

TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD, NH
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES

TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2006

Members present: Gary Winn (Board Chair), Bob Brockman, Anita Barber, Elliot Rowsey, Fred Szmit, Deb Hogancamp (Fire District Representative), John Koopman, Wanda McNamara (Select Board Representative), Steve Laskowski, Judy Idelkope (School Board Representative), Bill Bucknell (arrived at 7:35 p.m.) and Padi Blum (Secretary).

Absent: Dave Thomas and Sue Newcomer

Guests: Rick Carrier, Town Administrator

The meeting was called to order by Gary Winn at 7:07 p.m.

- 1. Resignation of Budget Committee Secretary** – Winn announced that Jodi Moreau had resigned from the Town of Chesterfield. Blum would serve as the secretary this evening.

- 2. Board Elections** –

Barber nominated Gary Winn for Chairman. Hogancamp seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Brockman nominated Szmit for Vice-Chair. McNamara seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

- 3. Meeting Schedule** – It was decided that the Board would continue to meet the third Tuesday of each month September through December starting at 7:00 p.m.. It is expected that beginning in January the Board will meet every Tuesday.

September 19, 2006

October 17, 2006

November 21, 2006

December 19, 2006

*January – Begin meeting every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

- 4. Contact Information Update** – Winn requested that updated e-mail addresses be provided to Rick Carrier. Carrier will forward copies of the draft minutes prior to the meetings (attached as Word documents) along with e-mailed notifications of the meetings. Winn stated that most members would print out the minutes and carry them to the meetings; therefore Carrier would only need to bring 4-5 printed copies to the meeting for those who could not print them or forgot them. The need for additional copies could be revisited as necessary.
- 5. Budget Status Review** – Carrier presented copies of the Budget Status Report for all departments. The Board questioned if Carrier thought that there were any specific concerns. Carrier responded that he was not particularly concerned; most budgets were right near 50% with the exception of a few departments that had large dollar one-time expenses that he was aware of going in.

It was noted that fuel, for the PD and Highway most notably, may be a concern. Pre-buy figures for the Town have not yet been determined. It is possible that pre-bought fuel for the school may come in at around \$2.32/gallon.

It was noted that the RERP money in the OEM budget generally must be spent by June 1st in order to get reimbursement.

The PD had unexpected costs in maintenance and hiring a new officer. The PD is now at full full-time staff. The new SUV has not yet been purchased. Laskowski advised that Fairbanks is waiting to ensure that the Escape will be a suitable purchase. PD has been advised that there are reports of unsatisfactory performance with the Escape, and they are questioning if the vehicle may be too small. There are reports that a hybrid Explorer will be coming out with better performance expectation and a potential savings on fuel. Fairbanks is willing to wait to be sure that they get the right vehicle and is willing to come back and request the money for another vehicle if necessary, as he wants to avoid spending the money on a vehicle that would be unsuitable and another model may be more expensive.

New cell phones are waiting in Carrier's office to be mounted in the PD vehicles. They are waiting for parts to allow installation. Carrier stated that he could not guarantee better coverage, but it would not be any lesser coverage, and it is expected that when the phones are vehicle-mounted you will get better reception. Carrier expects a savings by way of monthly cost and cost per minute.

There was a status update on the Transfer Station Roll-off Truck. It has been repaired with the exception of the transmission. The cost to date is in the neighborhood of \$15,000.00 and it should now be up to safety standards.

There was much discussion about the presentation at Town Meeting regarding the TS Truck. There was much confusion about conflicting facts and figures. Board members questioned how and why so many different figures were being circulated. The Board was not clear on why the information was presented the way it was or what the best resolution to the issue would have been, but felt that if the issue was to come up again there must be a better process for researching the facts and figures and informing the Town with accurate and consistent information and a convincing presentation of what was needed to properly remedy the situation. The Board must have full knowledge and accurate information before such a matter comes up for vote again.

It was noted that this was not the first time that a situation such as this has occurred. They have seen basically the same thing happen many times in the past in other departments. This scenario could happen with any department at any time.

The Board felt that there should be some sort of assistance or resources made available to Dunbar if this is an issue that will come before the Town again. The Board should not be adversarial or try to micro-manage, but should make an attempt to get involved and lend assistance. Several members also thought that the Town may have access to the expertise of residents with knowledge that they may be willing to share without cost to the Town.

Some members of the Board felt that there may have been too many people working independently on a single issue, and that a committee should be formed to assist the department head in researching such matters; although the Board believes that the Selectmen should be tasked with forming such a committee, Winn identified several members of the Budget Committee who would be willing to take part.

The Board questioned the staffing needs and procedures at the Transfer Station. Some members would like to visit Brattleboro Salvage and Windham Solid Waste to see the operations. There was limited discussion on the issues of sorting and a pay-per-bag system, and the possibility of contracting pick-up. Bucknell felt that an employee should be checking for stickers and inspecting bags. Szmit noted that Kowalski has in the past made inspections and reported that Chesterfield had amazingly little material that belonged in other bins.

It was noted that the Town should be working more collaboratively in all matters – phones, cell phones, copier contracts, etc. to achieve the best results for the Town throughout all departments.

Barber questioned why Wares Grove Beach Maintenance was at 218% and who authorizes the spending. Carrier stated the Metevier had spending authority. He was unsure of the exact nature of the spending, but the Highway Department had done some work there. The manager does not report to the Selectmen on such a purchase or spending- she is only responsible for bottom line spending.

It was noted that the operational budget must be spent by January 10th or the budget is closed. Surplus is returned; only warrant article funds may be carried over.

Barber asked if the committee could request separate itemization for House Maintenance. She speculated that if the cost to maintain the house as a benefit is \$30,000.00, maybe the Town should consider doing away with the house.

Idelkope stated that the School Board would have a surplus. There was no figure available, but it was expected to be larger than forecasted in March. She stated that \$9,000.00 of the surplus would be used to purchase two pieces of equipment – a Krescor and Computer Software for Food Services. The Krescor is a unit in the kitchen to keep food heated and is a necessity. The software will be purchased to update what happens in Food Services. This will allow a child to get a PIN number and charge food purchases to their account. The family will be direct billed. The account may be prepaid, but the school may set allowable overspending limits. The School Board feels that the software purchase was a necessary purchase, especially at this time to enable them to hire a new Food Services Director. Idelkope stated that they have been unable to hire someone to work in the current conditions.

The Board questioned if other schools had the same billing issues and what did they do. Idelkope stated that other schools in SAU #29 did have similar software.

The Board questioned the process of spending surplus without having to go through the same process the other departments in Town must to get an approved capital expenditure

(warrant article). This has been a contention for many years. Members of the Board felt that the School Board should have to comply with the same zero-based budget and surplus spending procedures as the rest of the Town.

Barber noted that the policy of the School Board has always been to only spend surplus money to address matters of safety issues.

It was the consensus that they had followed the School's procedure by holding a public hearing as is mandated for approval of surplus spending by the School Board. The Board did support the purchase, and it was also noted that they did not have any authority to deny such spending. Winn stated that in the future, the committee would appreciate it if the School Board would run it by them ahead of time, for edification if not for their blessing.

Idelkope noted that it was determined in June that the software would be a necessity because they had come to the conclusion that people just don't want the job if they had to deal with the existing conditions.

Barber asked if preliminary financial reports could be forwarded by Carrier with announcements of hearings and what would be requested.

6. Swearing In Officers – Newly elected officers were sworn in by Wanda McNamara.

7. Adjournment:

McNamara moved to adjourn. Hogancamp seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 9:27 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 19 at 7:00 p.m. at the Elementary School.

Respectfully submitted

Padi Blum