

## Municipal Budget Committee

### Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2005, 6:30 P.M.

#### Corner Meeting House

Chairman Ron Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Also present were committee members Norma Patten, Albert Akerstrom, Mark Roberts, David Morse, Ken Ellis, Ken Knowlton, Cherie Willoughby, Rich Fournier, Linda Frawley and Selectmen's Representative Ronald Cormier. Others in attendance were Town Administrator K. Jeanne Beaudin, Administrative Assistant Cary Lagace, Town Planner Candace Daigle, Water Department Manager David McLelland, Parks & Recreation Director Janet Breton, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley (6:54) and Daily Sun reporter Ray Carbone.

#### Minutes

Ken Knowlton moved to accept the minutes of the December 12, 2006 meeting as written. Norma Patten seconded the motion.

Ken Knowlton wanted to clarify that the point he was trying to make is that perhaps there needs to be more members of the Board of Selectmen, because it doesn't matter how much money is given if the manpower is still overloaded and another angle may need to be looked at.

Cherie Willoughby wanted to clarify that her concern with Perchlorate is of the human health issue as it has been shown to cause birth defects. Cherie provided a copy of Safe Fireworks Practices to be forwarded to the fireworks company. She also noted that there are fireworks available without the perchlorate.

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

#### Water Department

Water Department Manager David McLelland was present to give an overview of his budget. He indicated areas they had increased due to review of 2006 expenditures, including electricity, postage due to past due and shut off notice mailings and fuel.

Chairman Mitchell asked what the quality of Belmont's water is. David McLelland indicated that the water meets or exceeds all federal levels and is tested monthly to determine that. He noted that the Water Department treats additional for iron and indicated that it is common.

There was discussion regarding the aquifer and could the Water Department tell when there are changes in the level of the aquifer if another source were to draw from it as well. David indicated that he monitors the aquifer level regularly, which rises and falls with the seasons so it would be difficult to tell how other sources drawing from the aquifer would affect the level.

Ken Knowlton moved budget item 01-4331-101 to 01-4331-302, Mark Roberts seconded.

David Morse expressed that if overdue notices are now being generated why would the legal line be reduced as the notices could trigger dispute. Town Administrator Beaudin indicated that the process is the registering of liens as in taxes and would only incur legal expenses if the Town deeded the property, so there are no legal fees to collection. Cherie inquired why the telephone budget is up; David explained that his department had added a line that is utilized for an alarm system on the well.

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

Ken Knowlton moved budget item 01-4331-303 to 01-4331-999, Ken Ellis seconded.

David Morse asked where the Pleasant Valley expenses were being allocated in the budget, David McLelland explained that the materials for those repairs are minor and are allocated throughout the maintenance line items, but the larger expense associated with those repairs are for the manpower and equipment provided by Public Works which is not billed to the Water Department.

There was discussion regarding the well development line item and the fact that there is an additional \$25,000 being budgeted through a Capital account to be paid by taxpayers. David Morse felt that the taxpayers who do not have Town water should not be required through taxation to pay for the well development. Taxpayers that have their own well already incur expenses related to their private well and shouldn't have to pay for Town water expenses. It was asked if the water revenues are good, Town Administrator Beaudin noted that the revenue through the first two billing of 2006 is approximately \$78,000.

David Morse made a motion to increase line item 01-4331-888 to \$50,000 and zero out the Capital line item for Well Development. After further discussion regarding water rates and potential development of the system up Route 106, it was noted that the budget could remain as is and the Capital request be changed to require the money be raised by water user fees. With that said David Morse retracted his motion.

A brief discussion followed regarding the chemicals used to treat the water and how the treatment takes place. David McLelland noted that everything is regulated by the State and he has certain guidelines that he has to follow in order to maintain safe drinking water. Cherie wanted to point out that the chemicals being used should be

monitored closely as things that have been said to be safe in the past have now been proven to be harmful.

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

Ken Knowlton moved budget item 01-4909-503, Ken Ellis seconded.

David Morse expressed that he feels the Water Department should carry itself financially and made a motion to have the \$25,000 paid by water user's fees and not through taxation, Ken Knowlton seconded the motion. Rich Fournier suggested that the Route 3 water project and the well development project be funded together through a long-term bond.

Selectman Cormier explained that this item had come from the CIP and although the Board was split on the idea originally they proposed it. Ken Ellis added that as a member of the CIP the discussion was that everyone in some way would benefit from the development of the well whether it is from fire hydrants or schools, it is a small amount to be paid by the Town. There was discussion of raising the water rates and Town Administrator Beaudin pointed out that a study had just been done and the rates were raised.

Town Administrator Beaudin expressed that precise cost would need to be determined for the development of the well, so the process of establishing a savings had been started.

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

### Land Use

Town Planner Candace Daigle was present to review her budget and began by noting the small increases within the budget and an overall increase of 4.10%. She went on to talk about the many areas that are seeing a lot of activity including subdivision build outs, commercial development, major redevelopment of seasonal homes, new roads and the road management program, as well as the hiring of a new part-time Code Enforcement Field Inspector, to mention a few. She noted that a lot of long standing code violations are being resolved.

Norma Patten moved budget item 01-4191-101 to 01-4191-507, Ken Ellis seconded.

David Morse commented that the information being provided on the website is really good, but would like to see a question & answers section that could address what requires a permit and what does not. Candace advised she would work on adding that to the site.

Linda Frawley inquired what stage the implementation of the 2002 Master Plan was at, Candace explained that there are a lot of areas of the Master Plan that are being worked on.

There was discussion regarding Economic Development and Selectman Cormier indicated that Chairman Watterson had just been reappointed to the Belknap County Economic Development Council and he feels that with the many projects going on that it had been put off to the side and the Board of Selectmen need to refocus on Economic Development as that was one of his goals when he was elected to the Board of Selectmen. Town Administrator Beaudin pointed out that the infrastructure in Belmont is lacking and that perhaps tax incentives can be offered to entice commercial and industrial development.

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

### Conservation Commission

Ken Ellis moved budget item 01-4600-101 to 01-4600-999, Norma Patten seconded.

Candace started out by acknowledging the hard work that the Conservation Commission had put in this year. She noted that they had really come together and accomplished a lot including the acquisition of the Harker property which is 200+ acres, significant progress on the Natural Resource inventory, created a policy for grading potential property, received a grant for their first newsletter and granted their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual scholarship.

They are working on acceptance of open space areas, derived from subdivisions. The open space must be at least 50% buildable so good lots are being accepted. They have installed 2 new gates at the Town Forest, had a Town Forest clean up and created rules and regulations for the Town Forest use.

It was noted that after the purchase of the Harker property and the receipt of Land Use Change penalties the year ending balance of the Conservation fund should be approximate \$300,000.

Ken Knowlton commented that the staff at the Land Use office has been invaluable to the Commission in their accomplishments.

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

### Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Director Janet Breton gave an overview of her budget highlighting some of the programs that were held this past year including summer camp, which, she will be expanding the hours for in 2007 with hopes of luring in more

participants. She noted there were repairs made at the skate park and a platform that still needs to be constructed; she will be making improvements to the landscaping at Bandstand Park and addressing lighting issues at the park.

There was discussion regarding the trips that are planned and the expense associated with them and Janet noted that the majority of the programs she runs are self-supporting. It was noted the anticipated revenue for Parks & Recreation is approximately \$23,450.

Janet indicated that the skate park continues to be the most popular spot but that she continuously promotes family oriented events, which are relatively successful.

Ken Knowlton moved budget item 01-4520-102 to 01-4520-719, Albert Akerstrom seconded.

Janet explained that the playground equipment would need to be addressed in the near future as some of the equipment is outdated and doesn't meet safety guidelines any longer. There was discussion regarding liability and Town Administrator Beaudin assured the Budget Committee that the Town is amply covered. Janet indicated that waiver of liability forms are used for specific functions she holds, as well.

There was discussion regarding utilizing the school and David Morse asked if the school had set a limit, Janet explained that they limited her to 4 weeks with the summer program but she will run it for 5 weeks with the final week being held at the Corner Meeting House. Town Administrator Beaudin pointed out that the school needs time to finish their maintenance prior to the start of school. Cherie suggested that Janet look at a sliding scale option for the cost of the summer program. Janet noted that she does offer scholarships for the program but perhaps could look into the sliding scale if the need arises.

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

### Town Beach

Ken Knowlton moved budget item 01-4521-101 to 01-4521-505, Albert Akerstrom seconded.

Janet pointed out that some of the usual maintenance at the beach hadn't been done in 2006, and she will need to catch up on the work in the coming year. She noted that there is lighting that needs to be fixed, buoys replaced and maintenance to the picnic tables and coverings. She added that deadbolts had been installed on the bathhouse due to break ins. Cherie asked if the water is tested at the beach, Janet indicated that the State tests regularly and the beach has never been closed due to bacteria.

There was discussion that usage for the beach should be tracked; Janet indicated that she would try to implement that this year.

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

#### General Assistance Administration

General Assistance Director Donna Cilley explained to the committee how busy her office has been in the last 3 or so months. She is seeing a lot more working poor coming in for assistance, an increase in mental health issues and domestic violence. Donna explained that she works to case manage those that come to her for assistance.

Ken Knowlton moved budget item 01-4441-101 to 01-4441-505, Ken Ellis seconded.

Donna explained to the Committee that the State is cutting benefits for some and those that try to work end up with less. She is implementing a software program that will help track statistics to some degree, but it is a program that was created by Welfare Administrators so its capabilities are limited. Her budget includes a line item to pay an individual to do data entry to that program. David Morse expressed that he thought Donna would be more excited about getting software to assist her in the administration of General Assistance, Donna explained that she is excited, however, the data entry that needs to be done and the extra steps that she will have to take to process an application seem daunting during this busy time.

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

#### General Assistance Vendor Payments

Ken Knowlton moved budget item 01-4445-430 to 01-4445-441, Mark Roberts seconded.

Cherie asked Donna if assistance is available to everyone, Donna explained that if they meet the required criteria she is obligated to help. There are certain areas such as housing, food, lights, telephone and vehicle if medically necessary that residents can receive assistance with if they qualify,

Town Administrator Beaudin added that the Town is very lucky to have Donna as she works diligently to locate outside sources to be used prior to Belmont making assistance payments.

Donna noted that through the lien process she is able to recuperate some of the funds and this year has received revenues of approximately \$29,000. Cherie expressed that she understands that if you own property it is lien and you would be forced to pay back the money, but what about renters? Donna explained that she chases those that she can but there is no mechanism to recoup money from renters.

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 on Tuesday, January 2, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at Corner Meeting House.

Adjournment

Norma Patten motioned to adjourn; Ken Ellis seconded the motion, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman Ronald Mitchell

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Flack

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald Cormier, Selectman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Fournier

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth Knowlton

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Ellis

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma Patten

\_\_\_\_\_  
Albert Akerstrom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cherie Willoughby

\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Frawley

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Morse

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Roberts

\_\_\_\_\_  
Submitted by:  
Cary Lagace

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