

BUDGET COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 8, 2009

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: B. Manning, Ken Jacques, Darrin Patten, Jon Poston, Jeff Milne, Bill Sullivan, John Trachy and John Chiarella. Don Hill and Tim Cook were also in attendance.

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

Election of Officers: Darrin made a motion to nominate B. Manning for Chairman, and Ken Jacques for Vice-Chairman, seconded by Bill. The motion passed.

B. indicated that the Board needs to fill Dave Tucker's term which was left open when he became Selectman.

John Trachy made a motion to appoint Tim Cook to the vacant position, seconded by Ken and unanimously approved.

Meeting Schedule:

B. reviewed the work session and public hearing schedule. The Board was in agreement to hold the following sessions:

Tuesday, January 12, 2009	Budget Work Session	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 19, 2009	Budget Work Session	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 26, 2009	Budget Work Session	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 9, 2009	1 st Budget Public Hearing	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 16 2009	2 nd Budget Public Hearing, if required	7:00 p.m.

General Discussion:

John Chiarella explained the Selectmen chose not to use any of the fund balance to lower the tax rate this year. Consideration was given to the amount remaining in the unreserved fund balance, and the possible eventuality these funds may be required to meet a budgetary obligations given the economic picture, and the uncertainty of anticipated revenue at local and state levels.

B. asked the Selectmen what to anticipate for the 2010 operating budget. John C. explained the Department heads have been asked to keep operating costs level or lower. Two anticipated projects, not part of the operating budget, will be the possible purchase of property, and implementation of the drainage project at the safety complex. Also of concern, is the continuation of kindergarten in Springfield. The Selectmen have made an offer to reduce the rent

to the district. So far, this has met favorably with school administrators, but most likely will be dependent on final budgetary requirements.

B. asked John for more details with the two projects. John indicated the Selectmen need to work out details regarding the property purchase. Ross has finished engineering design for the drainage. The Selectmen anticipate the project will be completed in phases over a few years. The drainage project will be hired out. The Selectmen foresee the funding for this coming from a warrant article. John Trachy questioned if the costs for the phases were small enough, would the Selectmen consider appropriating funds through the operating budget. John C. indicated Ross has discussed the plan with the wetlands board and feels the proposal meets favorably with them. John Trachy reported the state does make provisions for wetlands areas to be created at alternate sites to compensate if wetlands need to be filled in next door. This could perhaps be done easily on the Kinsley lot. John T. stated there are mitigation funds available to assist in creating wetlands. John C. indicated that paving of the site is recommended.

John C. reported the storage of sand and salt does create an issue and the sand and salt shed needs replacing. It is feasible that the phase of the project might be:

1. Drainage issues on site
2. Sand/Salt Shed
3. Paving of site

Jeff questioned the property purchase. John C. reported a space needs committee was created to review town space needs. The committee and the Selectmen agreed a priority was to find larger space for the police department. The property that is available is in close proximity to the town facilities and the location makes it advantageous. It appears it could easily be converted for use by the police department and possible other town functions. The second priority is to increase and improve document storage for archived files. John reported the Selectmen have approved the purchase of a scanner, to scan and electronically store files, but the State requires retention of certain paper files as well. A decision as to the actual scanner purchase has not been made.

John C. indicated Brad has been trying out new loaders, but has indicated to forgo asking for an appropriation for that this year. There is concern the equipment replacement schedule has been pushed back and the existing equipment is getting older and requiring more repairs.

John C. indicated the Town Hall needs to be repainted. The Selectmen will have to look into costs for this for 2010.

John reported the Police Department is not looking for any increases this year. The worksheet indicates some discussion the Selectmen had with Tim regarding holiday time and what Tim would like to see for his department for 2010, but these were suggestions only and not requests.

The Police Department has been approved for a 50% matching grant for in-car video cameras.

Brad has indicated he can work within the proposed 2010 operating budget for road maintenance.

John reported employee health insurance costs are increasing by 16.4%. The Selectmen looked at other options offered by LGC last year, and savings to the Town were nominal. The Town contracts with LGC for Workmen's Comp and Property Liability Insurance and in so doing receives discounts. John indicated the Selectmen have been discussing shifting some percentage of insurance costs to new hires. Don reported the Selectmen have also talked about instituting some type of benefit dollar policy in the future.

The Board agreed to have the department heads attend the January 19, 2009 meeting.

With no further business, the Board voted to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Roberts,
Administrative Assistant