

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2007
7:00pm Town Hall

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 by Larry Wahl.

Present: Larry Wahl, Tom Benson, John Lamson, Gail Klanchesser, Rick Stern, Gail Pare, Helen Maldini, Mike Mazeau, Jan Stuart (Selectmen's Rep), Darin Sabine, Jim Katkin of SAU 50, Steve Sabine & Wib Goins – Fire Engineers (arrived at 7:40pm); and AA Beatrice Marconi.

Larry opened the meeting with discussion about membership – announcing the resignation of Cliff Abbott along with a position that did not get filled by vote at Town Meeting, therefore yielding two vacant seats.

Appointment of Members

John Lamson moved to recommend Michael Mazeau to fill one of the seats. Gail Klanchesser seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Selectman Stuart then swore in Mr. Mazeau.

Selectman Stuart indicated that Mr. Tom Horrihan could be interested, however, with Mr. Sabine at the meeting, *Helen Maldini moved to recommend Darin Sabine as a Budget Committee member. Gail Klanchesser seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Jan Stuart moved to appoint Larry Wahl as Chairman of the Budget Committee. Helen Maldini seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Jan Stuart moved to appoint John Lamson as Vice Chairman of the Budget Committee. Gail Pare seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of February 17, 2007

Gail Klanchesser moved to accept the minutes of the Public Hearing held February 17, 2007. Gail Pare seconded. Motion to accept passed unanimously.

School – Year End Review

Jim Katkin of SAU 50 passed out year ending June 30, 2007 DOE-25 report as filed with the DRA.

Some of the highlights are as follows.

Page 1 Column 1 Line 30 represents the amount of unreserved fund balance which shows \$180,116.21. This is the amount unspent from this budget and although will not be turned back to the Town, it will be calculated in the school's request for funding the '08-09 year and used to reduce the town's burden. The main reasons for this unspent amount are: tuition costs were less than projected, natural gas prices did not soar as forecasted, benefit costs came in less than expected and other language needs weren't as high as originally thought.

The After School Program this year showed an excess of \$ 1,774. This was accumulated from donations, parent contributions, etc. Helen Maldini mentioned that in actuality they should have spent these funds as it can't be profit making, but this being the first year, the unknowns will be more clear as the program develops.

Food Service lost \$ 6,800 as it is difficult to off set labor costs based on so few students.

Expendable Trust Fund for School building and grounds maintenance now has \$ 107,936 in it.

Per Pupil Cost increased over last year primarily due to the decrease in student population. The numbers show an 8.5% decrease in student count. Average daily membership does not include absences.

Kindergarten is offered optionally as a full day itinerary although next year it may be different – all depending on circumstance. This is offered at no increase in costs to the budget. There are 4 full time participants at this time. They are combined with the first grade in the morning, 2nd grade in the afternoon – all based on curriculum with Principal Rist providing reading. Regarding the After School Program, 6 students are currently attending with certain days offering other activities or specialty classes. The \$ 1,774 will roll back into the after school program. Offering transportation is the responsibility of the school system. If there are cases where 1 or 2 students need transportation, a bus is not launched, rather, they hope either the parent helps out or a stipend is negotiated.

98% of the school budget is raised locally and never leaves town. 14.17% of the budget goes to special education. 2/3 of this 14.17% is for needs at our Elementary School with the remaining 1/3 attributed to needs at the Middle and High Schools. In answering a question from Gail Pare, Mr. Katkin felt as statistics show right now, special ed needs are down to 14.17% from 18%. Special Education costs us \$ 254,746 including Elementary, Middle and High School levels.

Gail Pare moved to accept the June 30, 2007 end of school year report. Gail Klanchesser seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Town Budget Mid-Year Review

Misc lines were discussed.

Vehicle Maintenance – E/O – shows a deficit – due to work needed to cruisers when turned over from PD to town.

Old Town Hall – Gail K. asked about air conditioning. Jan Stuart stated that it may be presented for 2008. Gail also added that even fans would help stir the air.

Meeting House - Larry Wahl hoped that temporary flooring support could be done in '08 as the left side is failing fast.

Fire Engineers Letter dated Sept 11, 2007 to BOS which was CCed to Budget Committee – Larry Wahl felt the Selectmen should address it as it was directed to them but felt the Fire Dept must make this budget work in addition to the consideration of transfer of funds by the Board. Jan Stuart stated that since the Budget Committee got a copy, they may want to comment. Helen Maldini noted that the bottom line is the most important. With two Fire Engineers present, Jan Stuart asked them with professional training being over by \$3,700, when did the red flag first appear? Wib Goins said that the Engineers knew there would be hardship when their revised budget was cut \$68,600. Steve Sabine stated that the Fire Engineers worked very hard to slash and kept the needs of both the Fire Department and the Tax Payers in mind. They too, (the Board of Engineers) are taxpayers and there should be a certain element of trust. Larry Wahl, a former Fire Chief here in Newington said that shortfalls are not events that never happen, in fact while he was Chief, it occurred three times. Helen Maldini noted that at the public hearing, there was no representation from the Fire Engineers. No one was there to answer questions or to address concerns at such an important step in the budget process. Steve said, yes, it was unfortunate no one could attend but it was circumstance with all being tied up. John Lamson echoed Helen Maldini's point of view on the importance of attending the Public Hearing. The voters can vote on anything but should be made aware of the consequences.

With no one at the Public Hearing, the tax payers weren't advised of the consequences. Darin Sabine felt that the Vehicle Maintenance line will be over. Jan Stuart asked the Engineers what they projected for an overage as she had heard \$30,000 to \$60,000. With Larry Wahl choking in the back ground, the Fire Engineers felt that that estimate was extremely high but would come up with a reasonable forecast. In looking at the bottom line, Larry stated that it didn't look critical at the present time but advised the Fire Engineers that they should spend very cautiously. Wib said that the vehicle maintenance line should not be a line to short-out on. Larry added that this line historically has always been a bone of contention. Larry stated that an annual physical was not mandated and that generally they are administered every other year. When asked about the possibility of two new fire fighters being added to staff in 2008, Steve Sabine stated that specialty grants are being researched for possible consideration but it was at ground level at the present time without the Engineers even knowing if Newington would qualify for these funds.

Highway Paving was budgeted at \$190,000 with \$95,000 being awarded to the Brickyard job and left over funds projected for the Coleman Drainage/Paving project in addition to misc patch and pave. Gail Klanchesser felt a 5 year plan for road work was helpful in the past and that she hopes the Selectmen and Road Agent, along with other departments could go back to this system. Larry noted that our infrastructure has been neglected and that Shattuck is going to need some serious attention. John Lamson agreed with roads needing major funding. Gail K. wondered if the Master Plan ideas and concepts were reviewed from time to time as it was full of considerations. It was agreed upon that prioritization is important. Gail Pare felt that bids and requests for proposals should be done early on in the year so that when our cash flow concerns have dissipated, we can move on contracts. Even to get more done and utilize the TANS would not be a problem. Larry felt prioritization of all projects would be a benefit and that funding road capital reserves would be a necessity. Land Management – Care of Trees is over partially due to the drainage project on Nimble whereas maple trees had to come down.

Gail Klanchesser moved to accept the Town's mid year budget review. Gail Pare seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business: Larry Wahl suggested a close look at the Capital Reserves be done this year by all. He felt the different departments should discuss the suggested funding at the Selectmen's level as well as set goals for long term needs.

Gail Klanchesser moved to adjourn at 9:19pm. Helen Maldini seconded. So Moved.

Respectively Submitted,

Beatrice Marconi
Administrative Assistant
Newington, NH

SARAH:

**PLEASE PASS A COPY OF THESE MINUTES
ON TO DARIN SABINE/CHIEF/ENGINEERS**