

Municipal Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 12, 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 Gary Flack, Cherie Willoughby, Norma Patten, Ken Ellis, Rich Fournier, David Morse, Linda Frawley, and Ken Knowlton. Others in attendance were Town Administrator K. Jeanne Beaudin, Receptionist Sharill Conley, and Town Planner Candace Daigle. Selectman Ron Cormier came in at 7:20 p.m.

Committee members thanked Town Administrator Beaudin for preparing and distributing requested information on the ComStar account. Based on the CIP equipment replacement schedule and assumptions on the cost of replacement vehicles, it appears the account will max at year 2013. In discussions with the preparer of the Fire Study, one of the recommendations will be to analyze the method of charging/collecting ambulance revenues, which would impact future equipment funding.

Minutes

Chairman Mitchell moved to accept the minutes of the November 28, 2006 meeting as written.

Linda Frawley requested the minutes be amended by adding the following statement: "Linda Frawley asked Chief Baiochetti if his budget request reflected the recommendations of the 2005 Police Department study. He referred the question to the Board of Selectman. Following brief comments from Selectman Cormier, Frawley requested a copy of the taxpayer-funded study, to put the department's budget and needs in context. Selectman Cormier indicated the report was not available for public review."

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was in favor as amended, the motion passed.

Executive

Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin presented the Executive Budget. She explained this year's Executive budget is down 6.07% reflected primarily in the reduction in Professional Services. In accordance with her recent contract, which runs through 2008, 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 work to be done in 2007, which include the Pleasant Valley drainage project and roadwork under the Road

Management Program. Rich Fournier inquired if Underwood Engineers, Inc. set parameters and criteria for prioritizing the roads using information such as accidents, weight requirements, traffic exposure, etc. Town Administrator Beaudin said she would obtain that information and that Underwood Engineers would be presenting more information in the future.

Town Administrator Beaudin explained the wage increase in the Administrative Assistant's salary and that she received the 4% plus one step up. Cary has been an asset and has taken on more responsibility in the assessing office as well. She is currently enrolled at NHTI for the winter term for a class on the Fundamentals of Real Estate Appraisal.

Ken Knowlton moved budget items 01-4130-101 to 01-4130-290, Norma Patten seconded.

Rich Fournier inquired on what surrounding towns were paying their Selectmen and how many did they have. Town Administrator Beaudin reviewed several of the Lakes Region area towns listed on the NHMA website and noted a range of salaries for Selectmen.

Rich Fournier moved to amend budget line 01-4130-101 to stay at \$12,000. Ken Knowlton seconded.

Chairman Mitchell called for a vote, Ken Knowlton, Linda Frawley, David Morse, Rich Fournier voted yes. Norma Patten, Cherie Willoughby, and Gary Flack voted no. Ken Ellis abstained. The motion passed.

Selectman Ron Cormier explained the increase was two-fold: 1) the Board felt it was fair and reasonable for the hours that they were working for the Town; and 2) it may attract others to want to become a Selectman for their Town in the future.

After discussion with Selectman Ron Cormier, Ken Knowlton moved to amend budget line 01-4130-101 to \$13,500. David Morse seconded.

Chairman Mitchell called for a vote to amend budget line 01-4130-101 to \$13,500; the vote was unanimous in favor as amended, the motion passed.

Town Administrator Beaudin recommended a reduction in budget line 01-4130-210 because the current year's usage is down.

Ken Ellis moved to amend budget line 01-4130-210 to \$4,000, Norma Patten seconded.

Chairman Mitchell called for a vote to amend budget line 01-4130-210, the vote was unanimous in favor as amended; the motion passed.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote on budget items 01-4130-101 to 01-4130-290; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Town Administrator Beaudin explained the services provided to the Town by NHMA (LGC) including several types of training courses that included the Municipal Leadership Courses, and health and workplace safety support. The Professional Services budget line has been reduced as no municipal management department studies are anticipated for the upcoming year.

Selectman Ron Cormier commented that the Board of Selectmen had not decided to contract for studies on other departments at this time. The Fire Department draft study is anticipated shortly and upon review and comment by the Selectmen will be released.

Ken Knowlton moved budget items 01-4130-293 to 01-4130-999, Norma Patten seconded.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Assessing

Town Administrator Beaudin explained line item 01-4152-102 was 50% of Administrative Assistant/Assessing Clerk salary as the other 50% was allocated on line item 01-4130-112 in the Executive Office Budget.

Ken Ellis moved budget items 01-4152-101 to 01-4152-710, Norma Patten seconded.

Discussion followed in response to a question from member David Morse regarding the process for picking up property changes that have occurred where the owner did not obtain the proper permit. Town Administrator Beaudin explained the changes are found by neighbors or if the Town conducts a program of measuring and listing property, either quarterly or when a full revaluation is conducted.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Legal

Ken Ellis moved budget items 01-4153-275, Norma Patten seconded.

Rich Fournier inquired what law offices we are currently using. Town Administrator Beaudin explained that we are currently using Mitchell & Bates of Laconia and Devine Millimet of Concord. She explained that Mitchell & Bates handles most of the Town's general legal matters.

Town Administrator Beaudin explained that the Board of Selectmen anticipate using the Town's Police Department Prosecutor to pursue code violations in District Court and have increased the budget slightly for that process.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Personnel Administration

Ken Knowlton moved budget items 01-4155-100 to 01-4155-324, Ken Ellis seconded.

There was a great deal of discussion relative to the cost of benefits; many members of the Committee expressed concern that employees do not realize the cost of their benefits and what this adds to their overall employment package. David Morse asked what the Committee could do to send a message to the employees that a hard look has to be taken on this issue in the next budget year. Town Administrator Beaudin explained that the issue of Health Insurance and other benefits would be reviewed during the upcoming contract negotiations. She noted that the Committee's discussion would be noted in the minutes of the meeting and would certainly express the Committee's concern with the rising cost of benefits and low employee cost sharing.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

General Government Buildings

Ken Knowlton moved budget items 01-4194-201 to 01-4194-980, Norma Patten seconded.

Town Administrator Beaudin explained that a propane emergency generator was being installed at the Garage in order for the Garage to be used as an emergency operations center in the future if needed, and that the generator would be run once a week to keep it functioning properly.

Chairman Mitchell suggested that the Town contact PSNH for an energy audit. He would also like to see the wood trim on the Mill building repainted and possibly replace the windowsills in the future.

David Morse moved to accept budget item 01-4194-711 for \$3,500, Ken Knowlton seconded.

Town Administrator Beaudin noted that the Mill Electricity line is overspent and she recommended an increase of \$1,000 in that line item.

David Morse moved to amend budget item 01-4194-920 from \$18,000 to \$19,000, Gary Flack seconded.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor as amended, the motion passed.

Insurance Not Allocated Elsewhere

Committee members asked why these line items were not included in the Personnel Administration budget with other similar insurances. Town Administrator Beaudin indicated that NH DRA establishes the format and numbering sequence for municipal budgets. Rich Fournier asked about the Insurance Contingency line. Town Administrator Beaudin explained it was to pay the deductible on insurance claims, which is unknown from year to year. However, they have established a program using parts from cruisers taken out of service instead of selling them as surplus. This has resulted in a significant savings for both parts and insurance costs.

Ken Knowlton moved budget items 01-4196-616 to 01-4196-626, Rich Fournier seconded.

Town Administrator Beaudin explained the increases in the worker's compensation rates.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Street Lighting

Ken Knowlton moved budget items 01-4316-220, Norma Patten seconded.

Town Administrator stated the nine new street lights installed on Depot Street, Dearborn and Spring Street has been received very positively with only one complaint as to where one light was actually placed. Town Administrator said she spoke with PSNH and they will be moving that one light down two poles without cost.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Principle Debt, Interest, and Tan

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.

Ken Ellis moved budget items 01-4711-001 to 01-4711-003, Norma Patten seconded.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Ken Ellis moved budget items 01-4721-001 to 01-4721-003, Norma Patten seconded.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Ken Ellis moved budget items 01-47230-001, Norma Patten seconded.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Patriotic Purposes

Norma Patten moved budget items 01-4583-453 to 01-4584-999, Ken Ellis seconded.

Cherie Willoughby made a motion to zero budget line 01-4583-454 as fireworks are evidenced to be hazardous to the environment. There was no second and the motion died.

Committee members discussed both Memorial Day and the costs for the Belmont Better Times.

With no further discussion, Chairman Mitchell called for a vote; the vote was unanimous in favor, the motion passed.

Next Meeting Date

The committee will meet Tuesday, December 19, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. at Corner Meeting House.

Adjournment

Ken Knowlton motioned to adjourn, Chairman Mitchell seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Approved:

Chairman Ronald Mitchell

Gary Flack

Ronald Cormier, Selectman

Cherie Willoughby

Kenneth Knowlton

Ken Ellis

Norma Patten

Linda Frawley

David Morse

Mark Roberts

Rich Fournier

Albert Akerstrom

Submitted by:
Sharill Conley
Date: _____