



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

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** Tuesday, December 29, 2009

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:35 pm.

**PRESENT:** Kristin Lewis Savage – Chair, Martha Sumner, Vice Chair, Michele Conte, Gayle Hamel, Ron Hayes, Tricia Holt, Dan Hooper, Neal Morin, Ben Sadewicz, Catherine Willis, John Sherman–Selectmen Rep.

**EXCUSED:** Normand Bouchard and Joyce Ingerson

Additional Attendee: Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

**MINUTES:**

*Motion by D. Hooper to approve the Minutes of December 8, 2009 as written.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Sumner.*

*Vote 10-0-1.*

*Abstain: K. Lewis Savage.*

*Motion passes.*

*Motion by M. Sumner to approve the Minutes of December 15, 2009 as written.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> by T. Holt.*

*Vote 7-0-4.*

*Abstain: K. Lewis Savage; D. Hooper; R. Hayes and M. Conte.*

*Motion passes.*

**AGENDA:**

**REVENUE REVIEW**

K. Lewis Savage noted the Committee just received the Revenues this evening and suggested for all to take home and review. She inquired as to the date of the revenue.

S. Fitzgerald noted Actuals are through the end of last week and the Town is awaiting the information on Rooms and Meals revenue. He noted some revenue had not been ten keyed however the numbers listed were based on what they took in through December.

J. Sherman discussed trend: revenues received at the end of the year, at the last minute.

S. Fitzgerald discussed the revenues overall going to be tight.

Board and Sean reviewed page 3 of Revenues and Court House information.

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## **BUDGET REVIEW**

S. Fitzgerald discussed: 2010 Buildings and Grounds Budget/Grounds Maintenance was reduced by \$24,070; Cemetery Budget/Grounds Keeping was reduced by \$9,940; Highways & Streets Budget/Equipment Purchase was increased by \$19,000; and Tree Maintenance/Fertilizer line 1-4312-80391 was increased by \$9,500. Several adjustments to Personnel Budget: Unemployment increased by \$169 and NH Worker's Compensation was reduced downward slightly by \$2,000. The Board voted to leave the Legal line funded at the proposed limit. Discussion ensued regarding landscaping and the savings along with the calculated average of four highway staff and time they would have to invest into the landscaping maintenance.

J. Sherman noted that he agreed with the numbers Sean discussed regarding the savings. He referenced an earlier email Sean sent to the Budget Committee members.

K. Lewis Savage inquired about numbers being updated on an earlier memo Sean sent to Committee members.

S. Fitzgerald gave handout regarding landscaping to Committee members. He discussed mowing; cap; leased commercial grade mower; annual savings; calculating numbers downward; recreation expenditures that would facilitate related expenses; incorrect numbers; net change; reduced baseline of general landscaping cost in 2009 downward by \$10,000; and the base cost savings on those changes.

K. Lewis Savage discussed Sean's memo and noted corrections needed to page 2: under 2010 Landscaping Cost the heading at the bottom needed to be changed and the 2010 Cost Savings heading needed to read 2011 and others as well.

D. Hooper suggested the memos Sean gave to Committee members be added to the Town's web page under the Budget Committee's page. Sean stated he would do so.

***Motion by D. Hooper to recommend to take under consideration Cemetery Budget for \$3,525.  
2nd by M. Sumner.  
Vote 10-0-1.  
Motion passes.***

***Motion by B. Sadewicz to take under consideration Government Buildings for \$180,776.  
2nd by R. Hayes.  
Vote 10-0-1.  
Motion passes.***

***Motion by M. Sumner to take under consideration the Highway Department Budget in the amount of \$545,090.  
2nd by B. Sadewicz.  
Vote 10-0-1.  
Motion passes.***

***Motion by D. Hooper to recommend the Personnel Administration Budget for \$1,315,502.  
2nd by G. Hamel.  
Vote 10-0-1.  
Motion passes.***

S. Fitzgerald and Committee discussed Veteran's Tax Credit Petition and the possibility of the Warrant being changed.

J. Sherman noted the BOS had not taken a vote on the Veteran's Tax Credit Petition because they were looking for more information. He discussed the tax impact in rough numbers and the history of the Veteran's Tax Credit.

### **DEFAULT BUDGET REVIEW**

S. Fitzgerald discussed how the Town established a Default Budget; mechanics of the RSA; contracts and salaries being budgeted in 2010 to level fund services; Solid Waste contract page 2, account 4323 and the reduction; negotiated contracts being level funded and the bottom line of \$7,259,800.

J. Sherman discussed responsibility of the Board of Selectmen: voted on at a local Town level; Budget Committee not having to approve and only being given to Budget Committee as a courtesy for the understanding as to how it is derived.

D. Hooper discussed recommending the Operating Budget and not the Default Budget.

K. Lewis Savage inquired how the increase for the Legal expense line came about.

S. Fitzgerald discussed \$10,500 increase based on what they generally were going to expect in terms of cost related to negotiation contracts and legal matters that they would face in 2010.

M. Sumner questioned the increase in the Legal Budget and inquired how that could be done if last year's budgeted amount was lower.

S. Fitzgerald discussed and read RSA 40:13, IX (b) "Default budget" and discussed meeting regulatory responsibilities in 2010 and contractual obligations that will arise in 2010.

M. Sumner discussed contractual services that have been committed to and not just increasing a line.

D. Hooper discussed taking comments from voters and voicing their opinions at deliberative Session.

M. Sumner suggested for Sean to discuss matter with Atty. Kalman regarding the Default Budget.

K. Lewis Savage discussed putting in last year's number and the possibility of getting the flexibility of getting the bottom line number through all the changes that are in various accounts. She suggested that Sean should recalculate the Default Budget.

C. Willis discussed the Library Budget and noted it was more because they reduced the 2010 utility budget however the 2009 number was a greater number than 2010 and the Default Budget was higher than the Operating Budget.

J. Sherman inquired if they were comfortable with putting \$56,000 back in the Default Budget.

K. Lewis Savage and M. Sumner agreed as that is the proper way to calculate the default.

### **WARRANT ARTICLE REVIEW**

S. Fitzgerald discussed his memo presented to the Budget Committee members on December 22 noting the Board of Selectmen approved the following Warrant Articles on 12/21/09: Public Safety Complex Feasibility Study \$25,000; Highway Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund \$66,000; Water Line Expansion (Old Road to Walton Road) \$50,000; Cell Tower Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund \$10,000; Fire Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund \$88,000; Conservation Capital Reserve Fund \$5,000; Town Hall Emergency Generator \$45,000; Building System Capital Reserve Fund \$5,000; and Maple Ave Pumps & Pump House Capital Reserve Fund \$58,400 for a Total of \$352,400.

S. Fitzgerald discussed Chief McArdle's memo regarding the Fire Suppression Capital Reserve Warrant Article and the Police Department's study regarding the Safety Complex Feasibility Study. He reviewed the 24 page study and details behind Chief Savage's presentation given to the Board of Selectmen. All Committee members were given copies of Memo and Feasibility Study for their review.

D. Hooper inquired why the Fire Department's deficiencies were not listed on the study if the study was for both.

S. Fitzgerald noted the Police Department was significantly more impacted than the Fire Department and noted they were going to look into both departments.

D. Hooper discussed other local areas voting this type of article down for a new police department because some were not in favor of the police and suggested to have the Fire Department listed because some will vote for the Fire and not the Police. He discussed prisoners/criminals being listed and noted it should be softened because not all were prisoners or criminals.

D. Hooper and S. Fitzgerald held a discussion regarding the Feasibility Study.

D. Hooper and T. Holt recommended that the public be invited to see the Safety Complex to better understand the needs of the facility.

B. Sadewicz discussed public presentation and noted it would require the Fire Department to be listed.

K. Lewis Savage discussed wording of the Warrant Article and inquired how detailed do you want to get and would you want to bind yourself for the future.

Committee discussed wording for the Public Safety Complex Feasibility Study Warrant Article and noted the wording needed adjusting.

J. Sherman noted if the Committee could come up with consensus language he would be happy to take it back to the Board of Selectmen for review.

K. Lewis Savage discussed reviewing Warrant Articles only and not voting on them tonight.

K. Lewis Savage noted the Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund Deposit Warrant Article was the same as seen earlier and the Fire Suppression Water Line Expansion Warrant Article had changed.

S. Fitzgerald noted they did change some information on the Fire Suppression Water Line Expansion Warrant Article and discussed the water line project in 2010; the information from Chief McArdle which he included in the Committee member's folders tonight; and recommending to raise \$50,000 from 2010 taxes to offset close to a ½ million dollars of water line expansion.

N. Morin inquired if there was any way to make the "amount to be raised" line to be bold.

J. Sherman suggested to un-bold the "appropriation" and bold the "amount to be raised".

J. Sherman showed the Committee members the map of the water line project.

T. Holt and S. Fitzgerald held a conversation regarding dry hydrants and their locations.

K. Lewis Savage discussed presentations regarding completing the loop on Route 125 and inquired if they were putting themselves in a bad position by not putting money in that account just in case possible funding does arise. She noted she was nervous about depleting the account.

J. Sherman noted the Selectmen will sit down and plan a strategy regarding future years.

K. Lewis Savage discussed the Cell Tower Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund and noted it previously was \$20,000 and now was down to \$10,000.

S. Fitzgerald noted the Cell Tower Article had been reduced down to \$10,000 based on a cost assessment. They were seeding the Cell Tower Maintenance Capital Reserve and funding some cement work for the footings of the tower. He referred to the 2007 study regarding cost estimate for painting and structural deficiencies of the tower. He noted the Board of Selectmen had requested more detailed information for the work.

D. Hooper and S. Fitzgerald held a discussion regarding maintenance versus capital reserve fund.

K. Lewis Savage and S. Fitzgerald held a discussion regarding Warrant Article and maintenance.

Consensus of the Committee was to have the Selectmen know the Budget Committee's opinion regarding \$30,000 based on \$200,000 over a 7 year span or \$40,000 based on \$200,000 over a 5 year span. These numbers were derived from earlier notes given to the Budget Committee.

D. Hooper noted if the BOS was solid on \$10,000 that was fine and if the BOS wanted to review based on the information given that was fine also. He noted he needed more facts and the BOS had the facts. If they did not have the facts, it should be considered holding off on creating this account until the Town has enough information.

B. Sadewicz discussed raising the amount of money and level fund over the amount of years

Committee held discussion regarding opinions for John to bring to Board of Selectmen.

K. Lewis Savage discussed clarification needed in the wording of the Intent. Her opinion was not to support as it was.

J. Sherman noted the BOS was presenting the Article as is.

K. Lewis Savage noted the Conservation Fund Deposit Warrant Article and the information in the Emergency Power Generator for Town Hall Warrant Article stayed the same but the dollar amount increased.

S. Fitzgerald noted the Warrant Article for the Emergency Power Generator for Town Hall increased slightly and discussed the Article and figures.

S. Fitzgerald discussed Building Systems Capital Reserve Fund Deposit Warrant Article and noted the BOS asked him to itemize all the unanticipated repair costs in 2009. He reviewed the itemized list totaling \$6,076.08. He discussed the use of the fund, the fund balance and the interest associated with the fund.

M. Sumner and J. Sherman held a discussion regarding the \$20,000 established in the fund and replenishing the account.

D. Hooper discussed the Intent and noted the previous was for unanticipated emergency repairs and not for long term building maintenance projects.

J. Sherman agreed and suggested to change "long term" to "unanticipated".

S. Fitzgerald discussed Fire Protection System Pumps/Pump House Replacement Capital Reserve Account which was to offset the cost associated with maintenance to the pumps and the pump house replacement.

M. Sumner suggested that the Intent wording should include “this is a multiyear warrant article” and to clean up the Intent with the “pump” and “pumps” words.

K. Lewis Savage suggested that they not create a new account but instead use the current water-line capital reserve account and fund that as the pump(s)/house are part of the waterline. This would allow for more flexibility and keep voters familiar with the warrant articles that have appeared in the past. Sean stated he would look into this and discuss it with the Board of Selectmen.

#### **Upcoming meetings/schedule and handouts**

K. Lewis Savage asked Sean to follow up with any changes from the Board of Selectmen’s meeting next Monday to the Budget Committee members the following day (Tuesday).

She noted the Committee’s schedule was as follows:

January 5th was for final review and to recommend/approve budgets and warrant articles;

January 12th was for changes only, review of MS-7 and any petitioned articles with budgetary impact – possibility of no meeting if there were no changes;

January 14th was Public Hearing and

January 15th was snow date for Public Hearing

#### **Old Business:**

No Old Business discussed.

#### **New Business:**

No New Business discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Audrey DeProspero