

BUDGET COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 5, 2006

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: Bernard Manning, Ken Jacques, Don Garlock, Jon Poston, Doug George, John Trachy, Rick Kidder, Selectmen Neal Huntoon and Bob Anderson. Absent: Darrin Patten and Bill Sullivan.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. The roll was called.

B. requested nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairman. Ken nominated B. Manning as Chairman, seconded by Don and unanimously approved. Jon Poston nominated Ken Jacques as Vice-Chairman, seconded by Doug and unanimously approved.

Personnel:

The Selectmen discussed the office personnel situation. They are looking at a position that will provide accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll up to 16 hours per week and additional 4-5 hours per week for someone to take minutes and file hearing notices for Planning and Zoning.

B. noted that the issues facing these boards are getting more difficult with technical and legal issues. The Selectmen recognize the difficulty getting someone who is willing to take on these responsibilities for a minimum of 4 hours per week. B. noted that the Town Office has the obligation to provide the public with information required to file necessary applications for the boards. It was noted that the person responsible for covering the board would have some flexibility in their work hours and be able to do some of this work from home.

Ken stated that he feels it is important to keep salaries and wages competitive to keep valuable employees. Neal indicated that the Selectmen have been reviewing the Local Government Center's Wage and Benefits Survey and are trying to keep wage guidelines competitive. Springfield appears to be in good shape for wages. The Board explained that insurance is offered after 35 hours. Ken indicated that health insurance costs need to be taken into account when figuring wage increases.

Audit:

The costs of an annual audit were discussed. The Board questioned whether an annual full audit is required. Ken asked that the DRA be contacted regarding requirements of an audit. Requirements for GASB 34 compliance were discussed. There is still work to be done tracking accounts receivable before considering GASB 34.

Code Enforcement:

Ken questioned whether the Board of Selectmen saw the Code Enforcement position expanding. Bob indicated that when home occupation and home business issues are addressed that position would need to be looked at. Bob stated that at a Joint Board of Selectmen's meeting he attended recently, some area towns are looking at the possibility of sharing a zoning administrator type position. This could be a possibility for Springfield.

Health Insurance:

Health insurance premiums are increasing 13.4%. Bob stated that the Selectmen have asked the Local Government Center for information regarding other plans available, however, those plans would have greater out of pocket expenses for employees. The Selectmen will have to make a decision by December 31.

Planning:

The Board discussed the major subdivision application currently before the Planning Board. Possibilities of requiring an environmental engineer were discussed. The Board indicated that the planning engineering line item would need to be increased for gross budgeting purposes.

General Government Buildings:

Property repair appropriation and expense was discussed. The ceiling project at the fire department meeting room is being installed now.

Cemetery:

Landscaping appropriation discussed. Tree removal was not done this year.

Police Department:

The Board discussed the proposal for a full-time patrolman. A part-time patrolman was discussed. The Selectmen indicated that they were not in favor of a part-time patrolman with the addition of a full-time position. Bob indicated that the Police Department has been compiling statistical information to support their request. The Board questioned whether another cruiser would be required if another officer were hired. The Selectmen indicated that Tim has presented information regarding leasing a cruiser. The Board would like to know what other costs would be associated with hiring another full-time officer in addition to salary and equipment expenses. The Board would like Tim to make a presentation to them at their next meeting.

Fire Department:

The Fire Department budget requests are not ready. Neal stated that the Fire Department may be looking at a new truck purchase in the next 2-4 years to replace one of the older trucks.

John questioned whether the Planning Board is working on updating the Capital Improvements Program. Ken indicated that the Board has plans to do a CIP update.

Neal discussed with the Board the possibility of establishing a capital reserve fund with for a fire truck purchase. Ken stated that he is not in favor of the use of tax dollars to fund capital reserve funds when towns can borrow cheaply for purchases.

Highway Department:

The Board explained that there are currently two full-time employees for the highway department and two part-time people available to be called during storms.

Neal explained that due to the increased cost of contract plowing from \$46.00 to \$67.00 per hour, the Selectmen recently made a decision to purchase a used truck for \$13,000 through SG Reed. The truck would be available year-round, and will be used by a part-time person to plow during the winter. In reviewing the highway budget, money was expended from the balance in contract plowing, guardrails, and reclamation. Budget members discussed the disbursement, and asked that the amount spent on the truck be shown on the truck line-item.

Transfer Station:

No figures are available for transfer station operating costs yet. Bob explained that the NH/VT Solid Waste District will be dissolving. The Selectmen have received some information regarding a local warrant article to dissolve the NH District. He has calls in to TJ Alexander for further information. The Selectmen feel strongly that they will follow Sunapee to stay on board with the Sunapee Transfer Station.

Hydrant Fees:

Ken Jacques explained how the water precinct recently evaluated the annual costs for maintenance of hydrants, which will result in an increased cost to the town from \$75.00 per hydrant to \$250 per hydrant. Springfield has 9 hydrants within the precinct.

Recreation Department/Summer Camp:

Recreation department proposes expenditures were reviewed.

Bob explained the proposal for funds to continue summer camp next year. This year the camp ran for two weeks, with 15 children participating the first week, and 32 children the second week. The cost of enrollment was \$30.00. The camp is anticipated to run four weeks next year, at a cost of \$50.00 per participant.

Conservation:

Bob explained the possibility of a warrant article to appropriate funds for a natural resource inventory. The Commission will be contacting the Society for the Protection of NH Forests to inquire about allowing withdrawal of some of the funds in the Royal Arch account to be used toward the inventory. The warrant article would be written contingent on the receipt of other grants that the Conservation Commission is planning on applying for.

Capital Expenditures:

The Board questioned what other capital expenditures might be anticipated in the future. Neal explained that the Sand/Salt shed needs to be considered for repair or replacement. Other departments should begin to think about long-term needs toward capital improvement planning. The Board would like Brad to think about future requests for the highway department and also to review his proposal for road reclamation projects.

Meeting Schedule:

Board members agreed to hold budget meetings on the following dates:

Tuesday, January 16, 2007 @ 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 30, 2007 @ 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 6, 2007 @ 7:00 p.m. Public Hearing with a continuation date to be scheduled if needed.

The Board would like department heads from the following departments to attend the January 16, 2007 meeting:

7:15 p.m. – Highway Department

7:30 p.m. – Fire Department

7:45 p.m. – Police Department

With no further business, the board voted to adjourn at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Roberts,
Administrative Assistant