account number 01-4194-10-580 Building Maintenance of \$500 was proposed due to the number of maintenance issues that need to be completed. Town Administrator Fournier stated that the furnace in the fire station is first priority.

Chair Martino called for a five minutes recess.

The committee reconvened and asked the Library to present their proposed budget.

Allison Robie, Chair of the Library Trustees complimented Susan Grant, Library Director on being fiscally conservative when proposing the library budget. Ms. Robie stated that it very difficult to have only minor increases in the budget when the age of the building is increasing the costs to keep it maintained. Ms. Robie further stated that Ms. Grant did not ask for a raise for herself and Lorreen Keating, as she felt their salaries were in keeping with other libraries in the area.

Chair Martino and Mr. Miller asked for the balances in the Library Trust Funds. Ms. Grant stated that she did not have that information with her, but she would get that to them.

Chair Martino read through each line item of the proposed library budget. Mr. Peck stated that he was surprised that the total budget is up 4.35%.

Ms. Grant stated that every year the budget falls short when it comes to programs, and another reason for the increase is that non print references, data bases, and downloadable audio book costs have increased.

Mr. Hamilton asked Ms. Grant to re check her figures for health insurance.

Mr. Peck stated that he had met with Chief Page to review the budget, and gave a brief summary of the Police Department's budget. He stated that employee turnover is favorably affecting the budget in the salary, FICA, health insurance and retirement accounts, but that the training account was up due to new employees.

Mr. Peck stated that the current contract with union members is due to expire in June of this year, and there may be an additional warrant article if a contract is passed.

Mr. Peck asked Chief Page for a detailed expenditure report on account numbers 01-4210-10-570 Vehicle Maintenance, 01-4210-10-620 Office Supplies, and 01-4210-10-635 Gasoline.

Chief Page stated that the balance in the Police Department Special Detail Revolving Account as of November 30, 2010 was \$83,761. Chief Page explained how the revolving fund works and informed the committee that retirement, FICA, maintenance costs and fuel associated with Special Details also are expended from that fund.

Chief Page distributed expense reports to the committee members that show the remaining budget from January 25, 2011 through June 30, 2011. The Chief reviewed each line item in the Police Department budget. He pointed out that the salary account shows a 0% increase because there is currently no contract; the merit pool is for the Chief, Deputy and Administrative Assistant; overtime is increased but the bottom line of his budget will be o.k.; holiday pay has decreased due to reduction in salaries; longevity no longer exists in the contract; there are now more single health insurance plans versus family plans; FICA and retirement are driven off of the salary account; gasoline prices rose from \$2.74 per gallon to \$3.01 per gallon; a digital decimeter and an external tachometer will be expended from the new equipment account.

Mr. Peck asked Chief Page if a cruiser could be paid for out of the Special Detail Fund. Chief Page stated that he would be uncomfortable spending that amount of money with no revenue history to go on. He also stated that there are very specific rules on what can and cannot be spent from that fund.

Chair Martino thanked Chief Page for his presentation to the committee.

4. Adjournment

Motion by Selectman Rineman to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 PM. Seconded by Bob Hamilton. Motion carries 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,

**Janet L. Facella
Administrative Assistant**