

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
Minutes of 12-21-09
5:35 p.m.

Selectmen:

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

Town Manager:

Phillip L. Warren

Recording Clerk:

Karin Landry

Call to Order: Chairman Peter Brothers called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. He introduced the Board, Town Manager, and the Recording Clerk, and made announcements pertaining to fire exits, listening assisted devices, the use of microphones, and cell phones.

ACCEPTANCE AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

W 09-64 Minutes of the December 7, 2009 Workshop and Regular Meeting.

Selectman Worsman motioned to accept the minutes of the December 7, 2009 Workshop and Regular Meeting. Seconded by Selectman Palm.

Page 4 of the Regular Meeting minutes will be corrected to read: "The completed budgets will be received from department heads by December 17." The minor change will be made after the minutes are executed by the Board.

5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

- The Town Manager responded to concerns that have been voiced that the Town is charging more in taxes even though property values have decreased. He explained that the total amount to be raised through taxation at the Town level decreased by \$18,176, and that the tax rate went up as a function of declining real estate values. He broke down the amount to be raised by taxes at the local, school, and county levels for 2008 and 2009. The total increase in the amount to be raised by taxation in 2009 is \$588,907, and the total decrease in assessed value is \$120,232,124. Selectman Flanders emphasized that the Board worked very diligently over the course of this year to project revenue shortfalls and put holds on spending that was appropriated at Town Meeting. The Board and staff made a diligent effort to assure the Town didn't have to raise additional taxes in 2009. Selectman Lovett explained that the average tax bill for the Town portion will be the

same as the previous year. Selectman Palm pointed out that the County also worked very hard to keep its portion of the tax rate stable.

- The annual employee Christmas luncheon was held last Friday at the Community Center and was well attended. The Town Manager has thoroughly enjoyed working with the employees and Board of Selectmen of the Town of Meredith, and wished a Merry Christmas to all.

VISITOR'S AND RESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

None

SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS:

The Chair announced that the Board will be commencing its work on the 2010 budget. The Town Manager will begin with his budget presentation.

NEW BUSINESS:

09-65 Presentation of the 2010 Meredith Budget

Mr. Warren highlighted the 2010 municipal budget. The Board made it clear that as a result of the economy the total amount to be raised from local taxation was not to increase. As a result, department heads were instructed that wages would be frozen for 2010, and that there would be no COLA or step increase. Although concerns have been expressed by employees that they will fall behind by not receiving the step and COLA increase, it has been demonstrated through salary surveys that employees are paid at or above the median. Human resource management is a goal of the Board, but adjustments must be made in order to keep the 2010 budget where it needs to be.

Budget Considerations:

- Maintain current service levels
- No new positions or reclassifications
- Vacancies due to separations from employment will not be automatically filled. The Town Manager's office will evaluate all positions to determine appropriate action
- No new services or programs
- Hold on equipment purchases
- The goal is to maintain capital improvement program recommendations; however, because capital improvement projects have been funded in the past, this is an area where holds can be made over the next 12 months. This short term budget strategy will be reviewed during the final budget development.

Calendar to Town Meeting 2010

- December 21: Budget presentation

- January 8: First day to hold public hearing on bond or note issue over \$100,000. Notice of the hearing must be published 7 days in advance. No bond or note issues are anticipated for the 2010 budget
- January 11: Budget deliberation meetings begin
- January 29: Last day to give notice of public hearing for the 2010 annual budget
- February 8: Public hearing on 2010 municipal budget
- February 12: Last physical day to hold public hearing on annual budget
- March 9: Town Elections
- March 10: Town Meeting

2009 Municipal Budget Summary:	2009 Appropriations	2010 Town Mgr. Budget
Department Operating Budgets:	10,747,468	10,825,403
Conservation Commission (funds encumbered from 2009)	19,015	1,515
Cable Franchise Special Revenue Fund	24,806	24,806
Regional Associations	219,062	219,062
Debt Service	1,457,649	1,382,810
Capital Project Recommendations	<u>601,000</u>	<u>255,000</u>
Total	13,069,000	12,702,597??

One-time capital projects are not factored in for 2010. \$365,000 was appropriated in 2009 for one-time capital projects. The total appropriations for 2009 excluding one-time capital projects were \$12,704,000. The total Town Manager's budget for 2010 is \$12,702,597, for a decrease of \$1,403.

Budget Specifics:

Personnel: No changes in staffing levels for 2010; freeze salaries and wages for 2010

Capital Items: CIP committee recommendations are included. The Town Manager's recommendation took into account current economic conditions, and continued with a conservative strategy

Regional Agencies: Evaluating service to Meredith residents is the primary focus of the agencies that are level funded for 2010. The three new agencies requesting funding are not included in the Town Manager's recommendation.

Expenditures:

- Operating Budgets: Increase of .73%.
- Janitorial Services: In an effort to utilize Town staffing, the yearly janitorial contract in the amount of \$64,000 has been removed. Although the Town has had great success with their janitorial service, it will realize a net savings of \$57,500 by utilizing the Buildings

& Grounds department to perform the work in 2010. Temporary wages in the amount of \$6,500 have been included in the 2010 Buildings & Grounds budget for that purpose. (Note: This does not include the library's cost for a cleaning contract.)

- Debt Services: The decrease in debt services reflects the payoff of the Cotton Hill sewer project.
- Capital Projects: Includes \$19,000 to establish expendable trust funds recommended by the CIP committee.

The 2010 proposed Town Manager's budget reflects a substantial review and reduction of costs to meet the needs of the Town while continuing with the current service level to the public. The decisions affecting the proposed budget were made with the understanding that spending needs to be in proportion to the ability to fund services and expectations. Because revenue is so volatile, the Town Manager recommends that the Board review revenue projections after the close of 2009 to establish revenue projections for 2010. Doing so will allow the Board and staff to make completely informed decisions on how to proceed. Budget deliberations will begin once revenue projections have been established.

Mr. Warren thanked the staff and department heads for their efforts in putting together the proposed 2010 budget.

The Chair encouraged the Board to review the detailed expenditure budget and share questions and comments to prepare for the budget deliberations that will commence the week of January 11.

Dialogue ensued regarding the consumer price index. The national index for all items less food and energy increased 1.8%. The Northeast Consumer Price Index from the Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau for the State of New Hampshire was down earlier in the year, but increased during the month of October, and was up 2% for the month of November. The numbers are adjusted each month based on the prior 12-month period.

The Town Manager has not received any new information regarding further cutbacks at the state level.

09-66 Execution of Milfoil Control Grant Agreement.

The Board of Selectman must vote to authorize the Town Manager to execute a Certificate to accept Department of Environmental Services funds for the control of milfoil in Meredith Bay of up to \$3,742.50, which is 30% of the total project cost. The remainder of the funding for the project was included in the 2009 budget, and will be carried forward to 2010.

Selectman Flanders moved that the Board of Selectmen approve the Milfoil Control Grant Agreement and authorize the Town Manager to execute the agreement on the Board's behalf. Seconded by Selectman Worsman.

Dialogue ensued regarding community and landowner involvement in the fight against milfoil in Meredith Bay and surrounding areas. Although a few volunteer efforts have been mustered, there are no firm commitments from them for funding milfoil control at this time. Selectman Lovett reviewed the steps that are being taken to minimize the impact of milfoil by citizen's groups he is familiar with. The Town Manager and Community Development Director John Edgar will proceed with the crafting of a milfoil master plan once the budget cycle has been completed. Volunteer efforts can be used for matching or offsetting certain grants, and will be included as a part of the master plan. Selectman Lovett suggested that the Town take the initiative to contact local homeowner's associations to get them involved in the effort. There was a consensus among the Board that it is important to include surrounding water bodies in the efforts to eradicate milfoil. \$15,000 has been encumbered from 2009 for milfoil control.

5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

The Chair announced that after a short break, the Board will move into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) and (d) to address matters regarding personnel and real estate.

Selectman Flanders motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Worsman. 5-0. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip L. Warren, Town Manager

Peter F. Brothers, Chairman

Karin Landry, Recording Clerk

Miller C. Lovett, Vice Chairman

Robert C. Flanders

Charles G. Palm

Colette Worsman

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