

DRAFT
Budget Committee Minutes
Town of Sandown, NH

Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 3, 2012

Type of Meeting: Public

Method of Notification: Public posting – Town Hall & Post Office

Meeting Location: Town Hall, Second Floor

Members Present: Bruce Cleveland, Selectwoman Copp (*Selectman Ex-Officio*), Lauren Cairns, Jon Goldman, Cathy Gorman and Dawn Nicolaisen

Recording Secretary: Sue Reynolds

Meeting was called to order by Bruce Cleveland at 6:30 PM.

Bruce Cleveland asked the Committee to review the minutes of Wednesday, September 26, 2012. Dawn Nicolaisen stated that line 11 should have Jon Goldman's name as he was present during the meeting last week. Bruce Cleveland stated line 105 should read moderator and line 95 the number for the Net Expenses should be \$286,513.52.

Motion by Brenda Copp to accept the minutes of Wednesday, September 26, 2012 as amended.

Seconded by Jon Goldman.

In Favor, Lauren Cairns, Bruce Cleveland, Brenda Copp, Jon Goldman, Cathy Gorman.

Abstain, Dawn Nicolaisen

Motion passes 5-0-1

Bruce Cleveland asked Bill Carter to come forward to speak with the Budget Committee in regards to becoming a member. Bill explained that he has no intentions of running after this term has expired. He also stated that he has not always agreed with the budget process in the Town and feels the Budget Committee should operate by the law and not

by precedence. Bill has been on the Budget Committee and BOS for several terms in the Town of Derry.

Motion by Jon Goldman to appoint Bill Carter to fill the vacant seat until March 2013 on the Budget Committee.

Seconded by Brenda Copp.

In Favor, Dawn Nicolaisen, Lauren Cairns, Bruce Cleveland, Brenda Copp, Jon Goldman, Cathleen Gorman.

Motion passes 6-0-0

Brenda Copp swore in Bill Carter and the Committee signed the appropriate paperwork.

Motion by Bruce Cleveland to put the Town Clerk Account budget 4140.1 on the table for discussion.

Seconded by Lauren Cairns.

Michelle Short is presenting this budget. Bruce Cleveland asked about the increase in the Revenue line and Michelle stated people are purchasing new cars so the registrations are up and also there are not as many tax liens, (on the tax collector's account) which contributes to the amount of Revenue. Michelle also stated the employee hours are lower as there is only 1 election next year and not 4 like this year. She also said she took a look at her budget and lowered any line that she could. Jon Goldman asked what the Deliberative Session line is for and Michelle said this is for a recording secretary to do the minutes. Jon also asked Michelle how she came up with the amount of the Revenue and Michelle said she looked at the month end from January through September and for the other months she looks at what was brought in the previous year.

Motion by Brenda Copp to accept the Town Clerk budget with Gross Expenses of \$48,162.38, Revenue of \$934,974.38 and Net Expenses of -\$886,812.00 pending further review.

Seconded by Dawn Nicolaisen.

In Favor, Dawn Nicolaisen, Lauren Cairns, Bruce Cleveland, Brenda Copp, Jon Goldman, Cathleen Gorman, Bill Carter

Motion passes 7-0-0

Motion by Bruce Cleveland to put the Tax Collector Account budget 4150.4 on the table for discussion.

Seconded by Brenda Copp.

Michelle Short is presenting this budget. Bruce Cleveland asked about the Tax Lien Expenses line and the decrease and Michelle Short explained that there are fewer properties with liens on them so the expenses are lowered. She said in years past there have been 170 or 180 properties with liens opposed to only 124 for 2011 tax season. Jon Goldman asked about the reduction in the Tax Bill Printing line and Michelle said she overestimated how many bills she needed for last year so she has a lot of stock left over that she will be using for this year. Brenda Copp wants to let the Budget Committee know that Michelle is a department head that goes above and beyond her call of duty. Brenda states that Michelle has declined her raise for next year. Bruce Cleveland asked Michelle why and Michelle stated that she loves her job and said that she hasn't had to take anything new on this year. She also said that she has good help and they make her job easy as well. Jon Goldman is concerned that if the Town gives out a 2% increase every year then in 5 years Michelle would be at a 10% lower rate than where she should be and he wants to be sure she won't come back to the Town in 5 years looking for a larger increase. Michelle Short said she will have no regrets in the years to come in regards to her decision.

Motion by Brenda Copp to accept the Tax Collector budget with Gross Expenses of \$59,180.09, Revenue of \$12,736,153.24 and Net Expenses of -\$12,676,973.15 pending further review.

Seconded by Dawn Nicolaisen.

In Favor, Dawn Nicolaisen, Lauren Cairns, Bruce Cleveland, Brenda Copp, Jon Goldman, Cathleen Gorman, Bill Carter

Motion passes 7-0-0

Bruce Cleveland said he suggested to the Conservation Commission to meet on November 7th or November 14th and he is waiting to hear from them. He also stated that the Budget Committee will review the Moderators budget next week.

Bruce asked Brenda about the Plumbing account Supply line and Brenda said she will let the Committee know as soon as she hears back from the Plumbing Inspector.

Motion by Bruce Cleveland to put the ZBA Account budget 4191.3 on the table for discussion.

Seconded by Brenda Copp.

Bruce said there was a discrepancy on the hourly rate and that it has been corrected. Cathy Gorman feels that the amounts at the bottom of the page for 2011 and 2012 for the rate of pay are not correct. Bruce said he spoke with Darlene and she said the amounts are ok the way they are. Cathy mentioned that what they approved last year and what they are being presented with this year don't match. Jon Goldman said he is still not convinced that the rates are correct according to Cathy Gorman's finding. Cathy stated that the 2011 requested 13 weeks is 15.92, and the 39 weeks was 16.24 and they are now listed at 15.92 going into 2013. She feels they should be making \$16.24 now. Bruce said he was told the recording secretary is currently making \$15.92 and is not sure why that amount is not reflected in the budget. He also stated that the amount requested in the Payroll line reflects that she is making \$15.92 now and will be making \$16.24 with the 2% increase and would like the Committee to approve the budget tonight. Jon Goldman said he would rather wait until everyone is clear on the numbers to approve this budget. He would also like to see the numbers be correct so that next year the Committee doesn't have the same confusion.

Motion by Brenda Copp to accept the ZBA Account with Gross Expenses of \$1,570.32, Revenue of \$500.00 and Net Expenses of \$1,070.32 pending further review.

Seconded by Bruce Cleveland.

In Favor, Bruce Cleveland, Brenda Copp, Bill Carter.

Opposed Dawn Nicolaisen, Lauren Cairns, Jon Goldman, Cathy Gorman.

Motion fails 3-4-0

Bruce Cleveland asks the Committee what it will take to pass this budget. Brenda said usually what happens is the budget won't be brought up again until the final budget hearing. Bruce wants to know what the Committee is looking for, for information.

Lauren Cairns said the budget was tabled last week due to lack of information and there

is still some information that is not clear. She said Cathy brought up new information that needs explaining. Bruce said the Committee is voting on 2013's budget and last year's numbers shouldn't matter. Jon Goldman said if you follow the flow if the presumed 2% increase the numbers don't add up and he feels the Committee would like them to add up through the current year. Jon found an email from Darlene that states that in 2012 the 13 and 39 weeks should have been \$15.92 as there was no 2% given last year as it was not requested or approved. Jon continues to read that Steve Misner has requested a 2% increase for this year which will bring the rate of pay up to \$16.24 will be effective for the 39 weeks. Bruce said this budget will be tabled until next week.

Election of Officers

Motion by Brenda Copp to appoint Bruce Cleveland as the Chairman of the Budget Committee.

Seconded by Jon Goldman.

Bruce asked if other Committee members are interested, and there was no interest.

In Favor, Dawn Nicolaisen, Lauren Cairns, Brenda Copp, Jon Goldman, Cathleen Gorman, Bill Carter

Abstain Bruce Cleveland

Motion passes 6-0-1

Motion by Bruce Cleveland to appoint Jon Goldman as the Vice-Chair of the Budget Committee.

Seconded by Brenda Copp.

In Favor, Dawn Nicolaisen, Lauren Cairns, Brenda Copp, Bruce Cleveland, Cathleen Gorman, Bill Carter

Abstain Jon Goldman

Motion passes 6-0-1

Bruce Cleveland recruited himself as he will be presenting the Budget Committee budget. Jon Goldman will be acting Chairman for this budget.

Motion by Brenda Copp to put the Budget Committee Account budget 4150.9 on the table for discussion.

Seconded by Dawn Nicolaisen.

Bruce Cleveland is presenting this budget. Jon Goldman asked why the 6% increase. Bruce said the recording secretary will be receiving a 2% increase due to the responses of the evaluation. The supply line was increased from \$100.00 to \$120.00 as they went over a little last year and he also said the cost of the seminars doubled, from \$30.00 to \$60.00. Brenda Copp suggests increasing the Seminars as a few of the Budget Committee should attend a Right to Know seminar.

Motion by Brenda Copp to increase the Seminars line by \$120.00 bringing it up to \$300.00.

Seconded by Jon Goldman for discussion.

Jon said this makes sense but would like to see 2 members go to the LGC seminar and 2 members go to the Right to Know seminar.

These motions have been pulled.

Motion by Brenda Copp to increase the Seminar line by \$60.00 bringing it up to \$240.00.

Seconded by Jon Goldman.

Brenda feels that the members that have gone to the budget seminar won't need to go again as it doesn't change much from year to year. She strongly feels that there is more of a need to attend the Right to Know seminar. Dawn Nicolaisen is concerned that the Budget Committee's budget is being presented with a large increase, when they are asking departments to come in level funded. Jon asked about money being budgeted for the first 13 weeks for the Recording Secretary and Brenda said the budgets don't start until August. She also said you budget according to the number of hours you think she will work by the rate of pay. Bill Carter asked if the Budget Committee meets occasionally during the year to review the budgets. Jon said they do not and Bill said he has a problem with that. Bill said the Budget Committee should be meeting monthly to review the budgets and to be sure the department heads are spending the money according to how it is allocated. Brenda Copp said once the Elections take place the budget has already been approved and it would be useless for the Committee to meet as

they have no control over the budget at that point. Bill agrees the Budget Committee has no control but they should still be reviewing the budgets to see that the revenue is coming in and that the monies are being spent accordingly. Bill refers to the Municipal Budget Act and monthly meeting should be taking place all year. Jon Goldman said this is duly noted.

In Favor, Dawn Nicolaisen, Lauren Cairns, Brenda Copp, Jon Goldman

Opposed Cathy Gorman, Bill Carter.

Motion passes 4-2-0

Motion by Brenda Copp to accept the Budget Committee budget with Gross Expenses of \$2,698.20, Revenue of \$0.00 and Net Expenses of \$2,698.20 pending further review.

Seconded by Lauren Cairns.

In Favor, Dawn Nicolaisen, Lauren Cairns, Brenda Copp, Jon Goldman, Cathy Gorman, Bill Carter.

Motion passes 6-0-0

Bruce Cleveland is back with the Budget Committee and announced that next week's budgets that will be discussed are the Planning Board and the Moderator.

Brenda Copp asked to review the dates of the final meetings. She said warrant articles need to be reviewed by January 15, 2013 as well. The BOS asked that all warrant articles be submitted no later than January 8, 2013. Brenda said the only exception is that the meeting needs to be posted separately and posted 7 days prior to the meeting. The posting can read that the meeting may be continued past January 15, 2013. Bill Carter stated that no new articles can be added after that date and Brenda said that is correct, all warrant articles are due in the office by January 8, 2013. The Committee agrees that the final budget hearing will be held on January 11, 2013 with a snow date of January 12, 2013 with a possible continuation of January 15, 2013.

Brenda Copp would like to speak to the Budget Committee in regards to the Right to Know law and refers to the paperwork she received from the BOS office. She states that

on page 3 that there should not be any communication in regards to budgets outside of the Budget Committee meetings. She said it is illegal for the Budget Committee to discuss budgets through emails. Brenda is referring to the emails that have been going around this week in regards to the question on the amounts on a budget. She said even if no decision is made through the email it is still against the Right to Know law as the public has a right to know everything that is being discussed on a budget. She asked that the Committee to leave all discussions on budgets to the Budget Committee meetings. Brenda said if there is a question on a budget that can't wait the Committee Members can call LGC or the Finance Director to get their questions answered. Bruce Cleveland said he saw the email and also a comment from another Committee Member in regards to the Right to Know law and he said he called LGC. He said that he did not put his question in email and didn't get a written response as he was looking for some general understanding in regards to the Right to Know. Bruce said it is ok for the Chairman to send out information to the Committee in regards to the budget, but if anyone has a question on it they should reply back to him directly and not reply to everyone. Bruce said members were just responding to his email asking if the wrong budget was sent out as the numbers didn't make sense. Bruce refers to the "Spirit of the Law", which states that someone is trying to do something wrong and he feels that no one on the Committee was acting that way. Brenda Copp feels that no budgets should be discussed through email as the public has the right to know everything that is being discussed. Bill Carter said that agrees with Brenda Copp. Dawn Nicolaisen asked for clarification in regards to this and Bruce said that he sent an email out to the Budget Committee in regards to the Planning Board, and he meant to send the email to the Planning Board. He said that a Budget Committee member responded saying the numbers didn't look right and gave an example as to what they might be. Cathy Gorman said when she saw the email she thought it was for the ZBA again and saw an error which is why she responded. She said she understands that it should not have been done that way and she would like to bring this to the public's attention. She said she was not trying to hide anything or deceive anyone in the town. Brenda Copp reiterates that if an error is found in a budget then it should be brought up at the meeting and not through email. Cathy said that she understands and she got the ZBA and the Planning Board budgets mixed up and assures the Committee it won't happen

again. Cathy asked if this can be discussed at a Budget Committee meeting so the residents of the Town know what took place. Jon Goldman said the budget hasn't come before the Committee yet but when it does if anyone finds any errors to bring them up at that point. He also feels it was an honest mistake. Bruce Cleveland said that he asked all Committee members to delete all the emails in regards to this budget. Bill said he wouldn't want to limit the Chairman and if a Committee member has a question on a budget it is ok to ask the Chairman. He also feels that just because you are a public official you don't lose your right as a citizen.

Bruce asked the Committee to let him know if there is a question that needs to be discussed to let him know so he can add it to the meeting agenda.

Bruce Cleveland asked all the Committee members if they still wanted to receive hard copies of the budgets.

Bruce also stated that next week the ZBA budget will be discussed.

Meeting adjourned 8:00

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Reynolds