

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD  
BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 21, 2006**

**Present:** Fred Szmit, Mike LeClaire; Chesterfield Fire Representative, Elliot Rowsey, John Koopman, William Bucknell, Jon McKeon; Selectmen's Representative, Gary Winn; Chairman, Susan Newcomer, Bob Brockmann, Steve Laskowski, Judy Idelkope; School board Representative, Dave Thomas; Spofford Fire Representative, Anita Barber (arrived at 7:25) and Amy LaFontaine; Secretary

Guests: Amanda Fryberger, Kate Stohr, Lee Brockmann, Jane Anderson and Kevin Bresland; Library representatives, Bart Bevis; Highway and Pat Gilbert and Neal Jenness; Cemetery

1). The Committee had a moment of silence in honor of Louis Perham. The funeral will be at 2 PM on Saturday at the Asbury Methodist Church and visiting hours are 7 – 9 Friday night at Atamaniuk Funeral Home.

2). Fred moved to approve the October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Steve and passed unanimously by the Committee. The Committee agreed that 1<sup>st</sup> names were okay since no one shares the same first name.

**3). Housekeeping –**

Gary asked about the legislative workshop a few weeks ago. The Budget Committee budget is what is presented to the Town. The Budget Committee has no official capacity at Town Meeting. The Public Hearing at the end of January is run by the Budget Committee.

Bob stated that the hospital has threatened to go on strike for 3% and some of the Town Employees are getting 4.1% COLA plus 2, 3 and 4% merit raises. Jon stated that the Selectmen are trying to change the format that employees are reviewed. He stated that the Town looks at surrounding towns and pay scales. Jon stated that he thought most departments were in line, with the possible exception of the Police department. The committee discussed whether everyone should get an automatic 3% raise. Mike was concerned about longevity. In his experience on the police force if you are getting excellent scores you should move up to a Sergeant or Lieutenant and if you remain a patrolman than you shouldn't expect a raise. Jon stated that he was working on a 5-year plan with the Police and the Highway Departments. He is also working on a man-hole and culvert inventory with Bart.

**4). Budgets**

**Library –** The building is now 8 years old and most of the proposed expenses are repairs and maintenance for the building. They hope to finish replacing the ballasts this year. The Trustees are requesting \$2,000 for new shelving for videos. They have received a grant for \$500 for downloadable books accessible from home. The Keene library uses this program. Some books have unlimited access, others are limited so the

user may have to try again later. They are looking to change service providers, as they are looking for a little bit faster service. They are currently using Pine Tree. The Board suggested contacting Verizon. The Committee discussed whether the library would be near enough to a hub for Verizon to reach them. The library has applied for funds from Ocean Bank for new computers. The Committee asked for the funds for shelving be moved to the furniture line in the budget. The furnace needs to be recharged. Parts of the building are due for repainting and carpets need to be replaced. Susan requested a 5-year financial plan for building maintenance so that this brand new building doesn't deteriorate. Ballasts have repeatedly blown since the day they were installed. The manufacturing company went out of business. They have 44 lights and 30 have already been replaced.

Steve stated that the lowest rate for a department head is \$15.52. Jane is making \$14.77 with 31 years of experience as a librarian. She puts in more hours than the 35 per week that she is scheduled for. Gary stated that the Highway Foreman after 4 years is making \$17.40. The Committee suggested the Trustees propose a revision to the budget with justification for a raise for Jane. Fred suggested the trustees compare her salary to other librarians. Bob asked how the increased hours have affected circulation. Jane stated that she thought there was better service and increased circulation. Judy asked how computer use was measured. The students sign in every ½ hour. The Committee also asked that the comparative chart be updated and represented as soon as possible after the end of the year. Based on the comparative chart now, because 2006 is only posted through September it looks like their budget is up and circulation is down almost 20%. There is a request for \$5,000 to be added to the CRF for Building Maintenance. Steve suggested a form showing deposits and expenditures from the Building Maintenance fund.

**Highway** – Bart removed blasting supplies from the budget. Dave stated that 3 days of blasting would cost approximately \$600. So Bart requested \$1800 added to fees for contracted services. The committee asked if there was a rider on insurance that could be dropped because blasting supplies not housed at the garage anymore. Pest control for Beavers is the other thing that is driving contracted services up. Bart spoke to May Davis and told her that she could be responsible for repairs to the roads if Beavers were not removed. Atherton Hill Road is also a problem. He only has permission to trap on one side of the road. The beavers on Route 63 are flooding the forest and could cause damage to Twin Brook Road again.

Gary asked about 0 dollars spent out of the rented equipment line item and an increase in funds from \$6,000 this year to \$8,000 next year. Bart stated that this was due to a hold on a project waiting for approval from DES to dredge Gulf Road where it intersects with the CT River. Bart stated that the chipper was no longer considered safe, so he sold it for an amount close to \$856.34. He purchased it for \$250. He has increased rented equipment because he will now need to rent a chipper. A new chipper would cost approximately \$19,000. He is proposing to rent one for 10 days at \$250/day. John commented one could be rented for \$150/day. Bart stated that he has found it convenient to have one like the over the rail mower. Steve stated that he could see that having a chipper would be beneficial to the Town and could he find one to share with 2 or 3 other Towns. Bart stated that a new chipper shared between 2 or 3 Towns could last between 10 to 15 years. The Committee agreed that renting the equipment would not be ideal,

because of time wasted to pick it up and return it as well as the amount of time or short notice that the highway or recycling center may be able to use it. Gary stated that it would be a warrant article at this point and then would increase the Capital Reserve Fund going forward. The Committee asked about buying the chipper and renting it out to other Towns. Bart was concerned about liability to the Town in case someone gets injured using the equipment.

Bart is changing all street signs over to a 6-inch letters because of Federal requirements causing the increase to Delins, Posts and Signs. The Selectmen have requested a higher quality, more durable block for headwalls. Bart is proposing to resurface 10 miles of road next year for \$210,760. He only completed 7 miles last year. Anita asked if any of these could wait another year as the cost of paving keeps increasing. Bart stated that the paving was on a 3-year cycle and he did not think it was practical to stretch it out any further than that due to repairs that would need to be made. Steve requested the \$5,000 capital expenditure for guardrails be added to a budget item for materials including the Delins, etc.. There is a capital expenditure to replace the 1995 Ford 35,000 GVW for \$126,610. Last year the Loader was replaced.

The roof leaked on the Highway Garage a couple of years ago and ruined the fiberglass insulation. Bart is proposing \$30,000 to remove the old insulation and replace with a spray. This should increase the life of the roof. Gary asked about the use of polyurethane in the building as this is the material that increased fire spread. It is allowed as this is not a residential space. Bart stated that this building is getting older as well and it is probably time to start considering a capital reserve for maintenance. He is concerned about the concrete floor and the insulation in the walls.

**Cemetery** – Pat is proposing only a 1.9% budget increase. She needs to replace the 1998 truck. It is only used seasonally, which is hard on it, but she has done very well with used trucks in the past. She has \$1500 for road rebuilding and realignment. The fence at Cemetery West is due for painting. She was not able to paint last year because of the weather. There is \$2500 into the mower expendable trust to be purchased in 2008. Susan stated that it looked like a very respectable budget.

5). The next meeting will be December 19<sup>th</sup>. The meeting adjourned at 10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine  
Secretary