

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 4, 2009
6:30pm Town Hall

Chr. Larry Wahl called the meeting to order at 6:40pm.

Present: Larry Wahl, Gail Pare, Gail Klanchesser, Tom Benson, Selectmen's Rep Jack O'Reilly, Liz Taccetta, John Lamson, Daren Sabine, AA Beatrice Marconi, Fire Chief Roy Greenleaf, Fire Engineers Steve Sabine, Wib Goins and Ruth Fletcher; George Fletcher, Assistant Fire Chief Dale Sylvia, Selectmen Jan Stuart and Chr. Cosmas Iocovozzi. *Russ Cooke and Helen Maldini were absent.*

Minute Approval: Gail Pare moved to accept the minutes of January 21, 2009 as written. Jack O'Reilly seconded. Motion passed with Liz Taccetta and John Lamson abstaining.

Chr. Wahl began the night by stating that the Public Hearing begins at 1:00pm with the Town's budget immediately following. (Bea had sent an E-mail out to the members which stated a 1:30 start for town). Larry corrected that E-mail.

Fire Department's Amended Budget

G. Klanchesser moved to amend the Fire Department's tentatively recommended budget from \$1,182,499 to \$1,221,408, (being a difference of \$ 38,908.) Seconded by G. Pare.

J. Lamson asked if the added amount to the Call line was realistic. The Chief feels it is a good start and hopes to recruit more personnel. They do not advertise. He tries to hire individuals no further out than 15 to 20 miles from Newington. There is a formal 'Call Plan' in place. Asst. Chief D. Sylvia spoke to the plan and how they try to keep it equitable and fair. Nights and weekends is primarily when they utilize call people the most bringing staff count to three. Insurances for extra call personnel are in place.

Chr. Wahl called for the vote. Motion passed 5-2 with L. Wahl and J. O'Reilly opposing and Darin Sabine abstaining.

General Town Government under Selectmen - \$2,112,840 (amended)

Before a motion was made, Selectmen's Rep Jack O'Reilly stated he felt a revision to the bottom line number was necessary as the Fire Dept Cap Outlay line should read \$22,500, not \$25,000 therefore bringing the starting number at \$2,110,340.

G. Klanchesser moved to tentatively recommend the General Town Government budget in the amount of \$2,110,340 with G. Pare seconding.

Selectmen's Rep J. O'Reilly began by stating that we are down by approximately \$143,000 primarily due to the Library Bldg Maintenance budget being moved to the Trustees of the Library's operating budget and the Frink Bond expired so we didn't have to fund that item this year. He went on to say that there could have been other cuts in addition to what has already been done, however the Selectmen felt another year of concentrated building maintenance would bring long standing bldg. neglect to an end. The Board also factored in the timing of the expiration of the Old Town Hall Bond and are eying the donor town situation.

Make up of line 110 – wages – consists of the Administrative Assistant's, the monthly reconciliation by Cyndi, Cathy's and Theresa's pay. J.O'Reilly noted that a step system was created this year bringing all full time people to step system level.

Engineering line – used for necessary culvert work through the DES when required, SWAMP work off Nimble and blanket needs for the Town.

Elections – decreased due to decrease in elections. There were 4 last year. This year only Town Meeting is slated – food was partially donated so that line was decreased as well.

Tax Collector/Town Clerk – Not on step system – Elected position and part time.

Finance/Assessing – The Commercial and Industrial values will be adjusted this year therefore the Assessing line has increased substantially. The Utilities send their school portion directly to the State as a form of school funding.

Legal – J.O'Reilly noted that the Coalition line was funded this year which is used to support the fight against Donor towns. The Legal Lines are always funded as an 'in-case' scenario. You never can predict what will appear or happen. It's like 'if needed' insurance.

Building Admin Salary – covers the custodian's salary and money was calculated in for funding a fill-in in sickness or vacation times.

Town Hall – G Pare asked if the savings from changing to the SMART plan were realized yet and if we can see a difference with PSNH. Kilowatt usage has not been analyzed at this time. J.O'Reilly feels a heating efficiency test is necessary for Town Hall and added that the Board was able to utilize last year's funds to buy a new stove for Town Hall kitchen. Storage is the biggest concern.

Town Garage – Chr. Wahl stated that there should be a plan b in place incase the bond for the new garage meets opposition. With the bleak economy there may be some folks asking for a delay. If the Bond fails at Town Meeting, warrant article #4 will then become activated and because of the major issues with the current Highway Garage, a motion to put extra money in the budget may be necessary just for the building to last a few more years. But with the multiple problems we must deal with on the current building, you could sink way over \$100,000 into it and still not be in compliance - and that would be close to being equivalent to a payment on a new bldg.

Old Town Hall – G Klanchesser noticed that the phone budget request is not reflecting the BayRing savings the town will get in 2009. Beatrice explained that the majority of the savings will be reflective in the internet charges rather than the phone. G Pare stated that there are plans to consider erecting a flag pole on the site and said that she feels it is a sign of disrespect to see our flag flapping in a storm even if it is well lit. The projector and screen installation was questioned as Old Town Hall may not have the need. The ceilings are very high for mounting and that could present a problem. Air conditioning has been shot down in the past and fans installed on the second floor.

Meeting House - \$105,000 is budgeted to wrap up the renovations needed to complete the project. The Town received \$ 124,000 via a grant to help in the costs. J O'Reilly added that next year we are expecting to see a significant drop in building maintenance request for funding.

Fire Station – Although last year a generator was budgeted for, it was not bought as some unexpected costs arose from the kitchen project involving asbestos removal. Funds, were, however encumbered to help in the cost for a generator this year. Chr. Wahl asked about wiring planned this year at the Fire Station as he had re-wired much of the building not so long ago. Jack will talk to our Building Inspector to get more detail.

Police Station - The icicles cannot be merely knocked down in fear of damaging the shingles. This problem is not unique to the Police Station as we have had a bad year weather wise. The chair recommended the Town use the bucket truck to help with the ice problem and it should also be utilized when town staff deals with branches. With a new police garage requested in 2009, it could also be used as an animal shelter when emergencies hit our Town. This covers the new Federal mandate that shelters make provisions for pets.

Stone School - \$5,000 is budgeted for this year to address problems in the back side wall. It must be kept weather tight.

Old Parsonage – Mold and mildew issues were addressed last year and continue on this year. critters were dealt with in 2008 and in 2009, part of the roof and clapboards will be replaced.

Regional Associations – CASA has been added for 2009.

Code Enforcement – The Fica/Medi line was recalculated to be inline with wages. The new figure is \$5,169.

Emergency Mgmt – For declared emergency incidents, \$2,200 has been placed into this line for the purchase of mobile generators as a result of the after actions meeting with the Emergency Management Team. The Fire Department will put these generators on their equipment maintenance schedule and run them as recommended so they don't get bogged over time. They will be for emergency incidents only and not simply for heavy rain storms as it is not the responsibility of the Town to constantly pump basements out if the home owner has not purchased their own generator or pump.

Welfare – Discussed at length, this is another one of those lines that a crystal ball would come in handy. The economic forecast is not a healthy nor prosperous one. The Budget Committee felt another \$15,000 should be added to this budget.

Land Mgmt – Chr. Wahl asked why the Carriage House doesn't have a building line of its own. Chr. Iocovozzi explained that it has always been part of Fox Point much like the Chicken Coop, etc.

Cap Out Lay – The Board of Selectmen placed \$ 25,000 into a line for Fire Cap OutLay however only \$22,500 is needed. This adjustment was made at the beginning of the General Government Budget presentation by Selectmen's Rep J. O'Reilly. (-\$2,500)

G. Klanchesser moved to amend her original motion to now read \$ 2,126,056 (was \$2,110,340). G Pare seconded the amendment. Vote to accept amendment passed and after no further discussion, the Chr. called for the vote to tentatively recommend a General Government Budget of \$ 2,126,056, the motion passed. None opposed.

Note: The Budget Committee increased Welfare from \$ 10,000 to \$ 25,000 (+15,000); and adjusted FICA/Medi in Code Enforcement to now read \$5,169 (+716).

The draft of Warrant Articles was reviewed in preparation of the Saturday's Public Hearing.

Gail Pare moved to adjourn at 9:15pm. Jack O'Reilly seconded. Motion passed

Respectively Submitted,

Beatrice Marconi
Administrative Assistant