

NEWINGTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2004

Present: Budget Committee Members

Alfred Smith (Chairman), Dennis Acton, Kay Akerley, Leslie Brock, Candice Cantaloupo, Laura Coleman, Wil Gilbert, Gail Pare, Richard Spinney, Board of Selectmen Representative Jack O'Reilly.

AA Gillespie, Road Agent Leonard Thomas, Cemetery Trustee Clifford Abbott, Recreation Committee Representatives Keith Frizzell and Peter MacDonald, Library Trustees Patricia Bennett Wood, Meredith Hoyt, and John Welch, Selectman Cosmas Iocovozzi and Resident Jackson Hoyt

The Budget Committee Chairman Alfred Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to review the budget of the Library, Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, Highway Department, Cemetery Committee and Historic District Commission.

Kay Akerley made the motion to accept the minutes of September 10, 2003. The motion was seconded by Laura Coleman. Motion carried with none opposed.

Langdon Library

Budget Committee member, Gail Pare moved to accept the Library Budget of in the amount of \$47,920. The motion was seconded by Laura Coleman.

Budget Committee member, Kay Akerley stated that the Librarian's salary has been increased by almost ten thousand dollars in the last two years. Library Trustee, John Welch said that the library is striving to be up to date with the State's average for librarian wages. Library Trustee, Patricia Bennett Wood pointed out that the State average is \$18.52. Kay Akerley asked how Newington's library compares with other small towns. Library Trustee, Meredith Hoyt replied that many comparisons were made and Newington's Library has fewer employees and lower wages than other small towns throughout the State. There are shelvers in these other towns that are making up to \$12 an hour. Pat Bennett added Rockingham County's average is \$19.51. She said that the Town has been paying the librarian considerably less than the State and County average over the last couple of years and even with this increase she will still be paid less. She also pointed out that the other reason the salary line has increased is because the Library will be open more hours. The school children are visiting the library every Friday from 10:30 in the morning to 2:30 in the afternoon and the hours have been adjusted accordingly. Also hours are increased on Tuesday evening so that residents that can't make it during the day can have access to the library in the evening. Budget Committee member, Gail Pare stated that she was on the Board of Library Trustees when Becky Marks was hired as librarian. She pointed out the Librarian's salary was a huge

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decrease from what the previous librarian, Dwayne was making. Last year Becky's pay was raised to what Dwayne was making four years ago. Pat Bennett Wood mentioned that Becky receives no health insurance. She also, stated that the Library has a five year proposed plan that will hopefully include State funding for the children's program. Selectman O'Reilly explained that the State House Bill 608 leaves only two donor towns, New Castle and Newington. Next year there should be ways the School can use the money so that money will stay in Town. There is the possibility that next year the school could pay for the extra hours that the librarian would be available for school classes.

Chairman Smith asked about the increase in the wage line. Meredith Hoyt said that Mary Rash also increased her hours from 5 to 10 hours a week at \$11 per hour. This is also due to the school program.

The Chairman called for a vote to accept the Library Budget in the amount of \$47,920. Motion carried with none opposed.

Recreation Committee

Laura Coleman moved to accept the Recreation Committee Budget in the amount of \$38,805. The motion was seconded by Jack O'Reilly.

There was discussion on the summer program. Chairman Smith asked if the ten percent increase in the summer program was due to more children in attendance. Recreation Committee member, Peter MacDonald stated that the cost has not been finalized yet and may come in lower. Recreation Committee member, Keith Frizzell said that there were less than 45 children last year. Peter Mac Donald guessed there will be approximately 40 children this year. Parents pay around \$200 per child for the program which is reimbursed to the Town. Keith Frizzell read from notes written by Recreation member Jack Anderson; the per child camp costs increased last year from \$608 to \$669. If family cost is kept at \$201, the Towns portion will increase from \$407 to \$468. Chairman Smith noted that the Old Home Days and October Fest has been combined into one event. Peter MacDonald stated that the event seemed to be a great success. There were about 120 to 130 people there and a tent was rented as a rain precaution and a band was hired. There were activities planned for both the children and the adults. Budget Committee member, Laura Coleman said that the event was just as much fun and much easier than having two separate events. Keith Frizzell added that planning a rain date for events is next to impossible. Kay Akerley pointed out that this is a great argument for tearing down the Mott House and building a Gazebo. Laura Coleman said that the Carriage House should be used for this event. Gail Pare asked why there was no appropriation this year on the Adult Activities line. Keith Frizzell said that the Recreation Committee planned two bus trips last year for the Adults; one to Freeport around Christmas time for

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shopping. The other trip would be in the spring, to Boston for a play. Neither trip got any interest or response. There was discussion on the cost of the Senior Dinner. Chairman Smith noted that the budget has been between \$1,500 and \$1,800 for the last several years. He added that the Senior Dinner is as important as the Youth Programs.

Chairman Smith called for a vote to accept the Recreation Committee's Budget in the amount of \$38,805. Motion carried with none opposed.

Conservation Commission

Gail Pare made the motion to accept the Conservation Commission Budget in the amount of \$11,442. The motion was seconded by Jack O'Reilly.

There was discussion on the Old Town Forest. Selectman O'Reilly stated that originally the Town was anticipating a lease of the Town Forest from the PDA. Now that the FAA will be turning the Forest over to the PDA, we are anticipating the title will be turned over to the Town. He added that the Air Force found the original survey, however the Town will have to have the survey reviewed for accuracy, also the Forestry Plan will have to be updated. Chairman Smith noted that the Wetlands Study will be put together into a book. Gail Pare asked about the designation of Wet Lands. Kay Akerley stated that this will have to wait until the Zoning Ordinance is approved. Mrs. Pare asked if this was the last year for Wetland Resource. Kay Akerley responded yes. Chairman Smith asked if the Town is still budgeting for Forest Management. Selectman O'Reilly stated that it was included in the \$8,000 for the Town Forest.

Chairman Smith called for a vote to accept the Conservation Committee Budget in the amount of \$11,442. Motion carried with none opposed.

Cemetery Committee

Laura Coleman made the motion to accept the Cemetery Committee Budget in the amount of \$12,550. The motion was seconded by Gail Pare.

There was discussion on the fact that the Cemetery Committee asked for no budget from the Board of Selectmen. Gail Pare stated that the expenditures for the Cemetery last year were nothing. AA Gillespie explained that the Stipend for the Cemetery Sexton was paid the last week in December, after the Cemetery Committee meet with the Board of Selectmen. Also, the maintenance expense was encumbered because the bill for the mowing had not been received yet. However, the bill was received on January 7th, so it will be put in as a payable instead of an encumbrance, because the year will not be

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closed until the 10th of January. Selectmen O'Reilly stated that the request for bids on the cemetery mowing has gone out and the bids will be opened Monday, January 12th. Budget Committee member Richard Spinney asked the term of the bids. Selectmen O'Reilly stated that it depends on what the bid is for, sometimes the Town will ask for a two or three year bid. The cemetery mowing bid usually is two years. Laura Coleman asked who hires the contractor for the Cemetery mowing. Cosmas Iocovozzi said that the mowing bids have always been the Selectmen's responsibility. Cemetery Trustee, Clifford Abbott asked if the \$350 for the stipend and the \$200 for the supplies could be combined and given to Billy Beals for everything that he does at the Cemetery. Gail Pare stated that the Budget Committee can only recommend the bottom line of the budget. It is up to the Trustees of the Cemetery to spend it as they see fit.

Chairman Smith called for a vote to accept the Cemetery Committee Budget in the amount of \$12,550. Motion carried with none opposed.

Historic District Commission

Selectman O'Reilly made the motion to accept the Historic District Commission Budget in the amount of \$6,050. The motion was seconded by Kay Akerley.

Gail Pare stated that the HDC is continuing to work on the restoration of the old town records. The books are being kept in the vault, in the Town Hall. There were five books completed last year, which were the ones in the worst condition. Hopefully, more than five can be done this year and next year the restoration will be completed.

Chairman Smith called for a vote to accept the Historic District Commission Budget in the amount of \$6,050. Motion carried with none opposed.

Highway Department

Gail Pare made the motion to accept the Highway Department Budget of \$196,590. The motion was seconded by Kay Akerley.

Budget Committee Member, Leslie Brock pointed out that the Highway Budget for 2004 is actually \$184,131 with an encumbrance of \$12,459.45 to Bayside Paving.

Gail Pare amended the motion to accept the Highway Department Budget to the amount of \$184,131. The amendment was seconded by Kay Akerley.

Chairman Smith asked about the new line item for Road Signs. Road Agent Leonard Thomas explained that the State is requiring that all Towns go from 6 inch to 9 inch

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road signs by 2005. He stated that Newington will replace half of the signs this year and half next year.

Kay Akerley asked about the increase on the salary line. Selectmen O'Reilly stated that it was to cover the cost of the snow plowing. Chairman Smith stated that every year there is money appropriated for street sweeping but there is never anything close to \$1,200 spent on street sweeping. Road Agent Thomas stated that in the past he was able to use more salt than sand on the roads however, Conservation is frowning on the use of salt. Selectman O'Reilly stated that this year the Town will try to purchase a power sweeper, instead of hiring the work out. The sweeper should cost around \$1,000. Chairman Smith stressed the importance of not re-appropriating money every year to expenditures that never get used. He pointed out that it affects the tax rate even if the money is returned in the next year. He added that it places an undue burden on the tax payers of the Town. Further it is not a responsible act on the part of the Budget Committee. Chairman Smith asked if the increase in the salary line will cover the cost of having Town employees doing the road sweeping. Selectman Iocovozzi said that it will. Chairman Smith asked what roads are scheduled for paving this year. Selectman Iocovozzi stated that Fox Point Road will be resurfaced as well as Gundalow Landing and Brickyard Way. He added that there will be a need to hire an engineer, because of the water and drainage problems at Gundalow Landing and Brickyard Way. Laura Coleman asked why there is a request of \$7,500 for Road Surface Maintenance when all that was spent was \$961. Selectmen Iocovozzi stated that all that was done last year was cold patching. This year the Town will have to hire an outside company to saw cut and repack certain pot-holes in Town. The Town does not have the equipment to do the job. He stressed that cold patch is not a permanent fix. Gail Pare asked why vehicle maintenance was overspent last year. Road Agent Thomas said that the large truck needed springs. Selectman Iocovozzi stated that the trucks are all getting older, even though they are all running good right now, there is no way of predicting what will happen. Chairman Smith asked why there is an increase in road striping. Road Agent Thomas stated that the striping has not been done in a couple of years. In years past the State did the striping. Now the State does not do striping so the Town has to hire it out to a contractor. He added that the Town usually schedules the white (outside lines) one year and the yellow (center) lines the opposite year. Chairman Smith asked what the \$6,000 was spent on. Selectman O'Reilly said that the roads that were repaved were striped. Road Agent Thomas said that he hopes to get the job done for about .16 cents per linear foot. Chairman Smith noted that the appropriation for Ditches and Shoulders has not been spent in the last eight years. After further discussion it was decided to cut \$2,000 from the shoulders and ditches line.

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Gail Pare made a motion to amend the Highway Department Budget to \$182,131. The motion was seconded by Kay Akerley. Chairman Smith called for a vote to amend the Highway Department Budget to \$182,131. Those in favor-Dennis Acton, Kay Akerley, Leslie Brock, Candice Cantaloupo, Laura Coleman, Gail Pare, Richard Spinney-**7 Yes**. Those opposed-Wil Gilbert-**1 No**. Motion Carried.

Chairman Smith called for a vote to accept the Highway Department Budget in the amount of \$182,131. Motion carried with none opposed.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. by Selectman O'Reilly. The motion was seconded by Richard Spinney. Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia L. Gillespie
Administrative Assistant