

Town of Newington, NH
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2013- Town Hall
7:00pm

Call to Order: Chair John Lamson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Present: John Lamson, Gail Klanchesser, David Mueller, Janis Marconi, Michael Marconi, Leila Richardson, Gail Pare, Jack O'Reilly, Jan Stuart and Martha Roy.

December 4 Minutes: Martha distributed the minutes and **Gail P. moved to postpone review and acceptance until the Committee had a chance to review them.** Jack seconded this with all in favor.

Employee Wages/Salaries 2013 and 2014: Martha distributed a packet containing the detailed wages/salaries of each Town employee for 2013 and proposed for 2014 along with each department's step schedule as requested by the Committee. The packet also included other information for their binders. Martha stated the office is still working on the revenue report for the Committee and this will be forthcoming shortly.

Planning Board Budget Review: Denis Hebert, Planning Board Chair and Tom Morgan, Town Planner were present to review the Planning Board budget with the Committee. **Gail K moved to tentatively recommend of the Planning Board budget in the amount of \$184,394, which was seconded by Gail P.**

Mike stated that he was a Planning Board member for the record and expressed the viewpoint that the COAST Bus funding should not be located in the Planning Board budget. This amount had increased to \$30,000 for 2014. Gail P suggested that the Town Hall staff research where other Towns place their COAST Bus funding. John mentioned that for next year the Selectmen might have placement of this line item reconsidered.

Jan explained that the Board of Selectmen voted 2-1 in favor of the COAST budget with Jan in opposition. She would be speaking independently against but wanted the Committee to know that the majority of the Board was in favor. She had asked COAST to complete a loop around town in the past and they had refused. They currently pick up ½ mile of their route if called for handicap accessibility and Gail K stated this only brings them as far as Coleman Drive.

Gail P reminded the Committee that this bus service serves our largest taxpayers, the businesses of town. Tom stated that their biggest customer in terms of people using the service is the Town of Newington. Jan clarified that Tom is the

Town's representative on the Board. John asked if there was a possibility they would at least come to Town Hall and Tom stated that he expected if we asked for this extension the other towns and cities would also ask for larger routes.

Jack informed the Committee that the Town had sent out a survey in the past and residents stated that there was no interest in transportation for seniors.

Tom discussed the fact that matching funds come from the Federal government.

Gail P noted that the Professional training budget was at the same amount as last year but had not been used. Jack noted that the Local Government Center training is free. The Planning Board expected more funds to be expended in the future.

Jack stated that wages were on the high side. He also had questions about health and why the Board changed to the Blue Choice plan. John stated that the Committee would come back to these questions when the Town budget was reviewed in January.

Jack asked that the Committee cut the Planning Board wages by \$500, Professional training by \$500, Engineering by \$1,000 and Legal by 1,000. Denis countered that historical fund usage reflects the recession but now the Planning Board is meeting more frequently. The economic pendulum is swinging in the other direction now. He stated the bottom line is that these cuts will just hurt the town. He also stressed that the applicant reimburses the costs. John mentioned that this was a good reason for the revenue sheet to be provided to the Committee.

Leila asked about the Highway expansion and might it end up as an unforeseen Planning Board issue to which Denis responded that it had been finalized.

John called for a vote on the Planning Board budget and all were in favor of \$185,394.

Highway:

Gail K moved to tentatively recommend the Highway budget of \$407,565, seconded by Michael.

Jack asked where the phones were and who had them. Len responded that this applies to the cell phones for himself, and members of the Highway Department. Jack asked if there was still a phone at the garage and Len replied that there was.

Gail K explained that she had asked at the town hall about the new budget lines for culverts and other project lines that the highway crew participates in. She was told that wages needed their own lines to accurately reflect bookkeeping

rules and that payroll taxes needed to be moved from these lines and placed under the wages section of the budget..

Gail P asked if \$73,200 was the total for wages and Len replied that it was.

An inquiry was made as to the Cost of Living Adjustment this year and Martha replied it was 1.5%.

Mike asked about the road signs budget and particularly about the sign at the end of the Exit 4 ramp off the Spaulding Turnpike. Len replied that Tom Morgan was in charge of fixing the sign.

The Committee noted that the resurfacing budget was significantly decreased in 2014. Jack replied that the Town had been aggressive on having roads repaved in the past few years and we were almost done. Len reviewed the roads to be completed in 2014 which included the remainder of Shattuck, Piscataqua, Old Post Road and other minor roads. The Town has received an estimate for these projects and it is in line with the total listed.

Jack asked if there were any major vehicle buys in 2014. Jan stated they are keeping enough in the budget should they need to purchase a truck.

Gail K inquired as to the cost of a new truck. Len responded it would be approximately \$80-90,000.

There was discussion regarding the purchase of a mower and the recommendation to take it out of 2013 funds.

Leila asked when the town will be taking the state road. Jack replied that a punch list of items to bring it into compliance should be developed. Michael discussed the redesign of the corner by WalMart.

Gail K asked why the Highway Department hadn't spent anything out of the Road sand budget. She noted there had been plenty spent on salt but none on sand. Len will look into this.

John asked for a vote from the Budget Committee on the Highway budget in the amount of \$407, 565. All were in favor.

Library:

Gail P moved to tentatively recommend the Library budget in the amount of \$173,286. This was seconded by Michael with all in favor.

Martha asked the Budget Committee to use the Library's colored version of the budget.

Leila asked why three phone lines were necessary at the Library. Gup and Melissa explained that the fax, fire and entry alarm lines all had to be separated.

John discussed the decision of the Trustees to make sure that there are two employees in the Library at all times.

Leila asked if there was going to be a further warrant article about the library at this year's Town Meeting. Gup responded that a survey to the town's people will be sent out as they have received many requests for expanded hours. Melissa stated that if the survey shows that the majority of town's people would like expanded hours there would be a warrant article put forth. This would include 2 employees during any additional hours.

Michael asked for details about the Collection Development line. Melissa explained that this was the book purchases line. She went on to say that the peach colored line is from the Library Trust fund but that all of the lines add up to the total budget amount.

Gup discussed that \$35,000. in the account can only be spent with the approval of the town.

John asked if the Committee was in favor of the \$183,286. All were in favor with Gail K abstaining.

Michael asked how many employees were paid at the Library and Melissa replied that there were 6 employees.

Adjournment:

Gail P moved to adjourn at 8:31pm., seconded by Jack with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted by:

Martha S. Roy, Town Administrator