

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET WORKSHOP

Minutes of 12-01-10

5:10 p.m.

Selectmen:

(Tardy)

Charles G. Palm, Chairman
Colette Worsman, Vice Chairman
Peter F. Brothers
Miller C. Lovett
Nathan J. Torr

Town Manager:

Phillip L. Warren

Recording Clerk:

Karin Landry

Call to Order: Chair Chuck Palm called the meeting to order 5:10 p.m. He introduced the Board and Town Manager.

Town Manager Philip Warren provided information requested by the Board at the November 30 Budget Workshop:

DPW - General Maintenance: The General Maintenance line is for items that do not fall within a certain category such as hand sanitizer for crew trucks, spill cloths; concrete diamond saw blades, and ear plugs. The amount is based on the total for those purchases in 2010. Selectman Worsman suggested that it might be more efficient to contract with a local company for the monitoring and testing of pumps, which is currently being provided by a company headquartered in Maine. The Town Manager will follow through on the matter.

Administrative Services Director Brenda Vittner will respond to additional requests made by the Board, once the information is compiled.

(The discussion regarding Outside Agencies was postponed until the arrival of Selectman Brothers.)

Capital Projects:

Child's Park - Engineering work is being done at this time. Because the estimates for site work were higher than what was originally estimated in the original building plan, the engineers are exploring alternatives for the playground. It might be necessary to value engineer the playground or obtain additional contributions in the spring.

Prescott Park - Drainage problems in the parking lot have been addressed. The project came within budget.

Road Projects - As a result of refinancing existing debt, \$60,000 has been applied to road project expenditures. Because the funds are non-recurring, they may not be applied to a shortfall in the operating budget. The Town Manager stressed that holdbacks are the key strategy for addressing

shortfalls, followed by the use of fund balance. Selectman Lovett pointed out that CIP funds have been used generously to balance the budget.

Conservation Commission: No Comments.

Debt Service: The debt amortization schedule will be amended to include the rates and terms of loans prior to and subsequent to refinancing, and made available for the public hearing and published in the Annual Report.

Cable Franchise: Selectman Worsman inquired why payments to the Town are not made periodically. The Town Manager will review the terms of the contract.

Revenue: Revenue is higher than what was projected at year end (\$442,000 vs. \$425,000). Dialogue ensued regarding the use of revenues in excess of what is projected. There was a general agreement among the Board that they should not be used for expenditures other than those approved at Town Meeting.

Dialogue ensued regarding the use of Fund Balance and the complexities of the municipal budget. Selectman Lovett is pleased that Fund Balance is above 10%, but would like to see it higher, in order to manage bad times and fund capital projects without a bond issue.

(Selectman Brothers arrives)

REGIONAL AGENCIES

The Board is faced with difficulties in identifying how many individual Meredith residents were served by various agencies. It is hoped that a revision of criteria will generate the information needed for next year's vetting process.

American Legion: 2010 - Received \$3,000; 2011 - Requested \$3,000

The American Legion receives 3/4 of its funding for patriotic events from the Town of Meredith.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the American Legion at \$3,000.

American Red Cross: 2010 - Received \$2,000; 2011 - Requested \$2,916 (45 cents per capita)

Selectman Worsman is concerned with taking funds from individuals for non-profit organizations that accept public donations and compensate their CEO's at exorbitant levels. While she does not personally support the organization, she acknowledges that in the event of a disaster, the amount of money poured into the community would far exceed the cumulative amount paid in. She would like the community to be able to weigh in on the matter, but agrees on funding at the 2010 request (\$2,000). Selectman Lovett would like to know what crises assistance has been rendered to the Town of Meredith in the past, as well as on an ongoing basis. In addition, he would like more information on the services that have been provided to residents of Meredith, including training, and services for members of the armed service. Selectman Brothers sees a value in supporting the Red Cross in the event of a disaster. In the event of multiple disasters, towns are not assessed proportionately. Selectman Palm pointed out that in the event of a disaster, the Red Cross runs the emergency shelter, and that the community emergency response team is not trained to do so.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Red Cross at \$2,000.

Child and Family Services: 2010 - Received \$6,000; 2011 - Requested \$6,000

Child and Family Services primarily serve the handicapped and addresses mental health issues faced by families. They are considered a sister organization to Genesis, and some services may overlap. The Board agrees that there is great value to the services provided by the organization. The organization is primarily funded by the state. The Town Manager will investigate why Meredith is contributing at a higher rate than other communities (current contribution equal to that of the City of Laconia). Additional information will be requested, including the number of Meredith residents served, during next year's vetting process.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund Child and Family Services at \$5,000.

Community Action Program: 2010 - Received \$36,588; 2011 - Requested \$36,588

It is not known if the numbers provided by CAP are for persons served or services rendered. CAP's services are targeted to the elderly, disabled, and low income families. Selectman Torr supports the work of the organization, including operating the food pantry. In 2010 they weatherized 10 homes inhabited by 23 people. It is anticipated that the demand for the fuel and electrical assistance will increase this year, and CAP orchestrates getting those needing assistance in touch with the agencies administering those programs.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Community Action Program at \$36,588.

Community Health and Hospice: 2010 - Received \$7,500; 2011 - Requested \$10,000

Selectman Worsman supports funding the organization at \$7,500 based on the argument that residents support the organization through state and federal taxation. The Board agrees that the agency provides much needed services.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Community Action Program at \$7,500.

CORE - No longer in existence.**Interlakes Daycare: 2010 - Received \$23,027; 2011 - Requested \$23,027****Kidworks: 2010 - Received \$10,000; 2011- Requested \$10,000**

Interlakes Daycare typically services families with a lower income level than Kidworks. Assistance is provided for families at 250% of the poverty guidelines (\$36,620 for a family of three). Those with income above that level are charged the full rate. The Town of Meredith has among the lowest average income when compared to surrounding communities. Dialogue ensued regarding the ratio of support between the two organizations, and the Board agreed that a formula of residents served would be helpful in making decisions during next year's vetting process.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund Interlakes Daycare at \$23,027 and Kidworks at \$10,000.

Genesis Behavioral Health: 2010 - Received \$7,845; 2011 - Requested \$10,760

Genesis is a family oriented organization that provides services to Meredith residents. It is in the midst of a financial crises, and requests for funding to surrounding communities have also increased this year. Although it receives funding at the federal, state, and county levels, the county funds are used for purposes that are not duplicated. It is unknown how many Meredith residents were served in 2010.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund Genesis Behavioral Health at \$9,000.

Greater Meredith Program: 2010 - Received \$15,000; 2011 - Requested \$15,000

Dialogue ensued regarding the economic vitality and development benefits of the programs administered by the Greater Meredith Program, including the facade and beautification programs, the high school intern program, and pond hockey. The GMP has played a part in an increased interest in making Meredith a destination community.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Greater Meredith Program at \$15,000.

Lakes Region Association: No request submitted.**Lakes Region Planning Commission: 2010 - Received \$7,617; 2011 - Requested \$7,769**

The Commission serves as a link between the state and towns, and provides services such as the RSMS assessment of road conditions at considerably less than can be done utilizing in-house staff. The Town Manager will contact them regarding updating the RSMS assessment in 2011.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Lakes Region Planning Commission at \$7,769.

Chamber of Commerce: 2010 - Received \$7,000; 2011 - Requested \$7,000

The Chamber's request is for general operations. The Town benefits from the operation of its information office.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Chamber of Commerce at \$7,000.

Historical Society: 2010 - Received \$3,000; 2011 - Requested \$3,000

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Historical Society at \$3,000.

Meredith Public Nursing: 2010 - Received \$72,802; 2011 - Requested \$82,030

Selectman Worsman takes into consideration the contribution the Town made to the organization's new building when it waived the building permit inspection fee, and favors funding at the 2010 level. Selectman Lovett is an advocate of the increase, and pointed out that the services rendered to the community are tremendous. The argument that a waiver was granted is not a good one and should not be made. The organization does not bill clients who are unable to pay. Selectman Brothers has been actively involved in the organization for a number of years. They typically treat homebound individuals. He pointed out that the conditions in the old building were deplorable, and the new facility will allow those who can travel to be treated in the office at a lower cost. It is safe to assume that the new building will be exempt from property taxes. The cost for free care continues to increase, and is anticipated to be in excess of \$166,000 in 2011. In addition, Medicare reimbursement for those paying is being reduced. The Board recognizes the value of services provided by the organization, the bulk of which are to Meredith residents. Selectman Brothers would like to honor the entire request, but finds it difficult to do so in view of requests from other organizations. In addition, he believes that the organization has been successful in private fundraising, and can manage some level of shortfall. Selectman Torr struggled with advocating any more than \$76,000.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund Meredith Public Nursing at \$78,000.

Motorcycle Week Association: 2010 - Received \$2,000; 2011 - Requested \$2,000

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Motorcycle Week Association at \$2,000.

New Beginnings: 2010 - Received \$1,800; 2011 - Requested \$1,800

There was an agreement among the Board to fund New Beginnings at \$1,800.

New Hampshire Association for the Blind: 2010 - Received \$500; 2011 - Requested \$500

There was an agreement among the Board to fund New Hampshire Association for the Blind at \$500.

New Hampshire Humane Society: 2010 - Received \$9,500; 2011 - Requested \$9,500

Although \$10,000 was appropriated in 2010, only \$9,500 was given. Selectman Worsman has a hard time giving to animals as opposed to humans, and suggested reducing the contribution in order to compensate for granting funds above the 2010 level for other agencies. In addition, a number of residents have expressed dismay in the amount that must be paid in order to drop off or adopt a pet from the Society.

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Humane Society at \$9,500.

Oakland Cemetery: No request submitted.

Winnepesaukee Wellness Center: 2010 - Received \$3,000; 2011 - Requested \$3,000

There was an agreement among the Board to fund the Winnepesaukee Wellness Center at \$3,000.

The Town Manager will forward an updated version of Regional Agency requests to the Board.

Additional budget items will be considered at the Workshop scheduled for Monday, December 6, including the purchase of a second police cruiser, police department detail rates, an increase in general assistance, trust funds, solid waste construction debris, and the debt amortization schedule.

Resident Dave Sticht is of the opinion that more information should be presented at public meetings prior to voting on a matter. Although the workshops are open to the public, it is difficult for many to attend because they begin at 4:15.

Selectman Worsman moved at 7:45 p.m. to reconvene in a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3II(a) after a short break. Seconded by Selectman Lovett. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

Charles G. Palm, Chairman

Colette Worsman, Vice Chairman

Peter F. Brothers

Miller C. Lovett

Nathan J. Torr