



Town of Plaistow ♦ Board of Selectmen
145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865

SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE: December 17, 2007

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 pm

PRESENT: Michelle L. Curran, *Chairman*; Lawrence W. Gil, *Vice Chair*; John A. Sherman;
Charles L. Blinn, Jr.; Daniel J. Poliquin; Jason Hoch, *Town Manager*

EXCUSED: Daniel J. Poliquin

COLORING CONTEST:

Recreation Director Carlene Malette is present to announce the winners of the Christmas coloring contest. M. Curran and J. Hoch present the prizes.

D. Poliquin arrives to the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No members of the public wishing to speak.

MINUTES:

The minutes of December 10, 2007 will be postponed until the next meeting.

BUDGET REVIEW:

Recreation:

J. Hoch reviews the budget. He states that he is looking at a bottom line net appropriation of just under 300,000. The change to the tax rate is a \$.30 (cent) increase to the tax rate. From 2006-2007 we had a \$.26 (cent) increase. The numbers are based off the 2007 numbers.

J. Sherman states that he is glad the Town Manager was able to process the changes, which are mostly reductions to the budget. The total expense line is up \$161,000 which is really not much considering all the factors. If you are just looking at total numbers this is up less than the cost of living, this is about a 2% increase in expenses. This is a good sign that we all kept a good eye on the budget. The biggest impact on taxes next year is from a pretty obscure source, which is loss of revenue from car registration. We are estimating \$150,000 less in car registrations. This is almost exactly half of the increase.

M. Curran asks why we are not going to see the car registration revenues.

J. Hoch states that the trend we are seeing is that fewer cars are being replaced and less people are buying SUVs. The bigger more expensive vehicles are larger revenue generators. This trend has slowed down.

J. Sherman states that when we went to set the tax rate the actual car registration revenue was less than we had projected. The way to make this up is in property taxes.

J. Hoch states this is correct.

J. Sherman states half of the tax impact is loss of car registrations. If we stay with this budget the revenue we need will move from car registrations to the tax base. Doing it this way will be a shift to commercial and industrial because they are not registering cars. This is a shift off residential.

J. Hoch states that the Recreation Commission is present to discuss field mowing bids.

M. Curran asks for copies of the bids.

J. Hoch states that he has copies tonight that the Selectmen are welcome to look at. There was discussion about the landscaping bids for Old County Road and the original budget had numbers from the current town maintenance company. He solicited bids for just the Old County Road Fields and we received three additional bids back. The budget tonight is a reflection of the lowest eligible bid. The Recreation Commission has sent a letter indicating that they would like to not go with the lowest bid and stay with the current contractor.

M. Curran states that the original bid that was submitted last year from Cantone Landscaping was much lower. This year his bids came in almost \$8,000 higher than what he originally proposed.

J. Hoch states this is not true. When you compare apples to apples his was the lowest. We expanded the scope this year. Last year we had placed \$7,000 in the equipment line to purchase equipment to maintain the Town Hall Green. We realized that this was not a feasible option. The money is being used for grounds keeping instead.

M. Curran asks if everyone was asked to bid on the Town Hall last year.

J. Hoch states everyone was asked to bid on the same specifications and this included the Town Hall. He was the lowest bid on those specifications.

M. Curran asks why we are over if the numbers included the tractor.

J. Hoch states that we budgeted for a tractor for mowing the Town Hall line. We did not buy the tractor. We are using that money for the grounds keeping at Town Hall. We did not bid the project until after the budget season and we decided to include the Town Hall in the bid.

We spent in one line and not in another. The numbers he put in the Old County Road Field budget turned out to be the middle bid. The request from the Recreation Commission is to use the original bid even though it is a higher number.

M. Curran asks how close we are to the budget this year.

J. Hoch states that we are closer to \$24,000. We had everyone bid on the text that went out with his predecessor's specifications. When he reviewed the things that were missing we changed some specification. However, everyone bid on this in an apples to apples way.

M. Curran asks what fields Cantone has done before.

J. Hoch states that the fields and the Town contract are 2 separate things. Cantone has a recommendation from Hampstead.

Recreation Director Carlene Malette states Cantone has been doing Depot Field in Hampstead for a while. He takes care of multi-use fields and baseball diamonds. She checked his work throughout the season and was pleased each time.

M. Curran asks who takes care of our school.

C. Sarty states that the School District is responsible for their fields. David Leith of the High School takes care of the fields and Kevin Wade fertilizers. We usually maintain the diamond itself at Pollard School with volunteer equipments.

J. Sherman states the Recreation Commission wants to express how important it is to maintain the fields properly in the first year and this is crucial for the fields. The Recreation Commission is very pleased with Cantone's work and they are recommending him even though it is not the low bid. This is a critical year and the fields are an investment that needs to be protected. The other bidders did not have a history of ongoing maintenance.

Recreation Commission member Kristin Lewis Savage states that this is an investment to maintain. We increased the fees to help cover the costs of the fields. If we are going to tell people the increase is to cover the fields, we want them to be the best they can be.

M. Curran states she thought we were increasing the fees anyways because we are not making the budget.

K. Lewis Savage states that we did increase them but we increased them again to assist in this. This is an investment in something we have spent a lot of time on.

L. Gil states that in reviewing the letter from the Recreation Commission it evaluates the bidders. He was approached by one of the bidders. The letter does not shine a favorable

light on some work. He wants to make sure that everyone had the same specification in front of them to bid on.

K. Lewis Savage states that the Recreation Commission members all agreed on the comments made in the letter. She is new to the commission and did not have personal experience but the comments were agreed on by all members and she would stand by it.

C. Malette gives the example of the specifications and states that all the bidders received the same document. She states that Cantone stayed with his original numbers and 3 more companies responded to the bid.

M. Curran asks how many years he has been in business and states that she is frustrated that the numbers are not present tonight.

J. Hoch states that he gave these numbers to the Board before tonight and no one asked for additional information to be prepared for tonight. He did not realize we would be sifting through the bid details. Cantone came to us with references.

M. Curran states that she respects the Recreation Commission's experience. She states that she is looking at Lavallee and it appears he has the years of experience, the right equipment and length of time in business for less money.

K. Lewis Savage states it was her understanding that he would be vendoring some of the work out because he does not have the equipment.

J. Sherman states that Lavallee's experience does not speak to this type of athletic field.

D. Poliquin states that the service record of the subcontractor that he has listed is impeccable. The work can be done for less money. Lavallee is offering a complete package. There is a significant difference in price.

C. Malette states that none of the three bids refers to the weekly maintenance of the field. She states that the fields need to be raked and groomed. She called all the bidders and asked for a call back. She had a lengthy conversation with Lavallee and he admitted that he has not done this type of work before. He will be using the Greenskeepers equipment.

M. Curran asks for clarification of the rake.

C. Malette states that the base-paths where the athletes run need to be raked out. This is a piece of equipment that is used on clay. She looked at number of fields this year and checked on references.

C. Blinn states that he believed the maintenance price is high. He thought this was a Recreation Field not a mausoleum. The Greenskeeper is one of the best. Lavallee will be

bringing it a high level of professionalism. He thinks a \$10,000 difference is astronomical. This is weed whacking and weeding bases. This is for the kids and they are going to be running all over the place. He states we do a whole town for \$24,000. Why would he want to pay \$28,000 to maintain fields?

J. Sherman states that the size is compatible. The new fields total approximately 11 acres. This is a big area.

C. Malette states that this is not a straight cut. This needs to be watched closely the first year. He feels very comfortable with Cantone. She watched his fields all summer and for the first year the fields needs good solid growth. The track record is not good with the contractor in the letter. She will give specifics at another time. This vendor's track record is not good.

C. Blinn states that \$10,000 is a big difference. Kevin Wade is one of the best around and that is why Lavallee joined with him. Lavallee does the Library and it is kept nicely.

C. Malette states that this is a lot different than a Library.

C. Blinn states this has been a lot of years to get the fields and we want to protect the interest of the residents. This is hard to justify. Who are you going to charge to use the fields? These are suppose to be for the kids.

C. Malette states that the fields are also used for walking groups and adult sports. The Recreation Commission has not discussed renting the fields. She mentions other Towns that do rent their fields for group activities.

J. Sherman states that we will be able to generate revenue. We could attract tournaments from the outside and this is all the more reason to maintain them properly.

C. Blinn states that we paid dearly for these fields. He thinks maybe the Recreation Commission should go back and negotiate with Cantone.

L. Gil states that he has heard different numbers.

J. Sherman states that you are looking at a \$7,000 difference from Lavallee to Cantone. He supports going with Cantone.

Recreation Commission Chairman Greg Mason states that he feels the Selectmen are trying to steer the Commission with a vendor that they have had bad experiences with before. Why would you go back?

M. Curran asks if they have a problem with Kevin Wade. She states that she knows his reputation and she does not see why he would join forces with Lavallee if he was not reputable.

G. Mason states that Kevin Wade is only doing 7% of the job.

M. Curran states that you haven't mentioned any other fields that Cantone did other than Hampstead.

C. Malette states it was the closest one and she watched it for a season.

M. Curran states that she is having a problem with all of this. She was told this was the only bid, no one else did this work and no one had the equipment.

J. Hoch states that this is not true. We did not go out to bid originally because he was looking to bundle this with the person doing the other town work. He did not make any comment that this was the only person.

M. Curran states that she is almost positive this was said.

C. Blinn states that it was said that no one was qualified.

J. Hoch states this was never said. What was said was that the preference was to put this all under one roof and not put it out to bid. This was put out to bid when requested by the Board. What is before the board is those bids. The low bid does not seem to be a competitive match. His recommendation to the Board is the next eligible lowest bid. The Recreation Commission is going with his original recommendation. When people didn't like the number he pursued more bids.

J. Sherman states he believes that Cantone is the best vendor and will do the best job at protecting our investment out there.

D. Poliquin states that the Groundskeeper bid states that they have prepared fields for tournaments.

J. Sherman states that getting a field ready one time is different that weekly maintenance.

K. Lewis Savage states that it was the Recreation Commission's feelings that we need someone that knows what they are doing. The first year is a very important year. Wade is willing to teach Lavallee but this is not the year to learn on these fields. We understand the increase in costs but there is no one in the new bids that can firmly state they have maintained fields. As Buzzy (C. Blinn) stated we have paid dearly for those fields. If we do not care for them we pay even more dearly. Next year we can reassess the needs. Once the fields are established we have flexibility. We want these fields to grow to their full potential and this is the Recreation Commission's concern. The price he gave to Plaistow is the same price as Hampstead. Plaistow has bigger fields and we were getting a deal from Cantone.

M. Curran states that we are looking at the budgets. You want us to spend \$10,000 on grass. Cantone has only done this Town for 1 year. He is eager and new. Anyone knowing the importance will care for the fields. No matter how well we maintain those fields nature could come along with a drought and ruin the fields. She is having a difficult time spending money when she just said last week that she didn't want to pay employee insurance. She remembers just playing as a child and having a good time, as long as it is a safe field she does not see a problem. This is not Fenway Park.

K. Lewis states that there is no need to yell at me. She states she is just making a point and you are getting nasty.

M. Curran states no, she is just expressing her concerns and she is having a difficult time justifying the money to mow the grass.

G. Mason states that looking at this as just mowing the grass is looking at this with blinders on. That is an incomplete assessment.

C. Blinn states if this is not mowing the grass, what is it. There is 11 acres and if he isn't mowing the grass what is he going to do.

G. Mason states that it is more than mowing. This needs to be cut at the right times, at the right level and with proper care.

C. Blinn states that Kevin Wade can do that.

G. Mason states you obviously keep going back to that one bid. Kevin Wade is only a subcontractor to the bidder doing 7% of the work.

M. Curran states that she does not have a problem with the company that the Town Manager recommended. Her problem is the money. She is familiar with Kevin Wade and knows his work. She feels that the Recreation Commission is negative towards a bidder. Her concern is the money.

G. Mason asks M. Curran if she has been up to the Hampstead Fields.

M. Curran states she has not.

G. Mason states that he has and they are wonderful. He states that the comment has been made that Cantone has only been with us for 1 year. He has been taking care of the Hampstead Fields for 4 or 5 years now. Those fields are incredible. It is not Fenway Park but it is nice. We are looking at him because of the job we want done. This is caring for fields, not a mowing contract. With the fields being new, we want these fields to be further along in a year not in worse shape. We have put a lot into this project and we are counting on someone who knows what they are doing to do it right. That is why we like Cantone.

C. Blinn states that the Town Hall and Cemetery did not have a fall cleanup. He states that he spoke to the Town Manager about this and apparently Cantone is not charging for the fall cleanup. He asks if this sounds like a guy who is on top of his business.

G. Mason states that he is not going to comment on something he does not have the information about.

C. Blinn states that you have to remember the name Kevin Wade and he is going to have a lot to do with what is going on at the fields.

G. Mason states that he appreciates that he is going to be involved but he is not going to be out there weekly monitoring this.

C. Blinn states that he thinks this is basic work besides the diamonds being done the way the Commission wants. Some of these guys went out and bought the best equipment out there. He knows the costs we have invested in this. The public doesn't even know the complete costs, from swapping 22 acres and to the years of work invested in this project. It is a diamond compared to anything else in this Town.

G. Mason states that it has been a long time coming to get these fields for a community of Plaistow's size and affluence.

L. Gil states that this discussion has gone on long enough and he would like to move the issue.

J. Sherman agrees with L. Gil and states that we will be reviewing all the budgets this evening.

M. Curran thanks the Recreation Commission for coming in.

J. Hoch resumes the review of the recreation budget. There is an increase in revenue.

M. Curran asks for an explanation on trip fees.

C. Malette states that we have always added \$5 for nonresidents for bus fees. For all trips we are adding \$5. This is an increase but it should be manageable for people.

M. Curran asks if we combine with other towns because she has spoken to people from out of town that have gone on our trips.

C. Malette states that she signs up Plaistow residents first and then if there are places left on the trip she opens it up to outside people.

J. Hoch reviews the adjustments including CPI adjustments, mileage & expense reimbursement adjusted for new IRS rate , reduced hours for Summer, reduced Smith Field

grounds keeping, reduced Plaistow Pride Day, removed youth soccer and removed youth lacrosse.

M. Curran states that it seems the community trip lines are down and it looks like we are taking a loss.

J. Hoch states that the numbers are not final and we should not be taking a loss on this. He will research the numbers.

J. Sherman states that these items pay for themselves. If they are short on revenue, they are short on expenditures. Next year we are projecting over \$100,000 in revenue to offset the budget.

M. Curran states that it looks like the community trips have been overspent this year.

L. Gil states that this is always a wash.

J. Hoch states that not knowing the questions year to date he does not have the information before him. He states generally it is a wash but you can buy tickets and not sell all of them and take a small loss.

M. Curran states that she has been watching this budget for years and this is never a wash. We are running into the community trips now being an issue. 2 years ago one of the shows went poorly. She thinks we over shoot on some of the projects.

L. Gil states that the conversation is how much of an over shoot there is. If we are looking at a few thousand dollars then it is close and he does not see this as an issue

J. Sherman states that the numbers are a timing issue that can not be resolved tonight. We also need to take into consideration the revolving fund. He asks J. Hoch to get these numbers together.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to recommend the Recreation budget at \$247,646.

M. Curran asks if this will reflect the numbers the Town Manager recommended for Old County Road field maintenance.

J. Hoch states this is correct.

J. Sherman states that he would like to increase the amount to the numbers in Cantone's bid.

M. Curran states that we have a motion on the floor already.

J. Sherman withdraws his motion.

► Motion by L. Gil and second by D. Poliquin to recommend the recreation budget at \$247,646.

J. Sherman states again that we budget over a \$100,000 in revenue to offset this budget and we need to keep this in mind. He thinks we need to invest in the new fields and it is critical this year that we have a proven vendor that knows what he is doing. He supports increasing this budget to cover the costs of the new vendor. He believes that it is unfortunate that we reviewed this budget first. He thinks we stand in a lot more comfortable place than we did before because of the cuts made. We are looking at an overall budget that is increasing less than the cost of living. He thinks this is one budget that we can increase to protect our investment. The overall budget including warrant articles is up around 2% and he feels this is a budget that is fiscally responsible. He believes that if we need to raise this budget to protect our capital investment then he would support it.

D. Poliquin states that he has not seen anything that shows the bidder the Town Manager recommended can not do the job.

J. Sherman states that there is nothing to show that they can do the job. They have produced no evidence that they can maintain this type of field on an ongoing basis. This is the reason he will be voting against this budget.

VOTE: 4-1-0

Executive Offices:

J. Hoch states that we have added \$4,500 additional funds for GIS based on the needs assessment. Across all budgets it is a \$27,000 investment based on the needs assessment. He states you will see the GIS expenses appear in several budgets.

M. Curran asks if People Forms is a new expenditure.

J. Hoch states he had placed the People Forms in the budget with an estimate but had not placed the total in the budget.

L. Gil questions if we need to do this in this year.

J. Hoch states that the needs assessment shows an increase of \$30,000 per year to meet the needs and move this forward.

L. Gil asks if this can be phased in.

J. Hoch states it can be phased in and the assessment shows phasing as part of the plan. We are looking at the data we have and rolling the information out to departments in a sequence.

The People Form tool allows us to build a work order system in the Highway Department. This is a low cost way of creating a work order system and we can get some good data from this. The more it languishes in just one department means the investment doesn't spread to your other departments.

M. Curran states we already have this system up and running in 1 department.

J. Hoch states to some extent we have some data available but we do not have GIS up and running.

M. Curran asks how many licenses are involved.

J. Hoch states that it is organization wide. We develop a staff component and an outside user component. We have static data in one place and we are not getting this up and out to other departments.

L. Gil asks what staff in the Executive Department is going to use this software.

J. Hoch states that there will be cross uses that do not fit neatly into one niche. Those have been placed under the Executive Department umbrella.

Planning Coordinator Leigh Komornick states that she has been working closely with Kevin Flanders from PeopleGIS and the nice thing is that he has sorted through the files and he has packaged it so he has created files that she can use. She does not have to call a company and have to pay a fee to use data she had. He has packaged this so she is able to produce maps and data without additional fees. All the data has been there and has been under utilized. We have a lot of data but this was \$800 to produce a map. The saving is going to be great to the Town. Kevin has been great and is available to staff without charging this.

M. Curran states that she attended a demonstration and the staff was very excited to go forward with this. She wants to stress that the staff needs to be trained and use this frequently.

J. Hoch states that of the many nice features of this system is that it runs through a web browser and everyone can use it. Right now the system is complex and only assessed from Planning.

M. Curran states that she was impressed by the information that would be available to residents from the web. This would be a beneficial tool that when used correctly will save time and money.

L. Komornick states that Kevin Flanders will be overseeing all of the programs and teaching the staff. This is not just a consultant that charges for a product. He is teaching you the product and helping develop the product.

L. Gil states his only issue is the phasing in of things and he believes that the executive offices could wait. The utility of this is also a concern. GIS is sophisticated and time consuming. It requires people to stay with it and use it frequently.

J. Hoch states that with maps online you are not relying on the complex systems.

M. Curran states that the whole town would be using the same data. However, she would like to know what this brings specifically to the executive office.

J. Hoch states that licenses, complaint tracking and development tasks are coming from his budget. He is not running a special system in his department. These expenses are the cross departmental issues.

J. Hoch continues reviewing reductions in general supplies, office supplies, equipment purchases, record deeds, overtime for Town Report and other assignments. He has made adjustment to CPI, books and periodicals and equipment maintenance.

M. Curran asks what other assignments in overtime are.

J. Hoch states that this is staff covering meetings and assignments that run over.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Executive Budget of \$239,495.
VOTE: 5-0-0

Election Registration & Vitals:

J. Hoch reviews adjustments to the CPI, and adjusted supervisors of the checklist.

M. Curran states that it is misleading when someone covers 2 departments. She suggests a note indicating this to avoid confusion.

J. Hoch reviews the reduction in the equipment purchase and removal of voting booths.

L. Gil asks if there is any reason to keep the computer old system.

J. Hoch states no because the State will not be supporting the old system.

► Motion by L. Gil and second by J. Sherman to approve the Election, Registration and Vitals Budget of \$126,125.

J. Sherman asks how much of a risk we are running only having 2 printers not 3.

J. Hoch states that we are ok. Most of the time we are only staffing 2 people in the office.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Financial Administration:

J. Hoch states that he adjusted the CPI, audit contract, mapping, GIS and BMSI support. He has reduced the deed research.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve Financial Administration budget of \$255,066.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Legal:

M. Curran states that as much as she would like to make cuts in the budget this is not a budget she wants to cut. She asks how we arrived at the number.

J. Hoch states this is based on year to date numbers. He advises the Board that this is one of the lines you are allowed to overspend if the need arises.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to recommend the Legal budget of \$24,500.

J. Sherman asks for an update on the cable franchise re-negotiations.

J. Hoch states they will be scheduling this in the early part of the new year. He is waiting to see how the Verizon situation plays out.

J. Sherman asks if we will be encumbering funds.

J. Hoch states yes, most likely.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Personnel Administration:

J. Hoch states that on the suggestion of the Budget Committee the worker's compensation line has been adjusted to our actual expense in 2007.

L. Gil states that he is looking at health insurance and it is a 13% increase. He states we had talked about boosting the buy out.

M. Curran states that we have talked about bringing this to an 85/15 split as an option.

J. Sherman states he is in favor of staying with the 90/10.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Personnel Administration budget of \$1,176,057.

J. Sherman states that now that we look at the overall budget and the warrant article being less than a 2% increase, he believes we can absorb this sizeable increase. The actual expenditures were over in 2007 because of the selections by the Union, which is where we saw the most increases.

L. Gil is in favor of doing this now but he wants to review this next year and look at the percentage paid out. He would like to look at this with a differential for new employees coming in.

M. Curran states she is frustrated because she thought we were looking at this and gathering information early on in the year. She believes it is a shame we have not done this. She believes we would not be in this position now if this had been done. She is frustrated and concerned with the increase. She understands it is partially done by the Union. She states that we have made a lot of cuts in this budget than what we originally had seen. We can not keep having this go up. We need to do something.

L. Gil states that the way he is looking at this is that the discussions we have had, have provided a sufficient wake-up to everyone involved. Giving a year, so everyone can adjust is representing a fair warning. Unless something miraculous occurs something will need to be done.

D. Poliquin asks how much of an increase will the warrant articles cause.

J. Hoch states that the numbers tonight are assuming all articles pass.

L. Gil points out that this is a 2% overall increase.

J. Sherman states that we are a service organization and the majority of our expenditures are salary and benefits. He believes that a 2% overall increase in expenditures is fiscally responsible.

D. Poliquin states that there has to be a point in time when we take action. He would like to change to the 85/15 split. He believes that this would be relatively amenable with the staff. He realizes we also have to bring this back to the bargaining unit.

M. Curran asks if we are renegotiating the contract this year.

J. Hoch states that this will be in 2 years.

D. Poliquin recommends making the change. He does not have ill will to any staff but we need to look at what is good for the citizens of Plaistow. He believes bringing this up now is appropriate; this is a hard time for everyone.

C. Blinn states that whether it is this year or next we need to meet in the middle. He doesn't think we could have a better staff. This is reflective of the bottom line of an industry. He felt he was scrutinized out in the public. He thought that he had to make a hard choice just like staff does. He is agreeable to an 85/15 split. He asks what the buy out would be at 85/15.

J. Hoch states that the difference is approximately \$20,000 between a 90/10 and 85/15 for the non-union employees.

C. Blinn states that we have been looking at this and we are not zeroing in on 1 item. Insurance is going up and this is great policy. He believes the Town offers a lot more benefits than the public sector. As far as he is concerned he hopes everyone makes the right decision. He hopes everything gets better and we can all work together. It is getting tough out there. He believes we are asking for a share in the responsibility. It had nothing to do with the personnel personally.

M. Curran states that J. Hoch spoke to staff at the beginning of the year.

J. Hoch states that our provider was coming in with a lower number than industry standards and the next comparable plan. He should have asked the Board for specifics because at that point he thought we had dodged the bullet with the number he brought to the Board. The conversation going forward is about policy changes. He thought he had done what was asked of him and then he found out the Selectmen did not see it that way. He has heard the suggestions tonight about moving forward with policy change and that we have a figure that the Selectmen will budget and agree to percentage increases each year. With a budget he can look at he can plan. Speaking with employees he is seeing that the plans are not one size fits all and someone will be affected. What would be beneficial is if the Selectmen give the Town Manager a number and then we can determine what the best way to deal with the insurance is.

M. Curran would like to reduce this to an 85/15 and keep the coverage the staff has. Then move on next year with policy changes.

J. Hoch states that employees have discussed keeping the coverage and increasing the 5% rather than dealing with the exposure. Remember that I had those conversations a few weeks ago. Since then other things have transpired publically and otherwise. At the time he brought the 85/15 to the Board he was comfortable the staff agreed. He would not make that statement tonight.

J. Sherman states the overall budget is not up much and he believes we can absorb the costs this year. If we make a change, we are implementing something effective January 1st, which is not much time. He does not think we need to do that. Given the changes made we can include the increase and explore policy changes in the upcoming months. He believes with breathing room we can explore inventive options. He believes we can have collective discussions and make changes to the Personnel Plan that work for everyone.

M. Curran states that we do not question cost of living adjustments. Last year the COLA was 2% or better, last year it was approximately a 4% raise or better and next year it will be approximately 5% or better. We have always tried to keep similar with the union. She believes this shows we do care about our employees. She states that it is funny that when you look at making some kind of changes, it can simply be made in another direction. It could simply be made in merit and performances; we could save \$25,000 if you want to start nickel and diming. There are other ways to do it and we always seem to try and increase that pay line and there needs to be a compromise somewhere, whether it is this year or next year. We always want to move those pay lines up and 3.4 is phenomenal.

J. Hoch states it is 3.2 and last year the Selectmen agreed on using the inflation number as reported by the government.

M. Curran states that on average our employees get close to a 5% raise and have in the past.

J. Sherman states they didn't last year.

M. Curran states that it depends on how the Town Manager divvied it out.

J. Sherman states that he would hate to characterize this as an average 5% raise because that is not fair. The Town Manager has presented situations where some pay scales need to be adjusted.

M. Curran states that in some case it was more than 5%.

J. Sherman states some may have been less because adjustments need to be made and they come out of that pool.

VOTE: 3-2-0

Planning and Zoning:

J. Hoch reviews the budget with revised CPI numbers, postage, GIS and publications.

L. Gil asks if the legal line is up because of the elderly housing.

L. Komornick states that we need to be ready if something is challenged. One of the goals in her position is to try to keep legal expenses to a minimum. Sometimes you need to know if you have a clear direction.

M. Curran states this is a valuable resource. We are a volunteer board and this allows you not to feel bullied by big name applicants. We get advice that allows us to make good decisions for the residents. One law suit would spend this budget down and more.

L. Gil asks if there is any benefit to having one counsel vs. two.

M. Curran states that this is the Planning Board's decision.

L. Komornick states that the past lawyer was also representing others in Town.

J. Sherman states the actual Planning Board expenditures is almost the same as the Board of Selectmen's.

L. Komornick states every time we have a Special Town Meeting it comes from this budget.

L. Gil states that based on the elderly housing ordinance, he would recommend the Town Attorney Sumner Kalman review the ordinances.

J. Sherman states that he believes given the circumstances 2 legal firms are appropriate. He supported both Special Town Meetings. He does not see that having 1 attorney would cost less or be more efficient.

L. Gil states that this may have been avoided if Attorney Kalman had reviewed the articles before they went on the warrant.

M. Curran states that some issues could have been avoided by any person showing up at any of the Public Hearing and expressing their opinion. She believes part of the issue was the late hour going to the warrant. The Planning Board and the Selectmen have two different opinions on that and she believes that is ok.

L. Gil disagrees and states it is not ok. He believes that if Attorney Kalman had seen the document issues would have been raised and the outcome would have been very different.

J. Sherman states that he agrees with L. Gil but he thinks this would be best discussed at another time. This is a policy issue and not a budget issue.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to recommend the Planning and Zoning Budget \$88,266.

VOTE: 5-0-0

General Government Buildings:

J. Hoch states there are adjustments to CPI and he revised grounds-keeping by moving shrub pruning to an in-house task.

J. Sherman states that his experience at work is that the bids that come in are boiler plates and are always difficult.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to recommend General Government Building for \$186,881.

M. Curran states that someone is supposed to be more diligent about making sure these budgets are not overspent. She believes we need to work a package deal out. This was a dry year and her lawn did not need a lot of mowing.

J. Hoch states that this is very different than your home lawn.

M. Curran states that this needs to be watched.

L. Gil states the Town Green did not look as good as he would have liked this fall.

J. Hoch states that he tried to get the fall clean-up in one mowing not two. This was not something he pushed hard on.

L. Gil states that we need to have a “not to exceed” clause.

M. Curran asks when this contract is due to be rebid.

J. Hoch states that this contract is up in 2009. He used his predecessor’s request for bid when he first came on because he did not know the Town and the exact needs. The next contract he will have the knowledge on the areas needing attention.

M. Curran asks if this contract was a 1 year contract.

J. Hoch states he exercised the option to renew the bid.

M. Curran states that she recalls a discussion about trying this company for 1 year and we would look at it again.

Consensus of the Board is that they do not recall that conversation.

M. Curran would like to have the minutes reviewed.

J. Hoch reviewed the request he sent out and states that he reviewed the contracts, chose the low bid and signed the contract. He then came and advised the Board of the decision.

L. Gil asks what the bid includes.

J. Hoch reviews the bid line by line.

VOTE: 4-1-0

Cemetery

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Cemeteries Budget of \$13,465.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Town Insurance:

J. Hoch states that we reduced the deductible by one incident from 4 to 3.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Town Insurance of \$56,875.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Advertising/Regional Associations:

J. Hoch states that this line has been adjusted to reflect actual.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Advertising/Regional Associations budget of \$24,670.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Cable:

J. Hoch adjusted the CPI and reduced the number of hours for operators.

► Motion by L. Gil and second by J. Sherman to approve the Cable budget of \$44,446.

L. Gil asks if the Town Manager is comfortable with the line increases.

J. Hoch states he is comfortable with the increases and the actual numbers.

J. Sherman states that he had toyed with reducing the number of hours for the Cable Coordinator. He has not been pleased with the output we have been getting and is not pleased to see an increase in the budget.

J. Hoch would like to see if we can generate additional growth. We are bringing in new equipment and we are addressing the training. If we can not get regular involvement in the Cable Committee, you can not generate programming.

J. Sherman states that he is aware there have been equipment issues, but unless he sees more results he will vote for a decrease next year. He is a huge advocate of cable. He believes that there has been programs taped but have never aired.

C. Blinn agrees.

L. Gil agrees. He had an event and it was a disaster that was never resolved.

C. Blinn states that he spoke to the Cable Coordinator several times. This is a waste of a cable channel. We need to utilize this studio.

L. Gil states that he thinks the number of cable channels across the towns are seeing a lot less activity.

J. Sherman states than this supports reducing the number of hours.

J. Hoch states that there is part of this that is a 2 way street. When someone approaches the Cable Coordinator he is willing to work with them. He does not see a large interest coming to him for cable. We are ready to support anyone coming forward but we are not getting the request from the community.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Conflict of Interest

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Conflict of Interest of \$97.

J. Sherman states that he reviewed the last 2 years of this budget and they have continually spent well under \$100.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Police Department:

J. Hoch reviews the adjustments to CPI, dues and gasoline, removal of equipment purchases and removal of SNHSOU overtime.

M. Curran states that she would like to see the records clerk position reduced back to the 2007 number.

J. Hoch states the additional hours are needed to organize, purge and archive files. The Records Study we did indicated this was an area that needed attention because of the volume of records generated. We need to organize this more efficiently to save space. This is a scope of work beyond day to day activities.

Police Chief Stephen Savage reviews the process of creating files. He states that the time budgeted is not sufficient to archive and purge.

M. Curran states that there are 2 secretaries at the Police Department and she is concerned that we are adding a significant part-time position.

S. Savage states that staffs on the street generate records. You can not keep adding more work to the same 2 people.

M. Curran states that she thought the laptops would increase efficiency.

S. Savage states the laptops keep the people on the streets filling out paperwork and not returning to the station. There is still inevitable paperwork that is flowing in.

J. Hoch states we are looking at 2 components, managing the current flow and a fixed project of dealing with the existing files and reducing storage that will increase space. What needs to be reviewed next year is where you are on the conversion piece and where are you on the regular work.

S. Savage states we have struggled with the optimal number of hours.

J. Sherman states that at first he thought he was going to recommend the same cut. However he sees there is efficiency to earn.

L. Gil states that the GIS development struck him as something that could be phased in later.

J. Hoch states that this is not just making static maps. This is looking at all spatial information and pulling it up to make better decisions. The example is that you may look at a data base on 32 Elm Street you will get all the calls for that address but you don't get the information you need for the neighbors. This will allow more access to all.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve the Police Department Budget of \$1,623,328.

L. Gil asks if there is interest in moving out the GIS piece.

M. Curran states that there are a lot of changes coming with technology. She sees this is as an adjustment period. We could hold this off for 1 year.

C. Blinn asks about the Victim Witness Advocate.

M. Curran states that this position generates revenue.

C. Blinn states you have a space problem and now you have specialty positions from the County taking up space.

S. Savage states from a domestic violence aspect, this is a large benefit.

J. Sherman hears what L. Gil is saying about the GIS. He spent time with the consultant and he sees efficiencies and the data that would be available as a benefit.

VOTE: 1-4-0

► Motion by L. Gil to revise the Police Department Budget by removing the GIS line out in the amount of \$5,000 for a new bottom line of \$1,618,328.

VOTE: 4-1-0

Fire Department:

J. Hoch reviews the revised GIS, mileage & expense reimbursement, events & activities, gasoline and equipment purchases.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Fire Department Budget of \$472,777.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Building Inspection:

J. Hoch reviews the revisions to CPI adjustment, data processing and gasoline.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Building Inspection Budget of \$108,579.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Emergency Management:

J. Hoch reviews the CPI adjustment.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Emergency Management Budget of \$5,979

VOTE: 5-0-0

Public Works Administration:

J. Hoch reviews adjustments to CPI, heating fuel and equipment fuel.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve the Public Works Administration budget for \$244,368.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Highway Department:

J. Hoch reviews adjustments to drainage improvements and pavement management due to the use of Highway Block Grant funds.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Highway Department budget of \$498,700.

J. Sherman asks if the Town Manager is comfortable with plowing, salt & sand lines.

J. Hoch states that he is not comfortable moving the lines.

J. Sherman asks if we are able to purchase salt when it is at a good price and store it.

J. Hoch states that we need to purchase before each storm because we do not have a place to store it.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Solid Waste Disposal:

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve Solid Waste Disposal of \$655,750.

L. Gil states this is a topic he would like on the agenda. Collectively the residents have not been doing something about this and he would like to look at pay as you go systems.

J. Sherman states recycling will reduce costs and reduce taxes.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Water Distribution:

J. Hoch reviews revisions to reductions in engineering, equipment purchase, mileage & expense reimbursement and equipment purchase.

L. Gil asks about heating at the process pump house.

J. Hoch states we are planning to use this for storage.

M. Curran states that it does not need to be heated for storage.

D. Poliquin states that he recalls something in the valving needs to be heated.

J. Sherman states this is \$600 and we can change this later.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Water Distribution budget of \$42,774 and recommend delaying the vehicle purchase for 1 year, which is a removal of \$13,000.

D. Poliquin states that at times personal vehicles are being used to transport equipment when the shared Animal Control truck is in use.

J. Sherman asks what the burden is.

D. Poliquin states that this is not a large time consumption but it is a liability. He believes it could be eliminated this year but it will be needed.

J. Hoch states that there is an issue with transporting equipment and moving equipment from the disciplines sharing the truck. He suggests including \$6,500 in the budget to look at a used vehicle.

M. Curran asks if the maintenance department truck could be used.

J. Hoch states that this truck is schedulable. When the maintenance truck goes he has discussed with the Water Department sharing a truck. He would not recommend spending any money to alter the maintenance truck to support the water line equipment.

Motion withdrawn.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Water Distribution budget of \$49,274, which is adjusting the vehicle purchase of \$6,500.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Health:

J. Hoch reviews adjustment to CPI, hour and mileage & expense reimbursement.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the health budget of \$78,487.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Animal Control

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by D. Poliquin to approve the Animal Control Budget of \$15,620.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Welfare Direct Assistance:

J. Hoch reviews adjustments to heat and shelter & rent.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Welfare Direct Assistance line of \$42,500.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Recreation:

L. Gil states that he is concerned with vandalism at the fields.

J. Hoch states that he will get an update from the Recreation Director.

J. Sherman states that the Warrant Article funds can be used for security.

Debt Services:

J. Hoch states that this adjustment is based on the best estimate from her and the Treasurer. There may be a final adjustment needed.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to approve the Debt Services budget of \$127,002.

VOTE: 5-0-0

Library:

J. Hoch states that the Selectmen may change the bottom line to the library budget but not the line by line budget. He reviews changes suggested by the Trustees to electric, gas and legal.

Discussion of energy costs.

► Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to recommend the library budget of \$445,565.
VOTE: 5-0-0

Warrant Articles:

J. Hoch presents the Selectmen with a draft copy of Warrant Articles. He reviews the suggestions made by the Budget Committee. He asks the Selectmen review them for the next meeting.

M. Curran states that the information on Meals on Wheels is not what she asked for. She would like the number of the Plaistow clients served.

J. Hoch states this is the application passed on from Human services and he will research the number.

SELECTMEN REPORTS:

Consensus of the Selectmen is to forgo reports.

NONPUBLIC:

Motion by J. Sherman and second by L. Gil to enter into nonpublic pursuant to RSA 91A: II, 2a.
ROLL: L. Gil – yes; D. Poliquin – yes; M. Curran – yes; C. Blinn – yes; J. Sherman – yes

M. Curran states no decisions will be made in nonpublic.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting Adjourned at 10:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Carr
Recording Secretary

