

TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 16, 2007

Present: Bill Bucknell, Steve Laskowski, Anita Barber, John Koopman, Judy Idelkope, School Board Representative; Elaine Blake, Chesterfield Fire & Rescue Precinct Representative; Gary Winn, Chairman; Rick Carrier, Town Administrator; Dave Thomas, Spofford Fire & Rescue Representative; John Zannotti, Elliot Rowsey, Warren Porter, Fred Szmit, Vice-Chair; Dan Cotter (arrived at 7:10) and Amy LaFontaine, Secretary.

Guests: Neil Jenness and Pat Gilbert Cemetery Commission; Bart Bevis, Road Agent and Lester Fairbanks, Police Chief.

- 1). Fred moved to approve the September 18th minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Anita and passed unanimously by the Committee.
- 2). Discussion-average individual assessed value is \$180,000. The property values in Chesterfield increase on average 3 to 5 million per year. John K. has attended an SAU withdrawal committee meeting. He does not believe they will have a preliminary assessment completed by District Meeting.
- 3). Conservation- Anita stated that she was concerned that they have not spent even half of their budget. Amy stated that they had just approved \$335 for a conference. There will be a public hearing tomorrow which will have some advertising costs and they have met with a consultant about the beavers in Friedsam next to Route 63 which may or may not use up Contracted Services this year. Steve asked why grant money did not show up in revenues? Rick stated that these monies go in and out of the Conservation Fund and are reported in the annual report. Amy stated that the Commission currently has a grant for flood repairs to trail systems from NH Trails Bureau. They have had 2 or 3 grants in the past 5 years. Each grant has been about \$10,000. The public hearing is to donate \$50,000 to help purchase an easement for California Brook Phase II. Fred stated that the Commission donates \$2,000 annually for Spofford Lake Host program.
- 4). Cemetery- Neil stated that part-time salaries were cut last year. The Commission needs another part-time person to take care of the cemeteries. The Commission is overbudget on Administrative Expenses because a new hire is required to have a physical. The physical cost \$135. The person left 2 weeks later. Pat stated that a new person is not as efficient as someone who has been there for 4 or 5 years. Lot repurchase has been reduced by \$500. If someone purchases a lot and decides not to use it the Commission has funds to buy back and resell the lots. The truck was replaced last fall. It was a 1998 with 144,000 miles. It needed \$3500 worth of work to pass inspection. Pat stated that there have been more phone calls for cremations without an undertaker. They have recently increased those fees, but she tries to be accommodating of families that have lost loved ones. They are working on a contract so families know what services they are getting. Lots are \$225. Anita stated that lots in Swanzey are \$400. The Committee asked if the fees were enough to maintain the lots? The lots require maintenance whether someone is buried there or not. There is \$5768 in the mower expendable trust and

approximately \$4,000 for the truck expendable trust. The truck expendable trust will not reach \$24,000 until 2014. The truck is garaged roughly 9 months out of the year and travels approximately 3,000 miles towing equipment. The truck is a one ton with a dump body. The Committee asked the Commission to investigate a lease.

5). Highway-Bart stated that fuel was figured at \$3.00 per gallon. The treated salt item has been decreased by 200 tons because of the recipe. The full-time overtime is due to the late winter. Bart stated that Pat would not be coming to the highway garage this winter. Her full-time benefits will be removed from the Personnel Administration November 1st. Part-time salary is down because the secretary spent more time with the Planning Board this year. Bill asked about the difference in cost between having materials delivered or picked up? The cost is \$57 to haul 8 yards. The cost to operate the truck is \$2.50 to \$3.00 per mile. Steve stated that you may have to consider the salary of an employee, because a driver picking up and delivering materials is not cutting brush, repairing a ditch or cleaning out a culvert, etc. You also need to consider depreciation to the truck. Steve suggested hiring contractors for snow removal instead of hiring a full-time seasonal employee.

The Selectmen are looking to put off the Stow Drive Cold Plane & Hot Top for 1 year in order to replace the culvert on Pond Brook Road. Initial estimates are \$300,000. The culvert was damaged in the 2005 flooding. It is a tricky replacement because of depth and slope. The Selectmen are considering using Construction/Reconstruction money. This is considered a 50 year repair. The Town could also consider bonding. The Poocham Road bond ends in 2009. The \$7,500 is to replace the fuel pumps, not the fuel master system. The pumps are breaking down more frequently. Sandri is looking for 2nd hand pumps. Bart stated that the Grader is not in good shape. It is not due to be replaced until 2014. Bart is looking into a lease-to-own program so the money can remain in the capital reserve fund. The grader is a 1994. It has been used over 10,000 hours. The cost to a breakdown is not just repairs, but also 5 guys that are unable to work on the current project and the rental of a flat bed to tow the vehicle out.

6). Police-Lester stated that Information Highway was unable to reconnect the phone at the temporary station on Route 9A in a timely manner. He had to call Verizon, whose costs are a little higher. He will remain with Verizon until they move back into the new Station in the spring. Lester stated that the officers and their families volunteered to move the PD into the temporary station. John K. thanked the Police Department for their inconvenience and effort to prepare for the new building. The County Administration has agreed to take on the Regional Prosecutor program. The Police had to turn over a \$300,000 grant to the Town of Swanzy. If at the end of 3 years they have amassed enough towns the county could fund the prosecutor program. Lester stated that he had held off on hiring the part-timer until he knows that he can meet his budget. The uniform for a new officer costs about \$2,000. Uniform cleaning is down \$200. Police reimburseable detail is budgeted at \$27 per hour for salary. The payroll for these jobs is paid by Chesterfield and reimbursed by the Town the work was done in. Minor Possession fines are returned to the Town. Bill suggested local kids wash the cruisers. Lester stated that kids may not be available when cruisers need to be washed. Gary stated that there could be environmental issues washing the cars at the Town Office Building. There is a Burton Car Wash on Putney Road now, which is closer than Exit 1 in Brattleboro. Ford may not make a cruiser in 2008. The Dodge Charger is a couple thousand dollars cheaper than Ford, but it may

be offset by the cost to equip it because it is designed differently than the Ford. Lester stated that he is still considering his options.

7). Animal Control- This is a difficult position to fill because they are on call 24 hours 365 days a year. There is a candidate undergoing a background investigation. The Candidate will need to go to the Academy in the spring. There are about 190 animal complaints a year. The humane society is now charging for cats. The budget was so high last year because of 1 dog incident. The dog bit 2 people and the judge did not require the owner to pay restitution. The dog required 2 cages at the humane society and was ultimately ordered to be put down. Lester's ultimate goal is to have 2 officers so they can alternate 1 week off, 1 week on. The dog warrant takes a lot of time, because they need to make phone calls, write tickets and follow-up.

8). The next meeting will be November 27th. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine
Secretary

Approved:

Date: _____