

## Municipal Budget Committee

### Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2006, 6:30 P.M.

### Corner Meeting House

Chairman Ron Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Also present were Committee members Albert Akerstrom, Norma Patten, David Morse, Mark Roberts, Ken Ellis, Linda Frawley, and Rich Fournier. Others in attendance were Selectman Ron Cormier, Town Administrator K. Jeanne Beaudin, Receptionist Sharill Conley, Town Planner Candace Daigle, and Cherie Willoughby.

#### Appointment of New Members

Chairman Mitchell explained that there were two vacancies on the committee with Don McLelland, Sr. resigning and John Rowe had moved out of town. Chairman Mitchell read Don's letter of resignation. He noted that there was a letter of interest received from Cherie Willoughby to fill one of these vacancies. The letter was read and a motion to accept Cherie as a Budget Committee member was made by Chairman Mitchell and seconded by Ken Ellis. The motion passed unanimously. Cherie will be sworn in at the Town Hall.

#### Election of Officers

Chairman Mitchell requested that the committee elect officers. Albert Akerstrom nominated Ron Mitchell for Chairman, Ken Ellis seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Albert Akerstrom nominated Ken Ellis for Co-Chairman, Ron Mitchell seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

#### Budget Overview

Town Administrator Beaudin welcomed everyone and introduced Sharill Conley as the new Budget Clerk for the upcoming year. She then gave an overview of the budget by means of a Power Point presentation that highlighted any increases, decreases or changes that have taken place within the budget. The Committee members were provided with a paper copy of the presentation at the beginning of the meeting, along with a copy of the 2005 and 2006 Tax Assessment.

## Revaluation Update

Town Administrator discussed the quarterly Measure & List project which began in 2005 with the intent to complete the project including a Statistical update in 2009. After meeting with representatives from the Department of Revenue and Town Administrator, they determined it was in Belmont's best interest to stop the project for 2006 and to move quarterly Measure & List remaining two quarters up to 2007 as well as completing the full revaluation for 2007.

## Belmont Tax Rate

Town Administrator Beaudin presented Belmont's Tax Rate for 2006 at \$25.69. It is broken down as follows: Municipal Rate = \$9.04; Local School Rate = \$11.91; State School Rate = \$3.14; County Rate = \$1.60.

## Executive Budget

Town Administrator Beaudin presented Executive Budget. This year's Executive Budget is down 6.07% reflected primarily in the reduction in Professional Services. The vehicle allowance has been eliminated and combined with the Town Administrator's Salary that reflects a 5% increase and a proposed salary of \$74, 250. The Engineering line is up slightly to reflect anticipated increases in engineering work to be done in 2007. The Road Management Program is complete and implementation will begin in 2007. There is an increase in the Copier Lease-Service line for additional service to the copier at the Corner Meeting House. An increase is proposed in the Selectmen's compensation line.

## Town Clerk Functions & Elections & Registrations

The Town Clerk's budget increased slightly due to Service Contract increases and tuition for the Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector, who successfully passed Year One of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector Certification Program, to continue with her certification.

Elections and Registrations reflect proposed increase for the Supervisors of the Checklist and Ballot Clerks. The last increase given was in 2004. Overall the budget did decrease by \$100.

## Financial Administration & Property Taxation

The Financial Administration budget includes a 4% wage increase for the Town Accountant, Tax Collector, Deputy Tax Collector, and Bookkeeping Assistant. An increase of \$500 is proposed for the Treasurer.

The Property Taxation budget is down 29.87% due to a reduction in the need for Contracted Services and part-time staff. Town Administrator Beaudin mentioned that Cary Lagace, our Administrative Assistant/Assessing Clerk will be continuing her

education in the assessing field and will be shadowing staff working for our Assessing Contractor.

### Legal

The Legal budget is proposed to increase by \$5,000, which will be primarily dedicated to prosecuting Code Enforcement violations. The Town recently hired a part-time Code Enforcement Field Inspector, Rick Stroscher.

The Town will also be negotiating a new Union Contract in 2007.

### Personnel Administration

The Town recently completed an overhaul of its Personnel Policies and the Board of Selectmen at their November 6th meeting adopted the new policies. The new policies have been distributed to all Town of Belmont employees.

This year we are proposing eliminating the Retirement Benefit from the Personnel Administration budget and have included the funds in the appropriation request to create a new Capital Reserve Account for the purpose of Accrued Liability.

The health insurance rates increased by 12.8%.

Overall Personnel Administration expense is up 8.64%.

### Land Use & Conservation Commission

The Land Use budget reflects a 4% increase in wages for all Land Use staff. Overall the budget increased by 3.94%

The Conservation Commission budget reflects a 4% increase in wages. No other increases are proposed.

### General Government Buildings

Town Administrator Beaudin indicated the Town had successfully hired a full-time Building and Grounds Maintenance man, Jim Vargus. This has proven to be most cost effective since April.

The proposed budget reflects increases in heat and electricity primarily due to actual expenditures; an increase is also proposed for Custodial Services. Building Repair and Maintenance as well as Ground Maintenance reflect slight decreases.

## Cemeteries

The Cemetery budget reflects approximately a 24% decrease in operational expenses. A request for \$5,000 is proposed to be added to the Lamprey Cemetery Capital Reserve and \$2,000 is requested for the Cemetery Trust Fund.

## Insurance

Worker's Compensation costs will be increasing for 2007 due to contractual wage increases and a change in the rates based on certain occupation categories. The experience modification factor increased by 3.9% for 2007.

An increase in Liability Insurance is proposed due to adjustments in our building and vehicle inventory as well as the Winnisquam Fire Department merger; the addition of the station and added equipment will result in an increase in our liability insurance costs.

Town Administrator Beaudin indicated we were able to slightly reduce our Insurance Contingency line for 2007. They have been recycling parts from old cruisers in an effort to reduce maintenance and insurance deductible costs. This has been very successful.

## Police Department

The Police Department budget reflects an overall increase of 8.8%, which includes a 4% wage increase in accordance with the current Union contract.

Recruitment was very successful in 2006 and the Police Department is at full staff.

There was discussion of the proposed Police Building. Town Administrator Beaudin indicated the cost to be approximately \$2,000,000 for land and building. Bond costs were discussed and it was noted that Northway had estimated a payment schedule at 4.5%

## Fire Department & Emergency Management

The merger of the Belmont Fire Department and the Winnisquam Fire Department was successfully completed as of August 3, 2006. The Budget presented represents the merger and reflects proposed expenses for both stations. The overall increase is 8.07% inclusive of a 4% wage increase in accordance with the current Union contract. As a result of the merger, \$78,630.48 was received for the WFD Corporation and placed in the Town of Belmont's Ambulance Revenue fund. In addition, the Town of Sanbornton contributed \$17,814 and it is anticipated that they will continue to participate in 2007.

Chairman Mitchell questioned regarding Tilton and Northfield Fire District on whether or not they plan to participate in 2007. Town Administrator Beaudin stated that the Belmont Fire Department had received notice from the Tilton/Northfield Chief removing Belmont from the automatic response. Belmont will continue to respond under the Mutual Aid system.

The Emergency Managements budget is proposed to remain the same for 2007.

#### Public Works Department

The Highway and Streets budget reflects a 4% wage increase in accordance with the current Union contract.

The Highway Administration budget reflects proposed increases for electric and heating fuel based on actual expenditures.

The Equipment Hire line was reduced to reflect the proposed purchase of the Excavator. Rental fees paid in 2006 will be applied to the purchase.

The Town owned gravel pit will be operational in 2007. Town Administrator Beaudin indicated that the Town has received all necessary permits from the State of NH.

#### Street Lighting & Highway Block Grant

Town Administrator Beaudin indicated that PSNH recently notified the Town that Street Light costs are anticipated to increase between 1-2% for 2007.

#### Solid Waste Disposal

Town Administrator Beaudin announced that Recycling is alive and thriving in Belmont. A new line item has been added for Recycling containers - \$10,000 that at \$5.00 +/- per container will purchase approximately 2,000 containers to be distributed to Belmont households to encourage recycling.

#### Health Agencies

Town Administrator Beaudin indicated that the Board of Selectmen support a total budgetary request of \$55,054 for 2007 for the following Health Agencies: Child & Family Services, South Road Cemetery Association, New Beginnings, American Red Cross, Community Health & Hospice, Inc., Genesis, Community Action Partnership.

#### General Assistance

Overall the General Assistance Vendor Payments budget has increased by 5.03%

### Parks, Recreation & Beach

The budget proposed is down 3.11%, however as noted in the Director's memo dated 9/29/2006, an increase is proposed for the Summer Camp program.

The Town Beach budget decreased by 5.38%

### Library

The Library budget includes a wage increase of 5.9% for the Librarian and the addition of two new part-time Assistant Librarians.

The General Expense line reflects an increase of \$19,550, however surplus funds from the Library's 2004 budget were applied to offset the line in 2006.

### Patriotic Purposes

Town Administrator Beaudin indicated that the BAD Day line was eliminated from the budget resulting in a 4.65% decrease.

### Principle Debt, Interest Debt Service & TAN Debt

Town Administrator Beaudin explained the Town of Belmont has very little outstanding debt. The Town presently has three (3) bonds outstanding and they include the Mill Building, the Highway Garage and the Town Beach for a total debt of \$136,000. Each of these bonds is scheduled to be paid in full in 2009.

The budget request for Tan Debt remains the same for 2007.

### Water & Sewer Departments

The Water Department budget is up 8.13% due to increased costs for chemicals and electricity costs in 2006.

The Sewer Department budget decreased by .38% for 2007.

### Other Business

Town Administrator Beaudin indicated important dates to remember for the upcoming year and thanked all those who participated in the preparation of the 2007 proposed budget.

There was discussion regarding the water line replacement and drainage project for Pleasant Valley. Town Administrator Beaudin stated that the CDBG Grant application is underway being written by Donna Lane. The income survey taken was received well. Also mentioned was the Ladder Truck for the Fire Department. Town Administrator

indicated that the study had not yet come in and therefore these items were not calculated into the Tax Rate for the Town of Belmont.

Chairman Mitchell mentioned that Underwood Engineer would be presenting information at next week's meeting.

Selectman Ron Cormier indicated that the Board of Selectmen is not recommending any increase for 2007 for Roadwork/Highway Project.

Next Meeting Date

The committee will meet next Tuesday, November 21, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. at Corner Meeting House.

Adjournment

Chairman Mitchell motioned to adjourn; Ken Ellis seconded the motion, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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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Cherie Willoughby

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Kenneth Knowlton

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Ken Ellis

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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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Albert Akerstrom

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Submitted by:  
Sharill Conley

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