

## Municipal Budget Committee

### Meeting Minutes

October 30, 2007

Corner Meeting House

Chairman Ron Mitchell opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Also present were Committee members Ken Knowlton, David Morse, Mark Roberts, Linda Frawley, Rich Fournier, Norma Patten, and Ken Ellis. Others in attendance were Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin, Selectman Ron Cormier, Town Planner Candace Daigle, Assistant Bookkeeper Denise Rollins, Fire Chief Jim Davis, Deputy Fire Chief Sean McCarty, Public Works Director Jim Fortin, Gerri Mitchell and Daily Sun Reporter Ray Carbone.

#### Election of Officers

Ron Mitchell requested that the Committee elect officers. Ken Knowlton nominated Ron Mitchell for Chairman. Norma Patten seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

David Morse nominated Ken Ellis for Vice-Chairman, seconded by Mark Roberts. The motion passed unanimously.

#### RSA 32:11 Request

Selectman Cormier told the members that the Board of Selectman have voted to enter into a tentative purchase and sales agreement with the owner of the property where the Northway Bank was located. He said the Selectmen met with the Planning Board who voted to recommend purchasing it and now he is meeting with the Budget Committee to get their support. Next week he will be meeting with the Conservation Commission. The purchase price is \$300,000. There is \$250,000 in the capital reserve fund that can be used. Per RSA 32:11 they will be making application to the Department of Revenue Administration to over expend the Town's unexpended fund balance for the remaining \$50,000. Selectman Cormier said that there are 2 tenants who are there until next August so nothing will be done to the building until then. They will hold public meetings to see what people would like to see put there. The members discussed the different options that the property could be used for.

Chairman Mitchell read the request. It states that "In accordance with the provisions of RSA 32:11, the Town of Belmont hereby makes application to the Department of Revenue Administration to over expend an appropriation in the amount of \$50,000. Funding for the over expenditure is to come from the Town's unexpended fund balance and will not impact the Town's tax rate".

Ken Knowlton made the motion to move forward with the application. Ken Ellis seconded it and the motion passed unanimously.

### Revaluation Update

Town Administrator Beaudin told the Committee members that the revaluation is complete. Residents will be receiving their new values the week of November 12<sup>th</sup>. She anticipates the tax rate will be set by December 3<sup>rd</sup> and tax bills will be mailed soon after. David Morse suggested that copies of tax cards be sent out with the letters. She said she will ask them if that could be done. Based on her preliminary review she expects a significant reduction in the municipal portion of the tax rate. She feels that last year's projected reduction of \$1.50 will be exceeded.

### 2008 Proposed Budget Overview

Town Administrator Beaudin gave an overview of the budget by means of a power point presentation. She highlighted any increases, decreases or changes. The Committee members were provided with a paper copy. She noted that since the town is currently in negotiations with the Union the budget worksheets do not include wages. She did include a copy of the Wage & Salary study conducted by the Local Government Center.

She told the members about the staffing changes in 2007. Jim Davis was promoted to Fire Chief, Sean McCarty was promoted to Deputy Fire Chief and Jim Fortin was promoted to Public Works Director. The town is presently advertising for the position of Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Office/Health Officer and also for a Highway Supervisor. She thanked Bill Tobin for providing Building Inspection and Health Officer services during the interim. And she also commended Elaine Murphy and Denise Rollins for their hard work in the Building Office.

### Executive Budget

An increase in the Selectmen's Salary line to \$15,000 is proposed which represents an increase of \$500 per Selectmen. Other increases in the Executive budget are in the Administrator's Salary by contract, Belknap County Register fees, Books and Subscriptions, NHMA Dues, and Copier Lease-Service. The Executive operating budget reflects a proposed increase of 6%.

### Town Clerk, Elections & Financial Administration

There is an increase in mileage since the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office needs to travel to the bank since the Northway Bank Branch on Main Street closed. There is also an increase in Service Contracts due to programming costs related to the # of elections to be held in 2008.

The Election and Registration budget reflects 5 elections in 2008 and related costs.

The Financial Administration budget reflects a proposal to have tax bills generated and mailed by an outside agency.

#### Assessing, Legal & Personnel Administration

The Assessing operating budget reflects a proposed decrease of 5%. An increase only is proposed in the Service Contract line of the Assessing Budget to cover increased cost for maintenance of the Assessing software (Vision).

No changes are proposed in the Legal budget.

A Personnel Administration budget worksheet was not included at this time as many of the line items relate to projected wages. Insurance quotes from Primex and LGC were received. LGC's proposal is lower.

#### Land Use, General Government Buildings, Cemeteries, Insurance

The Land Use operating budget represents a proposed increase of 9.3% due to Postage, Planning Commission Dues and Tax Map Updates. Offsetting revenues are projected to be \$29,925.

General Government Buildings reflects an increase of 3.2% due to increases in heat, water and sewer rents. An energy audit was undertaken by Public Service on the Mill, Town Hall, Police Station and Public Works Garage. A proposal for energy improvements is included in the capital budget. This would result in direct savings and PSNH will contribute 50% of the cost.

The Cemetery budget has not been submitted to date.

There is a reduction of \$37,756 in the Workmen's Compensation budget which represents a proposed decrease of 42%.

#### Police, Fire, Building Inspection and Civil Defense (a.k.a. Emergency Management)

The Police Department's operating budget reflects a proposed decrease of 1%.

The Fire Department's operating budget reflects a proposed decrease of 14%. The Board of Selectmen is still discussing the Chief's proposal for additional staff.

The Building Inspection budget reflects increases in Office Expenses, Vehicle Fuel, Professional Services and General Expense. Revenues to date for Building Permit Fees are \$26,496.

There are no proposed changes in the Civil Defense budget.

Public Works Administration, Highways & Streets, Street Lighting, & Highway Block Grant

There is a proposed decrease of 3% for the Highway Administration operating budget. A reduction in telephone, occupational testing and office supplies is proposed.

The Highways & Streets operating budget represents a proposed decrease of 9%. Additional funds are being requested for part time summer staff to be used for brush cutting and to assist with grounds keeping. A new line has also been added for Highway Facility grounds and building repairs.

There is a slight increase of 12.5% proposed for Street Lighting costs.

Highway Block Grant appropriation amounts are provided by the Department of Transportation in mid-December.

Waste Disposal

Town Administrator Beaudin told the Committee that in the fall of 2006 she was appointed to the Operating Committee of the Joint Board of the Concord Regional Solid Waste/Resource Recovery Cooperative. At their recent meeting they discussed exploring Single Stream Recycling. This would entail Belmont adopting a mandatory recycling ordinance in the future.

Costs related to the disposal of Solid Waste are slated to increase dramatically in 2010. The Solid Waste budget will be presented to the Committee following the Joint Board's Annual Meeting on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The costs for curbside pickup will be based on the contract signed last year with Bestway and will reflect a 5% increase.

Belmont has reduced its proposed GAT from 6,800 to 6,500 tons for 2008. Recycling efforts are being realized in a reduction in the tonnage being delivered to the Wheelabrator facility. As of September 30, 2007 our tonnage is down 646.9 tons from 2006 year to date figures.

Health Agencies, General Assistance

The Health Agencies budget reflects a proposed 6.4% increase.

The General Assistance Administration operating budget is proposed to increase by 17.5%

The Vendor Payment portion of the General Assistance budget is proposed to decrease by 2.2%.

### Parks, & Recreation, Town Beach, Library and Patriotic Purposes

The Parks & Recreation operating budget will increase 1.4% due to the proposed expansion of the Summer Camp program to 8 weeks. Overall the budget will see a larger increase due to added staff for the expanded program.

The Town Beach operating budget is proposed to decrease by 35%

The Library budget is proposed to increase by 3.7% due to wages and benefits.

The Patriotic Purposes budget will decrease by 31% due to the deletion on an appropriation request for the Belmont Better Times. An increase is proposed to the Old Home Day line to \$4,750.

### Conservation Commission, Tan Principle, and Interest Debt

The Conservation Commission operating budget increased slightly for the continued publication of 2 newsletters per year.

Tan Interest, Principle and Interest Debt are based on our current debt schedule. Sewer and Water debt is reflected in their respective budgets.

### Water Department, Sewer Department

The Water Department's operating budget is proposing to increase 8.4% due to the addition of principle and interest payments on the note for the Route 3 project and the new well.

The Sewer Department includes wages for the Superintendent's position. The proposed increase to the budget is 8.6%.

### Capital Equipment, Vehicles & Machinery

The Fire Department is requesting \$200,000 for the purchase of a used Ladder Truck and \$150,000 for the purchase of a new Ambulance. Each of these expenditures are to come from the Comstar fund which has a balance of \$513,173.93 as of 9/30/07.

Continued annual requests include Document Restoration, State Surplus Purchases, and Town Safety Compliance.

The Public Works Department has included a request for \$35,000 to purchase a used screen for screening gravel and sand at the Town's gravel pit,

The Land Use Office has requested \$8,000 for a new plotter.

### Capital Buildings

In the Capital Buildings budget is a proposal for a new roof for the Fire Department. It is proposed to replace the existing roof with a steel shingle style roof.

Energy upgrades are proposed for the Police Department, Town Hall, Mill and Public Works Garage. An energy audit was conducted by PSNH during the summer and the request for \$11,700 is ½ of the project cost. PSNH will contribute the balance.

New tables with seating are proposed for both the upstairs and downstairs of the Corner Meeting House.

It is proposed to upgrade the flooring, hvac and office furniture at the Police Department.

### Capital Other

The above ground storage tanks containing unleaded and diesel fuel had not been registered with the State DES. Through the process of registering the tanks significant upgrades were necessary and have been paid for through the Town's Environmental Contingency line. An additional expense of \$17,286 is anticipated for 2008 to add remote fill lines to the tanks.

The Conservation Commission is proposing funding for a Wetlands Inventory in the amount of \$12,000.

Funding for the Pleasant Valley project is also being requested for 2008.

### Capital Reserve Account Requests

Not included in the Reserve requests at this time are funding requests for Highway Reconstruction and Maintenance and the Drainage Capital Reserve fund. The Board of Selectmen are still reviewing plans and project estimates for road work to be completed and/or engineered in 2008. It is anticipated that a budget proposal will be ready by the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### Next Meeting Date

The Committee will meet next Tuesday, November 6, at 6:30 p.m. at the Corner Meeting House.

### Other Business

Town Administrator indicated important dates to remember for the upcoming year and thanked everyone who participated in the preparation of the 2008 proposed budget.

Adjournment

Chairman Mitchell requested a motion to adjourn. Ken Knowlton made the motion, seconded by Linda Frawley and passed unanimously.

Approved:

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Chairman Ronald Mitchell

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Gary Flack

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Ronald Cormier, Selectman

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Ken Ellis

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Kenneth Knowlton

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Albert Akerstrom

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Norma Patten

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Linda Frawley

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David Morse

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Mark Roberts

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Rich Fournier

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Submitted by:  
Denise Rollins

Date: \_\_\_\_\_