

Draft Minutes

Budget Recommendation Committee

November 12, 2013

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Corey Stevens called the meeting to order at 6 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices building. Other members present were Vice Chairman Harry Thayer, Allan Corey, Don Woodward, Bill Campbell, Francine Hall, Nikki Graney, Phil Johnson, Nancy Belanger, Nelson Lourenco, Robert Wentworth, Selectwoman Julie Gilman, BOS Chair Don Clement, BOS Vice Chair Dan Chartrand, Selectman Frank Ferraro, Town Manager Russ Dean, and Doreen Ravell, Finance Director. Bob Kelly and Anne Surman were absent.

Chairman Stevens said the meeting was focused on Recreation, Human Services, Library and Social Services.

Vice Chair Thayer questioned legal expenses, wondering how much longer for the Pine Road case. Mr. Dean said the last piece is with Brentwood which they are trying to schedule now. Once that is heard (which he presumes will take one day) then it will be done. Selectman Chartrand said no matter what he is not interested in pursuing further litigation so in his view the budget is right on target.

Chairman Stevens said Library would be discussed first. Library Director Hope Godino talked about the library, saying it is open 62.5 hours per week. She talked about what they provide, i.e. books, magazines, DVDs, computers, they help set people up with an email, they have book groups for children and adults. She talked about summer reading programs, providing space for adults to become educated with AARP, they provide tax help, NH safe boating education, and providing a comfortable place for people to come and read. She said they have a service to pick up overdue books and bring books to people. There is a friendly teen room at the library. She said all you need is a library card and you can have access to anything in the library. She talked about needing to update mechanicals.

Mr. Corey asked Ms. Godino if she had any specific highlights in her budget. She gave a rundown of expenses, saying \$3000 was added to building maintenance because of the outdated mechanicals. She added \$2000 to the programs line because more adults and teens are joining.

Mr. Woodward went over his Library subcommittee notes. He said nothing in the budget sent out any red flags, adding they did a good job with the budget. Mr. Campbell asked Ms. Godino to explain her salary line. She said they have been trying to hire a full-time

employee, but have been unsuccessful and have only had some part-time employees. Vice Chair Thayer asked about the \$70 non-resident charge. Ms. Godino said they figured what the average household spends a year at the library and came up with the \$70. She went on to say the 53rd payroll week and raises also factor into the salary line.

Mr. Corey asked about a \$21,865 balance paid back in 2012. Ms. Ravell explained the library has its own trustees and used to request the fund balance and the town would cut them a check at the end of the year. Ms. Godino said the library is separate and they try not to take a lot of money at once. Ms. Ravell said the library pays their own expenses except for wages and benefits which are run through the town payroll. Mr. Corey asked if she knew the library fund balance. Ms. Ravell did not have that figure but said she would get it to him.

A Motion was made by Vice Chair Thayer and seconded by Mr. Campbell to approve the library budget request of \$913,337.

Mr. Woodward requested Human Services be discussed next. Keith Bates from Rockingham County Action spoke. He talked about all the multiple programs they do. In 2012, they provided 367 houses in Exeter with fuel assistance. In 2013, they provided 479 houses in Exeter with fuel assistance. One program that is solely their own is called Gift of Warmth where every Sunday they feature one family that has received recent help to help advertise for their services. They have a full-time employee that takes applications for people in need of assistance of some sort. They provide rental assistance, administer security deposit loan programs, and do food pantries in Seabrook, Salem and Raymond consistently. Chairman Stevens commented it seems Mr. Bates is very busy and said he is appreciative of what he does.

Mr. Woodward went over the budget sheet he provided, saying Line E are this year's requests. He said asterisks show an increase. Mr. Lourenco questioned the COAST bus line item, asking if the \$33,000 figure was a donation or requirement. Mr. Woodward said that is the amount required for them. Mr. Lourenco asked what will happen if they do not get funding. Mr. Woodward said they will run out of money to fund their service.

Selectman Ferraro said there needs to be percentage totals provided so they can tell what percentage of the town they are funding for. Mr. Woodward said Ms. Riffle has all the individual applications for the Human Services requests. Vice Chair Thayer commented if the agencies don't apply by the deadline then they simply don't get anything. Chairman Stevens suggested they may not be asking for the correct information on the applications. Selectman Ferraro said someone needs to look over the applications. BOS Chair Clement commented, saying he is not sure if percentages are relevant. Chairman Stevens said they are to see if the proportions are fair. He said they need to figure out if all the applications are filled out properly.

Mr. Campbell asked what action was to be made. Chairman Stevens said they need to look at the applications from all the agencies and bring it back next week for a final vote.

Mr. Woodward moved on to Recreation. Mike Favreau and Greg Bisson from the Parks and Recreation Department spoke. The budget is made up of two parts; Recreation and Parks. The Recreation budget is down 6% because of insurance reasons. Parks budget has increased 14% because of a mower that needs to be purchased (\$10,000). The overall budget with both parts combined is only at a 1.1% increase.

There was discussion about the Holland Way fencing, and whether to repair it or take it down. It will cost roughly \$3000 to remove the fence. Vice Chair Thayer asked who makes repairs to the fence. Mike replied an outside company does. Mr. Corey asked what purpose the fence serves. Mike said it is basically just decorative. Mr. Johnson thinks it will look better if the fence is removed. Mr. Corey said if it doesn't serve a purpose just get rid of it. Mr. Johnson asked if mowing and such is more difficult with the fence there. Mike said it would be easier if it were removed. Vice Chair Thayer would like it removed. Selectman Ferraro suggested putting it out to bid to landscaping companies and if they want it they have to come take it down. Mike said if they have it fix it they will have to keep up with it.

A Motion was made by Vice Chair Thayer and seconded by Mr. Johnson to take \$3000 out of Parks budget and take the fence down. Motion carried – all in favor.

Mike talked about a \$2000 increase in contracted services because last year they did not have enough money to do some things themselves so they had to hire outside companies. Last year they had to contract out because a painter broke and took two weeks to fix. They are not sure if something else will break and they will need to hire someone. Mr. Woodward said some money was lost because of inclement weather, but is happy with the budget as it was given.

Mr. Dean talked about a request for tree removal in a cemetery as an example of why additional funds are needed. He said they need to make sure funds are available for these types of periodic requests. He said it happens 3-4 times a year.

A Motion was made by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Mr. Woodward to accept the total budget request for Recreation in the amount of \$271,531. Motion carried – all in favor.

A Motion was made by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Vice Chair Thayer to approve the new Parks amount of \$177,142. Motion carried – all in favor.

A Motion was made by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Mr. Wentworth to accept the total combined Parks and Recreation in the amount of \$448,673. Motion carried – all in favor.

Chairman Stevens talked about Water/Sewer and the new Economic Development Director position being the topics for the 11/13/13 meeting.

A Motion was made by Ms. Belanger and seconded by Mr. Campbell to adjourn the meeting at 7:33pm. Motion carried – all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole McCormack
Recording Secretary