

Budget Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 21, 2015

**Present:**

Chair- Kerrin Rounds, Ernie Richards, Tom Keegan, Shaun Lagueux, Kevin McCaffrie, John Sellers, Dave Carr, Ashley Dolloff, Carol Huber and William Cote.

**Absent:** Don Milbrand, Bob Emerson, and Ron Preble.

**Others Present:** Select Board members Janet Cote, Rick Alpers, Betsy Schneider, and Paul Manganiello.

**Call to Order:**

Committee Chair Kerrin Rounds called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

**Review of Minutes:**

Kerrin Rounds asked the committee to review the minutes from December 5, 2015. Kevin McCaffrie made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by William Cote. The Committee voted 9-0-1 in favor of the motion. Ms. Rounds asked for the committee to review the minutes from December 14, 2015. Kevin McCaffrie made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by John Sellers. The Committee voted 7-0-3 in favor of the motion.

**Correspondence:**

John Sellers mentioned an article in the Newfound Landing written by Paul Simard regarding the Budget Committee rubber stamping the budget and an opinion on the public comment statement made at a previous meeting. Ms. Rounds replied that the Budget Committee deliberates on the budget for about 6-8 hours and she does not consider it rubber stamped. Ms. Rounds also commented that the Committee is very open to correspondence and that this was made part of every meeting agenda. There will be a public hearing on the budget for comments.

**Old Business:**

**New Business:** The Select Board presented highlights from their deliberations on the proposed Select Board budget.

- Janet Cote informed the Committee that the Board hasn't come to a full agreement on the wage study. The proposals for wage adjustments are in the notes section of the current budget worksheet. A warrant article is probable for the wage study. Not all the salaries are entered yet.
- Some funds were encumbered from last year and this is also in the notes section of the worksheet.

Executive:

- Line 690 Selectmen's Expenses: \$1,500 was added to continue funding staff appreciation events and items.
- A new line was added for the design and update of the Town Website. \$10,000 was estimated for this but this may decrease.
- Tom Keegan asked why the amount in the Town Administrator line is more than 2015. Mrs. Cote replied that this is based on an offer accepted by the new Town Administrator which includes two pay increases, one at 6 months and one after the first year with an evaluation.

Legal:

- This line was kept at \$60,000. Northern Pass is a new legal item but the amount should be okay if the expense is shared with other towns.

#### Personnel Administration:

- Line 192 Merit Raises: This amount is based on a 2.5% raise which included FICA, Medicare, and Retirement. Some additional Retirement amount may need to be added. Kerrin Rounds asked if this was based on the lower group of employees or a combination. Mrs. Cote replied that it is based on an amount as if everyone gets a 2.5% raise. There was \$5,000 left over last year. John Sellers asked how many employees are included. Mrs. Cote replied that it is based on total salaries and that there are 50 employees. Mr. Lagueux commented that someone at the bottom of the review process is not compensated as someone at the top of a review. Ernie Richards asked what the percent of employees who got raises. Mrs. Cote replied that only a small percent received the 2.5%. Mr. Alpers commented that the average was between 1.8% and 1.9%. Mrs. Cote commented that this is a performance based process and the employees are being rewarded for work done in 2015. Mr. Lagueux commented that the reviews will be done earlier this year and that will make things go quicker next year. Kevin McCaffrie asked if the retirement portion will be included. Mrs. Cote replied that the figure is there but that it will be checked over. Mr. Sellers commented that the Committee had just received the budget from the Select Board 10 minutes earlier and it is not enough time to review it.

#### Planning Board:

- A new line was added for Professional Services and funded with \$1,000. There is the opportunity to get expert reports from professional services. The expense is reimbursed by the applicant. John Sellers asked if this will be a wash. Mrs. Cote replied that this will be a wash as there is revenue coming in. Tom Keegan asked if the Planning Board has run into this before and if it will be in the budget every year. Mr. Manganiello replied that the process was approved in the past. There is an engineering study that is needed for a project. The applicant will reimburse the town for the cost of the study. Mr. Alpers commented that this will be in the budget but that it is not coming out of the Legal line like in the past. This makes it clearer. Ms. Schneider asked why \$1 is not being used in the budget line. Mrs. Cote replied that the Planning Board requested \$1,000.
- John Sellers commented that some lines are only partially spent yet the full amount is still budgeted for. Mrs. Cote replied that there may be more expenditure due to recent activity. Mr. Alpers commented that expenses are still based on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Lagueux commented that some departments wait until the last minute to spend money on items.

#### General Government Buildings:

- Line 433 Repair/Repaint Town Signage: Money was added for signs at the beaches and Kelley Park. John Sellers asked if there were quotes on the signs. Mrs. Cote replied that the signs are very similar to the ones already done by Karen Bush and the same pricing was applied to these.
- John Sellers commented that the Police Department shares the town office building but they don't budget for electricity and heat. Mrs. Cote replied that it is all figured in this department budget as there are no separate meters.
- Line 640 Custodial Service: The amount increased as the contract is for one more day per week for cleaning. John Sellers asked how many days are included now. Mrs. Cote replied that only one is contracted for so this will make it two days.

#### Police Department:

- Line 190 Certified Special Police: This should be adjusted to \$20,000 as there has been a \$5,000 decrease to the line. This line is for part time certified officers.
- Ernie Richards asked how the employment turnovers in the Police Department are reflected in the line items. Mrs. Cote replied that officers are being replaced at a lower rate. Ms. Rounds commented that the person hired is accounted for in the previous employee's line.
- John Sellers asked how the training is paid for and how long the class is. Mr. Alpers replied that the Academy is paid through the state, the general fund, and through tickets. The class runs fourteen weeks. Carol Huber asked if the employee has to work for the town for a certain amount of time after. Mr. Lagueux replied that the officer signs an agreement to stay for three years but that it is not legally binding.

#### Fire Department:

- Line 635 Gas/Diesel: This was reduced to \$10,000.
- Line 660 Suburban was reduced to \$100 per the Select Board.
- Line 665 Ambulance: The \$1,100 from line 660 was moved into this line per the Select Board.

#### Wage Study:

- Dave Carr asked if there were any more raises planned besides the merit raises. Mrs. Cote replied that there is a wage study being considered and it will probably be a warrant article. The position would get the wage study adjustment and the employees get the merit raise. Ashley Dolloff asked if another copy of the worksheet will be available for deliberations as this one is difficult to look at. Mr. Alpers replied that the current salary level are there in the worksheet and not the amounts proposed by Department Heads.
- Ernie Richards asked if the wage study includes the hourly rate and the benefit package. Mrs. Cote replied that it is just for wages only and not the benefit package.
- Mr. Lagueux commented that the town funded the wage study in 2006 as part of a two-step process. Only half was implemented. Dave Carr asked if the study has been updated. Mr. Lagueux replied that that the figures have been adjusted based upon cost of living increases but that the study has not been updated. Kevin McCaffrie asked if this was part of the budget process or a warrant article. Mr. Lagueux replied that it was a warrant article approved at the 2007 Town Meeting.

#### Crossing Guards:

- There is still consideration being given to using two crossing guards instead of the one being used now. The School Street crossing or the Middle School crossing may need to be replaced.
- John Sellers asked why the expense is not split with the school. Mr. Alpers replied that it's not a school zone but a town street. Mrs. Cote commented that the town needs to look out for public safety. The school was asked in the past and they said no. Mr. Alpers commented that the teachers do monitor the parking lots and the cross walk at the school. Mr. Sellers commented that the school district should pick up the expense and that the school does not seem as concerned about safety.

#### Highway:

- Line 571 Equipment Rental Roadside Mower: This line is now zero as the equipment is no longer being rented.

#### Highway Projects:

- Line 390 Resurfacing Roads: \$77,000 will be encumbered for work to Central Street. Pipe and site work needs to be done here too. William Cote asked if there was a plan B as the work to Central Street could cost a lot more. Mrs. Cote replied that Jeff Chartier will come in with estimates for the pipes and that this will most likely be a warrant article. Mr. Alpers commented that it will come out of the Water/Sewer capital reserve. John Sellers asked where the \$77,000 goes if it is not encumbered. Mr. Lagueux replied that it goes into the unreserved fund balance. Mr. Alpers commented that there is roughly \$800,000 in the unreserved balance.

#### Streets/Bridges:

- Line 410 Street Lighting: Christina will be meeting with Eversource on 12/15/15 to determine the status of the payback period to determine if this line can be reduced. Mr. Alpers commented that this is to confirm that the plan is paid off and then true expenses will be seen in the line.

#### Land Use/Health Office:

- Line 120 Land Use/Health Officer: This line has increased due to adding another half day to the position for enforcement and one Planning Board meeting per month. The position increased from 16 hours per week to 20 hours per week. This is a combined position with the Health Officer.
- Line 690 Expenses: This line is now zero and the money has been moved to Line 620 Supplies.

#### Recreation:

- Line 890 Tapply Thompson Community Center: The Board approved the requested increase.

#### Beaches:

- Line 413 Chemical Toilets: The increased cost was approved by the Board on December 3<sup>rd</sup> to cover the cost of additional cleanings based on usage. There is a new company providing this service as there were problems with the previous company.

#### Kelley Park:

- Lines 120, 220, and 225 will be deleted or hidden as there is now a contract service for maintenance and mowing.
- Line 413 Chemical Toilets was added for the park and the bike path.
- Line 820 Master Plan: The \$20,000 covers fencing for \$15,000, \$1,500 for tiered seating, and \$3,500 for skirting. Mr. Lagueux commented that this is for tar or cement at the pavilion and the concession stand. The Highway Department will do the work at a significant savings.

#### Library:

- Kerrin Rounds requested that the Select Board consider making the Library budget one line in the budget as this could resolve some issues with the Library Trustees. It is the purview of the Trustees as to how the money is spent. The individual item numbers will be reported in the Town Report.

#### Patriotic:

- Line 881 Town Events: \$12,500 is budgeted for events such as parades, concerts, and Old Home Day.
- Line 891 Fireworks Display: \$10,000 is budgeted for a show at the lake by Atlas Fireworks. The Board will ask surrounding towns to help pay for this also.

- A line is added for the Decorating Committee. \$3,500 was approved by the Board to help pay for benches and other beautification items. Kevin McCaffrie asked if flowers were included. Mrs. Cote replied that the Garden Club does supply flowers but that the wreaths and advertising costs are covered by this line also.

**Conservation Commission:**

- Line 560 Meetings/Memberships has been increased to cover the cost for dues and the NHACC annual conference.
- Line 731 Professional Services: This is to cover the cost of a shared soil scientist for the Northern Pass project which impacts 32 wetlands in Bristol.

**Historic District Commission:**

- John Sellers asked why Line 891 Grant Related Expenses was overspent. Mr. Alpers replied that there is offsetting revenue.

**Social Services:**

- The approved Select Board recommendations are reported in each line.

**Debt/Interest:**

- The information is per the associated schedules.
- \$1 was added to TAN Interest and Bond Anticipation Note Interest. The School District was late with the information needed to set the tax rate and the dollar in the line gives the town the ability to have a line of credit available.

**Capital Projects:**

- Line 765 Town Master Plan: \$20,000 has been budgeted for the next section of the Master Plan update as recommended. Mr. Sellers asked what this is used for. Mrs. Cote replied that it is for the process of redoing the whole plan. It is a five year project with assistance from Lakes Region Planning Commission. Mr. Lagueux commented that a lot of the work is done in house so the town does not have to pay a charge.

Kerrin Rounds requested that page numbers and headings be added to each page of the budget worksheet by the January 4<sup>th</sup> deliberative meeting. Final budget numbers are needed by then also. Ms. Rounds commented that she is not comfortable deliberating without final numbers or the Select Board not voting on a bottom line. Mr. Alpers replied that the Board did vote by departments and that the budget is just not back filled yet but that the Board agreed to the changes. Mrs. Cote commented that current salaries just need to be put into this budget sheet and the wage study will be left as a warrant article.

Ms. Rounds asked when the new Town Administrator will be starting. Mrs. Cote replied that he will start on January 11<sup>th</sup> but will attend the January 4<sup>th</sup> Budget Committee meeting.

Ms. Rounds thanked the Select Board for their time and presentation.

**Member Comments:**

John Sellers commented that he hopes the Budget Committee does not rubber stamp the budget as hardly any line items have changed. Ms. Rounds encouraged Mr. Sellers to speak up at the meetings if

he believes this is happening.

Ernie Richards commented that he would like to get some clarification regarding questions on the TTCC presentation information. Ms. Rounds informed Mr. Richards to send his questions to Les Dion in writing and he will get the answers back in writing also.

**Select Board Comments:**

Mr. Lagueux informed that Committee that the new Town Administrator, Nicholas Coates, will attend the January 4<sup>th</sup> Budget meeting.

**Administrator's Report:**

**Adjournment:**

John Sellers made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kevin McCaffrie, passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Costigan, Secretary