

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 16, 2009
7:00pm Newington Town Hall

Chr. Larry Wahl called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Present: Chairman Larry Wahl, Vice Chr John Lamson, Selectman's Rep Jack O'Reilly, Gail Pare, Gail Klanchesser, Russ Cooke, Jim Katkin of SAU 50, School Board member Diedre Link, Anne Holliday and Administrative Assistant Beatrice Marconi. (*absent: Liz Taccetta, Helen Maldini, Tom Benson and Darin Sabine*)

Appointments:

Gail K moved to appoint Anne Holliday to the budget committee with G. Pare seconding. Motion passed unanimously. Her term is due to expire March 2010.

Election of Chairman & Vice Chairman

G. Pare moved to nominate Larry Wahl as Chairman for another year. G. Klanchesser seconded. Motion Passed unanimously.

R. Cooke moved to nominate John Lamson as Vice Chairman for another year. G. Pare seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Minute Approval:

G. Klanchesser moved to accept the minutes with amendments and R. Cooke seconded. Motion passed 6 – 0 - 1. (Anne Holliday abstained)

School Department Budget Presentation for the year ending June 30, 2009.

Jim Katkin of SAU 50 presented the school's information.

- Unreserved Fund Balance is \$ 75,124 which represents funds not spent*. Highlights of the savings came out of High School Tuition, Health Insurance and other misc. lines not exhausted. *Not needed to be raised through taxes this year.

- The Afternoon Enrichment Program shows \$3,232 left over. Jim went on to say that they will be looking at this program closer in an effort to prevent over budgeting for.

J. O'Reilly spoke of the generator grant - in process through emergency management. This is a 50/50 match and as long as the school is classified as a secondary or back up shelter, they very well could qualify. Jim noted that the building capital reserve could be dissolved as the renovations are complete and the balance would therefore be dissolved into the general fund. More than likely, the school will put forth a warrant article for the 50/50 match and the \$28,817 in fund 30 bldg fund would off set the expense.

- Food Service Program – Not unlike the past, this program shows a shortage of \$8,937

See Schedule G

- Page 25 addresses per pupil calculations. Jim notes that for 07-08 it showed \$23,321. For 08-09 it shows \$24,976. The number of students drives the per pupil cost amount. Our school currently has 40 students but could support 50 to 55 if needed. A. Holliday asked about the projected demographics with Jim stating that indicators are showing a flat to a slight increase over the next couple of years. J Lamson asked about Newcastle and how comparable it is to Newington. Jim felt it was only about a \$5,000 difference (with 55 kids) after hiring a teacher and nurse, however they have no food service program nor do they provide transportation.

- When asked about the number of Newington children not attending our school, he didn't know off hand, but Diedre thought it was 4 or 5. As far as afternoon enrollment, participation is between 7 and 9.

- Salary negotiations are not underway as yet. J. Lamson expressed that it would be helpful to know the numbers they are working with offering the teachers as a comparison to that of the town offerings.

- NH Retirement will go up in the vicinity of 20%. Jim is hopeful that the health insurance costs will remain level. Chr. L Wahl expressed his on going concern with the 125% rule passed last year and stated the issue was far from resolved. J. O'Reilly indicated that our Police Commission increased outside detail from \$32.00 to \$36.00 p/hour to offset some of the unfunded costs that went into effect last July.

- Amount of teachers on staff in our Elementary School

Grades 1 and 2; grades 3 and 4; grades 5 and 6 each have a full time teacher. Special Ed has one full time teacher. Phy. Ed has a 10% job share teacher, music has a 10% and band has a 5% teacher. Speech has a 20%. Jim felt that we had less than 7 equivalent full time positions not counting the principal or office support. In the next five years, 2 become eligible for retirement.

At 7:50pm both Mr. Katkin and Ms. Link ended the school presentation.

January 20, 2010 will be the school's night to present their upcoming budget to the Budget Committee.

Town Mid Year Review (through August 31, 2009)

- Professional Training – G Klanchesser \$752 left. J.O'Reilly spoke of free classes many take advantage of.

- Vehicle Fuel – G Pare stated that this problem was across the board – a year ago, fuel was twice the cost.

- Cruiser recycling – Chr. Wahl felt this program was good for code enforcement, however whereas high speed travel is necessary to get to emergencies, the question is – why are the retired cruisers not good for police high speed travel yet supposedly ok for the fire department high speed travel?

- Election meals have decreased along with other costs as there were four in 2008 and only town meeting in 2009.

- Finance – Assessing – work continues through December and bills are still yet to come in. Utility property being addressed for 2009.

- Legal looks good – J. O'Reilly did point out we had an abatement request that filed with Superior Court. The Conservation Commission continues legal issues with the PDA and Wetlands delineation.

- Coalition Line – J.O'Reilly felt with the impending Donor enactment we should continue to fund this line.

- Health Insurance is paid for by the town 100% and will take a vote of the people to alter that policy.

- Planning Professional Training – Has not be utilized much thus far. Request for classes has yet to come up. J.O'Reilly spoke of Ham Radio Licensing for emergency communications and mentioned that our Code Enf. Officer was recently certified.

- Planning Engineering – G Pare felt with development down, so too is the need for review engineers.

- Town Bldg Admin-J.O'Reilly informed the B Committee that a buffer has recently been ordered.

- Town Hall has \$ 70,000 left in maintenance & repairs. J. O'Reilly spoke of the storage area proposed. Chr. Wahl cautioned that we need to ensure we have the proper amount of escape routes. Jack adds that the planned heating & cooling system should save 30% once installed in 2010.

- Town Garage had \$2,800 not used however was funded to pay for New Garage Engineering.

- Old Town Hall Maintenance & Repairs – Not much done at this point, however Charlie is getting quotes on window treatments and stage curtain as well as audio & video hookups. Sump Pump was

budgeted for. AA will find out status on sump pump installation. Gail Pare asked that weather stripping the front door be looked into as snow blows in

- Meeting House coming along – weather not cooperating
- The Budget Committee questioned Fire & Police Station heating fuel. Balance remaining is extremely low.

Page 3

- Police Station Garage is coming along – J. O'Reilly informed everyone that the veneer finish should be done this year to preserve the wood.
- Old Parsonage – Rot and mildew being addressed the last couple of years. As improvements are made, when problems are found, they are repaired.
- Workers Comp increased as a result of their annual audit
- Regional Associations are contacted late fall to request their funds if they haven't done so all ready. J. O'Reilly mentioned the many Newington volunteers and relayed his thoughts on holding an 'appreciation event' to honor their service. He was unsure of where to request funding.
- Police Dept – Chr. L Wahl felt the PD is holding overtime in check til year's end along with other lines.
- Fire Dept – More money was allotted to the call line to hopefully reduce overtime costs, however Chr. Wahl stated it doesn't always work that way. He went on to speak of the Fire Association union and noted that the basis for union formation criteria has changed. A. Holliday voiced her concerns stating that the budget committee level was not the proper venue to address certain admin issues and felt a better platform would be the Engineers or Selectmen's level. She suggested an analysis of overtime be done which could determine if more positions are necessary. Chr. Wahl noted that training still shows a large balance due to the Chief possibly holding off on ship board training at this time. J. O'Reilly mentioned that the department has a request into the Selectmen asking for miscellaneous use of the existing capital reserve for unanticipated vehicle maintenance costs. Regarding alarm lines, both G Pare and G Klanchesser spoke of the many 'bag-tagged' alarm problems and wondered why they were not fixed and questioned what the unused funds in this line were intended for if not alarm maintenance.
- Code Enforcement – Contractual Services still was well funded due to sluggish economic growth and lack of need for engineering review, however J. O'Reilly informed the committee that the Town was involved in improving the town's compliance with ADA regulations and that this line would be funding the effort.
- Emergency Mgmt supply line is over spent due to the purchase of a food storage locker for our shelter.
- Highway Salary line is tight – however FEMA reimbursed the Town \$47,000 for ice storm clean up. Len Thomas, the Road Agent is currently working on a road side tree trimming schedule to prioritize problem areas in town. A new line will probably be created for 2010. Regarding paving, Coleman and Capt Landing were done this year. Gundalow is not 100% complete. Of the \$56,000 remaining in that line, J. O'Reilly tells us that Airport Road is a priority.
- Overall Building Maintenance for 2010 - J. O'Reilly stated that roughly \$600,000 was budgeted in 2009 and with utility valuations being updated this year, he would like to see a large amount of funding dedicated to our roads in 2010 if bldg maintenance drops as expected. He has urged the Selectmen to bear in mind the impending threat of the Donor Town coming back but with multi-year planning, he hopes Newington's tax rate will fair relatively spike less. J. Lamson noted that the Budget Committee has always supported a heavy paving line. H/W phone line is over which could be the result of ice storm clean up communications. The Nimble Hill gate has been hit 3 times – rumble strips, signage, barrels and a flashing light are now used as warnings.

- Transfer Station Contracted Services – J. O’Reilly stated a company wanting the wood chips came in and did it for free in 2009.
- Welfare – Will be close this year. Portsmouth is now administering assistance on our behalf.
- Recreation – A Volley Ball Court is currently being constructed behind Old Town Hall. G. Pare noted that with Sept Fest this weekend, the tent was in place and encouraged people to look at various pavilion placement locations. A public hearing will be scheduled to discuss various issues involving Fox Point per J. O’Reilly.

Page 4

- Land Management – G Klanchesser ask about the drainage line - keep the flow moving in the Nimble Hill Area. The permit process is on going with DES.
- Langdon Library – The ADA bathroom project is going to town this week.
- Conservation Commission – Legal issues continue to be addressed ie: wetlands dispute.

Chr. L Wahl said that overall the total budget shows 31% remaining which is about where we should be. He continued to speak of the Warrant Articles offered at Town Meeting last year and given that tone, felt the Selectmen should encourage departments to do their best to hold the line with zero increase yielding not more than a 10 cent variance in the rate. People were scared. He hopes to see the rate held level or even cut a few cents. J. O’Reilly encouraged the Budget Committee to wait and see what the tax rate does. A. Holliday stated that Capital Reserves should not be cut as a means to address any current year budget concerns. Regarding holding the line at zero, she added that there are certain set costs and for departments to hold the budget level would mean reallocation of funds, especially if health costs go up.

Chr. L Wahl moved that the Budget Committee recommend to the Board of Selectmen that the bottom line at the end of the budget process be at zero % increase.

A Holliday seconded with amendment by asking the motion maker to state that ‘the Budget Committee’s expectation would be to see a 0% increase.’ The Chr. accepted the amendment after discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

J. O’Reilly moved to adjourn at 9:30 pm. G. Pare seconded. Motion passed with no one opposed.

Respectively Submitted

Beatrice Marconi
Administrative Assistant