



Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee
145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES:

DATE: Tuesday, December 2, 2008

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:34 pm

PRESENT:

Jan Penta – Chairman, Ron Hayes - Vice Chairman,
Sean Fitzgerald – Town Manager
Normand Bouchard, Michele Conte, Bernadine Fitzgerald, Dan Hooper,
Joyce Ingerson, John Sherman, Catherine Willis, Martha Sumner
Kristen Lewis Savage – arrived 6:35 pm

MINUTES:

Motion by R. Hayes to approve the Minutes of November 25, 2008 with no changes.

2nd by B. Fitzgerald.

Vote 9-0-2.

Abstain by M Sumner and N. Bouchard.

AGENDA:

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

J. Sherman discusses the Executive Offices Budget and notes there was a change to this budget regarding the removal of the Town Report which is now in the Advertising, Regional Association Budget. He notes the other change is on the Town Manager Salary line and notes the original budget had the upper limit of the Town Manager Salary because at the time we did not have a Town Manager and it was listed at \$95,000 and is now at \$85,000, also part of the agreement is the possible bonus of \$5,000 so that was added to this budget and he notes he took out the CPI adjustment from that line. He notes Employment Expenses there is a budgeting for 12 months at \$40 a month for internet and phone which added \$480 because the Town Manager is not local and they wanted to make sure there is communication to him. He notes the arithmetic correction has been resolved and the proposed budget is \$276,912. He notes the BOS has approved this budget.

J. Penta notes phone system upgrade also has been added and asks why this is not a Warrant Article and questions if the dollar amount is the issue for it not being a Warrant Article.

J. Sherman notes it is a maintenance thing and they are not implementing a new thing. He discusses the reasons for it and the history of it, along with the quotes from Nikki and the maintenance agreement.

Board discusses dollar figures of previous items that were Warrant Articles and how items were not put in the operating budget.

M. Conte discusses previous total of \$262,912 and notes changes.

J. Sherman discusses previous total was wrong.

J. Penta discusses Part Time Positions and Permanent Positions.

J. Sherman notes who is full time and who the two part time position holders are.

Motion by K. Lewis Savage to accept for consideration the Executive Offices Budget for \$276,912.

2nd by M. Sumner.

Vote 11-0-0.

Motion carries.

ELECTION, REGISTRATION, VITALS -TOWN CLERK

J. Sherman notes change to totals only. No line items changed they are fine. He notes the BOS approved the corrected amount of \$108,161 and notes it is about a \$562 correction.

M. Conte questions postage.

K. Lewis Savage discusses previously held discussion and notes lines are correct it is just the break down of detail.

J. Penta asks Sean to get explanation for the 10-625 line - Notices for Registrations and the reason for the increase.

Motion by R. Hayes to accept for consideration the Town Clerk Budget in the amount of \$108,161.

2nd by K. Lewis Savage.

Vote 11-0-0.

Motion carries.

ELECTION, REGISTRATION, VITALS - ELECTIONS

J. Sherman discusses the Elections portion of the Election, Registration, Vitals Budget and notes that it was updated with actual changes from what was previously seen. He notes the Moderator came to the BOS and brought some worthwhile improvements to make in the budget. He discusses the biggest issue which is there are fewer elections this coming year; the increase to the Staff Supervisors of the Check List rate from \$10 to \$10.25 hourly; changes in polling hours from 7a to 8pm so it is an increase in the number of hours people will work; Computer Time and Computer Training hours have been changed; Supervisors of the Checklist hours have been cut down in the Deliberative Session and he notes that this budget is more accurate than the previous one presented. He discusses the State Survey of Elections sites and notes Plaistow did very well however it was noted that we did not have enough voting stations so the solution to that would be to get additional dividers for the tables. He discusses the text error on the spreadsheet noting the amount changed but the text did not.

J. Ingerson inquires as to why we don't use Town Hall for voting.

J. Sherman discusses that parking is an issue.

Motion by M. Sumner to take under advisement the Election, Registration, Vitals Budget - Elections portion in the amount of \$13,713.

2nd by K. Lewis Savage.

Vote 11-0-0.

Motion carries.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION - FINANCE & BOOKKEEPING

J. Sherman notes that this is strictly an addition correction. The BOS approved \$74,161 for the Finance and Bookkeeping line only.

Motion by K. Lewis Savage to accept for consideration the Finance and Bookkeeping Budget in the amount of \$74,161.

2nd by J. Ingerson.

Vote 11-0-0.

Motion carries.

J. Penta suggests taking this budget back under consideration because the bottom line is different.

J. Sherman notes that we voted on individuals not on total.

PLANNING

J. Sherman notes that the Planning Budget has some actual changes to it, not just corrections. He discusses the mathematical corrections and content changes to this budget noting the difference is it was redone and that it is the first budget that includes the 53rd payroll, a corrected CPI adjustment and Longevity which should have been there all along. He notes the Engineering Consulting Fees have changed, the BOS has approved the traffic study to be done on Main Street, we will be getting a matching grant from Rockingham which we will combine with local tax money and notes this is a change in the operating budget.

J. Penta inquires for more information on the traffic study.

J. Sherman notes the study is of key intersections for safety considerations. He notes that we can have Leigh come in with more detail. He notes that the Safe Routes to School Planning project has been removed from the budget.

J. Penta inquires if it went into another budget.

J. Sherman notes it was confusing putting in expenditure and off set.

R. Hayes inquires what is proper way.

S. Fitzgerald discusses the one time account that is in the budget, and notes a one time receipt likely a grant line will be put into the budget. He notes a one time grant you will see come in and out and notes grants that you apply for are separate revenue fund.

D. Hooper notes grants have been or routinely done in the past.

S. Fitzgerald discusses routine grants that are annually allocated for budget purposes. He notes this was a one time grant and is working with the Finance Department on this and wants to make sure it is in the appropriate account.

R. Hayes questions matching funds.

J. Sherman discusses the total grant which is \$8,000 and notes we will be spending \$8,800 for a total spent of \$16,800.

R. Hayes inquires if the match will be in the revenue side.

S. Fitzgerald discusses intergovernmental transfer where we will not be actually taking in the grant. He discusses appropriating the money and notes Rockingham County will be providing the service. He discusses State and Federal funding, two contracts and notes he can provide further clarification for the committee if needed

D. Hooper questions 53rd payroll.

J. Sherman discusses there are 53 weeks and hourly workers. He notes Sean will be presenting next week the 53rd week. He discusses that the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Building Inspector and Town Manager are salary workers. He notes Sean will have figures for the board.

M. Sumner discusses salary and people reporting underneath salary people.

Motion by M. Sumner to accept the Planning Budget for the amount of \$82,826.

2nd by K. Lewis Savage.

Vote 11-0-0.

Motion carries.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

J. Sherman discusses the 01-4210 Police Department Budget noting the one change to this budget is to the Prosecution Services. He notes as approved by the BOS which has been increased to \$32,100.

J. Penta inquires if that changes the bottom line.

J. Sherman notes yes for a new amount of \$1,782,303.

Motion by M. Sumner to accept the Police Department Budget in the amount of \$1,782,303.

2nd by J. Ingerson.

Vote 10-0-1.

Abstain K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

J. Sherman notes this is strictly a correction to the Fire Department Budget; there is no change to the detail. He notes it is approximately a \$1,000 correction and notes the new total is \$460,649.

J. Penta inquires if the Chief is still planning on adding five people.

J. Sherman notes he believes so and hasn't heard of a different number and notes that it is five new on call.

Motion by R. Hayes to make a move that we accept the Fire Department Budget in the amount of \$460,649.

2nd by K. Lewis Savage.

Vote 11-0-0.

Motion passes.

BUILDING INSPECTION

J. Sherman discusses the Building Inspection Budget noting this is just a correction. He also notes the Selectmen have approved the bottom line of \$108,330.

J. Penta questions if this is an addition problem.

J. Sherman notes yes.

Motion by R. Hayes to accept the Building Inspection Budget in the amount of \$ 108,330.

2nd by K. Lewis Savage.

Vote 11-0-0.

Motion carries.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

J. Sherman discusses the Highway Department budget noting this is just a correction. He indicates it is an increase of \$100. He explains in detail the first account, Notices and Publications, was not getting added in. He reiterates that this is strictly a correction.

Motion by R. Hayes to make a move that we accept for consideration the Highway Department Budget in the amount of \$485,750.

2nd by B. Fitzgerald.

Vote 11-0-0.

Motion carries.

J. Sherman notes the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee are in sync. He notes after tonight's Budget meeting he will be turning this over to Sean who is eager to accept and he will be doing the presenting next week.

S. Fitzgerald notes next week he will have gas, utilities and the 53rd payroll and CPI.

R. Hayes asks for a better definition on how to handle matching grants.

S. Fitzgerald notes he will and is looking into this as well as specifics to RSAs.

J. Sherman suggests going back to the Planning Budget.

J. Ingerson replies yes she would like to hear such.

J. Sherman refers back to notes from the BOS minutes and reads them out loud. He reads the traffic study notes found in the BOS minutes to the Budget Committee.

J. Penta notes she would like to discuss some leftover business regarding Kristin writing to the Conflict of Interest Committee and inquires if she had received any response.

K. Lewis Savage indicates no.

J. Ingerson notes they only meet once a month or every third Tuesday and they may be waiting until they meet again before responding.

NEW BUSINESS:

J. Penta notes John wanted to do a review on the operating budgets.

J. Sherman notes that he thought she may want to know about the changes and noted that it wouldn't take that long to go over reviewing the operating budget.

K. Lewis Savage indicates she would like to ask questions about some budgets.

J. Penta inquires if she believes any of her questions will require the department presenter to be here.

K. Lewis Savage indicates no and notes basically these are things we already talked about. She inquires to look at the Financial Administration Budget 01-4150 on page 2 regarding the mileage line and discusses calculations.

N. Bouchard suggests it should be kept consistent with all the others.

S. Fitzgerald notes that he will look into that.

K. Lewis Savage notes on the same budget, line 40-130 Salary, it needs to be looked at and adjusted. Also on the same budget, 90-120 line we had a discussion trying to figure out how to resolve and noted stipend for meetings or hourly. She brought this up as a reminder and noted staying consistent.

S. Fitzgerald notes he is looking into this issue and notes the past practice that has been established.

J. Sherman notes to look at the meetings and the reimbursement and suggests we should talk about that.

J. Penta notes last week she did ask if anyone wanted to go thru budgets and come up with questions so we can file them and determine if we need a department presenter to make an explanation or presentation.

K. Lewis Savage inquires about the new snorkel truck and what is happening with that.

J. Sherman notes it looks like a warrant article.

REVIEW OF OPERATING BUDGET:

J. Penta notes that as a board they can review each budget individually as follows:

Advertising Regional Association – 01-4197 - no questions or comments.

Ambulance – 01-4215 - no questions or comments.

Animal Control – 01-4414 - no questions or comments.

General Government Buildings – 01-4194

J. Penta questions the addition on this spreadsheet.

J. Sherman inquires as to what she wants to know.

J. Penta discusses the salary and weeks multiplication.

M. Sumner notes it has to do with the longevity line.

J. Penta inquires as to how we got to the \$35,984 number.

J. Sherman notes it is a payroll question and it will be fixed next week.

J. Penta asks Sean to look into the payroll regarding this.

M. Sumner suggests the longevity may have been added in twice by accident.

J. Penta notes the number just doesn't seem correct.

J. Penta inquires about the Part Time Position at the Library being double budgeted.

J. Sherman notes we took it off.

Board Members discuss amount, what happened and when and what approved.

J. Penta discusses combining grounds keeping at multiple sites and getting a discount.

J. Sherman notes Sean is going to look into that.

Cable Studio - 01-4198

M. Conte discusses the Telephone and Communication line, the proposed number of \$1,260 and inquires if we can look into that.

K. Lewis Savage discusses looking into bundled service and getting a cheaper price.

M. Conte inquires if it is too late to put something into miscellaneous.

J. Sherman suggests to have Bob come to the meeting to discuss and finalize this.

J. Ingerson notes that during a Selectmen Meeting or our meeting we had asked Bob to submit receipts for expenses and inquires if he ever did.

D. Hooper notes he does it by the end of the year.

J. Penta noted as of 10/7 he had not submitted anything for mileage only.

Cemeteries - 01-4195

J. Sherman notes lines with zeros and suggests Sean to delete to clean it up

J. Penta notes for historical we would keep the lines.

Conflict of Interest - 01-4199

J. Penta notes she is waiting for response from chairperson.

Conservation Commission – 01-4611 - no questions or comments.

Cultural - 01-4589

J. Penta has inquiries about the Summer Rec Staff.

M. Sumner notes she brings counselors in to help work.

Debt Service - 01-4711

J. Sherman notes this needs to be updated.

S. Fitzgerald notes he will have this next week.

Election Registration and Vitals – Election - 01-4140

J. Sherman notes lines have a couple of zeros and can be removed.

J. Penta notes Sawyers can be removed and Pollard School does not bill us when we use school for voting.

Election Registration and Vitals – Town Clerk - 01-4140

J. Penta notes we want to get clarifications for notices and registrations and why it went up \$100 a month and the reason for the \$1,200 jump from the proceeding two years to this year.

N. Bouchard discusses restoration and notes she talked about this and inquires if she is still willing to push it off one year.

J. Sherman inquires if the Board would like her to come in to the meeting.

N. Bouchard indicates no just an answer to Sean.

S. Fitzgerald notes he has been meeting with various departments, Town Clerk appropriate use at this point but can defer and will follow up with her.

Emergency Management - 01-4290

J. Sherman notes it may be worth it to put in this hourly rate because others have theirs in there.

B. Fitzgerald questions the Expenses.

J. Penta notes there is none listed.

K. Lewis Savage notes that is a good thing in his budget not to have any Expenses in his budget.

Executive Offices - 01-4130

M. Conte inquires about the \$14,000 for the Town Report which was taken out and inquires if it is going to be \$14,000 or \$10,050.

J. Sherman notes \$14,000 is too high.

J. Penta notes it went from \$14,000 to \$10,050.

Financial Administration – 01-4150 – no questions or comments.

Fire dept – 01-4220 – no questions or comments.

Health - 01- 4411

J. Penta notes this one had all the funky numbers on it that did not match.

K. Lewis Savage notes Dennise put in the actual and what the additional would be. She notes you need to add together and that Dennise was just trying to show what she has.

J. Sherman questions if mileage is at the new rate and notes it needs to be either the mileage reduced or increase the request. He notes we should find out.

J. Penta notes it should be consistent.

Public Works Administration - 01-4311

M. Sumner discusses the newspaper article regarding buying salt in bulk and asks John if we looked into this.

J. Sherman notes Dan has looked into it and Sean will look into this.

S. Fitzgerald notes he discussed with Dan the procuring of additional salt, regional bids and contracts.

M. Sumner notes this is just a question to see if we can save money.

S. Fitzgerald notes he would be happy to look into that and notes we do not have the capacity to store a lot of salt.

Highway Department - 01-4312

K. Lewis Savage questions pavement.

J. Sherman opinion is that the expenditures were charged to the wrong account.

R. Hayes discusses his note regarding FEMA.

J. Penta notes he filed for a one year extension from FEMA and the FEMA reimbursement is a line item just above public works administration.

Human Services – 01-4419

K. Lewis Savage inquires if we are waiting for any more to come before the end of the year and if there are any pending.

J. Penta notes the Rockingham Meals on Wheels is missing an account number.

J. Ingerson inquires isn't that under Community Health and Services.

J. Penta notes no those are two separate lines.

R. Hayes notes a correction in the spelling is needed on Disabled Residents.

Welfare Administrative – 01-4441 – no questions or comments.

Welfare Direct Assistance – 01-4442 – no questions or comments.

Building Inspection – 01-4240

J. Penta inquires if this is a new one.

K. Lewis Savage notes we just got that tonight.

Town Insurance – 01-4196 – no questions or comments.

Landfill – 01-4325 Solid Waste Clean-Up – no questions or comments.

Legal – 01-4153

M. Conte inquires on cable and notes we are in negotiations this year but thought we negotiated every 5 years. She discusses numbers listed.

J. Sherman notes we are in negotiations presently and they are ongoing and we have not finalized.

D. Hooper notes the last one we did was 10 years ago.

R. Hayes inquires if there is any end in sight.

J. Sherman notes we are negotiating with a huge company, he doesn't know, and a resolution is not near term at least not by the end of this year he doesn't believe.

Library – 01-4550

C. Willis asks John if he wants to bring up the number we are approving. She discusses MS7, gross budget and net budget.

J. Sherman notes used lower number in order to get this to equate to the total budget of 2007 for both the actual and the approved, however he thinks we should use the lower number which is the net number.

C. Willis notes DRA came up with several suggestions and one said to use the net and one said to use the gross.

J. Sherman defers this to Sean and thinks we should be using the lower number.

Board discusses the use for the last two years which has been the lower number.

J. Sherman suggests letting Sean confirm this. He questions what the Budget Committee approved last year.

C. Willis notes they approved the lower number.

Patriotic Purposes – 01-4583 – no questions or comments.

Personnel Administration – 01-4155 – no questions or comments.

Planning – 01-4191 – no questions or comments.

Zoning – 01-4191

N. Bouchard questions Legal and wants to know if that is separate from the other Legal.

J. Penta indicates yes. She comments that it could be more in the legal budget and discusses what we approved and what we have spent.

M. Sumner discusses Process Engineering and notes it would not be that high for next year.

J. Sherman notes this amount is approaching what our Legal expenses are for the Town. He notes not going to propose anything for elderly housing unless they change their mind.

Police Department – 01-4210

N. Bouchard inquires about the radio canopy for the school.

J. Sherman discusses the canopy at the PAC and notes Sean can follow up with Steve on this. He suggests school district can pay for this and not the Town.

Recreation – 01-4520 – no questions or comments.

Revenue – no questions or comments.

Street Lighting - 01-4316

J. Sherman notes this is one where we took the 6% increase.

B. Fitzgerald questions Expenditure \$44,796 and inquires when it is thru.

K. Lewis Savage notes it is up to September

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J. Sherman notes \$51,434 is thru October.

Water Distribution - 01-4332

J. Penta questions the \$4.20 a gallon for diesel fuel for generators noting diesel has come down and we should take a look at that.

K. Lewis Savage inquires about there being two types of diesel.

J. Penta discusses on road and off road and notes one is for home heating and one is for vehicles.

J. Penta notes next week will be Warrant Articles.

J. Sherman notes yes.

J. Penta discusses next week's agenda and notes they will be going over Warrant Articles, making corrections, asking questions and getting the answers to the questions asked at tonight's meeting.

K. Lewis Savage references the tax rate subject that John brought up last week and notes that she would like to hear about it this evening before she starts looking at the numbers as a whole.

J. Sherman discusses Assessment report he has from Marybeth Walker. He notes there was a sizeable decrease in the property in Plaistow. The total dropped from \$994 million to \$936 million, a total decrease in assessment of \$58 million. The biggest drop was taxable residential

land. The total assessment went from \$402 million to \$278 million to \$134 million a drop of \$124 million which is a drop of 30%. The total assessment for residential building went from \$438 million to \$390 million a decrease of \$48 million. The taxable commercial land was almost exactly level \$106 million before and \$106 million after. The taxable commercial building went up from \$144 million to \$152 million an increase of \$8 million. Overall that shifts the tax burden by quite a bit from residential to commercial. This is a good news bad news situation, residential dropped and commercial went up. Reduction in residential land and building is a reflection of the economy

He notes what is required by law is our best understanding of an arm's length sales agreement, a willing seller selling to a willing buyer, therefore many of the foreclosure situations don't affect the decrease in assessments. He notes the tax rate went from \$19 last year to \$21.50 this year which is an increase of \$2.50. The breakdown is: Town is \$5.10 which is an increase from \$4.60, School is \$12.79 which is increase \$11.12 from last year, State portion of school funding is \$2.43 this year which is an increase from \$2.39 last year, the County is 98 cents which is an increase from 89 cents last year. He discusses his own personal tax bill for an example to his explanation.

J. Penta inquires if the Assessor said anything about the number of foreclosures. She then discusses the newspaper article she read regarding 51 foreclosures in 2007 and already in October there was 53 for this year and she was wondering how much this had increased.

J. Sherman notes he was not sure and does not recall the number for this month but notes the foreclosures are up.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Audrey Michaud