

SELECTMEN'S BUDGET WORKSHOP
Minutes of 01-08-09
4:05 p.m.

Selectmen:

Peter F. Brothers, Chairman
Miller C. Lovett, Vice Chairman
Robert C. Flanders
Charles G. Palm
Colette Worsman

Co-Interim Town Managers:

John C. Edgar
Brenda L. Vittner

Recording Clerk:

Karin Landry

Call to Order: Chairman Peter Brothers called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

The Board signed various documents relating to the Page Pond Closing, which is scheduled for Monday, January 12.

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Librarian Erin Apostolos and Library Trustees Duncan McNish and Paul Eldridge appeared before the Board on behalf of the Meredith Public Library. The major capital expenditures identified for the library are replacing the windows in the old section of the building, repairing a leak in the roof near the back entrance, repointing the brick, providing handicap accessibility, and replacing the stair lift. In addition, the library intends to designate parking spaces in the lot behind the building, which will not require a major expenditure of funds.

The Library is requesting funds for handicap access and a new stair lift. The current is 20 years old and does not provide access to all levels of the library. In addition, there are safety concerns with the design of the lift. The cost of installing a new lift is approximately \$69,000. There is an agreement that capital improvements to the Library will be funded 50/50 with the Town. The Town's contribution to the stair lift is \$35,000. Dialogue ensued regarding various options for the Town's contribution toward the capital projects identified by the Library, including phasing projects over a two year period. The Board acknowledges the consequences of lessening annualized costs when in a difficult economic climate. Repairing the roof and replacing the windows are a high priority. The library is being utilized by an increasing number of physically challenged patrons, and would like to move forward with the handicapped access and stair lift as soon as possible. The library will investigate fundraising options.

There was a consensus among the Board to retain the \$17,500 currently in the Town Manager's budget for capital projects at the Library. The Board will consider allocating an additional \$17,500 in 2010.

PARKS & RECREATION

Director of Parks & Recreation Vint Choiniere thanked the Board, Town Managers, and his staff for their work on the budget. Economies were identified within the Department including a \$9,086. reduction in operating costs attributed to delaying the opening of the beach to coincide with the close of the school year.

Dialogue ensued regarding Community Center revenues. The fee schedule was adjusted approximately one year ago; however, the Board agrees that it should be monitored on an ongoing basis. There has been a steady increase in the use of the Center. Vint will continue to collect various data on the use of the facility, including revenues, expenses, and seasonal use. In addition, he will monitor whether the cost of an individual program is covered by its fee.

The funding of the summer concert series was slightly reduced because of poor attendance. Vint will explore a cost sharing arrangement with surrounding Town's for the maintenance of the fields. The Expendable Trust Fund supporting recreational facility improvements was reduced by \$25,000. There is a general consensus among the Board that improvements to Childs Park are a high priority. No existing programs were eliminated as a result of the reductions in the '09 budget. The increase in maintenance is attributed to unpredicted service calls, repairs, and the expiration of warranties on equipment. The purchase of a salt spreader in the amount of \$650 will allow Parks & Recreation to safely maintain its facilities in a time-efficient manner.

WATER & SEWER

Superintendent Brian Carroll thanked the Town Managers for making the budget process run smoothly. Duplications were identified in the budgets for the Water Department and Sewer Department, and the line items were adjusted accordingly. Brian and the Water Committee agree that the priorities for 2009 can be accomplished within the proposed budget. Splitting the first two phases of the groundwater study over a two-year period is reflected in the budget. Doing so reduces the budget by \$39,000 and allows for identifying additional efficiencies in the plant that could affect the groundwater study. The Water Committee made a recommendation to fund the Water Department Improvement ETF in the amount of \$100,000.

The Board took a short break at 6:00 p.m. It reconvened at 6:10 p.m.

SOLID WASTE

Public Works Superintendent Mike Faller thanked the Town Managers and his staff for their efforts in preparing the '09 budget. The recycling facility continues to be strong. Ms. Vittner will supply the Board with the revenue figures for recycling. Dialogue ensued regarding various revenue generators at the facility, including steel, mixed paper, and wood chips. Mike proposes increasing the first two-year facility decal permit for resident taxpayers from \$10 to \$20, which would account for an additional \$30,000 in revenues. A public hearing must be held on the proposed increase, and the Ordinance adjusted. The increased fee will affect Center Harbor residents that use the facility. The purchase of coupon booklets will generate additional revenue.

Ms. Vittner will investigate what surrounding communities are charging. Mike proposes replacing the third and final demolition trailer this year at a cost of approximately \$68,000. Demolition trailers get more use than trash trailers, and must be replaced approximately every 10 years. They are also utilized for the storage of materials. There are three trash trailers at the facility, and two Faberex demolition trailers that will be sold. Ms. Vittner estimates the value of the Faberex trailers at \$20,000 for both. Dialogue ensued regarding postponing the purchase of a demolition trailer by repairing and utilizing the Faberex trailer that is in the best condition. Mike will investigate the cost of repairing the trailer in the best condition, and the sales and trade-in value of both trailers. The revenue projections for the Department include \$25,000 for the sale of the two trailers. Mike will investigate whether two 1977 Fruehauf trailers that are listed on the insurance policy are on site. Ms. Vittner will provide the Board with a breakdown of gasoline consumption and mileage for equipment and vehicles.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

The vehicles listed under Buildings & Grounds are a '96 Ford F350, '99 Ford ranger, '00 Ford F350, '02 Ford F150 with plow, and a Ranger. The '96 Ford F350 has always been utilized by the Highway Department. The insurance records for the Buildings & Grounds department must be updated. There has been a reclassification of a position within the Department that results in a reduction of \$10,183.12.

CEMETERIES:

There were no questions or comments regarding the budget for the cemetery.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS:

Mike Faller reviewed the phasing of the Batchelder Hill Rd. project he presented to the Board at the January 2 Budget Workshop. The Town paving contract can be used if the Town gets a better price than what is bid on the project. Phasing the project will allow for a \$100,000 reduction in the Department's '09 budget. Dialogue ensued regarding the financing of the two phases, including bundling the road work in phase II to take advantage of better pricing.

Selectman Lovett is concerned with further increasing capital deficits that have resulted from previous cuts in the budget. He would like to know how much we are being hurt by the cuts in the '09 budget and what the implications will be in future years. Mike told the Board that while he believes the Department can survive with cuts in this year's budget, deferring the purchase of equipment for a year is not necessarily a good thing. The Department is doing what it can to keep equipment in an operable condition. Extreme weather last winter deferred some maintenance. It will be important not to make more deferrals next year. Mike will verify the line item for the purchase of 25 tires. A workshop will be scheduled to review equipment philosophy. Roadwork has stayed somewhat consistent with previous years. The Board is tasked with approving a level of spending for 2009 road projects at this time, and will develop criteria for the prioritization of projects in the future. There was a general consensus that the line item should remain \$505,305.00. Selectman Flanders suggested using a flow chart that is used by private companies to determine the number of hours the Town's employees are available for

road work. Ms. Vittner told the Board that the new time-keeping system will allow for gathering more information of that nature. Mike thanked the Board for their support.

The Co-Interim Town Manager's will update the worksheet to incorporate the changes talked about at the Budget Workshops.

The Board approved substituting Civil Rights Day for the Fast Holiday. Accordingly, Town offices will be closed on April 19 and opened on April 27.

Selectmen Worsman motioned that the Board move into a Non-Public meeting per RSA 91- A:3 II (c) to discuss a public exemption matter at 8:20 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Flanders. Selectman polled. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John C. Edgar, Co-Interim Town Mgr.

Peter F. Brothers, Chairman

Brenda L. Vittner, Co-Interim Town Mgr.

Miller C. Lovett, Vice Chairman

Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

Robert C. Flanders

Charles G. Palm

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