

Final Minutes

Budget Recommendation Committee

September 23, 2015

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Corey Stevens called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices building. Other members present were Vice Chair William E. Campbell, Stephanie Canty, Peter Lennon, Nikki Graney, Judy Rowan, Frank Ferraro, Francine Hall, Don Woodward, Bob Kelly, Barry Sandberg, Anthony Zwaan, and Allan Corey,. Also present was Town Manager Russ Dean and Selectwoman Julie Gilman, Selectwoman Nancy Belanger, Selectman Dan Chartrand and Selectman Don Clement.

2. Review/Approval of meeting minutes from 7/22/15 meeting

A Motion was made by Mr. Lennon and seconded by Mr. Campbell to approve the minutes of the 7/22/15 BRC meeting. Motion carried – all in favor..

3. Review 2016 draft budget

a. Presentation by Town Manager

Mr. Dean said the budget has three major funds; General, Water, and Sewer. The General Fund is up 3%, or \$527,844 over FY15. One reason for this is a \$79,720 increase in snow removal. There is a 7% budgeted increase for Health Insurance, which is slightly less than what was budgeted in recent years. There are increases in personnel and the new storm water permit has a cost of \$102,000.

Regarding 2016 Budget Initiatives, in IT funds have been requested for a GPS tracking system for town vehicles. This is a \$12,000 request. In the Town Clerks office, \$18,625 has been requested for shelving and \$2,717 has been requested for a position change.

In Planning, Building and Development, the Planning budget has decreased by \$19,048 due to the one time purchase of permitting software and a reduction in studies due to multiple warrant article requests. Chair Stevens asked for the status on the software. Mr. Dean said they are 95% there. Mr. Campbell asked if the position of the Town Panner has been posted. Mr. Dean said they are still making some decisions regarding that, but no it has not been posted.

Mr. Dean continued going over his narrative provided, saying Economic Development budget request has increased by \$12,948. The Building budget includes an increase in hours for the electrical inspector. The Historic District Commission is seeking an additional one-time expense of \$12,062 to fund an update on the Commission's regulations. The Heritage Commission has a budget increase of \$19,700 because of its \$21,000 request to restore the Winter Street cemetery.

In Police/Communications, the overall Police FY16 budget increase is \$113,144, or 3.1%. The prosecutor contract is up \$2,215. Patrol has been increased \$14,500 for overtime. In communications, wages are up 3.6% due to changes in the new union contract.

He continued on to Public Safety – Fire/EMS. The overall Fire/EMS budget has a \$7,718 increase. In Administration, the budget has increased \$4,322 because the family insurance plan that has been budgeted for the Assistant Chief replacement has increased. Mr. Ferraro had a question regarding a line item increase on new positions. Mr. Dean said reserves is included for FY16. There was discussion about breaking up the line item to make it clearer. Mr. Ferraro said he wants to look at full sets of numbers for new positions. Chair Stevens suggested moving forward with supplemental until they have numbers. Mr. Corey said they use last year's budget as a base for this year. Chair Stevens said they would look at new positions once they have numbers.

Mr. Dean went on to Fire Suppression, saying there is a \$14,569 decrease. Emergency Management budget has reduced \$384 due to a reduction in mobile communications costs. Fire Health budget has increased \$18,349 due mainly to an additional capital outlay request. This is a \$20,000 request for a fence around town owned property occupied by the Sportsmen's Club.

In Public Works, the overall budget has increased \$186,832 or 5.2% largely due to the MS4 storm water permit requirements. In Highways/Streets, the budget has decreased by \$24,349 largely due to staff turnover and/or changes in benefit plans. Two line item increases here are vehicle maintenance \$5,000 and phone reimbursement \$2,400. Mr. Dean said phone reimbursement is becoming larger with smart phones. Mr. Ferraro said under some contracts, personal phones can get discounted too. He suggested the Town take advantage of any discounts available. Ms. Hall asked how they could proceed with any phone discount opportunities. Mr. Dean said his office works its way out to see some sample policies. Mr. Ferraro said they should take advantage of mass buying power. Mr. Lennon questioned the \$100 placeholder for sidewalks/curbing. He said they are postponing the \$580,000 until 2016, but the CIP says this is going to start in 2015. He asked why there is anything in the budget indicating they want to spend more than the \$580,000. Mr. Dean said it is there so Public Works can do minor sidewalk projects if needed. He said paving contracts run from season to season. Selectman Chartrand said DPW has a program for sidewalks, downtown is just the beginning.

Mr. Dean continued on with snow removal. This request has increased \$70,720 due to difficult winters and to protect against overspending. Mr. Campbell asked why they wouldn't just go to reserves for any additional snow costs. Mr. Ferraro suggested leaving this to the subcommittee to follow-up. Street Lights has been increased by \$20,000 due to actual billing for street lighting.

In DPW Maintenance, there is a \$30,102 increase. General budget has increased by \$6,363. Garage budget request has increased \$23,939 for a position change, moving a part time employee to full time. Town Buildings has decreased \$200 over FY15. Mr. Sandberg asked about train station expenses. Mr. Dean said there are expenses such as electricity and a platform lease. Mr. Campbell asked about the facilities plan. Mr. Dean said they are looking to get a report on this within a couple of weeks. It is still ongoing. Mr. Ferraro asked if DPW will be coming forward for the fuel contract soon. Mr. Dean said they are locked in for two years. The fuel rate is \$2.19/gallon. They have one year to go on this contract.

Mr. Dean went on to Welfare/Human Service. This budget request has been decreased by \$21,770 which is mainly due to a change in personnel. Parks/Rec has increased by \$26,858, which is mostly in Parks due a temporary laborer and landscaping costs.

In Other Culture/Recreation, the FY16 budget is \$41,451, which is a .3% increase over FY15. Library is up \$21,993, or 2.4% over FY15. Debt Service has decreased \$163,067 over FY15 mainly due to the retirement of the conservation bond in FY15. Vehicles/Equipment has increased \$106,929. This budget includes current lease/purchase payments for Engine 2, Ladder 1, and Police patrol motorcycle. Benefits/Taxes has increased \$164,011 due mainly to holding a health insurance reserve in this budget until the Town is rated for health insurance in October.

Mr. Dean said the total Water Fund request is \$3,014,928, which is an 8% increase over FY15. Included in this is the Epping Road tank maintenance. Sewer Fund budget request is \$2,411,622, which is a 3.4% decrease over FY15.

Other budgetary considerations include the Wastewater Facility at approximately \$47,270,000, the final amount is TBD, and the Court Street Bridge/Culvert Project coming in at \$1,154,000. Mr. Dean moved on and read the warrant articles. Ms. Rowan asked if the Complete Streets Study and the Bicycle Path Master Plan will be integrated into the Master Plan update. Mr. Dean said these are separate projects that are done concurrently. Mr. Campbell said the Master Plan gives you the broad picture. Mr. Dean said the master plan is a statutory document that covers many things. There was a discussion about the studies and what is provided to the consultants when the study is done. Mr. Lennon asked what, if any, guidance is given to those doing the study. Mr. Kelly said it is the job of those getting the study done to take the information and use it for requests. Mr. Campbell said the RPC was supposed to do a study on Chapters 1 & 2 of the Master Plan. He said they have had 6 or 7 months and he has not heard anything.

The total General Fund Appropriations for FY16 are \$18,260,121. It is a 3.31% increase, or \$584,476, over the total General Fund Appropriations for FY15, which were approved at \$17,675,645.

There are two deferrals which Mr. Dean recommended. They are the Continental Drive Fire Substation and the Lincoln Street Design.

The budget does not comment on the Ioka purchase.

b. Q&A with BudCom Members

Mr. Ferraro wondered if they should have a discussion on every item in the CIP. Chair Stevens said not every CIP item needs to be discussed. He said it is a bit gray how deep you have to get into CIP items. They will have a CIP discussion within the subcommittee.

Ms. Canty talked the _____ Policy. She talked about the benefits of this policy. The Committee decided there needed to be some rewording done. Mr. Kelly said the application process should be somewhat longer. Ms. Canty said it is not an overly complicated application. It is a grant. Mr. Lennon referenced 2.5% and asked if it is Selectboard policy. Ms. Graney said it is new. It is a cap just in case a lot of agencies asked for large amounts of money. Mr. Dean said 2.5% is on the total amount for Human Services.

4. Review reports received and those still needed from town

5. Review subcommittee process

Chair Stevens passed out a template for subcommittees to use, and on how the process will go. He said he will send out a report to the subcommittee chairs. There was discussion on the format of the process. Mr. Ferraro asked for a master schedule of the subcommittee meetings. Chair Stevens said he would work with Ms. Riffle to make sure they are all posted. Chair Stevens said the subcommittees should do their work based on what is needed. He said the CIP should be handled the same way. Ms. Canty asked if they should break down the schedules on the revolving funds. Chair Stevens said that is not necessary.

6. Other business

The next Budget Recommendations Committee meeting will be October 21, 2015.

A Motion was made by Mr. Lennon and seconded by Mr. Campbell to adjourn the meeting at 9:19pm. Motion carried – all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Piper, recording secretary

