

BUDGET COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 9, 2014

MEMORIAL BUILDING

7:00 P.M.

Members present: Ken Jacques, Jeff Milne, Bryan O'Day, Jon Poston, Darrin Patten, Tim Cook, Bill Huntoon, Justin Hastings, and Ex-officio, Leigh Callaway.

Also present: Tim Julian, Chief of Police.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Election of Officers: Motion by Darrin to nominate the same officers, if they are willing, (Ken Jacques – Chairman, and Jon Poston, Vice-Chairman). The motion was seconded by Jeff. The Board voted unanimously in favor.

Ken noted the new computer system auto sends agendas and minutes and things people sign up for. He also gets frequent budget updates from Leigh and wondered if everybody else were getting them and if not, they would like them. Leigh stated currently he is only sending them to Ken. The information is not on the website but the numbers are reviewed at Selectmen's meetings. Jon Poston asked to receive the reports as well.

Leigh reviewed worksheets for the 2015 budget, a breakout of project costs, and potential funding through fund balance. He estimates there may be \$80K added to the fund balance. Paving was not done this year. The emergency replacement of the septic system at the highway garage was about \$26,500. During the year the Selectmen approved 3% instead of 2% wage increases, hired a contractor for custodial services, and implemented a new website, which will be paid for over three years.

Ken questioned if the 2014 budget had been manageable, and Leigh agreed that it was.

Leigh stated if there had not been the need to replace the septic system, then they might have still gone ahead with paving, though it was getting late in the season. The Selectmen's plan is to appropriate an amount from fund balance toward paving in 2015, with an additional amount in the highway budget. \$160K has been an amount discussed, but has not been agreed on yet.

Leigh reviewed issues as follows:

Projects that have been completed:

Painting and repair of the fire escape, and work on the doors at the Town Hall.

Carpeting has been ordered and will be installed upstairs in the church.

Septic replacement was done.

The new website is up and running. Town employees and department heads have town designated e-mail addresses available to them instead of using personal e-mails.

Leigh explained the breakout of projects, equipment, consulting, and computer as items the Board of Selectmen are reviewing for 2015, but they have not agreed on them yet.

Leigh reported that \$80,000 may not be a large enough project for the paving companies to make our jobs priority. Bill noted piece-meal paving may not be the most efficient way to use a paving crew, if they have to keep breaking down and setting up equipment. Leigh stated paving is based on where roads need it most. Darrin asked if \$80K a year is not enough what the plan is for 2016. Perhaps it would be better to do \$160K every other year.

Leigh stated there are no large expenses for 2015. One big item is converting the heating system at the town office. The Selectmen have looked at figures for a propane conversion. A decision has not been reached yet. Oil heating needs to be looked at as well. Ken stated that Tim Cook has spent years working in the field, and he felt Tim's input and experience would be appreciated. Leigh stated he would like to invite Mason and some others to a work session to see what they come up with. Tim agreed to assist.

The highway/fire building has issues with electrical circuits that need looking into. Adding subpanels, and correcting areas with issues was discussed. Leigh noted an amount has been suggested for a consultant as well as repairs. Exact costs will not be known until it has been determined what is required. Ken wondered if it would be feasible to ask some local electrical contractors to bid on the project versus hiring a consultant. Leigh stated the problem with that is there needs to be someone who can determine the scope of work so contractors are all bidding on the same project.

Jeff discussed regular maintenance versus one-time costs, and suggested that one-time improvements or non-recurring costs might better be shown in a separate line item for clearer explanation of one-time spikes in the operating budget.

Legal costs are a moving target and he does not expect them to decrease in 2015. Appeals are still pending with the BTLA for utility appraisals.

Pete would like a new mower for the grounds.

There will be the usual warrant article from the fund balance for Old Home Day Revenue.

The Library trustees have requested an increase in their budget to allow trustees to attend training sessions, and to pay a substitute for when Steve is on vacation. The substitute pay will be done through the town's payroll. They also would like to hire a consultant that would help them figure out how to bring in more business, and make the library more useful.

The new highway truck is due the middle of January. The blue truck is still being used and will be sold when we have the new truck. Darrin suggested checking to be sure how the delay has impacted the warranty timeframe.

Leigh stated the working budget does not include pay raises. He provided a worksheet with different percentages if wage increases are approved. Ken suggested the Selectmen need to come up with rates and present that information to the Budget Committee.

Darrin stated the Selectmen's stipend has not been raised in a long time. The Selectmen spend a lot of time on town business. Ken suggested the Selectmen should discuss this and make a recommendation to the Board. Darrin noted the last time the Selectmen's stipend was increased it was based on recommendation by the Budget Committee.

Leigh asked Bill Huntoon to take a look at the Historical Society building to see if it needs painting this year, or if it can be put off a year or so.

Pete Abair would like to purchase a chipper. The Selectmen are "lukewarm" and haven't made a decision about it yet. The Board discussed purchase versus renting. Ken suggested perhaps the brush could be "yarded up" through the year and then a chipper could be rented once a year. Leigh noted it might be possible to get a grant through Homeland Security to cover some of the cost.

The schedule for the upcoming 2015 budget meetings were scheduled as follows:

Monday, January 5	Work Session
Monday, January 19	Work Session
Monday, February 2	Work Session
Tuesday, February 10	Public Hearing
Thursday, February 12*	*In the event the budget is not complete on February 10 th , there will be a holdover hearing date on February 12 th . . All meetings to begin at 7 p.m. at the Memorial Building.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by,

Janet Roberts