

SELECTMEN'S BUDGET WORKSHOP

Minutes of 12/14/06

4:00 p.m.

Selectmen:

Peter Miller, Chairman

Peter Brothers

Miller Lovett

Frank Michel

Colette Worsman

Town Manager:

Carol Granfield

Director of Administrative Services:

Brenda Vittner

Administrative Assistant:

Wynette DeGroot

Roll Call at 4:10 p.m. Open Workshop by Peter Miller, Chairman

Town Clerk – This budget experiences a reduction in 2007 due to less numbers of elections. Any fees are mandated by the State as there is a large revenue from the Town Clerk. One expense for this department is the Opt-Tech maintenance contract for the ballot machines.

Administrative Services: This department which is responsible for finance, General Assistance, GIS/IT has 6 full time employees. There is a request to reclassify one part-time to full-time status based on demands and the necessity of this position for town and all department operations. Also requested is reclassification of the Accountant and a reduction of seasonal. The General Assistance line shows an increase due to recorded volume of increased numbers and large unknowns for the upcoming year.

Library: The Trustees oversee this budget. The Board of Selectmen adopts the bottom line however the library is able to expend the funds as they see necessary. There was extensive discussion on the line item for repointing the building. Frank asked if this is a safety concern and if this could be put off until another year. Lydia indicated the building is losing mortar and only will continue to deteriorate. It was stated that it is not a safety issue yet. The cost continues to increase for the repointing of the building. Another future concern raised at this time is the need for a new HVAC system for the entire building. There will be a Trustee meeting as soon as possible and the Trustees will come back to the Board of Selectmen with a (library) Board approved budget.

Conservation: (John Sherman was not able to attend, Don MacFarlane attended.) The Board reviewed the ETF's and Conservation Fund 5 (which last year was voted to designate the first \$50,000 of the land use change tax to the Conservation Fund 5). They further reviewed the balances as of May being roughly \$200,000. These funds help to reduce the cost of bonds and make it possible for the Conservation Commission to purchase land. The current balance of the

ETF is approximately \$100,000 of which these monies are targeted at major acquisitions and assisting with the soft costs of these purchases.

Fund 5 is a revenue fund established by RSA's to promote conservation.

Executive: This department is requesting a reclassification and a slight increase in the seasonal / temporary line due to the reduction of the seasonal line in the Administrative Services department budget.

Tax Collector: There is a new line in this budget for the mortgage search service which is necessary for segregation of duties and compliance with the RSA regarding lien holding. Discussion regarding the use of automated phones resulted in determining that we provide customer service and the use of automation is not always the best answer.

Municipal Administration: The Board of Selectmen reviewed the contingency fund and this year with the encumbered \$22,000 and this year's (06) encumbered the total will be \$32,000 and there will be none needed for 2007. The Ambulance will be reduced by 12,000 due to fewer calls. Software licensing is up to date. Flagged items include the newspapers, which are available on line and the Trust Maintenance Fees which are now netted out.

Regional Agencies: Most were level funded however the Greater Meredith Program will be in on Monday to review their recommended amount. Other agencies have been contacted regarding their amounts and most understand there are great cutbacks.

Personnel Administration: This budget there was a reduction of the Section 125 Plan to a no fee agreement. In the presented budget there is a 3% COLA. The COLA is based on the area average. There are various indexes available such as the NE CPI and the Boston area Index in order to gather the average. The ambulance contract included a 3.3% COLA, which is the area based amount. COLA's enable the pay scale to be kept comparable with similar area communities. If there is no COLA there would be no increase for those at the top of the pay scale. The pay scale is based on a merit based evaluation.

Miller Lovett indicated he would like to see a committee developed to review the merit and evaluation process.

The COLA is flagged.

Fire Department: The Fire Department has large items in the Capital Fund which includes the funds for the Fire Truck. Chief Palm explained the need for the Safety Equipment line which replaces turnout gear at \$1,500 a piece and also includes other safety equipment such as breathing apparatus.

In the CIP is the amount of \$175,000 which is to put the order in for the fire truck, which has a construction time (12 months). With these funds, there is a result in savings due to the dollars placing the order and paying a large percentage.

The question was raised to the Chief on the potential new station and the time frames being proposed. Chief Palm indicated that in 2008 there would need to be a vote at town Meeting for

the new station and in 2009 the new fire station would be close to completion (which is when a new truck would be delivered).

Monday, December 18th there will be a budget meeting at 4:00 pm followed by a regular meeting at 5:30 and then proceed back into the workshop immediately following the regular. The Greater Meredith Program will speak at that meeting and the following items such as Capital, Special Projects and Bundled Items will be discussed.

Peter Brothers motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Peter Miller seconded the Motion. All in favor. 5-0. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted:

Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

Peter N. Miller, Chairman

Wynette DeGroot, Admin. Assistant

Peter F. Brothers

Miller C. Lovett

Frank Michel

Colette Worsman