



BUDGET COMMITTEE
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MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Thursday, December 08, 2016 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Alyson Baryames, James Connelly, Mark Connelly, Sharon Hussey, Bob Krasko, Steve McKenzie, Patty Porter, Kristen Syphers, Paul Sanderson – Selectmen's Rep

Members Absent: Chair Mary McDonough

Late Arrival: Pat Walsh – School Board Rep

Also Present: Karen Anderson – Town Administrator, Vaughan Morgan – Board of Selectmen Chairman, Department Heads

Alyson Baryames opened the Budget Committee meeting at 6:32 p.m. A roll call was taken, and she announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

1. Approval of Minutes: Wednesday, November 30, 2016

MOTION: B. Krasko moved to approve the minutes of Wednesday, November 30, 2016. Second – J. Connelly; eight in favor, one abstain (S. McKenzie). **MOTION CARRIED**

2. Brief Review: School Budget

Two questions regarding the School budget were submitted. J. Connelly asked for the formula that is used to calculate the high school tuition cost per student. A. Baryames stated that a formula was given to the Budget Committee last year. She suggested a copy be located and given to members.

3. Search for School Principal

The School Department is beginning the search for a School principal. The kick-off meeting will be Monday, December 12, 2016, 6:30 p.m. in the Greenland School Media Center. A copy of the letter from Superintendent Salvatore Petralia is on file.

4. Review of Town Budget

The Town Administrator stated that a flat rate salary increase based on 2.25% was agreed upon for Town employees by the Board of Selectmen.

- a. Town Clerk/Tax Collector (Marge Morgan): Records preservation was increased by \$1,000. The cost of support for Clerks Works and the tax program were included in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector budget this year rather than in General Government.
- b. Police Department (Chief Laurent): Supplementary information was given to members by Chief Laurent. An additional officer, increasing the number to eight, was included. Chief Laurent is looking for a certified officer with some experience. It takes approximately one year to go through

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the Academy. The salary range would be high \$40,000's to low \$50,000's (doesn't include benefits). Chief Laurent explained that Greenland has had seven full-time officers, supplemented by part-time officers, since 2003. In addition to growth in Town, the climate of calls has changed over the years. By adding an officer, Chief Laurent hopes to get the overtime to 32%. The part-time officers would still be used for coverage. P. Sanderson added that a key policy goal has been to have better 24/7 coverage, which means more full-time officers in those shifts. He continued that the Police and Fire Departments are the Town's public safety agencies. Having more officers will also assist in the Fire Department; police are often the first on scene for an emergency call. The Board of Selectmen supports the Chief's effort to add an officer. Chief Laurent explained that cars are purchased through their Revolving Account, which is self-supporting. The Revolving Account is funded through private detail work. The total cost of the additional officer, including benefits, would be approximately \$93,137 (wages, benefits and uniforms). A warrant article in the amount of \$2,000 for bullet proof vests will be submitted.

- c. Fire Department (Chief Cresta): The EMS side of the Fire Department is now a medic service. There are three medics on the department, and they have saved two lives this year. P. Sanderson explained the Special Revenue Fund for the Fire Department. Chief Cresta and P. Sanderson discussed staffing concerns. Chief Cresta told members that he would like to retire in two to three years and is requesting a Deputy Fire Chief at 32 hours per week. He also explained standby pay for overnight coverage. Due to increased growth in Town, there is a need for additional staffing. P. Sanderson stated that the possibility of the Fire Department going "dark" had been discussed; there is no statutory requirement that towns must have a fire department or ambulance. The Board of Selectmen rejected that idea because there was no guarantee that other communities would respond for mutual aid. As a result, fire insurance rates for residents would increase 20% to 40%. They considered that unacceptable from a public safety and financial point of view. The Board of Selectmen opted to start transitioning rather than letting the department go dark.
- d. Building Department (Jim Marchese): The Building Inspector explained the proposed Geographic Information System (GIS). It would be linked with the Town's website and available to the public. The availability of GIS would greatly benefit Building, Fire and Police Departments. P. Sanderson stated that the Selectmen are looking into the fees charged for permits and trying to make the Building Department revenue neutral. It was suggested that members may want to look at Stratham's website and their GIS program.
- e. Library (Denise Grimse): An updated budget was given to members. The Assistant Director position was changed from salary-exempt to non-exempt. Salary increases were based on 2.25%. The total gross budget is offset through trust fund monies, copy/fax fees, damaged and lost fees, donations and non-resident cards. They are anticipating submitting a warrant article to add to their Capital Reserve Fund. The amount is still to be determined; however, it could be \$50,000. P. Sanderson added that the Selectmen agreed they would include a warrant article for the Library, but asked them to not submit an amount until more of the budget process was completed.
- f. Public Works (Paul Hayden): A warrant article for \$77,000 will be submitted for a new Public Works truck. The current truck will be traded in; the net amount will be \$53,000. The budget law requires that the warrant article be for the full amount. P. Sanderson added that the existing truck is a 2009 vehicle; the truck is beyond its useful life. The current truck can handle the trailer purchased last year when it's empty, but not full carrying a backhoe. The truck will be replaced with one that is heavy enough to handle all weight needs. \$5,000 for repairs to the current truck was included in the budget to "get by" one more year. The purchase of the backhoe and ATV was discussed. Also discussed were additional hours for part-time help, paving a portion of the parking lot at the maintenance building, and paving the Town Hall/Police Department area. Winter road maintenance was discussed and will be reviewed further at the next meeting. All Town roads have been evaluated by Underwood Engineers. A final report, with road maintenance priorities, should be available shortly. Priority roads include Willowbrook, Great Bay Drive West, Bayside Road, Weeks

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Avenue and Great Bay Drive; these are the oldest and in the worst condition. Roads that can benefit the best from routine maintenance include Fairview Terrace, Tide Mill Road, Coastal Way, Rolston Avenue and Brown Avenue. Roads requiring preventative overlay are two areas on Portsmouth Avenue, Alden Avenue, Cortland Drive, Sunset Drive, and Liam's Court. Suggested annual budget for routine maintenance, drainage and basic road preventative overlays is \$500,000. That figure doesn't include reconstruction. P. Sanderson suggested that the Board of Selectmen make their recommendations to the Budget Committee once they have reviewed the final report.

- g. Transfer Station (Paul Hayden): There is not as much revenue from the recycling stream; the Town is now being charged for metal. Fees were modified by the Selectmen earlier in the year.
- h. Cemetery Trustees (Paul Hayden): There were no significant changes to discuss.
- i. Recreation: The Town Administrator reviewed the Recreation budget. She was asked to provide the cost of leasing a Harley Rake vs. purchasing one; she recommended that the "Equipment – Permanent" not be reduced because there are other needs. There is no offsetting revenue; the revenue from programs goes into a revolving fund which is used to support the programs. P. Sanderson suggested that the Recreation Committee would be able to provide a prioritized list of equipment needs.
- j. General Government (Karen Anderson): Wages for Town Office employees were based on a 2.25% increase and divided as a flat rate; the differential between employees remained the same. The range of the increase is between 1.42% and 3.09%; the amount of the increase would be the same for all employees at \$1,083. 2018 will be a revaluation year. The user license for Vision increases to six to ten users. There were three reductions: sick time for insurance was reduced to \$23,426; liability insurance was reduced to \$37,065; worker's comp reduced to \$38,225. There was a large increase in Building Maintenance, partially due to the recent Department of Labor review: wiring needs in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector office; replacement heating system—if the budget is approved, the Town Office will change from electric heat to natural gas (Police and Fire Departments will be changing to natural gas); five windows in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector office; and emergency lighting. The total budget, before the reductions, is \$4,195,356 (an increase of \$359,000). Before any warrant articles, the tax impact for the Town portion will be a decrease of \$.29 (based on the estimated valuation for 2017 of \$719,000 due to new construction). The current fund balance is \$1.6 million; the recommendation from DRA is to hold \$1.3 million. The Board of Selectmen has discussed using the fund balance to reduce the tax rate \$349,000; the impact on the tax rate is an additional decrease of \$.49. Anticipated 2016 surplus is \$275,000 and is not factored into any figures. The Board of Selectmen may decide to divide that amount into various Capital Reserve fund. The Town rate is currently \$3.42; with all factors considered, the anticipated Town rate will decrease to \$3.11. The difference between the default and proposed budgets is \$118,000.

5. Other Business

Questions about the School budget will be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 14, 2016

Recommendations for the Town and School budgets will be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: B. Krasko moved to adjourn at 9:32 p.m. Second – J. Connelly; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

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NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, December 14, 2016 – 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room, Town and School Budget Review

Respectfully Submitted – Charlotte Hussey, Secretary to the Boards

Approved: 