

NEWINGTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 15, 2003

Present: Budget Committee Members (BUDCOM)
Alfred Smith (Chairman), Dennis Acton, Kay Akerley, Leslie Brock, Laura Coleman,
Richard Spinney. Board of Selectmen Representative, Janice Stuart

The Budget Committee Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to review the budgets of the Sewer Commission and Planning Board

Janice Stuart made a motion to accept the minutes of the meeting held on January 8, 2003; seconded by Laura Coleman. Kay Akerley noted a correction to be made to the minutes regarding the Conservation Wetlands. The minutes were accepted as amended. Motion carried with none opposed.

SEWER COMMISSION

Leslie Brock made a motion to accept the Sewer Commission budget in the amount of \$561,753; motion seconded by Richard Spinney.

Chairman Smith noted that the proposed 2003 budget is approximately a 10% decrease from last year. Smith asked if the increase in the operations contract is a normal increase. George Fletcher stated that the commission uses 3% as a normal increase. It could come in more or less. Richard Spinney asked why the \$6,000 that was appropriated of insurance last year was not expended. George Fletcher explained that the insurance bill had not come in yet. It is the same situation with the insurance on the vehicles. Kay Akerley asked what the Local Limits Study is. George explained it is a study done by Earth-Tech on businesses giving the potential fall out on the sewer treatment plant. The study sets limits on the minerals in the waste water and if a business goes over these limits then the Sewer Commission charges the business additional fees. This is a mandatory study and this is just the balance of what needs to be done. Most of the study was done in previous years. Dennis Acton asked why there was a decrease in sludge disposal. George explained that it was because the volume has decreased and the Sewer Commission has a new contract. The proposed budget number is based on last year's expenditure.

The Chairman called for a vote to accept the Sewer Commission Budget in the amount of \$561,753. Motion carried; none opposed.

PLANNING BOARD

Laura Coleman made a motion that the Planning Board budget in the amount of \$66,500 be accepted; motion seconded by Kay Akerley.

Chairman Smith noted that the Master Plan amount of \$30,000 is a 500% increase over last year. Smith asked for the justification of appropriating money for the Master Plan when the \$5,000 that was appropriated the past three years was never spent. Dennis Hebert, Planning Board member explained that in prior years there had been small revisions to the Master Plan, however the expenses have also been small and the work was done in house. This year is different because of changes in state statutes.

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This year the Planning Board will need to start a complete revision of the Master Plan. Because of the shortage of manpower in the Town Hall, the Planning Board looked to outside firms to do a Master Plan. A comprehensive Master Plan can cost just under \$100,000. Some towns have spent between \$150,000 and \$400,000 depending on the quality of the work. The Planning Board decided to do as much work as possible in house and hire out the work that can not be done, in order to cut costs. The things that need to be hired out will be secretarial services, engineering, and maps. Also, there will be a need to buy some equipment such as a scanner. Laura Coleman asked if the Planning Board charges impact fees. Tom Morgan said we do for transportation such as for the Mall and Wal-Mart. We do not have impact fees for residential development because it would just drive the cost of housing up further. Laura asked if that was just a one time fee. Tom stated that if the Planning Board can prove that a business will have a significant effect on a certain intersection or road then they charge an impact fee. Depending on how much time they put into it, they are trying to do it in sections. Tom Morgan mentioned that the amount that they decided on was a little more than they needed because it is better to have too much than not enough because if you don't have enough it is going to bring the whole process to a stop. The State Legislature changed the law two years ago, prior to that they said that your Master Plan is good for ten years. Then two years ago they said that we advise the Towns to update their Master Plan every five to ten years. Subsequently, a lot of Towns are in the same situation that Portsmouth and Newington are in. There was discussion on what was on the old Master Plan and what will be on this new updated Master Plan. There was argument from the BUDCOM on how the Planning Board's budget the last few years they asked for money to be appropriated and never did anything with it. Why should they appropriate funds now? Laura Coleman asked if it takes 2 or 3 years to do why would they budget the entire \$30,000 amount now instead of spreading it out. The Planning Board said that they anticipated a lot of up front costs. Laura Coleman mentioned that she feels that everyone is leery about every year seeing another \$30,000. Jan Stuart asked about a mention of an assistant for Tom Morgan. Tom Morgan responded that the amount is figured into the total and is a relatively small part of the \$30,000. He mentioned that there are a lot of ways to input the Master Plan into the computer and none of them take any major skill and he thinks that they won't have to pay anyone more than minimum wage to do it.

Chairman Smith noted his skepticism of the Planning Committee using the money. There was a question whether 2003 is the year that the Planning Board has decided to do a major update on the Master Plan or is it going to be an ongoing thing over the years? Tom Morgan said that since it was first printed in 1990 there have been three relatively small updates, which count for only about 30 pages, so when something comes up and they can't anticipate that, they need to update the Master Plan before they do anything. There was discussion on the price they charge non-residents for a copy of the Master Plan. They received around \$800 in Revenue from the purchase of several but because it will be so expensive they will probably raise the price of a copy.

The Chairman called for a vote to approve the Planning Board Budget for the year 2003 in the amount of \$66,500. Motion carried; none opposed.

BUDCOM member, Kay Akerley made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Leslie Brock.
Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Gillespie & Jennifer Nadeau
Administrative Assistant & Secretary