

**WOLFEBORO BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
January 8, 2013
Minutes**

Members Present: John MacDonald, Chairman, Stan Stevens, Vice-Chairman, Bob Tougher, John Burt, Matt Krause, Frank Giebutowski, Brian Black, Members.

Members Absent: Dave Senecal, Selectmen's Representative, Robert Moholland, Harold Parker, Members.

Staff Present: Dave Owen, Town Manager, Pete Chamberlain, Finance Director, Phil Morrill, Fire Department, Cindy Scott, Library Director, Ethan Hipple, Director of Parks and Recreation, Stu Chase, Police Department, Lee Ann Keathley, Secretary.

Chairman MacDonald called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM at the Wolfeboro Inn Ballroom.

2013 Operating Budget Public Hearing

John MacDonald introduced the members of the Budget Committee and Staff present. He reviewed the 2013 Operating Budget, see attached. He informed the public that Lieutenant Dean Rondeau is presently attending the FBI Academy and Chief Phil Morrill has been appointed President of the NH Fire Chiefs Association.

Suzanne Ryan questioned the increase for the Hockey Rink budget.

Dave Owen stated such is related to the amount of public skating hours purchased by the Town.

Suzanne Ryan asked why the Town raises its own fee.

Dave Owen stated such is an Enterprise Fund which is supposed to be self supporting.

Referencing the Sewer Enterprise Fund, Suzanne Ryan questioned the \$30,000 consultant allocation for wastewater treatment and the goal of the RIB litigation.

Dave Owen stated the allocation relates to the hiring of experts relative to the litigation with the engineering firm that designed the RIB. He stated the goal of the Town is to be made whole and noted the Town spent \$8 million and the system is not performing.

Suzanne Ryan asked whether legal fees would be reimbursed if the Town prevails in the lawsuit.

Linda Murray replied no, due to legislation that prohibits such.

Referencing the Water Enterprise Fund, Suzanne Ryan questioned whether the fund is financially level.

Pete Chamberlain stated the Water and Electric Enterprise Funds are in good shape and noted the debt in the Water Enterprise Fund was refinanced; noting a \$260,000 savings in interest payments. He stated the 2011 Audit Report is available on the Town's website.

Dave Owen stated the Audit Reports lists each enterprise fund and fund balances. He reviewed the new electric rates, effective in 2014.

Tom Bickford questioned the advantage for the Town to remain in the electric distribution business.

Dave Owen stated the Town does not have a lot of power outages and when there are, the power is not out for long periods of time. He stated the Town can purchase power directly and pass it through to the residents without a mark up in the cost. He stated a rate comparison is available on the Town's website.

Linda Murray stated approximately four years ago a subcommittee reviewed rates throughout the State.

Suzanne Ryan questioned the fund balance of the Electric Enterprise Fund and asked what the funds are used for.

Dave Owen replied over \$1 million. He stated the funds are used towards the purchase of vehicles (2013 Bucket Truck purchase). He stated the electric meter program will be paid for out of the surplus funds.

Suzanne Ryan verified the surplus amount is accumulated by the rate payers.

Referencing the Fire Department budget, specifically the Ambulance contract, Tom Bickford questioned whether the Town has explored having the Fire Department take over the ambulance service and bring the service in-house.

Dave Owen stated the BOS has previously reviewed the option and determined such was not economically feasible; noting the Fire Department staff would have to be increased. He stated the current contract expires at the end of 2013.

Linda Murray stated an ambulance would have to be purchased and stored properly. She stated the option was reviewed prior to the most recent execution of the ambulance contract.

Tom Bickford asked if the BOS would be exploring the option again.

Dave Owen replied conceivably.

John Burt stated an additional 7-10 staff would be necessary in order to provide a 24/7 ambulance service.

Tom Bickford stated the Fire Department currently has trained EMT staff on duty.

Ken Marschner thanked the BOS and Budget Committee for supporting the Middleton Road warrant article.

Suzanne Ryan requested the Budget Committee to explain why they reversed their decision to recommend the Middleton Road warrant article.

John MacDonald stated the Committee received additional information following their vote not to recommend. He stated the Committee discussed the information provided and voted to recommend the article.

Tom Bickford questioned the criteria for taking on roads and how such will be applied in the future to private roads. He questioned the final expense for the Middleton Road project and expressed concern regarding the State's promise to fund the project.

John MacDonald stated the BOS the Committee the State will not repair or maintain the road.

Stan Stevens stated the State's money is being given to communities in southern NH.

Dave Owen stated the State accepted the Town into its municipally managed project program in which the Town pays 1/3rd and the State pays 2/3rd of the project costs.

Linda Murray stated the Town will have an agreement with the State with regard to the road. She stated the Town currently plows the road and noted both Middleton and New Durham has taken over their portion of the road from the State. She stated Sarah Silk, Chuck Storm and she met with NH DOT representatives in December 2012; noting they were informed funds for road projects are being provide to the southern communities. She stated the State has no intent to repair or maintain the portion of road in Wolfeboro.

Steve Patterson asked whether the project could be expedited noting he has spent approximately \$1500-2,000 per year on vehicle maintenance and for the residents of Middleton Road to wait two years for the completion of the project is unacceptable.

Linda Murray invited Mr. Patterson to attend the BOS 1/16/2013 meeting and speak to such; noting legislative representatives will be present at the meeting.

It was moved by Stan Stevens and seconded by John Burt to adjourn the January 8, 2013 Budget Committee Public Hearing. All members voted in favor.

Deliberative Session scheduled for February 5, 2013 at the Kingswood Arts Center, 7 PM.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lee Ann Keathley
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