

Select Board Budget Workshop / Meeting

February 9, 2016 at 5:30 pm

Minutes

Present: Chairman Steve Beckert, V. Chair Roland Fernald, Jack Murphy, Rebecca Davis, Bob Pomerleau, Dana Lee. Budget Committee Members as public: Donna Murphy, Jim Tessier, Denny Lentz, Brad Hughes

The Chairman called the meeting to order with all present.

The Town Manager asked the Select Board to review Town Committees. Questions asked were as follows: How did the Asst. Planner position move from 32 hours to 40 hours and from doing its own minutes to having a recording secretary. The Town Manager explained that the amount of work going through that department has grown dramatically, public expectations, etc. It was felt that we should add back in the operational expenses for the Conservation Committee (add \$1,600) but not the land bank reserve request. It was suggested that adding the \$5k for Land Bank was perfect for a citizen option. Discussion ensued about \$900 for a recording secretary for the Harbor Commission. It was felt they could manage their own, very simple minute – just record motions and votes (cut \$900). These two changes were tentatively agreed to by the Select Board.

Next the discussion turned to Social Service Agencies. The Town Manager explained that he had recommended funding only to the agencies with the most direct impact on General Assistance. The Select Board tentatively agreed to his recommendation of \$18,890.

Discussion then turned to Debt Service where there was no discussion and tentatively agreed to the recommendation of the Town Manager.

The Select Board then discussed the Fire Dept. budget. Questions were raised regarding the \$800 in mileage. The Town Manager explained that it was new and he was trying to be consistent with reimbursing any employees using their own car for the Town's purposes (hauling back gear, attending regional meetings, etc.) The Select Board asked for more justification. They also asked what the stipend / pay rates are for firefighters in the mutual aid communities we serve / serve us. There was tentative agreement to increase the amount of stipend as presented by the Chief, but this tentative allowance was not the same as an across-the-board approval of "raises" for other non-union employees. These are "volunteers" type positions and hard to recruit and retain. The Town manager recommended budget was tentatively agreed to by the Select Board, subject to the \$800 gas question.

The Select Board then moved to the Police Budget. The Town Manager explained that the staff had not yet made the structural change to command staffing, and that we might want to wait until that change is reflected. Selectman Davis said she did not have a contractual services

justification sheet. The Town Manager said he would send it. A question was also asked when we would finally expend the pre-buy (expensive) gas we use from Kittery. Selectman Davis made a suggestion to create a Health Insurance Reserve fund to assist in times when staff changes and the medical plan changes, or a change in family composition causes unforeseen additional expense in health insurance. The Town Manager said he would discuss with staff and make a proposal. All Select Board members seemed to like the idea.

The Select Board discussed the Summer Roads budget. All agreed it should be rolled into the Public Works budget (along with the Roads and Bridges budget) in the future (may need Ordinance change). Selectman Davis expressed concern that we should keep track of when we work on cemeteries and to make sure to note on payables what was for cemeteries. Likewise she asked if other major bills could be noted as (storm water, cemeteries, paving, a CIP project, etc.). The idea being to try and lessen the swapping of funds too much between line items; to use the funds in each line item for their intended use – only. The Select Board tentatively agreed to the Town Manager recommendation for this budget.

The Select Board all tentatively agreed to the reduced General Assistance budget, noting the good work on the G.A. Administrator.

The Select Board reviewed the Transfer Station budget. Some felt that more reductions could be made there given some of the trends. There were no questions per se other than some requests being possibly greater than actual need (e.g. MSW tipping, etc.) The Select Board said they would need to come back to this one to find money possibly to do other projects (e.g. wage study, Pleasant Street erosion project, etc.)

Finally, the Select Board reviewed “Roads and Bridges” budget and all tentatively agreed with the Town Manager’s recommendation.

At 7:40 PM, a motion was made by Selectman Fernald to adjourn the meeting; this was seconded by Selectman Pomerleau and was so voted unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Dana K. Lee