

BUDGET COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 7, 2015

MEMORIAL BUILDING

7:00 P.M.

The following are to be considered draft minutes only until approved by the Board at their next meeting.

Present: Ken Jacques, Bryan O'Day, Bill Huntoon, Jeff Milne, Darrin Patten, Tim Cook, and Selectman Leigh Callaway. Absent: Justin Hastings.

Ken announced Jon Poston has resigned, the balance of his term is through March 2016. Ken asked if the Board wished to fill the position. He has spoken to B. Manning and B. will accept an appointment. Dick Kipperman has resigned as Moderator and B. has been appointed to fill the position. According to NH Municipal Association legal, there is no conflict with the same person serving on Budget and as Moderator. Motion made by Jeff Milne to appoint B, seconded by Tim Cook and unanimously approved.

Election of officers: By unanimous vote of the Board, Ken Jacques was elected as Chairman, and Justin Hastings as Vice-Chairman.

The Budget Committee agreed on the following schedule for the 2016 Budget.

Monday, January 4, 2016	7 p.m.	Work Session
Monday, January 18, 2016	7 p.m.	Work Session with Dept. Heads
Monday, February 1, 2016	7 p.m.	Work Session
Tuesday, February 9, 2016	7 p.m.	Public Hearing

Leigh reviewed budget spreadsheets. It is estimated there will be about \$70K unspent in the 2015 operating budget. With permission from the Department of Revenue, a replacement truck for the highway department was able to be purchased through the unreserved fund balance. The Selectmen have met with Police, Highway, Fire and Library departments. The worksheets presented are "working numbers" not decisions at this point.

Fire Department recommends pay increases of \$500 for the chief, \$200 for the secretary, and \$500 for response/training stipends. They are researching replacement of the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) with projected cost to be \$100K or less, and will be looking into the option of leasing. There are no other significant changes to their budget. Ken noted the SCBA has been talked about for a while and is on the CIP for 2016.

Police Department: Tim is proposing replacement this year at a cost to purchase (lease) and equip of \$34,000. CIP has included replacing Tim's cruiser, which was put-off last year.

Highway Department: Leigh reported Pete has an estimate of \$232K which includes paving high traffic areas. Stoney Brook Road south from Deer Hill to the Sunapee Town Line, and north from Coniston Road to Grantham Town Line; sections on each end of Bowman Road, and a

section on Hogg Hill Road, from Stoney Brook up the hill. In the past paving has been minimal while trying to keep the budget down for economic considerations. Pete now would like to catch up on some of that. With 25 miles of paved road, Pete estimates they should be redone every 7 to 10 years. The current cost is about \$50K per mile. Ken questioned if there had been a change in philosophy as the budget for pavement has been steady at 80K for quite some time, with additional 80K from fund balance this year because paving was not done in 2014 due to the emergency replacement of the septic system at the highway garage. This has never been part of the CIP conversation with Pete in the past, and he has indicated there are some roads that should have never been paved that would be less costly and easier to maintain if they were converted back to gravel. Jeff questioned whether the emphasis is that this is deferred maintenance, and other costs might be less if the roads were improved, making them easier to plow and maintain. Paving larger sections is more cost effective than moving for a mile here and there due to set-up and take-down costs. A suggestion was made to increase paving perhaps every 3rd year funding with a non-lapsing warrant article or fund balance. There are no other equipment or truck needs for next year.

Leigh reported heating costs have been lowered for the Town Office and Fire Station meeting room. A contract has been signed with Suburban for propane at \$1.34 per gallon.

Library: The Trustees are actively pursuing automating the library catalog system. They are requesting \$2500.00 for online cataloging software, and a one-time fee of \$5,000 to label, catalog, and populate the online catalog database. They are hoping to be able to accomplish this through volunteer labor. Steve Klein will be retiring. The trustees are advertising for a librarian, and they will be looking at wages. George stated he is encouraging the library to update some of their computers. For years they have been working with outdated computers that should be replaced, and it is not costly to do so.

Leigh reviewed a preliminary project list that he has pulled together. The Selectmen need to take a more in-depth look at that list.

The Unreserved Fund Balance worksheet provided examples of possible expenditures through the fund balance and their impact. Leigh reported the status of the NHEC, Eversource, and Fairpoint tax appeals was discussed with assessor, George Hildum. The appeal at the BTLA was found against NHEC and Eversource. They are appealing to the court. The Selectmen are maintaining a balance in the URFB against a worst case scenario outcome.

A Building Committee, spearheaded by Jeff Milne, with members of the library, administration, police departments and Leigh as the Selectmen's rep have been looking at building and space needs. Initially the library consulted with Banwell Associates to look at reorganizing their spaces. They are working hard to make the library a viable asset for the town. The project was merged with Town Office space needs and Ingrid Nichols from Banwell provided several hours of free consulting. Discussions have turned into floor plans, with upgrades for storage needs, and space for the police department. Ingrid has gone as far as she can pro-bono and the Selectmen approved up to \$5,000 for consulting to continue the project. There are preliminary

plans at the Town Office and Ingrid is working on putting together some hard numbers for possible budget consideration. The plan addresses ADA compliance for the town office, library and police department and provides increased space for the police and storage for archived files; reconfigures office space in the Town Office and improves the Protectworth Room for meetings and public availability. There is potential for future expansion to the building, which helps defray expenses because utilities are already here. There is another meeting of the committee on Wednesday, December 9th.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Janet Roberts,
Administrative Assistant