

BUDGET COMMITTEE

JANUARY 5, 2015

MEMORIAL BUILDING

7:00 P.M.

Present: Ken Jacques, Chairman; Jon Poston, Vice-Chairman; Don Hill, Ex-officio; Bryan O'Day, Bill Huntoon and Darrin Patten. Absent: Jeff Milne, Tim Cook and Justin Hastings.

Others present: George McCusker, Tim Julian. Jay and Janet Booker arrived about 7:30.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00.

Minutes: Motion by Jon Poston to approve the December 9, 2014 minutes as written, seconded by Bill and unanimously approved.

Ken asked Don for an update. Don reported there is still some fine tuning to do on the operating budget. The numbers for the transfer station are not known yet. There is no consensus from the Selectmen on raises and wages yet. It is likely they will do something, but it is not known what that will be yet.

Don noted the need for the septic replacement and paving was postponed to make sure there were funds available. There is a need to make up for paving that was not done. It feels like there is a consensus with the Selectmen to finesse the shim and sealing operating budget request and supplement with funds from the unreserved fund balance. The discussion has been to use \$120K from the fund balance with an additional 40K in the operating budget. There have been issues getting paving companies to schedule our work in a timely fashion, and the feeling is because our jobs are small.

Ken asked about leaving \$80K in the highway operating budget and then using another \$80K from the fund balance. Don stated the URFB is beginning to creep up and the Selectmen feel it is important to keep the budget as level as possible. The overall budget numbers are realistic. Ken noted concern with creating a "divot" in the shim and seal line this year, and then a spike in the following year. If the budget is left at 80K and then 80K is used from the fund balance, so that next year (2016) there isn't a 40K increase in the highway budget. If the Selectmen are concerned with the fund balance, perhaps it would be a good idea to spend 40K to defray debt service as there is a lull in capital expenditures this year.

Darrin suggested if 80K isn't going to work and it needs to be more, then perhaps figuring out a number that works, and budgeting that every other year, or using fund balance every other year so that larger projects can be planned.

Bill noted if 160K every year or two was appropriated, the town could get more for their money, if they could pave more at once instead of doing small sections and having to pick up and reset. Don noted that road conditions are what drives the priority.

Jon Poston suggested this might be a good place where a Capital Reserve account could be established, specifically for paving with an appropriation every year and withdrawal every other.

Ken stated it appears the board agrees with the thought process, but the execution needs to be fine-tuned.

The board continued with line by line review and questioning as follows:

Consulting: Don noted there has been heated conversation regarding consulting because of the outcome if there is a revised wetlands ordinance. If changes to zoning to do not take place, it is possible that line could be reduced. Ken asked how changes to wetlands ordinance would impact the process. Don stated there is possibility of disagreement over interpretation and there would be a need for more professional advice to sort things out. People don't want the opinion of Selectmen's interpretation. IF a professional needs to be brought in fees would be reimbursed when possible, but that is not always the case.

Grounds and Buildings: There are two lines impacted. One is custodial and one is the non-recurring projects. Don noted that in the past the highway department was responsible for cleaning. When that stopped they were subbing the work out. In the middle of 2014 the custodial job was put out to bid and the scope of the work was increased. Now the position is contracted. A lot more being done and the feedback has been positive. In addition to the town office and library building, the common area of the fire station is being cleaned regularly and as needed at the town hall.

Police: Tim Julian stated he proposes replacement of his cruiser next year (2016). There is nothing else unusual in his budget request this year.

Highway: Ken stated the need to figure out a format for addressing the paving bottom line. If paving is in the budget and by using fund balanced this year, then next year needs to be looked at as well so there are no surprises and no big jumps in the highway paving budget. It was again mentioned that a capital reserve for paving might be a transparent and consistent way to handle it.

Ken questioned if there was a sanding policy. He feels like the highway department is sanding more. Don noted that sanding is based on conditions of the roads. Many roads are challenging.

Library: Consulting – Don reported the library trustees are looking for someone to come in and help them select a perspective as to an approach to provide more community centered involvement.

The Board will meet with department heads at their January 19th meeting.

Don noted there are no big ticket warrant articles proposed.

A heating upgrade in the ballpark of 30K for “conversation purposes” for the town office/library building is being discussed. No final decision has been made as to propane or oil.

The wiring at the fire department needs to be addressed, but the Selectmen are not looking at re-wiring the whole building but correcting the problems or making an addition to the existing service to accommodate the needs.

Ken questioned if the 2014 expenditures will be complete at their next meeting on the 19th with an updated worksheet on the fund balance. Janet reported 2014 expenses will be closed out on the 15th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Janet Roberts