



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

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, December 15, 2009

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:43 pm

PRESENT: Kristin Lewis Savage – Chair, Martha Sumner, Vice Chair,
Normand Bouchard, Gayle Hamel, Tricia Holt, Joyce Ingerson,
Neal Morin, Ben Sadewicz, Catherine Willis, John Sherman–Selectmen Rep.

EXCUSED: Dan Hooper, Ron Hayes & Michele Conte

Additional Attendees: Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager; Lori Sadewicz, Finance Director;

MINUTES:

Motion by M. Sumner to approve the minutes of December 8, 2009 as written.

2nd by N. Bouchard.

Vote 7-0-3.

Abstain: M. Sumner, B. Sadewicz, K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

AGENDA:

REVENUE REVIEW

J. Sherman noted PUC (Public Utilities Commission) had issued their report about the storm and the utilities response to it. The information could be viewed on www.puc.nh.gov. He discussed the potential cost being due to putting all lines underground which he is in favor of however it is not as simple as one may think.

M. Sumner and J. Sherman held a discussion regarding the utility company.

N. Bouchard discussed 2010 column of the Revenue sheet and inquired about the numbers listed.

S. Fitzgerald discussed future changes; information submitted to DRA; tax rate established in the fall; estimates on revenues which are expectations of what is expected to be taken in; and MS4 grouping of numbers.

K. Lewis Savage inquired about the Actuals date.

L. Sadewicz noted October 31, 2009.

K. Lewis Savage inquired when the Board would receive more updated information.

L. Sadewicz noted when she balances November with the Treasurer which should be in a week.

BUDGET REVIEW

K. Lewis Savage asked Sean to walk the Board through the changes made to the Budgets.

S. Fitzgerald discussed changes with the Cable Studio's relocation; the head-end move; costs associated with the Cable Studio; Cable Studio Coordinator position; recommendation to increase the Cable Coordinator's pay scale; discussion with Cable Committee; combining duties with another position such as web development; and BOS 's recommendation to account for some of the hours of the Cable Coordinator (15 hours a week) under the Cable Budget and 10 hours a week under the Executive Budget. He noted the range of hours could change weekly depending on what the Town would be doing for broadcasting.

B. Sadewicz inquired if the Police Department would be included in the list of areas covered by cable.

S. Fitzgerald noted that they are currently arranging the Library for cable access and the future goal would be the Police and Fire Department.

K. Lewis Savage inquired for Sean to clarify the break down on future budgets sheets given regarding the 2009 column, 2010 Proposed column and the Changed column for the Cable Budget.

S. Fitzgerald discussed the 53rd week and numbers being presented initially with the budget.

N. Bouchard and J. Sherman discussed description listed for Permanent Position.

K. Lewis Savage read and reviewed changes in the Cable Studio Budget line by line.

J. Sherman noted the Rental Lease line would disappear in 2011

M. Sumner inquired when the lease expired for the Cable Studio.

S. Fitzgerald noted it expired last month and currently the location was a month to month lease.

S. Fitzgerald reviewed the Training line with Board members.

J. Sherman noted he made the motion to remove the Miscellaneous line item via the BOS.

K. Lewis Savage noted the bottom line was decreased. The new bottom number was \$31,475.

Motion by M. Sumner to take the Cable Budget under consideration for a new figure of \$31,475.

2nd by G. Hamel.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

J. Sherman noted the BOS increased the Executive Budget in the amount of \$12,000 for the extra 10 hours that the individual would work on the computer stuff.

K. Lewis Savage noted the Board wasn't going to motion repeat budgets, they were going to go through Sean's memo and then make the necessary motions, doing each changed budget only once.

S. Fitzgerald began his review of Gasoline Adjustment line by line.

M. Sumner noted that Sean did not need to go line by line and inquired for Board's input.

Consensus of the Board was not to go line by line.

S. Fitzgerald reviewed the Mileage Reimbursement rate.

M. Sumner inquired if any members of the Board had questions.

No Committee member had questions.

S. Fitzgerald reviewed the Electrical Utility Adjustment noting the cost would be going down.

N. Bouchard inquired why the Welfare Assistance Utility rate did not go down.

S. Fitzgerald noted that during the winter months it was something that residents required help with to stay warm and noted the line was being expended at a pretty fair level. He discussed the Gas Utility Adjustment noting the evaluation of such had determined a decrease for 2010.

N. Bouchard discussed the Welfare Direct Assistance line noting that only \$712.85 was expended so far in 2009 and inquired why Sean would keep it the same.

S. Fitzgerald discussed the Human Service Department's application process and people in need.

B. Sadewicz inquired what \$300 was for in the Cable Studio.

S. Fitzgerald noted it was for Route 125 and explained the splitting of the current utility bill with another tenant over there.

K. Lewis Savage noted that there were 11 changes to budgets and the Committee would need to make their motions now.

Motion by B. Sadewicz to take under advisement \$280,110 for the Executive Budget.

2nd by J. Ingerson.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

Motion by N. Morin to take under consideration the Town Clerk Budget for \$103,578.

2nd by J. Ingerson.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

Motion by M. Sumner to take under advisement General Government for \$204,846.

2nd by G. Hamel.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

J. Ingerson questioned if putting off certain items would hurt the Town in the long run.

S. Fitzgerald discussed tight budget; level funding lines; and looking at lines for several months.

J. Sherman discussed how playing catch up at a later date could effect the town and advised for the Committee to keep that question in mind with regard to the RSMS report.

Motion by B. Sadewicz to take under advisement the Police Department Budget for \$1,787,047.

2nd by M. Sumner.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

Motion by M. Sumner to take under consideration the Fire Department Budget in the amount of \$449,709.

2nd by G. Hamel.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

Motion by M. Sumner to take under consideration Building Inspections in the amount of \$108,786.

2nd by T. Holt.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

Motion by G. Hamel to take Public Works Administration under consideration for \$271,134.

2nd by B. Sadewicz.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

***Motion by M. Sumner to take under consideration the Health Department Budget for \$78,914.
2nd by T. Holt.
Vote 9-0-1.
Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.
Motion passes.***

K. Lewis Savage noted the numbers for Animal Control were conflicting.

Board reviewed and discussed numbers.

***Motion by M. Sumner to take the Animal Control Budget under advisement for \$15,810.
2nd by N. Morin.
Vote 8-1-1.
Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.
Opposed: J. Sherman.
Motion passes.***

***Motion by G. Hamel to accept for consideration the Recreation Budget in the amount of \$203,779.
2nd by M. Sumner.
Vote 9-0-1.
Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.
Motion passes.***

***Motion by G. Hamel to accept the Conservation Budget for consideration in the amount of \$4,875.
2nd by M. Sumner.
Vote 9-0-1.
Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.
Motion passes.***

Solid Waste

S. Fitzgerald discussed the 7 bids received from the RFP; active bid process; currently looking at all bids received and analyzing information. He noted he was comfortable with dropping the number that was carried in the budget for solid waste by \$56,800. He discussed tipping fees in the proposals were lower than what the Town was currently paying. He discussed by weekly recycling and bringing in the budget under last year.

M. Sumner discussed large buckets being issued by the companies in Massachusetts which are forcing residents to recycle.

S. Fitzgerald discussed a recycling committee being established in Town; public awareness; being able to recycle by using totes; and single string recycling.

Motion by N. Morin to take under consideration the Solid Waste Disposal Budget for \$615,000.

2nd by M. Sumner.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

Board discussed updated information for Landscaping being given for next week as the current memo was addressed at the BOS meeting and changes were to be made.

S. Fitzgerald discussed Legal; negotiating Cable Franchise Agreement with Comcast; finalizing tenants of the licensing agreement and his recommendation to lower the line by \$10,000.

N. Bouchard discussed reducing the Legal budget downward.

S. Fitzgerald discussed land use and planning efforts.

K. Lewis Savage noted a change was needed in the description line to add “except planning and zoning”.

Motion by N. Morin to reduce the Legal Services line 1-4153-10-320 Legal-Cable Consultant Attorney line from \$12,000 to \$2,000 for new bottom line of \$42,000.

2nd by G. Hamel.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

Committee held discussion regarding reducing the Legal Budget further.

N. Bouchard discussed making a motion to reduce the Legal Services Budget further.

J. Sherman noted however the Committee chooses to vote he would bring this information back to the BOS for a review.

K. Lewis Savage noted for the record she, in the past was argumentative regarding lowering this budget previously, and noted she favored to raise this line last year and feels the amount needs to be higher than what was budgeted in 2009, but not sure if it needs to be as high as \$40,000.

Consensus of the Committee was to defer to the Selectmen to review this line again and come back with a final recommendation to the Committee.

Elections

S. Fitzgerald noted the Elections Budget had been increased as a result of a Special Election in January for a State Representative.

Motion by M. Sumner to accept the Elections Budget in the amount of \$19,461.

2nd by G. Hamel.

Vote 9-0-1.

Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.

Motion passes.

S. Fitzgerald noted there would be some future changes that were not discussed with the BOS and he would bring to the BOS next week: Unemployment, Insurance Costs and Workman's Comp.

Road Surface Management

N. Bouchard questioned column headings and inquired the meaning of Reveal along with RSR.

S. Fitzgerald noted he would look into the meaning of Reveal however he believed it to be related to the software and RSR stood for Road Surface Rating.

N. Bouchard noted that some roads have major cracks in them and inquired why isn't the Town putting a sealer in them.

S. Fitzgerald discussed a four staffed department; cost associated with a contractor coming out to seal the roads; no justification for expenditures; no cost benefit; skim and overlay being put on roads and good roads in Plaistow along with some roads that need work.

Committee discussed the Road Surface Management information presented to them last week.

WARRANT ARTICLE REVIEW

S. Fitzgerald noted there were some changes to the Warrant Articles but there were no new ones.

K. Lewis Savage noted the Committee was not voting on the Warrant Articles tonight, they would be waiting until they had a full packet. They were just reviewing the changes this evening.

Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund Deposit

S. Fitzgerald noted the Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund Deposit Warrant Article did not change only the date was added for the balance of the fund.

Fire Suppression Water Line Expansion

S. Fitzgerald read the wording for the Fire Suppression Water Line Expansion Warrant Article as this was a new article presented to the Committee.

M. Sumner suggested the Intent's last sentence should add "fire suppression" so it doesn't look like the Town has a public water system.

Westville Road Bridge Replacement

S. Fitzgerald noted the wording for the Westville Road Bridge Replacement Warrant Article had been changed and he read the current Warrant Article wording and discussed notes on page 10.

B. Sadewicz inquired if the DOT would still pay even if the bridge was not red listed.

S. Fitzgerald discussed not prioritized until it was red listed however they would get funding.

K. Lewis Savage inquired if the Committee could have a complete packet of Warrant Articles before the 29th and inquired when the Committee would receive a Default Budget.

S. Fitzgerald noted as soon as they get done finalizing the budget. K. Lewis Savage asked that it be available to the Committee prior to the next meeting as it is important in the overall assessment of the budget approval.

K. Lewis Savage stressed to S. Fitzgerald the importance of the Committee receiving the paperwork timely and as close to possible after the BOS meeting, especially in light of the fact that the Public Hearing on the budget is quickly approaching.

J. Sherman discussed the total cost of Warrant Articles submitted tonight: \$262,264; the amount of Warrant Articles that impact taxes: \$262,264; the value of Warrant Articles under consideration but not approved: \$264,184. He noted this did not include the \$180,000 Warrant Article that was not in the packet; it did not include the cost if there was going to be a cost related to union negotiations and the total if added the three together was \$700,000 in round numbers.

Upcoming meetings/schedule and handouts

K. Lewis Savage noted the next meeting was December 29th and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

OLD BUSINESS:

None reported.

NEW BUSINESS:

None reported.

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Audrey DeProspero