

**Budget Recommendations Committee**  
**November 10, 2016**  
**Draft Minutes**

**1. Call to Order:**

Chair Corey Stevens called the session to order at 6:38 pm.

Members present were Christine Soutter, Donald Woodward, Francine Hall, Corey Stevens-Chair, Bill Campbell-Vice-Chair, Peter Lennon, Len Benjamin, Niko Papakonstantis and Anthony Zwaan. Judy Rowan arrived later.

Board of Selectmen (“BOS”) members present were Anne Surman, Don Clement, Julie Gilman, and Nancy Belanger.

Staff present were Hope Godino, Library Director, Mike Favreau, Director of Recreation & Parks, Greg Bisson, Asst. Director of Rec & Parks, Sheri Riffle, Administrative Assistant to Town Manager and BOS/Welfare Coordinator, Russ Dean, Town Manager, Doreen Ravell, Financial Director, and David Pancoast, Recording Secretary.

**2. Minutes**

(None were available for approval this evening)

**3. New Business:** Recreation and Parks, Library, Welfare

**Recreation and Parks Dept:**

Ms. Hall, Chair of the Subcommittee, presented this budget report. No changes were recommended. Mr. Stevens asked the Rec Dept. to summarize the budget. Mike Favreau, Director of Rec & Parks said all programming comes out of the revolving fund so it’s not budget dollars. Budget dollars is only for salaries, and benefits and costs. Parks has two full time staff and a part time seasonal worker from April to the end of September but their person got a full time job. Pay isn’t high, no benefits and short hours, so tough to fill it. This year they used contract services and it worked out well, increase due to that. Parks budget is overall down 1.6%, due to watering early on but stopped it due to drought. Mowing was down this year for similar drought reasons. [Judy Rowan arrived at 6:46 pm].

Mr. Favreau said yes and that landscape and irrigation supplies costs were down, don’t need them again for a while. They were able to cut down on chips purchased for parks,

due to a rented chipper/blower and were able to cut down on that cost. Mr. Stevens asked if contract services was a fixed amount and it is. Mr. Campbell said that the contracting out of services was a bit more than the person's salary plus normal contracting, but it may be worth it to do that. Mr. Favreau said it was worth it and they were able to cover absences via contracting services. It's slightly more expensive but there are savings in other areas.

Ms. Ravell reported recreation health insurance is \$58,319, new benefits total is \$99,893, and the recreation total is \$312,931. Mr. Campbell moved approval of those numbers, Mr. Lennon seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Ravell reported the parks total health insurance was \$30,694, new benefits was \$45,522, new parks total \$183,053, which amount was moved by Mr. Campbell, Mr. Lennon seconded and approval vote was unanimous.

Park and Rec total is \$495,984, moved by Mr. Lennon, Mr. Campbell seconded and it was unanimously approved.

Ms. Hall reported that Parks and Rec Dept. has proposed a new facility and activities areas. The Subcommittee supports CIP and feels this is an opportunity to centralize the operations in one spot. Another value is that if facility is built then the Court St complex would be available to the BOS to decide what to do with it, another opportunity for the Town there. Mr. Favreau described the CIP project.

The nursing home at the playground leases the property. Rec and Parks talked to the owners, which have no interest in selling it or in donating it. It's not wise to put a \$250K playground onto land we don't own. Would move current offices on Court St into a new building in parking lot, new road around pool, and a new back parking lot. New Baseball/softball field, new Planet Playground. Lighted multipurpose turf field, which would accommodate multiple sports usage. Could be football, soccer, lacrosse and others. They have located a spot for a new playground. Parking would go where current playground is located, so if owners decide to take back that area someday, Exeter would only lose the parking. A walking path would be included. This upgrade would bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Now is the time.

They are doing an RFP for naming rights for the park. Area businesses will be approached. Naming individual fields or park as a whole, some potential there for large fees to help defray the costs.

Mr. Stevens asked if operations costs would be available for the new facility. Mr. Favreau said he doesn't have them on the new building, but fields not a large amount of increase. Lighting grant has been applied for with a strong possibility of approval for that. Also same on turf field. Other grant is decided in spring, long process. There was lengthy discussion on improvements, process and grants. Mr. Lennon asked about costs and pointed out discrepancies in the figures, which were thoroughly discussed. Mr. Lennon then asked about access issues concerns. There are no access issues now. Mr. Favreau said the new building was originally proposed to be in the back, but was moved to the front and solved access issues. There was discussion about raising fees to help with costs. Mr. Favreau said he could give an estimate by next week on it. Ms. Rowan said that they should want children to feel welcome and higher fees could work against that. Ms. Soutter asked how Exeter compares with other communities on fees and the answer was that it is on the average across the state. Ms. Rowan said they want low income families to be able to use it as well. Mr. Benjamin said that even if they doubled the fees, it's not a lot, so concentrate efforts on naming rights fees. There was discussion about the bond affecting the tax rates. Ms. Soutter supported kids' activities/community enhancement, but wants the Dept to find more money somewhere, so trying to get letters of interest/intent on naming rights from known interested parties would help. The naming rights agreement timetable was discussed. There was discussion on interacting and sharing facilities with the YMCA, the crunch and expenses of booking facilities at other locations. If there is any way to improve Exeter by working with them, why not go to them before deciding on a \$9M bond? There was discussion on activities and overlap with the Y. Mr. Stevens said there is room for discussion about challenges to be met.

There was discussion on impact and user fees and need to expend them by a certain time. Mr. Dean said that recreational impact fees are only charged to residential development and have to be paid over within 6 years. Collect them in a year but the budget process is annual, so don't want to give the fees back. Facility for inside uses if it rains is important as well. If the dept could expand the summer camp program then this community would benefit. Senior programming is also of interest. Phasing the building was discussed and Mr. Favreau said he was reluctant to do hypotheticals. This cost is for now, and it goes up with delays or phasing, there is construction all around the building site so it's hard to avoid it. Not sure how they would phase it. Playground is \$250,000, but have to build to even get to that area. All is dovetailed together. Mr. Benjamin asked Mr. Dean if there any bonds being paid off in the next few years to lighten the load and Mr. Dean said the debt service is scheduled to drop in a couple of years, so about \$200K

reduction within 4 years or so. This is a package deal that has different elements that serve the community differently.

There was significant discussion on phasing, project reduction, shared uses and attractiveness for Exeter population and new folks deciding to move here.

Ms. Corson asked what other towns have a turf field comparable to this one, a lot of maintenance is involved? Mike said none in the area, that's why teams travel miles and pay thousands of dollars to play. This turf field is \$1.5M. Russ Dean said that ballpark costs could be obtained. Layout was an issue for major parking area across the street. Grandparents are more involved, so more user friendly for seniors. Discussion was held on parking for this project. There will be no new outside staff to maintain this new facility. Since this is a CIP project, the Chair said this will be taken up again next Wednesday evening.

[Break 8:02 to 8:09 pm] [Anne Surman left at break]

The Chair reconvened the session with the Library budget presentation.

Ms. Hall presented the Subcommittee report with Judy Rowan and herself. There was a changeover from part time to full time position, but made no changes.

Ms. Hope Godino, Library Director, presented this budget and said they do programs for all ages and preschool story time, book groups up to high school and seniors. TechTalk about device instructions and use familiarity, which classes are booked through December 2016. Set up emails for folks and help with cell phone usage too. Lots of services in addition to books and movies. Special programs for holidays or teacher service days, now for teens as well as younger kids, open 8:30 am to 8 pm 4 days a week and open on Saturday.

Library Board of trustees ("BOT") is elected like the BOS, but the BOT has full authority over Library. Once money is voted by Town, trustees control it all. It's in RSAs and all towns have it but cities don't. Public Services are general costs and book acquisition is part of that. Ms. Rowan said that the Subcommittee's role was to be sure BOT didn't go off the rails on anything. Mr. Zwaan offered that there is a strange disconnect with the Library BOT and the BudCom doesn't hear from that BOT, just hear from Library Administrator and he is assuming the BOT is aware of all this. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ said they develop the budget and then they vote on it. Until they vote on it, it doesn't exist. This budget has been voted on by the BOT. There was deep discussion on the nature of the

BOT, the relationship, the process and the apparent disconnects in that process, where BudCom doesn't interact with the BOT. A new hire was discussed where a part-timer became a full timer, since she was very experienced and willing to be part of the community, not just come and go, and she had great credentials and the necessary degree and so the BOT hired her before they lost her. There was discussion on that point. Mr. Campbell said the BudCom could comment on it but not change it. BOT has considered these comments in the past.

Mr. Lennon asked about the BOT approval of the budget. Ms. Godino said they voted on a budget so it's finalized now. There was discussion on the process. Mr. Lennon asked if any opportunity to meet with BOT in advance in the future. Make every other dept do pushups but not library, why can't we change it some way to get our two cents to library BOT in time. There was discussion on this. Mr. Campbell said they could still give BOT input and they'd consider it. Ms. Hall said that a BudCom member could volunteer to interact with the BOT in this process. Ms. Soutter said the Chair of Library Subcommittee should meet with BOT during the entire process, but the Subcommittee would have to form very early to be able to do that.

Mr. Campbell urged the BOT to come to BudCom before any new hires are decided and approved. Ms. Hall said there is a timing issue on all this. There was discussion on communication and that other departments aren't fairly treated in this process of new positions.

Ms. Ravell reported that Library reduced salary increases to be in line with Town on it. Full time wages are the same, part time are \$131,278, the new salary subtotal is \$590,573. Health insurance is now \$108,332, dental is \$6175, new benefits total is \$216,151. Total Library is \$1,002,526, which was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Ms Hall and it was unanimously approved. [Don Clement left at 8:45 pm]

#### **Human Services:**

Ms. Sheri Riffle was present for this budget. Mr. Zwaan gave the Subcommittee report for Welfare, it made no changes in budget but looked at the welfare policy. Ms. Riffle gave her report as administrator of that program. This budget skips wages, benefits and supplies, and gets solely to direct relief benefits which has been \$27,000 in recent years and it's been steady. Some clarification about Wentworth Trust is warranted.

Subcommittee decided level fund the amount. Software was contemplated for a while, which helps coordinate disbursement of funds with other towns so no duplication-that would be money well spent. There was discussion on the Wentworth Trust-outside funding. Ms. Riffle said she looks outside for other money, and that trust approached her and wanted to expand its funding, of which Exeter is its largest town. In May they had \$60K remaining, so she threw everything she had at them and if there is one woman in the household, they will cover things Town won't like water, sewer, property taxes, medical bills, etc.

The Town Manager explained that he and Ms. Riffle are monitoring her workload and will be continuing on track as things stand unless a large expansion unfolds. Incremental wage is based on Ms. Riffle's current other position. There was discussion on Ms. Riffle's workload Ms. Hall said Ms. Riffle is very efficient and very good on a computer and that's how it works. Ms. Riffle said that things are fine for now. Mr. Stevens said a new set of eyes on the prior welfare person's role has helped.

There are no changes, no health care and no benefits involved, so the budget figure is \$37,778, which amount was moved for approval by Mr. Lennon, seconded by Mr. Campbell, and unanimously approved.

#### **Human Services Warrant:**

Ms. Hall's Subcommittee handled this. There was discussion on warrant articles and the process for accomplishing things through them. Mr. Benjamin asked when a warrant is required. TM: warrant articles in law have to be done by that process. In the past the Town annually had 20 warrant articles to vote on-which was way too many, so now all agencies wanting human services funding are listed in one warrant article. The Human Services warrant passes at 80+% every year.

Ms. Hall gave background on the Subcommittee's activities, requirements of the laws and such. The Town chooses to put this in front of the citizens and historically they have approved it. Percentage of people in favor is high. Subcommittee wanted to continue that tradition. Ms. Riffle administers it now and will continue to do so. The Subcommittee decided to recommend that this aspect of Town funding not be done by warrant article any longer, but become a regular budget item. Welfare budget expenditures would be overseen and approved by an advisory citizen's committee to clarify it. Mr. Zwaan said this is a big change, part of the reason for this conclusion was based on last year's negative experience, with a large amount of work put in last year on

this issue. Adjustments were made on a fairly subjective basis. Didn't want to go down that road again, so they think it should be put in budget so it's ongoing throughout the year. Mr. Stevens acknowledged the work last year and this year's process was a good one. Mr. Campbell commended the committee on a good suggestion on how to handle this. This change has possibilities, but must have BudCom involvement where agencies submit applications in late summer and find out in ensuing spring on amounts, due to the budget process timeline. Mr. Riffle would track the money and the Finance Director would as well. Certain Committees that have formed that have consumed too much time for Ms. Riffle to have to deal with. If any oversight by her is needed/wanted, then need more hours per week for Ms. Riffle. Ms. Hall said in her discussions with Ms. Riffle she thought that quarterly meetings might work fine. Mr. Dean agreed. There was discussion on money allotments and process, greater flexibility, needs of agencies/residents, a Citizen's Advisory Committee that could help facilitate the process and it could have a BudCom member and BOS member on it. All money would be subjected to the rules of the new committee. There was discussion on this process. Mr. Zwaan said there are many different aspects of this. Process is broken, warrant is growing and list is very long already and getting longer annually. Do it as an omnibus, so newer agencies wouldn't be included in omnibus. Is a newer applicant less worthy than an older applicant? Mr. Woodward said that the applications can become overwhelming. Ms. Riffle said the 990 forms were requested until this year, then discontinued. Ms. Hall said more efficiency could be used in the process-fresh look of this would be good. Mr. Campbell said there would be an application and a committee could review and approve it and if later on the obligations weren't being fulfilled, the committee change it. Ms. Hall said it would be doling out money as they go, not for the whole year. There was discussion on this process and allocation of funds to agencies. Ms. Soutter offered her experience is that the committee would be a sort of grant funding agency serving Exeter only. Can set it up however Town wants to do it. Mr. Lennon pointed out that operating procedures would be handled later on, just decide if the Advisory Committee process is a good one. Better and more responsive process or not? Chair said this should not become a major burden on Ms. Riffle's time. It would be hard to cut any of the amounts, too many criteria on them. Comfortable if in the budget with a reduced number than the one that is before the BudCom. Chair asked Mr. Dean if he can make this work and he said yes, it's well thought out. The BudCom needs to talk to BOS to get its support going forward. Selectwoman Belanger said that she thought it would be better for BudCom to come to discuss with the BOS sooner than later and Mr. Dean suggested they come on 11/14 or 11/28 sessions, probably the latter best.

Ms. Hall said the budget number was arrived at by deciding a lower amount would be more palatable to the BudCom. Original amount was \$108K and two new agencies so that raised it to \$114K, but the actual request is for \$100K. Mr. Dean said they should create a line item in Human Services for it.

He suggested it go into the budget, with a strong recommendation of Subcommittee that the new process be followed. Procedure was discussed. Mr. Lennon moved the new Human Services Grant funding process as recommended by the Subcommittee, it was seconded by Mr. Woodward, Mr. Campbell abstained, and it was otherwise unanimously approved. Mr. Campbell said he wanted to be sure of Ms. Riffle's workload. Mr. Zwaan moved the BudCom recommended no warrant article for Human Services component, Mr. Campbell abstained, and it was otherwise unanimously approved. Mr. Zwaan then moved budget for Human Services new line item be \$100,000, Mr. Campbell abstained and it was otherwise unanimously approved.

Chair: next session is next wed for CIP and it will be a long meeting.

#### **4. Adjournment:**

There being no other business before the Committee, Mr. Zwaan moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Lennon and the vote was unanimously approved. The Chair adjourned the session at 10:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by David Pancoast, Recording Secretary.