



*Budget Committee Meeting
February 15, 2011 7:00 PM
North Hampton Town Hall
Approved Minutes*

1. Call to Order

Chairman Paul Martino called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Those in attendance were: Select Board representative Jon Rineman, Dickie Garnett, Michael Golden, Paul Martino, David Peck, Larry Miller, Bob Hamilton, Bob Copp. Absent from the meeting was Jennifer Simmons.

Chair Martino stated that items on the agenda would be taken out of order and that the Cemetery Trustees would present their budget first.

2. Review minutes from January 25, 2011 meeting

The minutes will be taken up at the February 22, 2011 meeting.

3. Review the town budget with Steve Fournier

a. Review of Cemetery Budget

Town Administrator Fournier stated that the Cemetery budget is level funded over the previous year at \$45,000.

Margaret Brown, Cemetery Trustee stated to the Budget Committee that the only increased line item was for salaries, in order to give employees a .50 cent per hour raise, as employees had not had a raise in over five years. Mrs. Brown stated that now that they have been in the new building they have been able to shift costs around to those line items that need it, and that is how they were able to have a zero increase on their proposed budget.

George Chancey, Cemetery Trustee stated that they had originally asked for an increase of \$1,600 in order to give employees a .50 cent per hour raise, but when reviewing the budget with the Select Board, they were able to massage the budget a bit and keep it level funded.

Kendall Chevalier, Cemetery Superintendent stated that Daniel Donahue of New England Homes offered to donate sinks, lavatories or whatever bathroom fixtures would be needed.

Mr. Peck congratulated the Trustees for keeping their budget level funded, and stated that they are a role model for all departments.

Town Administrator Fournier spoke to the Budget Committee and stated that the Governor had released his budget for the next biennium for the State today, and it is going to have a large impact on municipalities and schools.

The Governor announced today that is withdrawing all funding for state retirement. This would mean an impact of approximately \$167,000 for the Police and Fire budgets above the bottom line number.

b. Fire Department

Bob Hamilton, Fire Department liaison, gave a summary of some of the major issues of the Fire Department.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed staffing, salary schedule, retirement, medical insurance, overtime, paramedic warrant article and the fire truck purchase warrant article.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he strongly supports the warrant articles for a paramedic training program and the purchase of a new fire truck.

Chief Cote stated that most of the increases in the fire department's budget were due to costs associated with the collective bargaining agreement.

The training and education line item was increased by \$2,350 for advanced schooling for the Chief.

Chief Cote stated that overtime is currently expended at \$101,000 as there were a couple of employees out due to non-work related injuries as well as one individual that was out on a work related injury and has since been let go because of that injury.

Chief Cote explained that several years ago the staff was tasked to cover shifts during the day for vacancies. During that period of time, the Chief was Deputy Chief and he was able to cover shifts during that time, saving a substantial amount of money. By not funding the Deputy's position last year, the department lost a significant amount of coverage capabilities.

Mr. Miller stated that he shares with Mr. Hamilton great interest in having paramedics in town. He asked Chief Cote if there was some sort of plan in place to keep the paramedics in our town.

Chief Cote stated that a careful review of well grounded individuals will be done and that some that are interested live close by and would have no intention of leaving.

Chair Martino recessed the meeting at 8:15 PM, and members of the Budget Committee went to the fire station to view the vehicles.

Chair Martino reconvened the meeting at 8:20 PM in the fire station.

i. Trip to Fire Station for an overview of their truck fleet

Chief Cote gave a tour of Engine 2, Engine 3, Ladder 1, Tank 3, Rescue 1 and the Forestry truck. The Chief explained that they are looking to replace Engine 3 that is 25 years old, and the new truck would be capable of holding the same tools and equipment as Engine 2 as it would be mirrored with the same equipment. Engine 3 currently carries only half of the equipment that Engine 2 does. Engine 3 is not equipped with foam, extrication tools, Haz Mat equipment, ventilation equipment and cribbing. There are also baffles that are broken in the tank on Engine 3.

Mr. Golden left the meeting due to illness.

Chair Martino recessed the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Chair Martino reconvened the meeting at the Town Hall at 8:50 PM.

The committee reviewed Fire Department Fiscal Year 2010 expenditures with Chief Cote.

Mr. Peck asked the Chief for more detail on the salary increase of 2.1%

Chief Cote explained that it is for contractual obligations, and that employee's step increases come in at different times throughout the year, and also due to the fact that there were 53 pay periods in the year.

Mr. Peck stated that the overall increase of 6.1% in the budget is mostly payroll related, and that if a collective bargaining agreement is reached there could be an increase of 8% in the fire department budget.

Mr. Peck thanked Chief Cote for his tour of the fire trucks, and that there is now a better understanding of the benefits of getting a new truck, and that it should be viewed as not just fighting house fires, but also for extrication and really important parts of car accidents.

Chief Cote spoke about a shifting trend of emergency calls, and that the majority of them in the last year were “home rooted” as opposed to the prior three years.

Chief Cote stated that the current balance in Capital Reserve Fund #4 is \$550,848, and there is an additional \$48,000 due to come in.

Mr. Miller asked Chief Cote if he would provide the committee with mutual aid information.

Mr. Miller left the meeting at 9:20 PM due to a prior commitment.

b. Review of Expendable Trust Fund Accounts

This item will be taken up at the February 22, 2011 meeting.

c. Highway

i. Review of Department Budget

Jon Hubbard, Public Works Director presented his budget and stated that the bottom line proposed is \$600,736 with the major items being the lease payment for the front end loader and the one ton plow truck.

Mr. Hubbard stated that other increases are in health insurance, retirement, dues and subscriptions, street signs and salt.

Mr. Peck asked why there is a proposed 35% increase over what was expended in fiscal year 2010 for part time salaries.

Mr. Hubbard stated that two part time employees were hired to help with snow removal due to a full time employee being out on short term disability.

Mr. Peck asked why there is a 15 or 20% increase in the overtime budget.

Mr. Hubbard and Town Administrator Fournier explained that it depends on the weather and last year there wasn't much snow. Also, there was not a collective bargaining in fiscal year 2010, but there was one for fiscal year 2011 which increased the salaries.

Mr. Peck asked why if equipment has been upgraded is equipment maintenance going up.

Mr. Hubbard stated that it actually lower than what was expended due to the fact the town was reimbursed from FEMA last year for a storm as well as the clean up after.

Town Administrator Fournier explained that these were unanticipated revenues that were received and that you are allowed to offset it on the budget.

Mr. Hamilton asked why the equipment maintenance line was so high.

Mr. Hubbard explained that all repairs to equipment come from this line, and as new equipment is purchased this line item will go down.

Mr. Copp thanked Mr. Hubbard for his work not only with the school, but also with the community garden.

Town Administrator Fournier gave kudos to the Public Works Department for saving the town a substantial amount of money by performing the demolition of the town hall.

Mr. Peck stated that over the years the Solid Waste line item has been going down, why is \$97,000 being budgeted when \$89,000 was paid in fiscal year 2010.

Mr. Hubbard stated that the tipping fees are set but are allowed to go up and there was an increase this year.

Mr. Peck stated that he would like to see detail of how the figure of \$97,000 was arrived at for the Solid Waste account.

The committee had no questions on the Recycling budget.

ii. Review of warrant article that proposes to rebuild three roads

Mr. Hubbard stated that the warrant article is for \$190,000 for the total reconstruction of New Road, half the reconstruction of Cherry Road, and the overlay of Highlander Drive.

Mr. Hubbard stated that there has been a request for a public hearing on these projects by the neighbors and homeowners, but a date has yet to be set.

d. Review unfinished business as time permits

Mr. Martino stated that he wanted to be sure to take up questions that the committee has on the Merit Pool at the next meeting. The committee members would like to see where the money has gone by employee and or position and also how the Merit Pool works.

4. Other

**Motion to adjourn by Mr. Peck. Seconded by Mr. Garnett. Motion carries 6-0.
Meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Janet Facella
Administrative Assistant**