

NEWINGTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2002

Present: *Budget Committee Members (BUDCOM)*
Alfred Smith (Chairman), Dick Spinney, Leslie Brock, Laura Coleman, Kay Akerley, Wil Gilbert, Terri Spinney

Board of Selectmen Representative (BOS)
Chairman, Jack O'Reilly
Jan Stuart
Cosmas Iocovozzi

Foster's Democrat Reporter, Michael Goot, George & Ruth Fletcher
Administrative Assistant (AA), Susan Newcomer

Budget Committee Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the 2002 General Operating Budget proposal.

Chairman Smith asked for the minutes of January 30, 2002. AA Newcomer said they were incomplete.

2002 General Operating Budget Proposal

BUDCOM Chairman Smith asked the committee if they would accept the proposed 2002 General Operating Budget of \$1,082,806. BUDCOM member Leslie Brock made a motion to accept; motion seconded by T. Spinney.

Chairman Smith asked the BUDCOM if there were any questions.

BUDCOM member Kay Akerley questioned the number of Attorneys that the Town was using and what matters they covered. BOS Chairman O'Reilly and BOS member Iocovozzi gave the committee a breakdown of services, including those used by the Board of Adjustment. Akerley asked if all invoices were authorized; O'Reilly said they were.

Salaries

BUDCOM member Laura Coleman questioned the Building Inspectors (BI) rate of pay. BOS Chairman J. O'Reilly said it was \$20 p/hr for 25-30 hours p/wk. BUDCOM Chairman Smith questioned the BI consultant's rate and the Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector's (a combined job) rate. O'Reilly said the BI consultant's rate involved other people when needed, and the Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector rate was higher in 2001 due to training. Smith said the Deputy's rate could increase only if more service hours were provided to the Town.

NEWINGTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2002

Although Chairman Smith noted RSA's, and the Town Clerk's rights, he said the Deputy cannot have more money for convenience sake. O'Reilly said a letter should be sent to the Town Clerk, written by the Selectmen, recommending that if more money was needed for the Deputy, more work hours should be provided. There was further discussion regarding evening hours that could be worked, a few times a month, when the BI is in the Town Hall.

The Plumbing and Electrical Inspector's rates were discussed (they are a combined rate of pay), and BOS Chairman O'Reilly noted plans for charging re-inspection fees to gain revenue.

BUDCOM Chairman Smith asked about a Road Agent and O'Reilly offered a proposed job description but was uncertain about pay requirements. T. Spinney confirmed that the dollar value could be added at the Public Hearing and estimates were made as to what might be needed. An RSA was noted that said the Road Agent was an overseer and can't take care of contracts.

Equipment Leases

Chairman O'Reilly reviewed a handout that broke down the leased equipment and costs for phones, the copier, and the postage machine.

New Equipment

Tables are being replaced in the function room (10 p/yr.) and additional money will be spent to replace chairs in the DeRochemont Room.

Salary for the Substitute (line 40 label to be changed to Secretary/Receptionist) currently involves transitional training for the Administrative Assistant. On or about March 1st, these funds will be used to provide for a part-time Secretary/Receptionist.

Revaluation

BUDCOM member L. Coleman and Chairman Smith requested an account breakdown for Appraisal and Town-wide Revaluation, which BOS Chairman O'Reilly noted included abatements and power plant assessment.

Legal Expenses & Claremont

A breakdown of services and fees was presented on the budget cover sheet. T. Spinney recommended that letters be sent to the Attorneys requesting the municipal rate for legal expenses if they were not already providing services at the municipal rate.

NEWINGTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2002

Fox Point, Grounds Landscaping, & Grounds Maintenance

Chairman Smith noted that the wheelchair ramp at Fox Point was important to complete for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Kay Akerley expressed her concern that the bank has been repaired 3 times at the Point and that someone should be able to correct the problem.

Smith noted that Jim Leger has a full-time job and can no longer do the landscaping. BOS Chairman O'Reilly noted that John Newick was the lowest bidder for ground maintenance and that the maintenance of the Fabyan Point grounds included everything except 2 clean-ups.

Fire Station

Chairman Smith reviewed what would be needed for furnace/heating system repairs. T. Spinney asked if there were quotes and O'Reilly said that bids would be taken and that asbestos removal and the bunk areas would be the focus for the year. Kay Akerley read the minutes from the budget meeting last year that discussed the bunk area. Chairman Smith and L. Coleman agreed that money had been set aside to renovate the old side of the building and to resolve the bunking issue.

Concern from BUDCOM members as to what had actually been done in the past year generated table discussion about priority and a two-phase plan. Chairman Smith said he needed to have the Board of Fire Engineers (BOFE) at the Public Hearing to fully explain how repairs were handled. The need to change the bid process was discussed. Smith said the repairs were not clearly presented by the BOFE, and the Selectmen did not have a clear picture and were not accountable. Smith said the General Budget would not be recommended without answers.

Library Maintenance

Relocating an outlet, adding a light timer, and installing a wrought iron rail were discussed. T. Spinney mentioned that a wrought iron rail would need future maintenance and wondered how G. Young got the job. The bidding and contract award process was questioned again and Chairman Smith confirmed the perception of conflict of interest and said the issue was being addressed.

MeetingHouse

Chairman Smith told the BUDCOM that the engineer who looked at the steeple said it was safe. Ruth Fletcher noted that if one were to go up and view it they would see that it is not safe. BOS Chair O'Reilly felt another engineer should look at it. Fletcher and O'Reilly discussed paint issues and repair work, and the BUDCOM requested a breakdown. O'Reilly read a detailed listing and said he would give copies of the list to the Committee.

NEWINGTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2002

T. Spinney inquired about the Stone School and O'Reilly said that L. Coleman had requested installation of a new sink upstairs. It was also noted that the fire escape at the Old Town Hall did not meet standards and had to be replaced, along with phone line work, a new phone, and an answering machine.

Chairman Smith said he was looking at the \$5000 in the Police Budget again to see what the money was for. T. Spinney wanted to know where the paving estimate for the Town Garage came from, and BOS member locovozzi said it was from pike 4 years ago for \$5000 less.

Chairman Smith said there were too many line items appropriated with zero spending and the practice needed to be dealt with or stopped. L. Coleman noted that the tax rate is higher because of those types of items. BOS member locovozzi mentioned that it could hurt Conservation or the HDC to remove some of the line items and Smith said they would have to think about them.

The Budget Committee Chairman called for a 10-minute break at 2:55.

A breakdown of the regional association donations was discussed. The need for the Town to assist each organization was detailed, along with the number of residents who benefit from each of them.

BOS Chairman O'Reilly explained the increase in the mosquito control line item. He read a letter from M. Morrison of Mosquito Control which noted a 10% increase for insecticide.

Chairman Smith said there was a motion on the table to accept the General Operating Budget 2002 in the amount of \$1,082,806. With questions on the Fire Station, Police Station, Town Forest, and Municipal Grounds, Smith said he felt there was too much out there to recommend the budget for that amount. Smith motioned to amend the motion to table the \$1,082,806 for resolution at the Public Hearing. Motion to amend was accepted by L. Brock. Smith called for a vote, vote carried, none opposed.

Chairman Smith read the warrants and L. Coleman noted that the cemetery committee did not submit stipend amounts for the warrant. Table discussed warrant articles and appropriate procedures.

Chairman Smith asked if there was a motion to accept the Capital Expenditure Budget in the amount of \$140, 740. Dick Spinney made a motion to accept; second by Laura Coleman.

NEWINGTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2002

The Fire Vehicle was discussed and Chairman Smith felt the Budget committee was not getting the whole story. L. Coleman mentioned last year's budget that read there was a vehicle for \$45,000, to which Smith added it was to purchase a new vehicle. Smith told the committee he wanted to table the Capital and Expenditure Budget or clear it out.

Kay Akerley made a motion, second by Laura Coleman, to table the Capital Expenditure Budget of \$140, 740 and take it to the Public Hearing. Vote carried, none opposed.

Chairman Smith noted that the Fire Department and Police Department building repairs were not clear and that the BOFE and Police Department would answer questions in these areas at the Public Hearing, with an explanation to the Selectmen. Due to this, the MS-7 can't be finished.

Chairman Smith asked if there was any other business.

Motion to adjourn made by Kay Akerley; second by Dick Spinney.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M Newcomer
Administrative Assistant