

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 2, 2009**

Present: Gary Winn, Chairman; Becky Auger, School Board Chair; Steve Laskowski (departed at 8:05 PM), Bob Brockman, Selectboard Representative (departed at 9:25 PM); Deb Hogancamp CF&R Representative (departed at 9:35 PM); Fred Szmit (departed at 9:10 PM), Warren Porter (departed 9:35 PM), John Koopman, John Zannotti and Mike Wiggin, Spofford Fire Precinct Representative (arrived at 7:30 PM); Bill Bucknell (arrived at 7:40 PM) and Bayard Tracy (arrived at 8:03 PM).

Absent: Elliot Rowsey

1). Steve moved to approve May 5th minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Fred and passed unanimously.

2). A Draft letter was handed out with comments. Becky stated because the school budget is July 1st to June 30th half of the costs for the year are already estimated because the school budget is usually presented in early January. She also stated that the Vice Principal has resigned. The School Board will be trying to make due with a person in that position 3 or 4 days per week. Deb Hogancamp stated that she disagreed with the tone of the letter and the discussion that is taking place. She thinks everyone is aware of the economic impact at home and at work. The Committee needs to work as a team with all of the departments and not micro-manage. The Committee can ask for 0% increase but be willing to accept a rate for inflation. The Town of Brattleboro has gone without any increases for several years now. The Budget Committee is not a manager of the budget. The committee reviews the budget and makes recommendations. John K stated that a zero increase does not account for the rise in County Taxes or the decrease in revenues from the State. Bob asked everyone to contact Molly Kelly before tomorrow. There will be a vote to decrease revenue sharing by \$50.4 million. This will increase the Town taxes. Mike suggested that Keene tuition was the problem. He suggested getting the Town's together at AREA meetings to fight the tuition increases.

Gary stated that the Committee did not make a lot of changes to the budgets, but he thought the budgets did reflect the Committees guidelines to the best of their abilities. Deb stated that the budget is only a guideline anyway. No one knows what kind of issues are going to come up. The Fire Department needs to be able to fight a 3-alarm fire on Memorial Day. Bayard stated that he was told that the entire School Board was not aware of the budget cuts until after the Committee meetings. The vote to remove the aides was lost by majority vote after the Budget Committee's final deliberative session. Bayard wanted to know if the School Board needed help? Becky stated that there was lots of public input at School Board Meetings. She stated that Selectboard member, Cliff Emery, attended the last School Board meeting with many helpful suggestions.

The Committee agreed to remove the 4th paragraph adding the wording about 0% increase on expenditures and receiving the Town & Fire Precincts in early November and the School Budget in early December. Remove the word preliminary from the last paragraph. Mike asked if there was an emergency that department heads would not be able to meet the goals could

they let the Committee know prior to mid November? Fred suggested holding a meeting in Mid October with the Fire Precincts, Selectboard Chair, and the School Board Chair to talk about the status of the current budget. It is the goal of the budget committee to have level spending for 2009 - 2010. A sentence will be added about a joint meeting with the Fire Precincts and the Selectboard and the School Board in early October. The word endless was removed from the first paragraph. Fred moved to accept the letter as amended. The motion was seconded by Bill and passed by majority vote. Becky voted no.

3). FEMA hearing – Bob stated that there would be a hearing to expend money received from FEMA for \$30,000 of the \$55,000 to crush gravel that was used to repair roads that were damaged.

4). Other – John K asked about continuing to look into the merger of the Fire Departments? The Precincts are still meeting together quarterly. There are issues with time spent by the Fire Chief's on reviews. They are looking into the impact on insurance from combining the departments. John Z asked about communicating with the voters. The school has a very effective communication system with parents. Gary suggested seeking funding from commercial enterprises to fund a newsletter.

5). Adjournment – Gary asked about meeting quarterly to receive reports from Rick about the Town and Becky about the School. The next meeting will be September 15th. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine
Secretary