

**Meeting Minutes
Town of Wolfeboro Budget Committee
November 14, 2013**

Members present: Chairman John MacDonald, John Burt, Bob Tougher, Harold Parker, Frank Giebutowski, Brian Black, Stan Stevens, Bob Moholland, Matt Krause and Board of Selectmen Representative Dave Senecal.

Members absent: None.

Staff or others present: Town Manager Dave W. Owen, Finance Director Pete Chamberlin, Director of the Municipal Electric Department Barry Muccio, Tax Collector Brenda LaPointe, Contract Assessor Todd Haywood, Milfoil Committee Chair Kathy Barnard, Chamber of Commerce Director Mary DeVries and Amelia Capone-Muccio Recording Secretary.

Chairman MacDonald opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

2014 Proposed Budget Review

➤ **Municipal Electric Department**

Barry Muccio addressed the Committee.

Administration

Mr. Muccio noted the biggest decrease in the Electric Budget is the cost of electricity and noted some contracts have increased, but overall the budget requests are flat.

Chairman MacDonald questioned the status of the meter program.

Mr. Muccio replied the intent is to have it in service next year and noted the billing department is currently transitioning the water meters.

Mr. Owen noted that they did receive the Health Insurance cost for next year and such will need to be adjusted in the budget as they only budgeted for a 6% increase but it will be a 6.5% increase.

Mr. Giebutowski questioned the phone line 3-43410.341 and if this is with Bayring.

Mr. Chamberlin replied all the departments will be switching to Bayring.

Distribution

Mr. Muccio noted line 3-43420.430 vehicle maintenance will reduce with the purchase of the new truck.

Mr. Burt questioned why the principal is up and the interest is down.

Mr. Muccio replied the Pleasant Valley road project was removed.

Generation

Mr. Burt questioned line 3-43430.380 outside services and not much has been spent to date.

Mr. Muccio replied that the current outage costs have not been posted to that line to date.

Technology Electric

No comments.

Capital Outlay Electric

Mr. Muccio provided a revised Capital Outlay request for the pellet boiler and based on further information received he is decreasing his request by \$10,000.

Chairman MacDonald questioned if it would have a silo and when they would see the cost savings.

Mr. Muccio replied yes it will have a silo and will be similar to what was put in at the Water Treatment Plant. He stated they will break even on the change in 7 years. He noted that regardless if they purchase a pellet boiler the current boiler needs to be replaced.

Mr. Tougher questioned if they are converting from the steam system.

Mr. Muccio replied yes, that is included in the cost. He noted they do use a separate hot water heater but there is not much use on it.

John MacDonald moved to reduce the Municipal Electric Department's Capital Outlay request for a pellet boiler by \$10,000.00 (\$65,000). Harold Parker seconded. Members voted, being all in favor, the motion passed.

➤ General Government

Chamber of Commerce

Chairman MacDonald stated Mary DeVries is here to address the reduction in line 1-41301.117 Part Time wages made by the Board of Selectmen.

Mrs. DeVries addressed the Committee and explained that the \$7,850 approved by the Board of Selectmen would cover the cost of the two staff members as budgeted in the past with a slight cost of living increase. She explained that they were looking to increase those staff members' hours to contribute more to the 2,500 open hours to contribute to the needs and hours supported by the Chamber staff which is the 2014 request of \$16,760.

Chairman MacDonald questioned if they are comparable in wages to other town staff.

Mrs. DeVries replied the increase would pay them at about \$10 per hour.

Mr. Moholland questioned the Board's reason for reducing the request.

Mr. Owen replied they chose to level fund the number of hours.

Mr. Stevens questioned what the increase would come out to in the number of days.

Mrs. DeVries replied it would contribute to the 2,500 open hours.

Mr. Burt expressed his concerns about contributing more to the Chamber of Commerce and noted that they are one of the few towns who do contribute to the Chamber. He has requested to see their books in the past, but never has and has no idea how they are financially. He is upset they are requesting more from the town.

Mrs. DeVries replied that the town had these two employees at the information booth and when they did away with the booth, the Chamber took the employees on in their space and have never asked for overhead costs. She stated that they are asking them to contribute to these needed hours to compliment to the Chamber's services. She is available to answer any questions and provide a tour if needed.

Tax Collector

Brenda LaPointe addressed the Committee.

Mr. Burt questioned the increase in the printing line 1-41504.550.

Mrs. LaPointe replied that both the printing and postage lines are increasing due to the switch from quarterly to monthly billing in the water/ sewer department.

Mr. Burt questioned if she will have enough staff to handle the increase in billing.

Mrs. LaPointe replied she does as the billing is outsourced and they have added online billing which will allow the customers to print their own bills and manage their accounts.

Milfoil Treatment

Kathy Barnard, Chair of the Milfoil Committee, addressed the Committee.

Chairman MacDonald questioned if they budget for the grant funding.

Mr. Owen replied they appropriate the whole amount and the grant will offset the request.

Chairman MacDonald questioned their progress.

Mrs. Barnard replied that Back Bay is persistent and will be treated with chemical treatments and offset with hand pulling. She noted Wolfeboro Bay is under control.

Assessing

Todd Haywood, Contract Assessor, addressed the Committee and noted the budget is 12% less this year.

Mr. Giebutowski questioned the decrease in abatement processing.

Mr. Haywood replied such is common after a revaluation (the last one was in 2010) to have abatements and see them decrease the further out from the revaluation as they get resolved. Such process starts over every five years.

Mr. Burt questioned if the abatement process is paperwork only.

Mr. Haywood replied that the request is logged and they meet with the taxpayer and then they re-measure the property. He noted there is research done and then a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Burt questioned the abatement funds are out of this budget.

Mr. Owen replied no those funds are out of the overlay account through the tax rate setting process by NH DRA.

Mr. Tougher questioned the abatement cases that were discussed in the Granite State News.

Mr. Owen noted that only one side of the story was told, the town was not contacted to present their side of those two cases noting one property was for sale at \$13 million dollars but assessed at \$9 million and they also has specialized attorneys and witnesses that town did not have either. He also noted the statement was made the property was not inspected, but it was not inspected because the property owner denied them access.

Mr. Haywood explained that both of those cases involved current use and were dealt with the former contract assessor but from reading the information on those cases the issue was the value of the land in current use vs. the value that was not in current use.

Chairman MacDonald questioned if they check the tree cutting.

Mr. Owen replied they do not have a Forrester and the State only has one person for the whole state.

Mr. Tougher questioned the increase of \$5,000 for an appraiser in line 1-41503.390 outside services.

Mr. Haywood replied that those funds would be used to better represent the town in court cases.

Executive

Chairman MacDonald questioned line 1-41301.810 travel and meetings and what has been spent to date.

Mr. Owen replied that the Board has spent \$50 and he expects a bill for another \$50.

John MacDonald moved to reduce line 1-41301.810 Travel and Meetings to \$100. Stan Stevens seconded. Members voted, being all in favor, the motion passed.

Mr. Burt stated with regards to line 1-41301.850 miscellaneous expense, it cannot have a flat amount; it needs to specify what the amount is for. He noted the Department accounts still have it listed as well.

Mr. Owen replied that they have done what NH DRA says they can do.

Mr. Chamberlin noted they have discussed the issue with Department Heads.

Mr. Burt stated this is not a true budget because the line was moved elsewhere and to him this is a flim flam.

Chairman MacDonald questioned how much has been spent in line 1-41301.320 legal to date.

Mr. Chamberlin replied \$68,850 as of October.

Mr. Owen noted he just receive some bills from Town Counsel today.

John MacDonald moved to reduce line 1-41301.320 legal to \$90,000. Stan Stevens seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Black questioned Union negotiations.

Mr. Owen replied such is not a big expense.

Members voted, Bob Tougher and Harold Parker-opposed and all others in favor, the motion passed.

Miscellaneous Expense

John Burt moved to reduce line 1-41900.850 Miscellaneous Expense to \$5,000. Bob Mulholland seconded.

Motion withdrawn.

Harold Parker moved to reduce line 1-41900.850 Miscellaneous Expense to \$4,000. Bob Mulholland seconded.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Moholland stated they need a rational for the funds.

Mr. Tougher disagreed and if the money is not spent it will go back to the surplus because if the Board of Selectmen needs the funds for something they have it but they don't spend it if they don't need it.

Mr. Black questioned the 5 year average.

Mr. Burt stated he believes around \$7,000 but has a few years he was not keeping track.

Mr. Chamberlin replied he has \$5,700.

Mr. Giebutowski questioned the notation the funds will be used for training.

Mr. Owen replied they do some training.

Mr. Black stated that there needs to be some documentation for the \$5,000 increase.

Mr. Owen replied it is to be more in line with what has been used.

Chairman MacDonald stated he supports the programs listed such as the Employee Appreciation Day, but no cost is attached to what the items costs.

Mr. Stevens stated he would be fine with setting the line at \$5,000.

Mr. Black stated a large increase was requested, but no backup has been provided for what the increase is for. He stated he would like documentation for the increase otherwise he suggests they stick with the 5 year average.

Mr. Tougher disagreed and noted that the five year average is more than the \$4,000.

Members voted: Frank Giebutowski, Brian Black, Bob Tougher, Harold Parker and Stan Stevens opposed all others in favor, the motion failed.

John MacDonald moved to reduce line 1-41900.850 Miscellaneous Expense to \$5,000. Stan Stevens seconded. Members voted, Bob Tougher-opposed and all others in favor, the motion passed.

Finance

No comments.

Technology-General Fund

Mr. Chamberlin noted they are replacing about 8 PC's a year and that they have moved the enterprise fund information to the general fund. He noted the \$10,000 request is to replace the operating system from 2003 to 2008 or 2012 if available because Microsoft will not support it after January.

Mr. Giebutowski questioned why they wouldn't they just get 2012.

Mr. Chamberlin replied that they will if it is available.

Mr. Giebutowski questioned if he will be purchasing it from the State.

Mr. Chamberlin replied he could look into that.

Mr. Owen noted the Information System Advisory Committee is currently seeking two members as two have resigned.

Town Manager

Chairman MacDonald questioned where the ICMA conference is this year.

Mr. Owen replied Charlotte.

Town Clerk

Mr. Chamberlin noted that Ms. Waterman was not able to attend tonight's meeting as she is away at her conference.

Mr. Burt questioned the need for the \$4,000 for vacation coverage in line 1-41401.117 part time wages as they are now fully staffed.

Mr. Giebutowski questioned if it also covers elections.

Mr. Senecal replied that it is used to cover vacation time for the staff and they use the Town Clerk from Brookfield to do that.

Mr. Burt noted this line has not been used that much.

Chairman MacDonald suggested that have the Town Clerk come back in to discuss the request.

Mr. Parker noted there is also going to be a change in the elections this year due to the passing of Ray Burton.

Chairman MacDonald noted they can discuss the elections line at that time as well. He noted the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 26th.

Being no further business before the Budget Committee, Chairman MacDonald entertained a motion to adjourn.

John Burt moved the Budget Committee to adjourn at 7:40 PM. Bob Tougher seconded. Members voted and being none opposed, the motion passed.