

Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting of March 14, 2015
Town Hall – Selectmen’s Meeting Room #1, Second Floor 8:30am

Present: Chairman Richard Ward , Vice-Chairman Ronald Clarke, Alan Dunham, Sarah Hewins, Helen Marrone, Town Administrator Michael Milanoski (TA), Town Accountant Meg LaMay & Elaine Weston.

All Members of the Finance Committee also present: Chairman John Cotter, Andy Cardarelli, Mark Townsend, Bill Duggan & Rich Buck.

The meeting was called to order at 8:35am. The Chair led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and Marrone led the audience in community prayer. The Chair asked the TA to review what will be happening during this meeting.

The TA reviewed agenda stating that the Financial Policies have been approved by Town Meeting and Board of Selectmen and that each department will be reviewed individually.

POLICE Chief Duphily reviewed how his department has evolved over the last year. He started transitioning the School Resource Officer position early so he & the school could get acquainted and he will be there full time in the fall. His department has made many successful drug ‘busts’ this year thwarting potential overdoses and his department has made many strides in communicating with the community with the National Night Out. The department is trying to engage the community more.

Ward commented on how successful he feels the department has progressed. Cotter questioned if there would be any reserve fund transfers. Duphily stated as of right now there are not any necessary, although it is hard to predict due to court costs, overtime, etc.

New officers start the academy in March and will be on the road training in 6 months.

Clarke questioned if there was a probationary period for new officers. Duphily stated that there is a one year probationary period which begins after the academy. Clarke also questioned if Duphily was involved in the new school layout for security issues. Duphily stated he did review the plans and did have input and would like to continue to be involved in the building of the school as far as the placement of the doors and windows. Clarke also questioned if any thought was put into a new police station. Duphily stated that any chance he gets he tours other stations to get ideas as there is no formal committee.

FIRE Chief Weston reviewed the successes of the department including the generous donations of people in town. Response time remains at 5.9 minutes. Training has been elevated and all apparatus is in service. There are 75 call firefighters and 5 currently being trained. Chief credited Deputy Germaine for the amount of work he puts in. Deputy Germaine is still covering two positions as he has been for the last seven years. There are times when there may not be

time to complete the core duties and they will need to solicit a firefighter to do the task. Chief has found a bid list where apparatus can be purchased at a tremendous savings to the town. The new fire station is at 70% design and is anticipated to be at 90 % design by April and is hoping to go out to bid in July.

Ward questioned what sub committees are involved in the building. Chief stated there is the Main Building Committee and the sub committees consist of the Fire Station Committee, Technology Committee & Training Facility Committee.

Dunham questioned the absence of a second Deputy Chief and how that is impacting the department. Chief stated that there is no administrative staff and this year he was fully prepared to add another Deputy Chief and would like to plan it so it is a position that can be transitioned to. The position is coming and would like to have an outline of specific duties set for it before requesting funding.

Cotter questioned wages of firefighters increasing. Chief stated there is a wage and benefit committee that researches this. They have researched this and have found that if the firefighters are increased a dollar a year they will reach the \$16 per hour rate. Last year he did not ask for an increase, this year he did put in a 2% increase as he would like to maintain the 'going rate'.

DPW & Buildings & Grounds John Woods & Gerry Farquharson present. Woods reviewed the snow plowing procedures. He gave an update on the department. The fuel island is being updated with an upgraded Gasboy system in which each vehicle and employee will be equipped with fob cards to track use. The Head Mechanic has implemented a fleet maintenance program. The DPW has taken over all of the mowing responsibilities to help give the building maintenance crew more time to do work inside the buildings. Farquharson stated that the merging of the departments has been successful, there are more resources and was a good move for the town. Woods thanked his crew for all of the hours they put in during the unprecedented snow season. There were 4 teenagers hired over the summer which freed up the full-time employees to focus on other projects. Buildings & Grounds had summer help who helped out in the Town Hall. Woods & Farquharson both stated that they have found the merge of the departments to be successful.

Clarke questioned the wear and tear of the equipment. Woods stated that besides one minor accident (not the Town's fault), the equipment is maintained regularly to keep up with demand.

Assessor Ellen Blanchard reviewed the processes in the department. Revaluation is every year, recertification is when the DOR physically comes to the town and reviews property record cards to be sure it accurately reflects the property. Carver has the largest amount of property land in the state. They also check maps to make sure they are properly maintained and updated. FY 18 is the next recertification year. Everything needs to be recertified.

Library Carole Julius summarized the budget. Many expenses are offset by fines and passport fees. There are no new positions or Capital Outlay requests in the budget.

Clarke questioned the difference in the request from her and the Town Administrator. Julius stated that she put in the amount that the state expects you to operate at. She feels that state aid could fill that gap.

Cotter asked how she budgets her time: She goes to the Library in the morning, then the Council on Aging until Noon and then to the Library for the rest of the day. It has been working for 5 years and there are times when she is at one building and does work for the other department. Making Amy Shepardson Assistant Director has helped a lot in this respect.

Council on Aging There are many services available. The senior population is large and they are working hard to get more people to access the Council on Aging. She has noticed some people that just come to one program and she feels that shows that they are appealing to different people on different levels. The Friends of the Council on Aging have fundraisers to support the programs and Council on Aging such as the mailing of the newsletter and their mission is to enhance the experience of the seniors in town.

Marrone questioned the donations to the food pantry. Julius stated that the donations of money to the food pantry is a separate line item in the Friends account and that money can only be spent on food for the food pantry. Marrone also questioned how cash is handled when it comes in. Julius stated that cash is handled in the same manner: being logged into a spreadsheet, cash is spent and a receipt is on file to account for that.

Marrone questioned if she thought of a volunteer group. Julius stated that her concern is that a volunteer would be operating a town facility. There are volunteers for the meals on wheels. She feels there is not the same level of commitment and accountability. They do a great job at enhancing the work of the staff.

The TA stated that all documents are available for the public to view if there is a question.

The Friends of the Council on Aging are working on a non-profit status which would give them the option of buying from the Boston Food Bank which would be at a significantly reduced rate.

Cotter requested a one page summary of what the function of the "Friends" is financially to the Council on Aging.

Cotter questioned how Gatra works financially to the town. Julius submits a form to be reimbursed for expenses by Gatra. The money is expended and reimbursed. The time frame of reimbursement is generally a month.

10: 35 – 10:45 Break

Town Clerk Lynn Doyle gave an overview of the department. There is no wiggle room if there are any additional elections. TA stated that a lot of thought and background went into putting her budget together and that she will be streamlining the election process which will require signage which is costly to meet all of the legal requirements.

North Carver Water District Kevin Tracey reviewed the Enterprise fund expenses and revenues. He has found the well pumps have issues and are requesting a budget to have wells cleaned annually. In the future they will be looking at new source approval which they will need assistance with so that they can keep up with future development and relief on rates. They are currently doing annual increases – we have the highest rates in the area. Elevated storage is also still a need for the long term. Jack Hunter stated that there are currently 5 purchase and sales agreements in N. Carver-it is a possibility they could become a part of the NCWD.

Cotter questioned Other Professional Services line item which is does not appear to be used this year and is wondering why it is budgeted level. Hunter explained that they will be under the same contractual obligations which have not been signed yet, and there could be unpaid invoices outstanding.

LaMay explained that it cannot run on a deficit so the money needs to be available. Cotter asked if a reserve line could be put in. The TA asked if it could be placed under the same budget that would work. LaMay didn't see an issue in putting in a contingency line item.

Decas consistently takes more water than they are contractually obligated to which has helped financially. The average is 35,000 gallons a day they are obligated to a minimum of 24,000 and a maximum of 50,000 gallons. Once the clear well is established, there is a company that would like to take a tank a day and potentially more.

Planning /Inspections/Board of Health/ Conservation Jack Hunter & Robert Tinkham: Hunter gave an overview of the staffing in the department and changes that have been made. Debra Deneen was promoted to the Administrative Assistant and all others are a level funded budget. Fees have increased for construction in town. Clarke questioned if the town has seen a change. LaMay stated that receipts have increased significantly.

Cotter questioned the pay scale of the inspector fees. Tinkham explained that the inspector used to get paid 75% of the inspection and the town would get 25%. Then it changed to a \$30 fee per inspection. This didn't work due to the structure of inspections (there are re-inspections and other things for which a fee isn't charged) and the department was running a deficit.

Tax/Treasurer Paula Nute gave an overview of the department and the new staffing changes in the department. The TA stated that Nute has done a good job of catching up from previous reconciliations and tax takings that had fallen behind from previous staff. Nute spent a lot of time fixing items that were listed in the Auditor's Management Report as well as taking on new software and preparing to borrow \$40 million.

Cotter questioned when the Town will be done from SoftRight conversion. LaMay stated there has been problems with the conversion which is also new to the company offering the service so they are working together to continue to work out the kinks, but functionality is working well. TA stated that not all departments have been rolled out to yet.

EMS Thomas Walsh gave an overview of the department budget and the services provided.

Veterans Ken Morrison gave an overview of the budget and a history of the deficits that the department has faced. Veteran's benefits have increased over the years and the trend has been consistent. Morrison does not see that trend changing.

Animal Control There are two new Assistant Animal Control officers coming in at a starting rate which accounts for a decrease in the salary line. They are a part time function and also provide emergency assistance to the police when needed.

Town Accountant Meg LaMay gave an overview of the budget. The department is level service funded. The SoftRight conversion has been vastly improving the workflow, however they are still cleaning up old problems which is causing the 'implementation' and rollout to be delayed. Customer Support is very responsive and functionality has been positive.

Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator TA gave an overview of the budget as well as the miscellaneous town-wide expenses such as telephone, gasoline, town audit, legal services & data processing. He also reviewed Redevelopment Authority, which he anticipates having more activity in FY 16 as well as the Recreation Committee, Insurance, OCVT assessment, snow & ice, landfill & engineering & Plymouth County Retirement which has increased by 10%.

The Governance Committee reviewed the Committees & Boards in town as well as in Plymouth County and their recommendations are incorporated into the budget. They feel the work that Chairmen do on committees should be acknowledged with nominal compensation for the amount of time that is put in.

Marrone and Hewins disagree that the stipends should be implemented or increased.

School Liz Sorrell, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Business & Finance Peter Gray as well as members of the School Committee: Paula Kibbe, Gina Marie Hanlon-Cavicchi & James O'Brien were present. Sorrell gave an overview of the budget and how it was compiled. She has prepared a needs based budget to begin the budget process. They are requesting a budget of \$1,554,638.26 an increase of \$65,978.60. She also broke down the increase by cost center. Transportation increased by 2.42%, special education increased by 9.92%, facilities management increased by 16.71%, Elementary school increased by 8.18%, Middle High School increased by 6.05%, Athletics increased by 5.68% & an increase in benefits by 1.01%.

There is a deficit in the budget of \$769,590. In order to bridge the gap, the following could potentially be reduced/omitted: Homeless transportation, text books, Voke/Aggie tuition, utilities, request for materials & equipment for CMHS, maintenance, unemployment & salaries, circuit breaker (which would result in a FY 2017 deficit). Circuit breaker pays on a year behind.

The Schools expenses are increasing and the state is giving the school less. The budget never cuts special needs. The top priorities are the teachers and library staffing at the CMHS.

Hewins questioned if the football equipment could be funded out of Capital Outlay. TA stated that due to the reduction in anticipated revenue into the Account, and there is no further funds at this time to fund the equipment. Clarke cautioned using money for one-time funds for an operating budget.

Marrone questioned if money on textbooks could be saved if Parcc testing is eliminated. Sorrell stated that that text book budget that is being requested is all for 10-year old text books and has nothing to do with testing. If the school does revert back to MCAS, they would be required to use technology because of the cost savings as it would cost \$50 per child to use paper testing and \$6 per child to use technology.

Clarke questioned the school administrative staffing level compared to other towns. Sorrell stated that we are light on administrative staff. In the 10 years Sorrell has been here she has eliminated 22% of administrative staff.

Motion to adjourn at 2:45pm by Clarke, second by Hewins. Vote 5-0

