

Members present: Kevin M. McCormick Christopher A. Rucho
Allen R. Phillips John B. DiPietro, Sr.
Valmore H. Pruneau

Mr. McCormick convened the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

FY09 Operational Expenditure Budget

Mr. Gaumond reported that he has spent the last several weeks meeting with the various department heads reviewing their budgets. He has requests of \$20,321,000, revenues of \$19,600,000 and a projected budget deficit of \$727,000. As of this date he has been able to make cuts to reduce the deficit to \$613,133. He reviewed the following budget categories with the Board.

Moderator – line item will be level funded.

Board of Selectmen line item will be level funded.

Town Administrator – increase this line item to include cost of living adjustment for Municipal Assistant and contractual increase for the Town Administrator.

Finance Committee will be level funded.

Reserve Fund, which was decreased last year from \$60,000 to \$50,000 will be level funded.

Town Accountant - increase this line item to include cost of living adjustment.

Town Audit – this line item has a slight increase to cover our audit.

Assessors' department – increase this line item to include cost of living adjustment.

Treasurer/Tax Collector – increase this line item for step increases, cost of living adjustments and \$2,000 for tax title enforcement.

Town Counsel – this line item is being reduced from \$90,000 to \$85,000.

Personnel Board – this line item will be level funded.

Computer Services – this line item will be increased from \$55,225 to \$69,815 as it includes the purchase of some new computers and increases to our computer maintenance contracts. We have also reduced the stipend for our web site consultant.

Town Clerk – small increase to include cost of living adjustment and larger increase to join the Mass Clerk's Association.

Elections – increased due to an increase in the minimum wage and the cost to code ballots and handicapped ballots. It also anticipates a special election.

Planning Board – last year the Planning Board took in \$8,200 in fees. Mr. Gaumond would like to eliminate the revolving fund and instead have those fees come back to the town. As of March 11 of this year they have taken in \$3,300. The Board agreed to fund the Planning Board at \$4,500 and allow them to keep their revolving fund.

Public Safety Building – this item has increased due to the costs of utilities and sewer usage was also moved into this line item. The Board would like clarification on how the expenses the cleaning of the facility by the firefighters is charged.

Town Hall – this line item will be increased due to the cost of renting 127 Hartwell, which amounts to \$121,000.

Town Report- line item will decreased by \$500.

Total General Government is at \$1,100,000 up 10.7% primarily due to the increase to rent town hall.

Police Department – this line item will be increased from \$1,179,528 to \$1,231,509 as it includes the lease of the cruiser and cost of living increases for both the union and non-union

personnel. Mr. McCormick questioned whether it would be possible to cut back on the training line item due the budget situation. Mr. Gaumond offered to request a list of the minimum required training for the department. Mr. Phillips suggested obtaining a list of all training and who requires what training. Mr. Gaumond will also get a break down on the "other" line item is.

Fire Department – this line item will be increased from \$513,600 to \$566,047, and does not include the cost of any additional employees. Training will increase by \$1,000. Mr. Gaumond will ask Chief Pauley if training could be cut to once a month. He will also ask him what the \$6,100 clothing line item is for. The Board also requested a more detailed department head report from the Fire Department, similar to that done by the Police Department.

Emergency Management – this line item will be maintained

Public Safety Communications – this item will be increased for cost of living adjustments and a marginal increase in the non-radio communications system.

Building Department – this line item will increase to include a cost living increase for the secretary, contractual increase for the Building Inspector and an increase for the inspectors who have not received increases in a number of years. There is also an increase in seminars for the wiring and plumbing inspectors. Mr. Gaumond will find out when the inspectors were given their last increase.

Sealer of Weights – this line item is being level funded.

Emergency Management – this line item will increase by \$1,000.

Animal Control – will be level funded.

Total public safety is up 5.7% primarily due to cost of living adjustments.

Education. The School Department has proposed increasing this line item of \$600,000. This line item will be left blank for now.

Public Works – this line item will be increased from \$532,012 to \$560,689 to include cost of living allowances, increases to the DPW union and increases in municipal fuel costs. Mr. Gaumond will get clarification on "other charges" and a breakdown on training for the department.

Snow and Ice Removal – this line item is basically being level funded with the addition of a cost of living adjustment.

Street Lights are increased from \$80,560 to \$81,761. The Board requested an additional column within the budget to show the percentage of increase or decrease. He will also speak with Salter College about using them for an emergency operations center. The Board suggested eliminating streets lights in non-critical areas of town. As this was suggested in the past it was agreed to look at why the lights were never cut.

Trash and disposal are per the contract. Mr. Gaumond noted that we are actively pushing mandatory recycling and the SWAT is looking at pay as you throw.

Cemetery is increased to provide a cost of living adjustment.

Board of Health – Mr. Gaumond is proposing \$28,244 and eliminating the revolving account. The Board suggested funding at \$12,500 and allowing them to keep their revolving funds. They would also like to know who pays for flu shots.

Council on Aging is increased due to cost of living adjustments. Mr. Gaumond will discuss the level of staffing and report back to the Board. The Board would also like to see a usage report which indicates a break down in numbers of residents and non-residents.

Mr. Phillips questioned the status of the wage and classification plan study. Mr. Gaumond does not believe the plan will be implemented until October.

Veteran's services has increased substantially as it includes three eligible veterans. The town receives 75% reimbursement. We typically budget for the minimum and rely on the Finance Reserve Fund should new eligible veterans be approved for funding. Our Veterans agent provides recipients of

job opportunities and job fares. Mr. Gaumond offered to invite in the Veteran's Agent to make a presentation to the Board on their April 16th agenda.

Library – this item will be increased to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement to avoid having to seek a waiver. Mr. McCormick recommends a level funded budget rather than a level service budget and seek a waiver.

Judith Doherty, who is present at the meeting this evening, identified herself as the Chairperson of the SWAT. She asked if it would be possible to have trash collection every other week. Mr. Gaumond offered to look at the contract and suggested she speak with Mr. Westerling.

Mr. DiPietro requested a list of accredited and non-accredited courses taught at the schools.

Messrs. Phillips and DiPietro recommend a level service budget, which would be a \$10,000 cut for the Library. Messrs. McCormick and Rucho recommend a level funded budget, which would be a \$20,000 cut for the library. It was agreed to address the level of funding for the Library at another time.

Historical Commission – funding will be at \$771.

Celebrations – this line item will be maintained.

Arts Council – will be maintained at \$500.

Total Culture & Recreation is up 6.6% primarily to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement for the Library and fund the Historical Commission

Both Debt Principal and Debt Interest are decreasing.

Short-term borrowing is also being reduced.

Intergovernmental includes our Central Mass Regional Planning Commission assessment of \$1,472 and our membership in MORE, Municipalities Organized for Regional Effectiveness is \$1,868.

Workers' Compensation is up from \$52,000 to \$55,000.

With regard to Unemployment Insurance, our Finance Director is recommending \$100,000.

Group Health Insurance will increase by 7%, with industry standard at 10-12%.

At this time, Mr. Gaumond has a \$613,133 budget deficit, however, this includes the entire school request.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion Mr. Phillips at 10:55 to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: April 2, 2008

Nancy E. Lucier

Kevin M. McCormick, Chairman

Allen R. Phillips, Vice Chairman

Valmore H. Pruneau, Clerk

Christopher A. Rucho, Selectman

John B. DiPietro, Sr., Selectman