

## **APPROVED**

Budget Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 15, 2014

### **Present:**

Chair- Kerrin Rounds, Dave Carr, Paul Manganiello, Carol Huber, William Cote, Don Milbrand, Tom Keegan, Ron Preble, Ernie Richards, Shaun Lagueux, Kevin McCaffrie, Barbara Greenwood, and Ashley Dolloff.

### **Absent:**

### **Others Present:**

Select Board members: Rick Alpers, Betsy Schneider, and Janet Cote. Finance Officer, Melanie Shokal.

### **Call to Order:**

Committee Chair Kerrin Rounds called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

### **Review of Minutes:**

Kerrin Rounds asked the committee to review the minutes from December 8, 2014. Paul Manganiello made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Don Milbrand. The motion carried with all in favor and two abstentions by Barbara Greenwood and Ashley Dolloff.

**Correspondence:** None

### **Old Business:**

Chair Kerrin Rounds received an email from the CIP committee asking when the CIP will be discussed. Ms. Rounds suggested that the discussion take place on the January 26<sup>th</sup> along with the warrant article deliberations.

### **New Business:**

Rick Alpers presented highlights of the Select Board's recommended budget.

- The Select Board unanimously determined that there would be a 1.7% overall increase in general operations. This does not include the Water/Sewer department. The increase does include debt service, the 27<sup>th</sup> pay period. The Town Administrator and Department Heads worked together to find reductions to meet the 1.7% goal. Approximately \$200,000 in reductions are as follows:
  - \$2,000 from the Executive budget
  - \$5,000 from Finance/Town Clerk
  - \$8,000 from General Government building
  - Regional Association agencies funded at 2014 levels
  - \$15,000 from the Police Department
  - Police Details is removed from the operating budget and will be presented as a warrant article. If the Police Outside details make any money, that money will go into the general fund.
  - \$15,000 from the Fire Department
  - \$6,000 from the Highway Department
  - \$9,000 from Land Use. The hours for the land use officer will not increase.
  - \$5,000 from Public Assistance, specifically from the Rent line.

- The water irrigation system for Kelley Park will be a warrant article.
- Library wage lines include the 2.5% merit based increase.
- The Select Board will discuss warrant articles at their next meeting in December. A rough list of articles includes the irrigation system, contingency fund, accrued wages, and \$10,000 for the bicentennial seed money, outside details, and the statistical update assessing revaluation.

The meeting was opened for committee member's questions.

- William Cote asked if the library was exempt from the merit raises. Mr. Alpers replied that they library is not exempt. The Trustees voted to accept the 2.5% increase based on merit raises.
- Rick Alpers commented that there is a 0.6% increase in the cost of health insurance. The Town has looked at other opportunities to try to save money, but the rates would go up. Health Trust has more stability with their rates.
- Paul Manganiello asked if there are any new part time employees in the library budget. Mr. Alpers replied that there are no new part time employees within the departments under the Select Boards domain. The Library Trustees have included a new 15 hour per week part time employee in the library budget.
- Paul Manganiello asked why there is no decrease in the Fire Department gas line. Shaun Lagueux replied that the Fire Department is heavily geared toward diesel fuel and those prices have not come down as much. Mr. Alpers commented that the diesel is bought from the state.
- Kerrin Rounds asked if the \$5,800 reduction in the Certified Special Police is from a change in plans to send an officer to the police academy. Mr. Lagueux replied that Chief Lewis will be able to give a complete explanation on the night of the Police Department deliberations.
- Paul Manganiello asked if the price for Franklin Dispatch was contracted. Mr. Alpers that the service is an agreement and the cost is based on a formula for calls for service.
- Dave Carr asked about the purchase of a police cruiser. William Cote commented that the line is zeroed out. Mr. Alpers commented that the Board agreed to present this as a warrant article.
- William Cote asked why the Police Outside Details was being changed. Mr. Alpers responded that because of the volatility in that budget line, it is being taken out of the operating budget. Mr. Cote commented that he feels that change is just a quick way to reduce the budget.
- Tom Keegan asked if the 2014 budget numbers are year-end numbers. Melanie Shokal replied that the 2014 figures include the first week in December and the first payroll for December.
- Tom Keegan asked why the Town Cemetery lined was cut back to \$3,000. The 2014 numbers show that only \$2,900 was spent but that some of the money is kept out to pay for town labor costs. Kerrin Rounds commented that she recalls that Archie Auger verbally asked for \$4,000 for the Town Cemeteries on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Alpers replied that he would check with the Town Administrator on this.
- Paul Manganiello asked about the Police Department Grant Related Expenses and Overtime and if the total for Overtime is \$49,000 combining the two lines. Mr. Alpers replied that the grant related expense is for restricted overtime items. Ms. Shokal commented that line 891 includes \$12,000 for overtime expenses and \$2,500 for video equipment.
- Kevin McCaffrie asked if the 2015 requested wages includes any wage increases. Ms. Shokal replied that the 2015 wages are at 12 months of the current rate as opposed to only 9 months of the current rate in 2014.
- Paul Manganiello asked for clarification on the \$30,000 health care refund. Mr. Alpers commented that the health care companies can no longer hold onto any excess money after the premiums are collected and claims paid out. The money has to go back to the members. A check could possibly be received in 2015 and that money would be dispersed to the employees and

the general fund. Mr. Lagueux commented that the amount paid to employees is based on what they already paid in the previous year. Ms. Shokal added that retirees also need to be paid. Ernie Richards asked if the money that comes out paid before taxes. Ms. Shokal replied that it is a pre-tax deduction and that employees do have to pay taxes on the money paid to them. It is not subject to retirement.

- William Cote asked if the \$100,000 going into the Water/Sewer capital reserve be given back to rate payers and if there was any possibility of a rate reduction. Mr. Alpers replied that both checking accounts are healthy enough to transfer the money to the capital reserve accounts to cover project repairs and that the money being put into the capital reserves is money that has accumulated over several years. Mr. Alpers commented that Jeff Chartier is keeping the rates level. The Select Board meets with Jeff Chartier once a year to discuss the rates.
- Paul Manganiello asked if there were any funds encumbered from line 390: Road Resurfacing. Mr. Lagueux commented that the 2015 funds have \$50,000 from Road Resurfacing broken out into Chip Seal and that most of the paving projects have been done this year. All of the money last year was in the Resurfacing line. Mr. Alpers commented that the sidewalks were also being paved. Kerrin Rounds asked if all the paving bills were in. Ms. Shokal replied that most of the paving bills were in.
- Kevin McCaffrie asked if the Safe Routes project was going to happen next year and if there is grant money for the project where is it in the budget. Mr. Alpers replied that the Safe Routes project is still in process. Ms. Shokal commented that the grant related expenses occur in a capital projects 03 fund at the request of the auditors. This is not an operational grant.
- Paul Manganiello asked if there were any encumbrances in the legal fund. Mr. Alpers replied that there are contracts with some attorneys in some of the legal cases and those funds are being encumbered.
- Tom Keegan asked about the \$4,000 reduction to Construction and Demo in the Solid Waste budget. Mr. Alpers replied that Mark Bucklin feels comfortable with the amount in that line. A notice just came in regarding the \$15,000 increase in tipping fees. Mr. Keegan commented that construction and demo rates should be looked at. Mr. Alpers commented that all fee structures should be looked at. The Town will look at prices for a used scale. The scale takes away the bias and would be a wise investment.
- Kerrin Rounds asked when employee reviews are done. Janet Cote replied that the reviews will take place right after Town Meeting in April. Procedures are being outlined now for the new process. Ms. Rounds commented that she would personally like to see the budget presentation reworked and consideration be made to grouping employee lines. The individual employee lines could affect morale when the reviews are completed.

**Member Comments:** None

**Select Board Comments:** None

**Administrator's Report:** None

**Adjournment:**

Kevin McCaffrie made a motion to adjourn, seconded by William Cote, passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Costigan, Secretary

