

**BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**JANUARY 16, 2007**

**MEMORIAL BUILDING**

**7:00 P.M.**

*The following are to be considered draft minutes only until approved by the Board at their next meeting.*

**Present:** Chairman Bernard Manning, John Trachy, Doug George, Darrin Patten, Don Garlock, Ken Jacques, Rick Kidder and John Poston.

Selectmen Present: Bob Anderson, George McCusker, and Neal Huntoon.

Others Present: Dick Kipperman.

B. called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Roll was called.

**Minutes:** John moved to accept the minutes of December 5, 2006 as written, seconded by Doug and unanimously approved.

**Membership:** B. discussed the membership of the Board. There has been a problem for several years where there have been 9 elected members, and there should be 8 elected members and a Selectman's representative as a voting member. There are 3 positions with terms expiring in 2007. B. questioned what should happen this year? Janet stated that she had spoken to the legal department of the Local Government Center and was advised to continue the way it has been, and correct the situation at the elections this year by electing two members with 3 year terms. Members were in agreement to continue as at present.

**Highway:** The Board met with Brad to review his proposed 2007 budget. The Board reviewed the budget worksheet, the plan for shim, seal, and blacktop, and capital improvements. Bob Anderson discussed the budget worksheet. Shim, seal and blacktop projects include \$48,000 to pave the other half of Hogg Hill this year and \$10,000 that was in reclamation to be moved to shim and seal roads Brad has proposed.

There is no contract plowing included in the proposed budget with the purchase of the third truck. Part-time help is being used during storms, eliminating the \$12,000 contract plowing appropriation.

On the highway capital improvement projects, reclamation of Stoney Brook Road was scheduled for 2005 and never done. The dates of the improvement projects have been rearranged. The Selectmen would like to propose Stoney Brook as a reclamation project for 2007. Bob stated the Selectmen have discussed putting the reclamation in as a warrant article, as there is \$48,000 in the highway budget for Hogg Hill Road. They felt that perhaps the voters should decide.

Brad stated the reclamation project would involve grinding of approximately 2300' from the Sunapee end of Bog Pond to Hogg Hill, laying 6" of gravel, and pavement overlay. Drainage ditches and rock removal will be done before the reclamation project begins. He is waiting on prices for the project, but should have them available by the next budget meeting.

B. stated he felt this should not be a warrant article project but be included in the operating budget. The road agent, the board of selectmen and the budget committee make decisions on money to be raised and the Town should not decide which roads are going to be fixed. Bob stated the Selectmen had thought about putting this in as a special article to keep the budget in line without too large an increase. Ken stated that the people that know the most about what needs to be done on the roads are Brad and his crew. That information gets disseminated to the Selectmen to determine how the roads get taken care of. This is what needs to be done to keep the town moving in the right direction of maintaining and upgrading roads. Several Board members agreed that the project should be part of the operating budget. Brad stated that Pike will give an estimate to do the whole project

The Board reviewed the capital improvements list. The State has reviewed town bridges and has listed the bridge at Star Lake Road, Bog Brook, and Gove Brook as needing repair in the next few years. The Star Lake Bridge was discussed. The State recommends replacing the concrete decking, and sealing the concrete on a regular basis. The concrete should not be covered over with gravel. The State report also lists the railings as being inadequate.

After discussion, the Board recommended the Selectmen consider increasing the highway budget to reflect the work on Stoney Brook Road instead of presenting it as a Warrant Article. Bob stated that the Selectmen will discuss this at their next meeting.

**Fire Department:** Dallas reported that the fire station ceiling project is nearly completed. The final coat of paint was applied today. The installation of the lights should be finished soon. The heating has been installed.

Dallas reviewed the proposed 2007 budget line by line.

Mileage reimbursement to increase a small amount to cover costs incurred by department travel.

Wages: The increase in the fire chief's wage was initiated by the Board of Selectmen. Neal stated the Selectmen had voted to increase the wages to better compensate for the time that is put in.

Dispatching fees remain the same from Hanover Dispatch.

New Communications: The fire department pagers are outdated and frequently need repair. The plan is to update some pagers each year as has been done with turn out gear. The appropriation should cover 3 new pagers.

Communications Repair: Updating pagers and radios should keep the costs down. The department received 19 hand held two-way radios through a statewide grant last year. In 2005 all the trucks got new radios through a grant.

New equipment: Dallas presented a list of items under consideration was reviewed. B. asked for clarification of Knox key holders. Dallas explained the town buildings, and the rest area has an outside box, and the department is hoping to get anyone with an alarm system to have a Knox box mounted on their house. The Knox system provides the town with a master key for the box. The department would use the master key to enter the box, with keys to the building inside each box. A Knox unit would go in each vehicle, with a pin code for each individual. The boxes are approximately \$350.00 each. The software enables the department to trail who uses each Knox unit for security. Homeowners with alarms would be encouraged to purchase these Knox boxes. The Knox boxes are a secure place for the keys to be kept to assist the department when responding to alarm activations when a property owner is not available.

Equipment repair: Increased to roughly reflect what was spent this year.

Training: Request for 2007 reduced.

Reference materials: NFPA catalogs used for inspections, etc are being updated. The State is changing their incident reporting programming. The department has to update their software to stay compatible at a cost of \$345.00 for the upgrade.

Vehicle repairs: Last year there were a few unexpected repairs required on the older engine.

**Rescue Squad:**

Jen Roberts reported on proposed appropriations for 2007.

Training fees: Jen reported on the increase in training fees. In the past the core group of rescue personnel the department has carried has been employed by New London Hospital Ambulance. Each member is required to have 48 hours of continuing education training every 2 years. New London Hospital has covered the cost for those people. There are now 7 new people on the squad, not employed by New London Ambulance. It costs approximately \$400.00 per person for their training to keep their licenses. Six of the new members are in the EMT basic class right now. One member is a licensed EMT. The six that are in the EMT class now are all vested in the fire department. Four of them are currently fire fighters. Three of the people in the basic EMT training now are

employed by New London Hospital, so the hospital is covering the cost of the basics course.

Equipment: Increased by \$200.00 to cover updating the equipment that each person will need to carry.

Oxygen supplies: This amount stayed the same. The expenditure for 2006 reflects a larger amount. There is a misunderstanding with Merriam Graves over what was asked for and what was delivered. Dallas stated that they are working with Merriam Graves to correct the situation. The department had arranged to purchase oxygen bottles, but Merriam Graves has been billing as a lease.

Medical supplies: staying the same.

Communications equipment: Two new pagers are needed so each person will have a pager.

B. asked if there were any questions.

Jon Poston questioned the status of the Regional Hazmat. Dallas indicated the fees for this are under association dues. Dallas reported the regional Hazmat Team should be ready to respond within the next year for a Hazmat situation. Regional Hazmat has received numerous grants. The team has purchased two trailers, a tow vehicle, and a number of pieces of equipment. The dues are being maintained since the grants will not pay for the Hazmat technicians to have physicals. The fire department has received a multi-gas detector for carbon monoxide and other gasses, and spill kits, etc., through the program

Dallas discussed with the Board giving consideration to replacement of the 82 pump truck, which is now 25 years old, in the next year or two. The newest truck is six years old. Dallas estimates the beginning price being around \$150,000. B. stated he felt a stock truck could be bought for less than that.

Dallas stated that he would like to see a 25 –30 year rotation. . It is time to start planning for a purchase now. 1983 –1984 is the oldest NFPA likes to see as front line apparatus. The newer truck is the first one on the scene. The older truck is used as back-up at the scene or at a water supply. Usually by that time there are other towns that have come in that allow this one to be a spare. There are beginning to be some maintenance issues with this vehicle.

Ken asked if there was any value to the truck. Dallas stated there could be to the right person or community. It is possible that the town could try to get a truck with a grant.

**Police Department:**

Tim Julian was present and reviewed the proposed budget line by line.

Special duty wages is eliminated with the revolving fund created last year.

Full-Time Officer: The full-time officer would be starting in March. A spreadsheet was provided showing costs of benefits for a full-time officer for 2007 beginning with Town Meeting. The proposed wages reflect what a three-year officer would get locally, as well as yearly lease payments for a second cruiser.

Tim reviewed the statistics he used to support his request for a full-time officer. In 2004 the State census figures estimate the population at 1074. He estimates it at about 1200 now. Calls have gone up considerably. The Selectmen requested more traffic patrol. He has been using a part-time officer approximately 20 hours per week. Ken asked how Springfield compares with Towns of similar populations? Tim stated that we are where Grantham was in 2003 as far as call volume, and they had 3 full-time officers at that time.

John Trachy asked what the call volume would be if the department were increased. Tim stated that the citations would probably increase. Tim reported he doesn't know how the incidents might increase, but he would hope that more time could be spent pursuing cases, instead of "going around putting out fires

Tim stated that Mike Beaulieu, our current part-time officer, has expressed an interest in the position. Mike has worked for the Town three years, and has put himself through about every course offered at Police Standards and Training and has not charged the Town for any of it. He is very good at community policing, and working with the Town. Tim stated that it is difficult to get new officers to join a Department. Mike will have to go to the Academy for further full-time officer training. There is no charge for the schooling; his wages would be paid while he was attending classes. He would need to attend school for 10 weeks.

Neal stated that the Selectmen felt that Mike has a fair amount of time invested in the Department and in the Town. He is well liked and he is interested in the Town. The Selectmen feel that they should follow-through with making this position available to him.

George McCusker discussed circumstances in other towns, and how fortunate the Town of Springfield is to have people who are dedicated in the Town. The Town has reached a point where we need to be more than a one police officer town. Springfield needs to catch up to handle the growth we are being faced with. George stated that he felt it was time to support the request for a second full-time officer and all the equipment that goes along with the position.

John Trachy asked why the Selectmen felt it was necessary to increase the amount of traffic stops? Neal reported that their request was based on complaints they have received.

B. questioned the amount proposed for health insurance for the police department. The amount includes family plan coverage at \$1500 per month, and the addition of a two-person policy for the second full-time officer.

Tim reviewed the cruiser lease information with the Board. The lease would be from Ford Motor Company for a four door Crown Victoria. The total net price of the vehicle is \$27,280 which includes all the equipment necessary for the vehicle to be used as a police cruiser. A cage would be an additional \$150 to \$200, and about \$350 for graphics.

Tim would like to consider leasing as a means to continuously rotate cruisers. The Explorer has 68,000 miles right now. He hopes mileage on the Explorer won't increase as rapidly with the purchase of another vehicle. The Explorer has required some repairs, and with two vehicles there would be a vehicle available when one is out of service.

Jon Poston questioned how critical it was to have two cruisers? Tim explained how an additional vehicle works as a force multiplier. As soon as an officer gets in the cruiser they are on duty. An officer should not be on duty with their personal vehicle for liability reasons.

Vehicle fuel: Increased by about \$700. He does not see the need to increase that more.

Equipment: Tim would like to purchase an additional patrol rifle for the department. The department currently has one rifle donated by Durgin & Crowell. He would purchase another rifle at cost. He discussed shortening the barrel, upgrading the sights and adding suppressors to each rifle.

Dispatching fees: Estimate for increase to \$12,000. Tim explained the dispatching service.

Radar Repair: Grants are available to purchase radar for a cruiser without radar through NH Traffic Safety.

Mileage reimbursement: Money has been appropriated for going back and forth to classes. Tim anticipates not needing that appropriation with a second cruiser.

The remaining line item requests stayed similar to previous year appropriations.

B. asked if Tim had absolute plans for an officer for an additional 20 hours per week?

Tim stated that his goal is reduce the amount of time he is on call. This would be an evening position, Wednesday through Sunday, with Monday and Tuesday off. Mike currently does Saturday and Sundays, and this has been working out well.

B. thanked Tim for his presentation.

The Board reviewed proposed warrant articles.

Proposed warrant articles to continue the Communications Committee, to appropriate money for a town-wide survey regarding communication needs, and funding for an assistant for maintenance of the web site, was discussed by the Board.

Bob discussed with the Board a warrant article to purchase the remaining skateboard ramps, and to do fencing and landscaping around the skateboard and basketball courts. One skateboard ramp has been ordered. There are not enough funds remaining to get the other two pieces recommended for a basic park. The Selectmen would like to see this phase of the project completed. Fundraising would continue for future phases of projects proposed.

John reviewed possible proposed warrant articles for the Conservation Commission. The Commission is suggesting raising funds to do a Wetlands and Natural Resources Inventory of the Town. It is hoped that there will be money available from the conservation fund, the Royal Arch and Society fund, and grants to off set this expense. Other sources of funding may be known by Town Meeting but will not be known before the warrant deadline.

John discussed with the Board the revolving fund for the recreation department. John questioned the appropriation for the summer camp if there are funds in the budget being appropriated in the operating budget for the camp this year. The Selectmen will look into this.

B. asked if there were any other items for the budget for discussion. Bob stated that health insurance costs have risen 13.4%. The Board reviewed policies for Matthew Thornton Blue and Bluechoice and have agreed to continue with Bluechoice. The premium costs for Matthew Thornton Blue were a little less but would result in more out of pocket expense for the employee.

The Board voted to adjourn at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Roberts,  
Recording Secretary

