

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**JANUARY 6, 2014**

## **MEMORIAL BUILDING**

**7:00 P.M.**

Ken Jacques, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll was called. Present: Ken Jacques, Vice Chairman; Jon Poston, Bryan O'Day, Jeff Milne, Tim Julian, Bill Huntoon, Leigh Callaway. Darrin Patten arrived shortly after roll was called. Absent: B. Manning.

Others present: George McCusker, Tim Julian, Pete Lacaille, Kevin Roberts, and Mason Wheeler.

Minutes of December 17, 2013: Motion made by Bryan to accept as written, seconded by Tim and unanimously approved.

Highway Department presentation: Pete Abair, Road Agent.  
Review of budget worksheet. Pete is considering changing to a clothing allowance versus a uniform service.

Plans to shim and seal George Hill Road in the area near McDaniel's Marsh. Ken asked if there was a road improvement plan. Pete stated there had been but a couple of years where nothing was done. Ken suggested in the summer perhaps an inventory of roads with a condition rating could be done. Pete budgeted to purchase a larger leaf blower (18 hp) for blowing leaves out of ditches.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding replacement of the blue GMC which is now 8 years old. The GMC make and model are no longer made. Pete has looked at pricing for International Durastar 25.5 GVW, 4 WD. The blue truck is used a lot in the summer. He would like something comparable to the GMC because of its multiple uses. He feels the life expectancy would be about ten years. Discussion followed about other options such as an F450 or F550 without a wing, or should the town consider the purchase of another full-sized truck. Pete noted concern with plowing limitations and the wear and tear on a pickup. There is not room enough in the highway garage to store a third full-sized truck. The cost to purchase and equip the Durastar would be approximately \$150K. Pete will contact more dealers to pricing information. He also noted the possibility of a lease to purchase option.

Leigh reported the Selectmen talked about trucks on December 30<sup>th</sup> but has not reached a consensus. George stated the blue truck has a solid frame, a good transmission and engine, and has met the needs of the department but the repair issues never seem to stop.

Ken suggested that Pete work with the Selectmen to come up with a recommendation to the budget committee. Jeff suggested looking at the availability of state bids.

Mason Wheeler was asked to take a look at the heating system at the town office and had suggested a conversion to propane. The two existing 275 gallon oil tanks in the basement are probably close to 50 years old. The two existing oil boilers are 25 years old and at the end of life. The fuel lines running from the tanks do not meet code. There is not room enough to install required oil containment containers under the existing tanks. The tanks are at risk of needing immediate replacement if they begin to leak. Removing the tanks would provide some additional space for the police office. Mason estimated a cost of \$25,500 to purchase and install two new 94% efficient wall hung propane boilers. He explained how the "outdoor reset" works and the efficiency of propane versus oil. Leigh reported propane conversion was on the CIP for 2015, and they had asked Mason to give them some estimates, but the Selectmen, as a Board, have not met with Mason about this yet. Jeff questioned whether there had been any long-range plans made for the use of the building. Tim Julian reported that a few years ago an ad hoc space needs committee proposed creating office space for Tamara and Janet in the old classroom space, moving the archive files into their existing space. The two meeting spaces would be maintained or even provide space for library overflow. Mason stated he believes that propane is the way to go because of its efficiency and the ability to offset heating cycles. The propane would be vented through concentric venting and there is no risk of carbon monoxide in the building. He noted bottom of the chimney in the mechanical room has begun to deteriorate. Replacing in with oil may be around \$5,000 less, but the difference would be gained in efficiency. Ken suggested the Selectmen need to review this further for recommendation to the budget committee.

Fire Department: Pete Lacaille, Fire Chief, reported their budget is essentially the same. A few numbers were moved around to better fit their needs. There is a slight increase in vehicle fuel. The SCBA equipment will need replacement in a couple of years and they will be looking to try to get in line with other departments for purchasing power. They are still replacing two sets of turn-out gear per year. The tanker is scheduled for replacement in 5 years. Ken questioned how the rescue vehicle is working out? Pete stated the vehicle is working out well. They have completed outfitting all the shelving. They were very pleased with the dealership. They probably will be looking at different tires at some point.

Police Department: Tim Julian, Police Chief stated the Selectmen have proposed a 2.5% increase in wages, but he would like to discuss this with them further. He proposes replacing the computer in at least one cruiser. The last computers were purchased 5 years ago with a federal grant. He has prices of \$5,000 for the newest, high-speed tablet to \$3,000 for a tough book computer. He had looked into refurbished computers but has been advised they are not recommended. Newer computers provide mobile data terminals are an aid to dispatching and record lookup for the cruisers. If he only goes with one computer this year, he will be looking for another next year. If an existing computer were to fail, he would need to find money somewhere for replacement. He needs to further discuss the computer issue with the Selectmen. Bill questioned, and Tim agreed, that vehicle fuel could be decreased somewhat.

Leigh stated the Selectmen will be presenting the standard warrant article for proceeds from Old Home Day to be transferred to the expendable trust.

Leigh briefly reported the Conservation Commission had a discussion regarding the possibility of a warrant article for unexpended funds from the CC budget to be allowed to be transferred to the Conservation Commission fund.

Leigh reported he met with George Hildum, (assessor) and the worst case scenario exposure of liability for the utility appeal appears to be about \$50,000 per year, (2011, 2012 & 2013). He would recommend maintaining that \$150,000 in the unreserved fund balance. As of now, the appeal is not scheduled to be heard until February 2015.

Leigh reported the wetlands application is still pending with DES. DES requested some more information and Jeff Evans will be meeting with DES next week. Leigh feels it is too late in the year to think about doing anything with the sand shed or the site next door. He would recommend putting that project off another year and perhaps scheduling something in its place.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by,

Janet Roberts