

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD  
BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 19, 2006**

Present: Mike LeClaire; Chesterfield Fire Representative, Judy Idelkope; Schoolboard Representative, Fred Szmit, Elliot Rowsey, Bob Brockmann, William Bucknell, Gary Winn; Chairman, Rick Carrier; Town Administrator, Wanda McNamara; Selectmen's Representative, Susan Newcomer, John Koopman, Steve Laskowski and Amy LaFontaine; Secretary.

Absent: Dave Thomas; Spofford Fire Representative, and Anita Barber

Guests: Kristin McKeon; Parks and Recreation and Deb Hogancamp, Stephen Pro, Lester Fairbanks and Nelson Fegley; Town Office Committee

1). Fred moved to approve the minutes from November 21<sup>st</sup> as amended. The motion was seconded by Susan and passed unanimously by the Committee. Bob pointed out the Cemetery budget actually increased 5.4% due to a \$3,000 special expenditure for grave stone repairs. It is reflected as 1.9% in the minutes. John stated that he was able to confirm a charge of \$150 per day for a Chipper for the Highway Garage from Valley Rental.

**2). Housekeeping** – Rick stated that the Library trustees were meeting tonight and would have the salary revisions for the Committee's next meeting. The Highway Garage has an amended budget reflecting contracted services increased by \$1800 for blasting and blasting supplies has been reduced by \$200 to \$0. The Transfer Station is requesting an increase of \$2560 in miscellaneous to purchase a new used storage unit. There is a possibility of a grant. Under Contracted Services they have added \$2,250 with \$300 for a needle program by joining with Windham Solid Waste and \$1,950 to start an electronic disposal system. As of July 1<sup>st</sup> TV's, VCR's and Computers, etc. will no longer be allowed in Triple T's waste removal. The storage unit will be for electronics and mattresses. Leon anticipates needing a pickup 3X in 6 months. The pickup fee is \$650. The storage unit will also allow them to store mattresses, which are kept outside and may get wet. The Town is charged by weight. Susan stated that she did not want this item to be in miscellaneous section of the budget. Susan moved to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that the purchase of the storage unit for the Transfer Station be a separate warrant article. The motion was seconded by Bill and passed unanimously by the Committee.

Susan asked if there was other hazardous waste generated by the Town that should be included in the needle program. The TS employees have had needles stuck in their gloves. The reason for the needle program is to increase safety. The Committee did not want to charge a fee for disposal needles. John stated that fluorescent bulbs could be taken to ACE Hardware in Brattleboro for recycling. Judy suggested charging a fee for people that do not use the needle disposal. Wanda suggested sending a letter to everyone stating that there is separate place to dispose of needles. There are large signs at the TS requesting needles be disposed of properly, but if someone has their trash brought to the dump by someone else they may not see this sign. Bill wanted to know why equipment repair was still at \$10,000 when it was \$6500 the previous year. It was overspent last year, because of supposedly 1X repairs to the truck. Steve stated that he presumed that this was for maintenance of the truck. Bill suggested cutting the budget to

\$7,000. Gary asked for more information on the maintenance line to justify this \$10,000 expense.

### 3). Budgets

**Parks & Rec** – Kristin stated that they had to test the water more frequently this year. Fred asked about testing the water in conjunction with the Lake Association, both are done by DES. An Emergency expenditure was to replace inside of the snack bar because of water damage. Parks & Rec has been asked to take over the State's Port-a-Potty. Fred stated that he thought the State should pay for it, because it is for access to the State Park. Steve stated that he did not think this expense should be the burden of the taxpayers since it is used primarily by Out-of-State residents. The State claims they have no money for it. Steve stated that the State requires public access to Pierce Island. The Island has no facilities. Kristin stated that she could write a letter. She thought she could find a Selectman to sign it.

Kristin stated that staff salaries for the Summer Program had not gone up, it was the increase in staffing for the extra hour a day they will be offering. Susan asked about the reduction in salaries due to some older staff members leaving. She was concerned about too much of a drop in salaries for staff taking care of children around water. Susan stated that lifeguard training is almost \$400. It is important to be sure that the staff is qualified and receiving reasonable hourly pay. Kristin stated that the summer program makes money. The summer program has been extended an additional hour and raised the fees for the beach. They can't charge more than double for Non-Residents than Residents. She is trying to encourage people to purchase Season's Passes. The coordinator of the summer program has a few years less experience than previous years. Kristin stated that Melissa encourages the counselors to have lifeguard training as well. They have added an unstructured hour at the end of the day for parents who are chronically late.

The telephone has decreased because they have switched to walkie-talkies and 1 cell-phone and a phone for local calls. The cell phones were previously being used for non-business calls. Maintenance went up because of a request to remove 5 damaged trees for \$1500. Steve asked if the highway department could remove it. Kristin stated that highway did not have the correct equipment or expertise to remove these trees. Judy asked about the cost of the summer program being too low. The rates are \$250 per season. The season is 8 weeks and 6 hours per day, 3 days per week. Only Town residents can be enrolled in this program. Kristin stated that the philosophy was that this was a service offered to the Town. Fred stated that he would like to see this department breaking even. Kristin stated that Parks & Recs offered more than the other departments and cost the Town the least. She asked if the library could provide this service for \$10,000. Judy stated that there are some families that watch their own children at the beach. This is a day-care program only accessed by a select few. Gary stated that the building would not have been repaired last year except for the recreation program. Susan stated that the goal of Parks & Rec used to be to break even. This department has become an expense in the last few years. Susan stated that she thought the department was underpricing the service. She thought if the program was a little more expensive this department could be breaking even. Judy stated that there were many people using this service that can afford to pay private day care rates.

Kristin stated that the department would like to be responsible for the Soccer, Baseball and T-ball programs as well. Steve suggested that prices could be modestly increased and reduce the burden on the taxpayers. Kristin stated that the reason they were losing money was a result of unexpected expenses, such as; lightning striking pumps, septic emergencies and trees coming

down. Kristin stated that when the department makes a profit the money is turned over to the Town which actually paid for the building originally. Gary asked for a break-down of the summer program revenue separated from concession and other Parks & Rec income. Fred stated that he is concerned that even after increasing the fees the program is still budgeted to lose money. Gary stated that there is \$5,000 in expenses for North Shore Beach that does not make money. He thought that it would be difficult to raise enough revenue from Ware's Grove to support North Shore. Bob suggested requiring a Town dump pass to get in to North Shore. Kristin will make a sign. Kristin stated that this program is a little cheaper because it is not 8 hours 5 days of week of day-care. A person that needs 24 days of day care is not necessarily going to choose this program. John asked about people unable to afford this program. There is a scholarship program. Fred stated that the Committee should agree that this department should be breaking even.

Judy asked about how many hours the Treasurer was putting in. The Town does the payroll. The Treasurer pays all the bills and all the non-payroll bookkeeping and is earning \$1296. She pays bills year round. Susan also stated that she would like to see the fees go up to offset some of the other costs. The costs have already gone up 25% this year. Kristin stated that the scholarships are all donated and the second child from the same family is ½ price.

**Town Office Committee** – Deb stated that this committee had been meeting for the last 4 years to create a new TO/Police Building. They have hired Weller & Michal Architects. This year they are coming forward with a plan and a price. Lester stated that the plan included several areas for future expansion. Lester reviewed the floor plan for the Committee. He has looked at many other police stations and hopes the building will suit his needs for 20 to 40 years. There is space for OEM and Governing Boards to meet, have access to public bathrooms and be restricted from other parts of the building. There is additional storage in the basement. The proposed building is 11,000 square feet. John asked if the 2-car garage was sufficient for the police. Lester stated that ideally it would be nice to have all the cars in the garage, but the 2-car garage was sufficient. There is no bulkhead. There is a proposed roundabout for the school designed for parents to drop off and be out of the way of the buses. The Selectboard has put off corrections to the parking lot behind the fire station in order to prepare for this project. The plan includes an extensive drainage plan for water to runoff from the roundabout to a swale at the front corner of the TO Complex. Judy was concerned about the safety of the new bus pattern. Gary stated that this discussion was good for the public hearing, but that the Committee needed to focus on numbers for tonight.

The exterior is clapboard, shingles and stone to match the character of the other buildings in the center of Chesterfield. The stone is \$155,000. Bob asked about the additional cost of the stone above the clapboard used on the rest of the building. Stephen stated that the TO Committee was still reviewing ways to reduce costs. He did not have the figures on how much could be saved by using clapboard instead of stone. He thought it was only 80 or 90 thousand. There were approximately 20-40 people at the informational meetings. The Committee asked about a contingency plan if the building doesn't go through. The TO Committee stated that they had devised the best plan with the information that was available. Lester stated that the repairs to the parking lot would be about \$290,000. There is really no way to approve of the project in pieces. Stephen stated that construction costs are rising about 9% per year. If the TO Complex fails, even if \$100,000 is contributed to TO reserve fund it doesn't cover the increase in construction costs for 2008.

Lester stated that the TO Committee was looking at radiant heat and forced hot air as well as a Passive Solar Panel for the entryway. They have also looked at fluorescent lighting to make the building as green as possible. The cost to build is 2.65 million or \$225 per square foot. They made several changes a couple of nights ago to reduce the cost. Stephen stated that the Town of Swanzey built a new police station 5 years ago which was too small the day they moved in. 5 years later they need to build a new one. Rick stated that there is \$7,500 for furniture and \$2,500 for moving expenses budgeted. Steve stated that this could be tough to pass because Spofford residents just approved a new fire station for 1.5 million. There is \$115,000 available in the Reserve fund already. Lester stated that he thought he could get an \$80,000 grant because of OEM. The TO Committee has spent \$5,000 for a needs assessment and \$80,000 for the Architect. \$200,000 was allocated last year for the Architect, Design Stage and Engineer and Construction Manager through Construction. Only \$85,000 has been spent out of this capital reserve fund to date. Susan suggested that the contingency plan include a contribution of money to the capital reserve fund equal to what the bond payment will be until the plan passes. Stephen stated that the library built in 1996 allowing for inflation in construction would be approximately \$205 per square foot to build today. He thought the number was comparable to the \$225/per square foot for this building. Susan stated that the TO Committee needed to get out and get groups of people to talk about and support this project. She isn't sure that the Town is ready to pay for this project yet. It will be difficult to find a use for the old Town Office building. There will be a bond public hearing held by the Selectmen in mid-February.

#### 4). Other –

A). Rick stated that he needed a \$5,500 warrant article to purchase a new copier for the TO. He had originally asked for \$5,500 in an expendable trust for a new copier next year.

**B). Personnel Administration** – Bob stated that he did not know anyone else receiving a 6% raise this year. The deadline for warrant articles is February 4<sup>th</sup>. Steve asked how benefits from the school compare to benefits from the Town. Judy stated that a single school employee is asked to contribute nothing, a family is paying between 5-7%. Wanda stated that a Town employee is contributing nothing and a group is paying 10%. Susan stated that it is difficult to compare the 2 groups because the Committee has no information about deductibles or co-pays. Gary stated that a BCBS family plan around \$1,200 to \$1300 per month covers \$1,000 per person/\$3,000 maximum out of pocket 20% after that is 100%. The Town employees have an HMO \$500 single \$1500 maximum. Wanda stated that the employees are concerned that there are many employees out of merit raises and only eligible for COLA's. Judy stated that it may take a 4% raise in order to pay 10% of the health insurance. Judy stated that all school employees that are not on a single plan are paying 5-7% of their health insurance. The HMO is less expensive, the employees that choose the PPO are paying more. Wanda stated that the Selectboard are working towards revision of the salary and raise schedule, but there is disagreement among the board.

**C). One-Line Budgets-** Ambulance has increased \$5,900. Susan stated that new Tanf (Aid to Needy Families) legislation effective October 1<sup>st</sup> could create issues with the General Assistance item. Steve asked who decides where street lights go? He stated that there are almost a dozen on Twin Brook Road which is a 1-mile rural road. Wanda stated that she thought all you had to do was ask for one. The Town is charged for each light. Wanda stated that she didn't know if we had ever had an audit to see if any could be removed. Rick asked Steve to let the Selectboard know if there were any lights that he would like to see removed, and the Selectboard

would review it. Rick stated that in his 8 years as Town Administrator only 1 street light had been added. If a street light is out please report it because the Town is charged for the pole regardless of the light.

**D). Miscellaneous Health Agencies** - This is the list of agencies that have met requests for funding established by Town Meeting in the 1990's. The Gathering Place no longer has residents for Chesterfield and will disappear from the list next year. They can reapply for funding. Southwest Community Services request 1.5% of the direct assistance base applied to the residents of Chesterfield.

**E). Warrant Article Overview** – Rick stated that there is no contingency plan if the TO/PD Office Complex Warrant Article fails. Fred asked about reducing the resurfacing budget of \$210,000 to help offset the cost of the TO/PD Office building. Rick stated that \$105,000 last year and \$210,000 this year, the Warrant Article last year for roadways construction was \$100,000 and was dropped to \$25,000. The amounts equal out for the last 2 years. Rick stated that he would provide a list all the expenditures by department and all warrant articles.

**F). Capital Reserve Funds** – Rick stated that Ruth would be coming in next month with a \$1,000 dollars request.

5). The next meetings will be January 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. There is still OEM and 2 Fire Precincts to review for the Town. The public hearing will be January 27<sup>th</sup> at 1 and 3PM. Deliberations will be the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine  
Secretary