

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD, NH
BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
JANUARY 28, 2006**

Present: Gary Winn; Chairman, Fred Szmit; Vice Chairman, Wanda McNamara; Selectman's Representative, Deb Hogancamp; Chesterfield Fire Precinct, Susan Newcomer, Anita Barber, Bob Brockmann, Nelson, Fegley, Steve Laskowski, Elliot Rowsey

Absent: Dave Thomas; Spofford Fire Precinct, William Bucknell

The Budget Committee held a public hearing at the Chesterfield School at 1:00 pm on Saturday, January 28th, 2006.

Winn, Chairman of the Budget Committee, noted that the Board has not voted to recommend and/or not recommend the proposed warrant articles.

Winn, introduced the members of the Budget Committee and explained that William Bucknell and Dave Thomas are absent.

Winn explained that he will be reading the bottom line on each budget and then fielding questions to the department heads. Winn explained that the Town Budget will be first, followed by the Fire Precincts and the School.

Town Budget

Executive/General Government

The Executive/General Government budget is down by 3.4% with a proposed budget of \$122,820 with a dollar decrease of \$4,339. Ruth Van Houten questioned what General Services is. Rick Carrier, Town Administrator explained that this is for software support, equipment maintenance, copier and things like such. There was a question on the Fire/Safety line as to whether or not the town charges the Precincts back. Rick Carrier explained that the Town pays for the items and gets revenue back from a grant. Barbara Girs commented on the budget being up from 2004-2005 by about 18%. G. Winn explained that a large chunk of this increase is due to the addition of the Homeland Security Grant budget. Kristin McKeon suggested for next year creating a line item named Computer Equipment and Software Support specifically for the software and copier support, so that it is not shown under General Services.

Elections, Regs, Vital Stats

The Elections, Regs, Vital Stats budget is up by 8.6% with a proposed budget of \$49,500 with a dollar increase of \$3,905. Ruth Van Houten questioned the Town Clerks salary as being Town Clerk Salary and Motor Vehicle lines added together. McNamara explained yes. Jean Hanson questioned why the Town Clerks salary went up and the Motor Vehicle line went down.

McNamara explained that this is due to the way the statute is written and the Town Clerk is no longer getting the Motor Vehicle fees. G. Winn explained that there will be an administrative change to be voted on at Town Meeting and the Budget Committee has not taken a stand. This is Warrant Article #38. There was a discussion as to the number of hours the Town Clerk is open. Currently the Town Clerk is open for Monday, Wednesday and Thursday nights for 18 hours, however McNamara explained that there are additional hours used for other things that need to be done which includes meetings and elections. Previously the Town Clerk was paid a salary with fees, however about 2 years ago a statute passed, stating that fees needed to go to the town first and then to the clerk.

Financial Administration

The Financial Administration budget is up by 4.5% with a proposed budget of \$52,625 with a dollar increase of \$2,260. There was a question as to the increase of 8.7% for the bookkeeper. Carrier explained that this was due to a 3.2% COLA and the number of hours have increased. Van Houten questioned the amount of money in the rainy day fund. Carrier explained that he is not exactly sure until after the audit, but believes the number to be somewhere around \$900,000. Carrier also explained that the Selectman will authorize some of the General Fund to go back in to reduce taxes if available.

Legal Expense

The Legal Expense budget is down by 16.7% with a proposed budget of \$25,000 with a dollar decrease of \$5,000. Van Houten questioned the hourly fee for the lawyer. Carrier believes it to be \$125 per hour.

Personnel Administration

The Personnel Administration budget is down by 3% with a proposed budget of \$292,700 with a dollar decrease of \$9,000. Van Houten questioned the Employee Bonus line. McNamara explained that this is a pay structure that the town came up with to use after the employee has reached their 5 steps and can no longer get a raise. Carrier explained that about 14-15 people are eligible for the bonus plan. There was a question as to the decrease in Health and Dental Insurance. McNamara explained that the Town purchases this insurance through a local Government Center Health Trust. Carrier explained that this figure also changed due to a change of demographics. Currently the employees do not contribute toward their insurance.

Planning Board

The Planning Board budget is up by 1.4% with a proposed budget of \$14,000 with a dollar increase of \$200. There was a question as to how many hours to receive benefits. McNamara explained 35 hours are needed.

Zoning Board

The Zoning Board budget is up by 2.7% with a proposed budget of \$7,700 with a dollar increase of \$200.

General Government Buildings

The General Government Buildings budget is up by 18.3% with a proposed budget of \$31,700 with a dollar increase of \$4,900. G. Winn explained that the Town is currently using a cost of \$2.50 for fuel/oil as a predicted cost. M. Winn questioned the what the Repairs and Maintenance costs were for last year. Carrier explained that the Town Hall floor was redone, the roof at the Town Hall and Town Office needed work and a couple other minor repairs. There was a mention that the Historical Society feels that the Chimney needs to be done. Merrill Yeaw noted that the trees around the Town Office with dead limbs need to be trimmed. Carrier explained this is looked at every few years. M. Winn feels that the windows at the Town Hall need to be looked at. Neil Jenness explained that they had already looked into replacing them, and it was going to cost around \$60,000 and it was felt that the Town Hall is not used enough in the wintertime to justify the cost. However storm windows could be installed inside. Jenness stated that if you look at the amount of fuel the Town Hall uses, it really isn't much. Van Houten stated that at election time you can see the outside underneath the doors; we really need to make the buildings we have energy efficient. Jenness explained that the town has already placed weather stripping around the doors.

Cemeteries

The Cemeteries budget is up by 15.2% with a proposed budget of \$50,263 with a dollar increase of \$6,615. There was question as to what the Stone Repair budget is for. Jenness explained that this is for any stone work that can not be done by themselves. There was also question as to what the Subcontract budget is for. Jenness explained that this is for anyone we need to hire out for example to due tree work, or open gates. VanHouten suggested putting the revenue line down under each department. G. Winn explained that the Selectmen do a total revenue page. The revenue for the Cemeteries is \$12,500, this includes cemetery trust funds, cemetery commission (lot sales).

General Insurance

The General Insurance budget is up by 14% with a proposed budget of \$57,000 with a dollar increase of \$7,000.

There was a question to revisit the Personnel Administration, as to what percentage the insurance rate went up. Carrier explained that it went up 7% for single, 15% family and 10% for couple.

SWRPC Regional Association

The SWRPC Regional Association budget is up by 2.4% with a proposed budget of \$4,200 with a dollar increase of \$100.

Police

The Police budget is up by 6.3% with a proposed budget of \$344,932 with a dollar increase of \$20,416. There was a question as to why the Regional Prosecutor line is up. Lester Fairbanks explained that this line is up due to a new cost formula, now taking 50% per capital with 50% per usage. There was question as to why the Telephone line went up. Fairbanks explained that OEM put in a line for emergencies. There was a lengthy discussion on the cost of gas increase. Mrs. Lauterbach stated that her cost went up by 28% so why is the Police cost going up by 40%. G. Winn explained that last year the appropriation went up by 28%, we are looking at 2 years as opposed to her 1 year.

Police Reimbursable Details

The Police Reimbursable Details budget is down by 76% with a proposed budget of \$60,000 with a dollar decrease of \$190,000.

Ambulance

The Ambulance budget is up by 79.6% with a proposed budget of \$32,500 with a dollar increase of \$14,400. G. Winn explained that the increase is due to the fact that Keene changed their billing process. Previously there were billing the town incorrectly. Linda Lord questioned if a service was charged to a resident and they didn't pay, did that bill go to the town. It was explained that it would go to collections. VanHouten explained that they only get paid when transporting.

Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement budget is up by 8% with a proposed budget of \$35,300 with a dollar increase of \$2,620. The revenues for Code Enforcement are \$25,000. Lord questioned the increase in mileage and supplies. McNamara explained that the town car is not always available, so they need to use own car and are reimbursed at 44.5 cents per mile and the supplies line is up due to an update in code books. Chet Greenwood stated that the cost per book is between \$30-50, and the books are on a 3 year rotation. Barbara Girs questioned why appropriated so much more then was spent. G. Winn explained that there was a change in the officer and at times they didn't have an officer or work full-time. Girs questioned why the salary has been appropriated for the same amount for 2 years. Carrier explained that the Selectmen had been planning over several years to turn this position into a full-time position, but have not as of yet. They plan to make this change this year. G. Winn clarified that assuming this position becomes full-time the benefits are shown under Personnel Administration.

OEM/Emergency Management

The OEM/Emergency Management budget is up down by 45.6% with a proposed budget of \$22,700 with a dollar decrease of \$19,000.

Forest Fires

The Forest Fires budget is level funded with a proposed budget of \$6,000.

Highway

The Highway budget is up by 10.3% with a proposed budget of \$656,533 with a dollar increase of \$61,375. The Budget Committee did approve a letter to the DRA allowing the Highway Department to over-expend due to the flooding damage. The town is expecting between \$140,000-150,000 to be reimbursed due to the flood. There was question as to why the Salary line is up. McNamara explained that they hired more people. This budget also includes merit raises that the Selectmen approve. McNamara explained that the Selectmen decide upon who receives merit raises from notes from department heads and whether or not the individual has met their goals. The Highway Department work week is budgeted at 41 hours. Van Houten suggested that next year the town take out all monies related to the flood damage, including salaries.

Street Lighting

The Street Lighting budget is up by 2.9% with a proposed budget of \$17,500 with a dollar increase of \$500. McKeon questioned if the town is using the most energy efficient lights. G. Winn explained that if the light is yellow, then it is the most energy efficient. Hanson questioned what street lights. McNamara explained any in this town. G. Winn noted that if it is not on the street, it is probably being budgeted for by the building. Girs suggested asking someone like Gary Winn to look into covering the tops of the lights to make the light shine down, which in turn could decrease wattage.

Jeness reminded everyone that it was 5 minutes to 3:00 pm and we were not nearly through the budget.

G. Winn suggested that if there is a street light out, that you call the Selectmen's office.

Solid Waste Department

The Solid Waste Department budget is up by 5.1% with a proposed budget of \$207,430 with a dollar increase of \$10,034. M. Winn commented on the Overtime line. The week for the Solid Waste is a 36 hour work week, so they still have 4 hours before overtime kicks in, however Leon Dunbar explained that he still needs to budget for some overtime. Girs would like to have an explanation of how much money is in the budget for all line items associated with having a roll-off truck, so that the town can see what the real expense is for trucking versus tipping. There was a request to the select board to have these figures available with as much detail as possible for Town Meeting.

Health Officer

The Health Officer budget is down by 27.4% with a proposed budget of \$8,200 with a dollar decrease of \$3,100.

Animal Control

The Animal Control budget is level funded with a proposed budget of \$3,000. McKeon questioned what they do and how do you get a hold of them. Lester Fairbanks stated that they are available through the Police Department and take any animal complaint calls. Last year there were around 170 complaints.

Other Health (Hepatitis B Shots)

The Other Health (Hepatitis B Shots) budget is level funded with a proposed budget of \$300.

General Assistance

The General Assistance budget is level funded with a proposed budget of \$25,000. This budget is a fund to help pay for rent, food, etc, and may be available by contacting the Selectmen's office.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation budget is down by 1.5% with a proposed budget of \$56,543 with a dollar decrease of \$858. The anticipated revenue is \$45,000.

Library

The Library budget is up by 6.5% with a proposed budget of \$111,238 with a dollar increase of \$6,786. G. Winn explained that the Library benefits are not located under the Personnel Administration budget. Amanda Fryberger commented that they need to add \$2,000 to the Maintenance Building/Grounds line so that they may replace the anti-freeze in the boiler. Fryberger also added that the Library has a request to decrease the Property & Liability Insurance line by \$1,000. The Director salary line is up due to last year was not a full year at full-time.

Patriotic Purposes

The Patriotic Purposes budget is level funded with a proposed budget of \$400.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission budget is up by 6.8% with a proposed budget of \$3,900 with a dollar increase of \$250.

Debt Service

The Debt Service budget is down by 3.3% with a proposed budget of \$52,100 with a dollar decrease of \$1,800.

Total Operating Budget

The Total Operating Budget for the Town is down by 3.7% with a proposed budget of \$2,351,084 with a dollar decrease of \$91,536.

G. Winn explained that the total for Warrant Articles is \$3,275,982. G. Winn briefly noted the purpose for each warrant article is to see if the Town will vote to,

Article 5 - Raise and appropriate \$105,608 for the purpose of resurfacing Town roads.

Article 6 - Raise and appropriate \$100,000 to be added to the Roadways Construction and Reconstruction Capitol Reserve Fund.

Article 7 - Raise and appropriate \$67,000 to be added to the Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

Article 8 - Raise and appropriate \$113,000 to purchase a new Loader and Plow for the Highway Department and to withdraw the same from the Highway Heavy Equipment Capitol Reserve Fund.

Article 9 - Vote to change the purpose of the existing Highway Roof for Fuel Tanks and Fueling Area Capital Reserve Fund to the Highway Fuel Tank Replacement Capital Reserve Fund and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to this newly created fund.

Article 10 - Raise and appropriate \$40,000 to purchase replacement fuel tanks for the Highway Department fueling area and authorize withdraw the same from the Highway Fuel Tank Replacement Capital Reserve Fund.

Article 11 - Raise and appropriate \$7,200 for the purchase of Guard Rails.

Article 12 - Raise and appropriate \$200,000 for the purpose of hiring a Architect/Engineer to provide planning and design services for the new Town Offices and Police Station and withdraw the same from the Town Office Capital Reserve Fund.

Article 13 - Raise and appropriate \$20,000 to be added to the already established Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund.

Article 14 - Raise and appropriate \$130,000 for the purchase of a new Roll-Off Truck for the Transfer Station.

There was a question as to how long the old truck will last. Dunbar could not be certain. There was question as to how many miles you got out of the old truck. Dunbar said he is not sure by believes they put on about \$5,200 a year and they have had the truck for about 2 and a half years. G. Winn believes the purchase was just after the 2004 town meeting.

McKeon commented that it would be helpful that when we have similar warrant articles from year to year to list both.

Article 15 - Raise and appropriate \$7,500 to complete the Paving and Site Work at the Transfer Station.

- Article 16** - Raise and appropriate \$28,000 to be added to the already established Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund.
- Article 17** - Raise and appropriate \$7,000 to be added to the already established Police Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.
- Article 18** - Raise and appropriate \$40,000 for the purchase of a new SUV for the Police Department and withdraw the same from the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund.
- Article 19** - Raise and appropriate \$4,100 to purchase a new Police Department Portable Radio and withdraw the same from the Police Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.
- Article 20** - Raise and appropriate \$1,500 for the purchase of computer upgrades and to withdraw the same from the Police Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.
- Article 21** - Raise and appropriate \$5,000 to be added to the already established Library Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund.
- Article 22** - Vote to create an expendable general fund trust fund to be known as the Library Copier Expendable Trust fund for the purpose of a copier replacement and to raise and appropriate \$2,300 to be placed into this fund.
- Article 23** - Vote to create an expendable general fund trust fund to be known as the Library Insurance Deductible Expendable Trust Fund for the purpose of insurance deductibles and to raise and appropriate \$1,000 to be placed into this fund.
- Article 24** - Raise and appropriate \$4,000 to be added to the already established Wildland Fire Suppression Expendable Trust Fund.
- Article 25** - Raise and appropriate \$7,500 to be added to the already established Cemetery Truck Replacement Expendable Trust Fund.
- Article 26** - Raise and appropriate \$3,000 to be added to the already established Cemetery Mower Replacement Expendable Trust Fund.
- Article 27** - Raise and appropriate \$300 to support the Chesterfield Senior Meals program
- Article 28** - Raise and appropriate \$8,009 to aid Home Healthcare and community Services, Meals on Wheels and Age in Motion.
- Article 29** - Raise and appropriate \$4,495 to support the work of Monadnock Family Services/Mental Health.
- Article 30** - Raise and appropriate \$6,000 to support the work of Keene Community Kitchen
- Article 31** - Raise and appropriate \$140 to support the work of Youth Services.
- Article 32** - Raise and appropriate \$1,296 to support the work of Southwestern Community Services.
- Article 33** - Raise and appropriate \$250 to support the work of The Samaritans.
- Article 34** - Raise and appropriate \$500 to support the work of The Visiting Nurse Alliance.
- Article 35 - Raise and appropriate \$200 to support the work of The Drop In Center.**
- Article 36** - Vote to accept the following be added to the Chesterfield Cemetery Maintenance Funds, Stephen D. and Nancy Bevis - Cemetery West, Barbara and David Cavanaugh - Friedsam Cemetery, Bruce W. and Avis A. Gauthier-Chesterfield West Annex Cemetery, Charles W. and Ruth S. Forbes-Spofford Annex Cemetery
- Article 37** - Vote to discontinue following roads (Egypt Road, Dexter Thomas Road, Stoddard Drive and MacDonald Road) and change class from Class V open highways to Class VI highway **subject to gates and bars.**
- Article 38** - Vote to see if the town will approve the new Town Clerk Compensation Policy (see article for explanation)

Article 39 - Vote to allow the Board of Selectmen to dispose of municipal assets by sealed bid.

G. Winn reviewed the list of total revenues at \$1,885,283.

There was a discussion as to why the departments are allowed to go over their approved budget. It was explained that the Highway Department was expected due to the flood damage, however each department is really only responsible for the bottom line.

Spofford Fire Precinct

G. Winn introduced Mike Wiggins and Steve Buckley who will be representing the Spofford Fire Precinct budget. G. Winn read each line item.

The total budget is up by 5.9% to a proposed budget of \$58,225. The budget would only be up by 3.8% if not for the fuel increase.

Wiggins explained that every 3rd year the Precinct has a full Financial Audit. They were not due for one this year, however due to the request for a Bond issue for the new station, they will need to have a full audit done.

Warrant Articles

Article 4 - To approve a bond issue of approximately \$1,580,000 to finance the construction of the new fire station.

Article 6 - Vote to appropriate \$24,000 to be added to the existing Heavy Equipment CRF.

Article 7 - Vote to appropriate \$50,000 to be added to the existing New Building CRF.

Article 8 - Vote to appropriate \$9,200 to be added to the existing Small Equipment CRF.

Article 9 - Vote to appropriate \$1,000 to be added to the existing Water Hole Expendable Trust.

Article 10 - Vote to withdraw up to \$4,430 from the existing Small Equipment CRF for the purchase of SCBA's, Fire Gear and Hose.

Article 11 - Vote to withdraw up to \$190,000 from the New Building CRF for engineering, architectural design, land acquisition, site preparation and bond fees for the construction of the new fire station.

Wiggins explained that they have taken a long time, and several different processes in researching for the new fire station. At Town Meeting there will be a ballot question for approval of the plan. Wiggins explained that they have the Planning Board approval. Jon McKeon questioned if Kevin and Don were going to donate the land if the bond doesn't go thru. Wiggins explained that the current building is 30 x 60 and does not meet OSHA requirements.

Wiggins explained the project costs.

- Total building construction costs \$1,320,000
- Site development costs \$177,000
- Total architectural engineers fees with soft costs \$123,000
- Contingency and escalation \$135,000
- Bond administration costs \$12,000

Total cost is \$1,767,000 less the design costs already paid \$15,000 and less all monies in New Building Capital Reserve Fund \$190,000 brings total bond to \$1,562,000. The new location will have a direct access to Route 9 with an emergency exit. The expected tax rate impact is .48 cents per \$1,000 for next year and will decrease every year after that. There was a discussion as to receiving a PDD presentation. G. Winn explained that the Planning Board already held a Public Hearing. There will be a Public Hearing at the Spofford Village Hall on February 13 to discuss this in detail.

Chesterfield Fire Precinct

G. Winn reviewed each line item. The Chesterfield Fire Precinct budget is up by 3.2% with a proposed budget of \$99,185 with a dollar increase of \$3,085.

Warrant Articles

Article 5 - To see if the Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate \$14,500 to be added to the already established Chesterfield fire and Rescue Precinct Small Equipment CRF.

Article 6 - To see if the Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate \$18,565 for the purchase of small fire and rescue equipment and withdraw the same from the Chesterfield Fire and Rescue Precinct Small Equipment CRF.

Article 7 - To see if the Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate \$38,500 to be added to the already established Chesterfield Fire and Rescue Precinct Heavy Equipment CRF.

Article 8 - To see if the Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate \$5,000 to be added to the already established Chesterfield Fire and Rescue Precinct Building Maintenance Non-CRF.

Article 9 - To see if the Precinct will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$5,000 for the construction of Restroom Facilities at the West Station and to withdraw the same from the Chesterfield Fire and Rescue Precinct S Building Maintenance Non-CRF.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Jody Moreau
Secretary