

**UNOFFICIAL
AS OF 01/13/08**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING TOWN BUDGET**

JANUARY 9, 2008

PRESENT: Dan Cloutier (Chair), Bill Gordon, Eric Geissenhainer, Phil Kendall, Scott Gross, Dick Fletcher, Roger Richard, Phil Plourde, Steve Fournier.

Excused: Bill Hart and Sue Tremblay.

Chairman Cloutier called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

D. Cloutier: The Budget Committee is covered by RSA 32. A public hearing is required. I would like to turn this over to Eric Geissenhainer, Town sub-committee Chair.

E. Geissenhainer: This evening, I will be presenting the changes we made to the budget. Tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m., here, my counterpart, Bill Hart, will be presenting the school budget. She has indicated to us that this is her last year- Sue Tremblay. She was good in the past remembering promises that were made to the Budget Committee that were not kept. She will be missed. Jo Ann Duffy is our recording secretary. She works closely with us all year long. Please hold questions to the end of the presentation. The Budget Committee will not meet after this evening. Our next scheduled meeting is January 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Mildred Stark Room. Your attendance at that meeting is appreciated. I would like to thank the Board of Selectmen for their work this year. This year they started with the BOS's proposal and worked back from there. It was a less controversial year for the Budget Committee. I would like to review the articles that have appropriations.

Article 13 – Water Distribution System

Article 14 – Acquisition of land for municipal use and conservation easements.

Article 16 – Collective Bargaining Agreement for Fire Department.

Article 17 – Safer Grant from Homeland Security for two additional firefighters.

Article 18 – CIP Fund for fire apparatus.

Article 20 – Main Street Program appropriation.

Article 21 – Red Cross appropriation.

Article 22 – Purchase of new ambulance.

Article 15 – Town budget - \$18,653,734.

The 2008 Town Budget Summary was reviewed. Eric highlighted the changes made to the various budget lines.

Elections – reduced by \$11,525
Finance – reduced by \$780
Planning – reduced by \$2,406
250th Anniversary – increased by \$500
Police – reduced by \$8,578
Fire – reduced by \$72,854
Fire – increased by \$23,000 for turnout clothing
Library – increased by \$15,000 for consultant
CIP – reduced by \$23,000 for tracking software

Chief French: I am the Police Chief for the Town. I am concerned about the level of staffing that the police department has in service. I put forth a request for additional personnel in the 2008 budget, which was not accepted by the BOS or the BC. I would like to go on the record for the reasoning for that request. In 2005, we put forth a request for a new position. We demonstrated the need for the officer. At the request of the BOS, at that time, in relation to budget issues, we were asked to defer that request to 2006. We did defer that request. In 2006, we did add one sworn police officer to our staffing level. In 2007, we recognized the need for additional staffing. In recognizing the budget and the other department's needs, we decided not to put forth a request. In 2007, we had the retirement of three key personnel. This gave us an opportunity to be creative. We did an internal study to find the opportunity to put more police officers on the street without having an increase in the budget. I put together a group within the organization and gave them one charge, we need more officers on the street – find a way within the existing budget. We did that. We put three police officers on the street. We presented the plan to the BOS, but a position needed to go through the budget process. We were transferring a sworn position from communications to the operating budget. That made the operating budget look much higher. There was a decrease in communications of 12.3%. We used two studies. One was a National study showing how many police officers we need based on population for the New England area. We should have 33 sworn police officers. We have 30. Two of the officers are committed to other functions – Prosecuting Attorney, who is a sworn police officer, and the other position is the school resource officer. The second study is the Martel Study. It is based on the amount of time needed to patrol areas and the amount of roads. We have 140 miles of roadway, not including housing developments, shopping plazas, St. Anselm College, schools, County buildings. The Town of Goffstown should have 29 patrol officers, we have 19. I am concerned about the staffing and our ability to respond to calls. I still have that concern. I appreciate your attention to what I have to say.

Karen Henderson: The Main Street Program appreciates your support.

Chairman Cloutier closed the public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann Duffy

Please see Power Point Presentation