

**WOLFEBORO BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
January 14, 2009
MINUTES**

Members Present: John MacDonald, Chairman, Scott Smith, Vice-Chairman, Dave Senecal, Selectmen's Representative, Fergus Cullen, Robert Moholland, John Burt, Brian Black, Members.

Members Absent: Allan Bailey, Ned Giroux, Jim Eisenhower, Members.

Staff Present: Dave Owen, Town Manager, Pete Chamberlain, Finance Director, Lee Ann Keathley, Secretary.

Chairman MacDonald opened the public hearing at 7:01 PM.

2009 OPERATING BUDGET

John MacDonald reviewed the proposed 2009 operating budget for General Government, see attached.

Suzanne Ryan questioned whether funding for the Planning Department's request for a Natural Resource Chapter of the Master Plan was approved.

Fergus Cullen replied yes and noted the BOS cut the amount for such from \$12,000 to \$3,000.

Dave Owen stated the department received a bid in the amount of \$3,000 for the project.

Referencing the Tax Collector budget, Suzanne Ryan questioned whether funding for a check scanner was approved.

Dave Owen replied yes.

John MacDonald reviewed the proposed 2009 operating budget for Safety, see attached.

Suzanne Ryan questioned whether the feasibility study for the Fire Department was approved.

John MacDonald replied no.

Suzanne Ryan questioned whether the building is included in the Town buildings study.

Dave Owen replied yes.

John MacDonald reviewed the proposed 2009 operating budget for Public Works and Health & Welfare, see attached.

Referencing the latter, Suzanne Ryan questioned whether the department received a part time employee.

Dave Owen replied no.

John MacDonald reviewed the proposed 2009 operating budget for Parks & Recreation, see attached.

Referencing Hockey, Suzanne Ryan questioned the increase in said account from \$48,000 to \$94,000.

John Burt stated the increase reflects half of what the Town paid; total expenditure being \$94,000.

John MacDonald reviewed the proposed 2009 operating budget for Other, see attached.

Suzanne Ryan questioned whether the Economic Development Strategic Plan was approved.

John MacDonald stated such was removed from the budget and placed in a warrant article. He reviewed the proposed 2009 operating budget for Debt Service, see attached.

Jeff Farrell requested a summary of total debt broken down by principal and interest for 2007 through 2009.

John Burt replied the following; 2007 – principal being \$98,573, interest being \$123,415; 2008 – principal being \$144,138, interest being \$136,263.

Jeff Farrell questioned the amount of outstanding debt the figures represent.

Scott Smith replied as of 12/31/06 it represents 1.128 million (principle) and \$425,000 (interest).

Joe Melanson questioned the total bond debt.

Scott Smith replied 11.4 million as of 12/31/06.

Pete Chamberlain replied \$18,246,647 up until 2033.

John MacDonald reviewed the proposed 2009 operating budget for the Enterprise Funds (Water, Electric, Sewer and Pop Whalen Rink), see attached.

Suzanne Ryan questioned the increase to the Pop Whalen Enterprise Fund.

John Burt stated such is related to the capital of \$26,500 for the development of parking.

David Booth questioned the increase in the Electric Fund, specifically Generation.

Dave Owen stated the Town has entered into a new electric supply contract as of 1/1/09; noting an approximate 60% increase.

Joe Melanson questioned whether the Town retained the same electric company.

Dave Owen replied yes, Constellation.

John Burt noted a 3.2% increase in the operating budget.

WARRANT ARTICLES

John MacDonald reviewed Article A; noting the BOS would amend the amount of such at the Deliberative Session to \$523,981. He reviewed the following Warrant Articles; C, D, E, G, H, I, J, K, M, N and O, see attached.

Suzanne Ryan questioned why the Committee did not recommend Article O.

John Burt stated the article does not identify the purchase of anything specific and questioned what could be purchased for \$10,000.

Suzanne Ryan stated such would be a reserve fund to build up in order to purchase land in the future.

John MacDonald reviewed Warrant Articles R, T and U, see attached.

Suzanne Ryan questioned why the Committee did not recommend Article U.

John MacDonald stated the Committee agreed to repair the roof and conduct a study of Town owned buildings, including the Railroad Station and determine whether the Town would maintain ownership of the building.

Scott Smith stated the Committee believes the article is premature relative to the evaluation and study. He stated Staff informed the Committee additional repairs and funding would be necessary and the Committee wants to know the entire scope of the project prior to the incremental support of such.

John MacDonald reviewed Warrant Article V, see attached.

Linda Murray stated that in the past, the Town had 6 health insurance plans and the goal of the BOS was to cut back the number of plans following the Health Insurance Study in 2007 when the BOS realized the employees could be given an excellent health plan at a lower cost.

John Linville questioned the percent increase for 2009.

Dave Owen replied 2%.

John Linville questioned the percent increase for 2010.

Dave Owen replied 2.5% related to the cost of living adjustments however, noted other elements of compensation are included in such.

John Linville questioned a change in 2009 or 2010 in the percentage paid out by the employees in relation to those other elements.

Dave Owen replied yes, in 2009 the employees would contribute 4% towards their health insurance costs based on the Matthew Thornton HMO and in 2010 the employees would contribute an additional 3% in so that by the second year, the employees would be contributing 7% which is the amount the nonunion employees are currently paying.

John Linville questioned the amount the employees are currently contributing.

Dave Owen stated most of the employees currently do not contribute anything.

Suzanne Ryan questioned whether the buy out remained the same and questioned the figure.

Dave Owen stated the opt out changed for new employees to \$2,500 and the opt out has been frozen and grandfathered as a separate piece of compensation for existing employees; cost being either \$8,500 or \$7,430.

Suzanne Ryan questioned the percent increase for the Town's insurance policy.

Dave Owen stated such decreased by 2%.

John MacDonald reviewed the Police Union Contract Agreement, see attached.

John Linville questioned the percent increase for 2009 & 2010.

Dave Owen replied 2% in 2009 and 2.5% in 2010; noting such are the only elements of compensation. He stated the police unit was not union members last year and therefore, the health insurance was changed at that time.

Jeff Farrell questioned whether there were health insurance savings in the police unit.

Dave Owen stated the savings were realized last year.

John MacDonald reviewed Warrant Article W, see attached.

Jeff Farrell questioned whether the budget would default to the previous year's operating budget in the event the budget was voted down.

John MacDonald replied yes.

Dave Owen stated the default budget reflects last year's operating budget with certain additions as required by statute such as contractual matters.

John MacDonald reviewed Warrant Article DD, see attached.

It was moved by Scott Smith and seconded by Brian Black to continue the Budget Committee Public Hearing to January 15, 2009. All members voted in favor.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Ann Keathley

*****Please note these minutes are subject to amendments and approval at a later date.***