

**Town of Newington
Budget Committee
February 3, 2001 Meeting Minutes**

Budget Committee (BudCom) Members Present: Chairman Alfred Smith, Jan Stuart, Kay Akerley, Leslie Brock, Richard Spinney, Laura Coleman, Terri Spinney, Cindy Noble and Board of Selectmen (BOS) Rep. Jack O'Reilly. Others Present: Board of Selectmen Chris Cross and Cos Iocovozzi, Fire Chief Larry Wahl and Guy Young, & Executive Assistant Bob Belmore.

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Selectmen General Government Budget

Motion by Stuart, 2nd by Brock to accept the FY 2001 proposed Selectmen General Government Budget at \$1,180,634.

Discussion: Selectmen Chairman O'Reilly presented the Budget along with explanations. Animal Control Officer salary indicated a \$1,000 increase. Stuart said she had responded to about 205 calls, she said she had completed the series of rabies vaccination shots. The Building Inspector (BI) line and consultant inspector lines: Selectman Cross said the BI position was planned as an approximate 30 hr per week position that included a training time allowance for the inspector. Cross explained the research conducted by the Board and the hiring process completed to fill the position. He explained that the increase in development as well as projected development & all the associated liability concerns were part of the basis for the direction the selectmen were taking.

Chairman Smith asked if the inspector was certified, and if not, why didn't the Board re-advertise. Coleman expressed a concern that no funding was placed into the consultant line. Cross said the position was budgeted at \$19.00 per hour. T. Spinney asked if the Building Inspector had agreed to work for the Town after he was accredited. Cross said no. Chief Wahl said he averaged about 20 hrs per week when he was filling in as building inspector. Akerley said \$19.00 an hour seemed fine but not for attending training. O'Reilly said it was not uncommon to pay employees for training such as police officers and sometimes they are uncertified and then attend the academy at the Town's expense. Selectman Iocovozzi said certification is probably not the best term for the building inspector, rather the Board was looking to send him to continuing education seminars. Cross said they had asked Greenland to share their building inspector who gets \$23 per hour. R. Spinney asked if he was on contract –O'Reilly said no, that all new hires are on six months probation. Chief Wahl mentioned the increased inspection load the inspector will need to address including the Bradlees demolition and projected development of the new ICR. O'Reilly said there should have been \$3,000 in the building consultant line, it was an oversight.

Smith questioned the budgeting for more hours for the deputy town clerk. O'Reilly said it was a request from the town clerk. Iocovozzi said by RSA the town clerk could set her own hours of operation. Smith read a letter from the town clerk on how she planned to use her deputy. Discussion continued on the need for earlier or later hours for the town clerk office. Coleman suggested she change the hours to include evenings when the Selectmen meet. Smith said he believed the deputy position was there to have a fill-in when the clerk was not available not an assistant position.

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O'Reilly said Wahl and Hart were the electrical & plumbing inspectors. Coleman suggested separate lines for them. Smith said the State RSA indicated the Town must have a road agent. Iocovozzi said the Selectmen could act as the road agent. Smith requested the Board get a written legal opinion regarding the road agent position so that the Town would not be faced with any liability exposure for not having one.

Akerley asked what the treasurer's hours were. Coleman said she would not be putting in the amount of hours that she had in the past. O'Reilly explained the audit expense for the newly hired auditing firm and work by the fraud auditor. Smith repeated a saying he had heard from a past shipyard commander, *If you always did what you always did, then you always got what you always got.*

Town Planner Morgan explained the computer expenses requested for hardware, software and support. Coleman suggested cutting the \$500 for check reconciliation software. Morgan said he had a concern with the Inteva computers that were no longer on warranty. T. Spinney suggested placing an older computer in an area for access by the public. Coleman said the police, fire and town hall should have purchased computers together and planned together. She asked what the computer plan was. Morgan said to go to a Windows 2000 environment. Smith asked about the second custodian line. O'Reilly said it probably should read as substitute or assistant custodian, it is there for when the custodian is off. Several questions were raised about how the custodian's hours and duties were tracked. O'Reilly explained the executive assistant and substitute lines. Smith asked about the position's duties and hours. O'Reilly said he had completed a job description for this position. Coleman asked about collecting and depositing funds. O'Reilly said the Board was waiting for auditor Stone's written report. Smith said he believed an underlying situation existed where there was no clear definition of who is responsible for what. Smith also suggested elected officials get copies of the RSA that states their duties and responsibilities.

Iocovozzi said it was a good suggestion to give the RSA to elected officials, but he asked if it was the Selectmen or town clerk responsibility to do so. Smith said it might be a shared responsibility. Coleman suggested the NHMA workshops given for town officials. Belmore said he had attended three NHMA local officials' workshops as well as many NHMA Annual Conferences and NHGFOA/NHMA budget conferences, and he also recommended the value of attending. O'Reilly explained how the substitute funding was determined, approximately 10-hrs +/- per week, which will be better determined by March. Smith said he had no big problem with three days per week for about 4 hours per day. Discussion comments included the need for a substitute job description and better action plan. Iocovozzi said the Board was working on attempting to get the Town into the 21st Century while trying to plug up some holes.

O'Reilly explained the revaluation appropriation request and the Claremont potential effect on Newington. He said Bob had checked with DRA and there was no need to reappropriate for the revaluation since the Selectmen were designated as agents to expend, same with the warrant article for communications equipment. He went on to explain the plans for town buildings' line by line.

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T. Spinney asked about the sleeping quarters issue at the fire station. Guy Young presented some plans. Chief Wahl said the asbestos removal needed to be addressed first. Iocovozzi said he needed to coordinate the steeple work at the MeetingHouse with the engineer and fire chief. O'Reilly mentioned re-paving the town hall and police department parking lots. Coakley payments were explained, etc. O'Reilly said grant letters for the emergency management budget had been received and it was reflected in the increase requested.

Chairman Smith suggested the Committee consider no increase over last year's budget and remove the requested \$54,100 increase and recommend \$1,126,534. Some discussion took place. Stuart then amended her original motion to accept the General Government Budgets for FY 2001 at the new figure of \$1,126,534, second by Brock.

Motion passed, 8-1 vote (O'Reilly voted against).

Warrant Articles

Smith read the Selectmen's proposed warrant article appropriations.

Article 2- \$10,000 for capital reserve fund (CRF) for fire dept. communications, motion-Akerley, 2nd-Coleman, 9-0 to recommend.

Article 3- \$15,000 for revaluation CRF, motion -Noble, 2nd-Coleman, 9-0 to recommend.

Article 4- \$30,000 for PD communications equipment CRF, motion-Akerley, 2nd-Coleman, 9-0 vote to recommend.

Article 5- \$12,000 for ambulance & equipment CRF, motion-Brock, 2nd-Coleman, 9-0 vote to recommend.

Article 6- \$20,000 for FD vehicle CRF, motion-Akerley, 2nd-Coleman, 9-0 vote to recommend.

Article 7- \$50,000 to be placed in a Conservation Fund, motion-Coleman, 2nd-Noble, 9-0 vote to recommend. Smith suggested needing other language in article seven to establish and spend. Belmore said the statute spells out how it is set up with funds held by the Treasurer and the ability to spend it given to the Conservation Commission.

Capital Expenditures

Smith went briefly over the requested capital expenditures.

Motion by Coleman to accept the proposed amount \$ 152,400 for FY 2001, second by Noble. Motion passed by 9-0 vote.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert M. Belmore