

MINUTES
ANNUAL PUBLIC PROPOSED BUDGET HEARING
FEBRUARY 11, 2015

The Board of Selectmen met at the Campton Municipal Building for the presentation of the Proposed 2015 Town Budget. Present were Selectmen, Charles Wheeler, Sharon Davis, Karl Kelly and Peter Laufenberg. In addition, there were approximately 30 people (Town employees and the public) in attendance.

Chair Wheeler called the hearing to order at 6:30 p.m. and everyone stood for the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag. Copies of the 2015 Proposed Town Budget were distributed to each individual in attendance. Chair Wheeler stated that Ann Marie Foote, Town Administrator will review the proposed budget. Chair Wheeler explained that after each department is reviewed, the public will have the opportunity to ask any questions pertaining to that specific department. Chair Wheeler then called on Ann Marie to begin the review. Ann Marie began with the Executive Department and pointed out changes such as a 2% increase in the Town Administrator's salary. Since there are not as many elections this year the Moderator/Meals/memory coding line decreased from \$5,200.00 to \$2,600.00 together with a decrease in Publication. There were no questions from the public pertaining to this department.

The Minutes will now reflect the departments that questions were raised by the public this evening.

The Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Department was reviewed by Ann Marie. After the review, the majority of the discussion from the public was in regard to the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's salary increasing from \$48,300.00 to \$51,000.00. It was explained that based on the wage study which was performed in 2012, the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's wages fell short and hence, the 5.6% increase. It was also explained by the Board that this position will be classified as a salaried position this year rather than an hourly position. Wayne Charron, Caron Pierce and Craig Keeney expressed that they were not in favor of this increase and voiced their reasons why. Jane Kellogg suggested reviewing other Towns to compare what kind of expertise exists in each department. There was also discussion concerning the Computer Svcs/Tax Bills line. The figure increased from \$2,500.00 to \$5,100.00. It was explained that part of this figure represents the 1 year extension, keeping the BMSI tax program to assist the Town Clerk/Tax Collector with reports for the auditors this year. The public inquired as to how much longer this additional tax program would be needed. The Board confirmed that the extension of BMSI program was approved for one more year only to assist the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

The next department reviewed where questions were presented was the Financial Admin. Department. The Auditors/Part time Bookkeeper line included a single audit charge due to the Blair Bridge Project which was costly and an updating on auditing work. The Part time Bookkeeper was questioned and it was explained by Ann Marie that

this is a 3 day a week position. The Bookkeeper works with the auditors and performs bookkeeping duties to assist the Town Administrator. The Auction of Tax Deeded Property line was questioned. It was explained that the \$30,000.00 figure will be offset by sales of property that the Town plans on auctioning off. In the Personnel Admin. Department Ann Marie explained in detail the new Health Insurance plan approved by the Board which will eventually be a savings to the Town and Ann Marie explained how a saving will occur. It was also stated that if the previous insurance plan was kept, the cost would have been \$212,000.00 as opposed to what is budgeted this year in the amount of \$198,920.00. Caron Pierce questioned the 7% portion that the employees contribute to their individual insurance plan which range from individual plans to family plans. Mrs. Pierce expressed that the 7% portion should be increased by perhaps 50%. Chair Wheeler acknowledged that this issue has been discussed, but confirmed that a percentage increase contribution by employees will not occur this year.

In the Gen. Gov. Bldgs. Department line Ann Marie confirmed that a new furnace was needed at the Fire Department, also Water costs will be addressed this year with perhaps a filtering system as bottled water is presently being purchased for consumption at the Municipal Building. There was discussion from the public pertaining to hooking into the Campton Village Precinct and the Board confirmed that this was not possible. The Board confirmed that they will be looking for alternative solutions.

In the Police Department Budget there were also questions from the public. It was explained that the Chief's Salary, the Sergeant's salary and the Executive Secretary's salary reflects a 2% increase. The Corporal and the three Officer's wages reflect a 4.5% increase. It was explained by Police Chief Warn that in order for the Campton Police Department to be competitive with other Town's Police wages the 4.5% increase was necessary. It was also pointed out by Chair Wheeler that it costs approximately \$16,000.00 for training of new police officers and the possibility of losing officers is greater if the Town is not competitive, therefore, he looked at the 4.5% increase as a savings rather than an expense. Also, it was explained that officers have to sign a three year contract with the Town, and if an officer discontinues employment before the 3 year period expires, a fee will be imposed on the officer. Craig Keeney was not in favor of the 4.5% wage increase and inquired what COLA was this year. It was confirmed that COLA was 1.7% and Mr. Keeney stated that he felt that the 1.7% increase is what should have been reflected in wages. He also commented that he and other property owners have been hit hard with new assessments and increased property taxes incurred by the revaluation and the property owners are paying Town employees' wages which add to their burden.

Another department which raised questions by the public was the Fire Department. The payroll line in the amount of \$208,703.20 increased from last year's amount of \$184,235.80. Part of this was due to a full time position not filled until July, after the Chief's probationary period was over. Karen Rienzo inquired what the individual compensation was. Fire Chief Defosses stated that the Fire Chief's Salary is \$56,052.00, the Administrative Assistant is \$34,777.00, the Lieutenant's is \$41,537.60 and the Fire Fighters/AEMT's are \$38,168.00. Ann Marie stated that the FD Equipment line in the

amount of \$165,000.00 will be offset by a \$60,000.00 withdrawal from the Capital Reserve account set aside for fire equipment. Ann Marie then called on Chief Defosses to discuss what this figure represents. Chief Defosses explained that this line item represents the purchase of 30 new air packs. By purchasing them all at once a \$22,000.00 discount will be obtained. Chief Defosses also explained some issues arising because the company they previously purchased from is out of business and the air packs have safety issues pertaining to snaps on the mask. Chief Defosses explained that the air packs have a 15 year life and many of the packs they have are expiring. Mr. Pierce inquired if the air packs can be leased and Ann Marie confirmed that the Town of Thornton does not want to lease; and therefore the Town of Campton cannot lease.

The next department that the public presented questions on was the Emergency Management Department. Karen Rienzo inquired as to why the diesel fuel needs to be changed for the generator. It was explained that after sitting in the tank for a period of time it is required by law that the old fuel be replaced with fresh fuel. The question of whether or not this old fuel can be used by the Town. Selectman Laufenberg expressed that he also presented this question and he is now researching the possibility of the use of the old fuel for the Highway Department.

The Highway Department budget was the next department which presented public discussion. Ann Marie indicated that the bottom line of the Highway Department Budget was down again this year. Craig Keeney inquired why then is the proposed budget not reflecting a figure closer to the 2014 budget in the amount of \$641,173.61? The 2015 bottom line is \$671,533.27. Ann Marie indicated that most of the increase was represented by a \$20,000.00 increase to the Paving Appropriation/Bridges line which the Board agreed was a necessary increase as last year's paving bids had to be redone because they came in too high. Ann Marie also commented that when a department head under spends those funds go into a fund balance account which can be used to lower the tax rate. Greg Jencks inquired if there is a job description for the Road Agent. It was confirmed by Ann Marie that he could acquire the job description for the Road Agent in the Selectmen's Office. He also inquired if mechanical repair and welding for Highway Department vehicles by the Road Agent had any legal repercussions, as this saves the Town money. It was stated that there was no problem.

The Conservation Commission (CCC) Proposed Budget was up by \$500.00 because of a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) project will be conducted and even though they are fortunate to have members with the expertise to absorb most of the costs for the NRI project, they find it necessary to budget for the additional \$500.00 for maps and printing costs. Greg Jencks raised the question if funds from current use (which the CCC receives a portion of) could be utilized for the NRI project. Ann Marie confirmed that the funds received from current use cannot be used for operating expenses, it would be illegal. The CCC can only use the current use funds for property purchases for conservation purposes and any other capital item pertaining to conservation.

The next item up for discussion was the Police Department Body Camera line in the Capital Outlay section. The \$10,000.00 would initially be for 7 cameras and Police Chief

confirmed that the price decreases to approximately \$3,500.00 thereafter. Chief Warn explained that the cameras are not mandatory at this time, however he feels they will probably be in the future. Chief Warn stated he wanted to bring the issue forward to see if there was any interest in a Warrant Article; however he didn't feel the cameras are an absolute necessity at this time.

Ann Marie stated that the Capital Reserves line represents all separate Warrant Articles. In the Municipal Building Fund line a \$20,000.00 figure is proposed for 2015 to contribute to the building of a new Library.

Ann Marie stated that the Board of Selectmen agreed on a 2% merit increase for all employees other than those mentioned above that were increased to be competitive wages in the market.

The bottom line to the total Proposed 2015 Town Budget expenditures is \$3,588,457.61. The 2014 bottom line expenditures was \$3,606,962.32. Ann Marie continued the review by going over Estimated Revenues. She emphasized that the figures are "estimates". Total appropriations for 2015 comes in at \$3,588,456.00, less estimated revenues of \$1,329,483.00, leaving an estimated amount of taxes to be raised in the amount of \$2,258,975.00. (The estimated amount of taxes to be raised last year was \$2,312,776.00). This concluded Ann Marie's review of the 2015 Proposed Town Budget.

At 8:30 p.m. Chair Wheeler declared the Proposed 2015 Town Budget Hearing closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor M. Dewey,
Office Assistant to Ann Marie Foote, Town Administrator