

DRAFT MINUTES

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 3, 2010

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Rob Corson convened the Budget Recommendations Committee at 7:00 PM in the Nowak Room of the Town Office.

The members of the Committee introduced themselves: Harry Thayer, Allen Corey, Corey Stevens, Don Woodward, Carol Aten and Vice Chairman Don Brabant. Also in attendance were Finance Director Doreen Ravell and Town Manager Russell Dean.

Chairman Corson explained that the Budget committee has spent the past 2 months meeting with department heads and the Town Manager and also reviewed the CIP. Tonight the committee will do a final review of the scheduled department's budgets and discuss any items that are still in question and make any adjustments that the committee finds appropriate. Tonight the committee will review Human Resources, Assessing, Town Clerk, Building, Planning, Information Technology, Town Manager, Finance and Parks and Recreation.

Beginning with the Planning and Building Departments, Town Planner Sylvia von Aulock and Building Inspector Doug Eastman appeared to answer any questions that the committee had.

Mr. Thayer moved to remove \$800 from line item 301-5810 (Conferences/Rooms/Meals). Mr. Brabant seconded. Motion failed.

Ms. Von Aulock advised the committee of updated information regarding an increase in the hours of a clerical staffer in the Planning Office, explaining the department's position of a need for increased hours in this position.

Ms. Aten moved to change line item 301-1200 to accommodate the expense of changing the clerical staff from part time to full time. Mr. Woodward seconded. Motion failed.

Mr. Corson asked if the committee had any questions regarding department 304 (Historic District Commission), there were none. There were also no questions regarding the budget for Department 306 (Heritage Commission). The Conservation Commission will be discussed in detail when representatives from the Commission appear for the committee.

Ms. Von Aulock asked about the line item for a \$600 printer. Mr. Corson asked why the new copier in the department would not meet their needs. Information Technology Director Andy Swanson said that he would review the situation and report back to the committee at a later date.

Mr. Corson asked if the committee had any questions regarding department 302 (Inspections and Code Enforcement), there were none. There were also no questions regarding the budget for Department 303 (Zoning Board of Adjustment).

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Eve Quinn and Andie Kohler appeared to represent the Town Clerk's office. Ms. Aten inquired about the decrease in postage requested for next year and Ms. Kohler said it was due to an increase of the use of the online registration option that is available to residents for auto registration and dog licenses. Moving on to the Elections budget, Ms. Kohler reminded the committee that the length of the ballot is directly related to the expense of each election.

Human Resource Director Donna Cisewski answered a few clarification questions for the committee. No changes were suggested or requested.

Mr. Corson asked Mr. Dean for clarification on the increase of town retirement rates. Mr. Dean said that the retirement numbers are directly related to the eligible wages of each employee including longevity pay and overtime.

Assessor John DeVittori appeared to represent his department. The committee had no questions for him.

Mr. Corson asked Parks and Recreation Director Mike Favreau to explain the increase in the Parks Department Temp wages budget. Mr. Favreau said that he had a summer temporary employee last summer and that they would like to keep him on for half of the year, not just summertime. That employee has since been hired part time year round at the DPW, so the committee cautioned Mr. Favreau to make sure this employee's hours stayed within acceptable part time limitations. The budgets for parks and pool were reviewed and Mr. Favreau updated the committee with some cost saving measures that the department has taken in the areas of electricity and irrigation management.

Mr. Corson told the committee that the committee would receive final numbers to look at and vote on at a subsequent meeting.

Library Director Hope Godino gave the members of the committee a copy of her version of the Library budget, which has been updated since the Library Trustees met the night before. The increase in the new proposed budget is due to a change in benefits as well as an increased request for books and technology that the Trustees feel is important for the community. The committee felt that they did not have enough detail and the parties did not have the same information to review. The consensus was that the Budget Committee needed time to review the new request and get enough information to make a decision. Mr. Thayer believes that an increase of about \$22,500 is more reasonable than the proposed increase of over \$44,000.

Mr. Thayer moved that the Budget Committee support going back to the Library Trustees to review the new budget and pare it down. Mr. Woodward seconded. Vote: 4-1 Motion carries. Ms. Aten recused herself from this vote.

Mr. Dean reminded the committee that the Library could also use the warrant article process if they wanted to.

Information Technology Director Andy Swanson appeared to answer questions from the committee. Mr. Thayer asked if printers are included in his budget but Mr. Swanson said that he has historically not

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been involved in those decisions but he did buy a small printer for the Planning Department two years ago when they did not have a budget for it. Mr. Brabant asked why he is buying 16 PC's next year. Mr. Swanson said that is 1/5 of the overall PC's in town and that he is trying to replace PC's on a 5 year schedule. Mr. Corson thinks the replacement plan is good and recommends that it is adequate for the Town. Mr. Thayer thinks that printers should be purchased by the IT department. Mr. Corson thinks this subject is a good one for the Technology Committee to review. Mr. Dean thinks this is a structural issue and that there are efficiencies to be gained by restructuring the purchasing process. There was a lot of discussion as to whether or not the Planning

Mr. Thayer moves that Mr. Swanson go back to the Planning Department to gather the information needed to decide if a \$600 printer will meet the needs of the department. Ms. Aten seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Brabant asked about the increase in Internet services and Mr. Swanson said that it is an effort to increase reliability of email and Internet. Mr. Swanson further said that the cost for the upgrade is about half of what it would be for a normal business because he is getting a 50% government discount.

Mr. Corson moved to reduce the Computers line item (125-7000) from \$12,000 to \$10,000. Mr. Brabant seconded. Vote: Does not carry.

Mr. Dean said that the Cable TV budget would be zeroed out if the Board of Selectmen adopts the new Cable TV contract with the accompanying fund.

Mr. Woodward moved to zero out the Cable TV budget if the Board of Selectmen adopts the new Cable TV contract. Mr. Corey seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

In the Board of Selectmen budget, there were no questions.

Mr. Thayer moved to recommend the Board of Selectmen budget of \$20,950. Mr. Corey seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

In reference to the Cell phone line item Mr. Brabant asked if there should be just one cell phone contract for the Town. Mr. Dean said that most of the cell phones in the Town are Verizon phones and they all have a government rate but through a variety of contracts.

Mr. Corson asked about the Town Office budget for Vacation Replacement and wants to reduce the number to something more in line with what is being spent.

Mr. Woodward moved to reduce the Vacation Replacement line (112-1150) to \$2500. Mr. Brabant seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Dean reported that the Legal budget is level funded from last year and the Trustee of Trust Funds is the same as it has been for many years.

In reference to the Finance Department, Mr. Brabant says he will step back to being Town Treasurer for the purposes of the discussion about the Finance Department. Mr. Corson said that he would have

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preferred that the department had waited to add the new Staff Accountant position because it does not give the Budget Committee a chance to review it. Mr. Brabant asked why the Finance Department needed vacation replacement with the addition of a new position. Ms. Ravell said that the committee could cut the vacation replacement budget but that she still needed to have an overtime budget for the hourly employee who works overtime to complete payroll or accounts payable on occasion.

Ms. Aten moved to eliminate the budget for line item for vacation replacement (201-1150). Mr. Woodward seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Mr. Stevens asked about the underutilized Conference/Rooms/Meals budget. Ms. Ravell said that she simply did not have the time before the addition of the Staff Accountant position, but that she will be using that in the coming year.

There are no questions on the Town Treasurer budget.

Mr. Thayer asked about the postage increase and Ms. Ravell said that it is needed so that the department can communicate with delinquent residents in an effort to collect past due balances. Mr. Thayer asked about the reduction in Temp Wages and Ms. Ravell said that with Mr. Dean's proposed changes, there will only be a need for this item for more than half of the year. Mr. Thayer asked why the Tax Billing Services line item (203-5001) is so high. Ms. Ravell said that with a change in billing companies, the cost has decreased.

Mr. Thayer moved to reduce the Tax Billing Services line item (203-5001) from \$4500 to \$3000. Ms. Aten seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Adjournment- At 10:02 pm Ms. Aten moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Woodward. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Geis
Recording Secretary