

MINUTES

FIRST 2017 PROPOSED BUDGET HEARING

FEBRUARY 6, 2017

The Campton Board of Selectmen met at 6:30 p.m. at the Campton Municipal Building for the first 2017 Proposed Budget Hearing. Present were Selectmen, Peter Laufenberg, Sharon Davis, Charles Wheeler, Charles Cheney and Karl Kelly and Carina Park, Town Administrator and Eleanor Dewey, Office Assistant and recorder. Approximately 14 people (Town employees and the public) were in attendance.

Call to Order: Chair Laufenberg called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and he introduced the Board and welcomed the public to the Budget Hearing. Chair Laufenberg informed the public that Heads of Departments present this evening were: Dan Defosses, Fire Chief, Hannah Joyce, Town Clerk Tax Collector, Lisa Ash, Parks and Rec Director and Robert Butch Bain, Road Agent.

Chair Laufenberg explained that the Board members will present the budget section by section and questions, if any, will be answered after each section. Chair Laufenberg informed the public of some points of interest before the review by explaining that the Board chose to provide two health care plans to the employees. One at a lower tier cost and the other at a higher tier cost. The lower tier cost the Town contributes 93%, and the employee contributes 7%. The higher tier plan the Town contributes 85% and the employees contribute 15%. With the new plans, the health insurance costs have been reduced by 4% in the budget. As far as employee compensation increases, the Board chose a 1% increase across the Board as well as a one-time payment of \$750.00 that is based on merit and that merit is based on annual performance evaluation of all employees. By doing a one-time payment it keeps costs down in payroll, i.e. FICA, overtime, etc. Last but not least, thanks to Department Heads and their hard work, the Town has approximately a \$200,000.00 surplus this year to return to the Fund Balance (essentially a Town saving account). Chair Laufenberg explained that the Board has chosen to use a significant portion of that surplus to pay for some of the line items, specifically in the Capital Reserves. The Board typically, each year, uses a portion of the Fund Balance to reduce the tax rate; however, this year, the Board chose to do it from the "frontend" to achieve more transparency for the tax payers.

Chair Laufenberg proceeded on the review of the Proposed Budget by calling on each Board member to review sections. A summary of the Board's comments and questions by the public are presented below:

Selectmen: down by \$5,000.00 due to not as many elections this year. There were no questions.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Budget is flat and that includes the purchase of new voting booths (pods) in the amount of \$4,500.00. There were no questions.

Financial Administration: This section pertains to the Selectmen's Office. It was noted that the part time bookkeeper's hours have been reduced creating a \$4,000.00 decrease. Slight decrease in health

insurance as previously mentioned. A major decrease is the Town is going with another printer for the Town Report which has reduced the printing costs significantly. Questions presented were in regard to if there is a bookkeeper at present. Carina replied that the bookkeeper is still presently holding the position. Her hours have just been reduced to one day a week rather than 2 days. Inquiry was made about longevity. Carina explained that, as part of the Personnel Policy, and this has existed for a number of years, employees who have worked for the Town for 10 years plus received \$950.00 each year. After 20 years of full time service the amount increases to \$1,050.00 each year.

Assessing Services: Increased by almost \$2,000.00 as we are in a final year before a re-evaluation and figure is based on the contract with Commerford Nieder Perkins, Town Assessors. No questions.

Legal Expenses: New Town Attorneys, as prior attorney retired. The new attorneys' fees are higher, hence, the increase. No questions.

Personnel Administration: Merit Pay line item in the amount of \$12,375.00 has been added in this section as previously discussed. A Question pertained to why it was a one lump sum rather than showing each department's amount. Selectman Wheeler stated that it was a good suggestion and the Board would discuss further. It was also confirmed that the 1% increase was reflected in each department as it pertained to each employee listed in that department. There seemed to be a discrepancy in the calculation of the 1% that was pointed out by the public and Carina will review. Merit pay was questioned and it was clarified that a maximum amount of \$750.00 was agreed upon and it was based on the number of points accumulated from their employee performance evaluation and the \$750.00 was adjusted accordingly. It was confirmed that not all employees received a merit pay, and some received a partial amount.

Zoning Board and Planning Board: Remained pretty much level. A question arose in regard to the Planning Board Budget bottom line of \$5,150.00 when in fact only \$1,952.77 was actually spent in 2016. It was explained that the \$5,000.00 has remained a "constant" just to be safe if more activity evolved.

Town Mapping: Remained level at \$5,500.00.

Gen. Government Buildings: Increased line item for Custodial, Maintenance, Rubbish as the Board agreed to go with another cleaning establish that would also handle maintenance repairs and more extensive cleaning that is needed in the Municipal Building. This line item does not include the grounds, it pertains to buildings only. The Telephone/Internet line item combines all departments. In the past, each department had their own line item, for Telephone/Internet, that is why it appears the line item increased, when in fact it has not, it just moved all the specific departments into the one line item. It was acknowledged that there has been some furnace repairs in the Municipal Building so the bottom line may increase and because of the numerous repairs to the furnace, and issues acquiring parts, the Board has discussed possible future replacement of the furnace; however, no decisions have been made at present.

Cemetery: Labor is up \$2,000.00 and the fountain needs some repairs creating some increase. Inquiry was made as to why the Cemetery Sexton does not receive longevity? It was confirmed that he is a part

time employee and only full time employees receive longevity. A member of the public expressed that because of the number of years of service of the cemetery sexton, she felt it was a "slight" and longevity should be considered for this individual.

Insurance: There is an increase due to Worker's Comp premium. The Town received a one-time discounted rate (termed as a worker's comp holiday) in 2016 due to a declaration of overcharging Towns for a period of time and this is how the Town was reimbursed ; however, this year the full premium is being charged. A question arose, as to how the Town will be protected from overcharges in the future. Carina explained that Worker's Comp is now holding audits and the Town of Campton is included in this audit procedure.

Police Department: It was explained that the line item for telephone is for cell phones as cell phones are the responsibility of each department that utilizes cell phones. The overall budget is up \$14,000.00, reflected by the fact that the new full time position is now budgeted for 12 months whereas last year it was only budgeted for 6 months. There was discussion concerning holidays and Carina will review this with Chief Warn.

Fire Department: Chief Defosses explained an increase in compensation due to a 3rd full time fire fighter. Questions arose as to Call Company line item increasing significantly and the fact that it was explained last year that a full time fire fighter would reduce the call company line item when in fact, this line item has increased by \$20,000.00. Chief Defosses explained that other Towns are paying more and it is difficult to acquire staffing so to attract new individuals and to hold on to the individuals they have, it was increased. It was also stated by a member of the public that the line item increase would cover a full time employee's compensation; however, Chief Defosses pointed out that a full time employee would cost considerably more as you have to factor in all benefits and the retirement alone is a 33% contribution by the Town. It was pointed out by the public that, by hiring a new employee and also increasing the Call Company line item it is putting an extra burden on the taxpayers. Chief Defosses did confirm that the Fire Department switched over to the WEX program for fuel for the vehicles and the program will reduce the fuel cost.

Emergency Management: Last year there was training and mileage expenses and maintenance of the generator which increased the bottom line. In 2017 the generator maintenance is coming out of the Building Fund so the bottom line will go back to \$2,500.00 as indicated on the proposed budget this year.

Highway Department: The whole budget is down \$40,000.00 from last year. Significant changes are one of the dump trucks is paid off saving \$27,000.00 and fuel through the WEX program has reduced the budget by \$6,000.00. Inquiry was made as to the paving for 2017. Mr. Bain, Road Agent confirmed the roads to be paved in 2017 are: Goose Hollow Road, Miclon Road, Pond Road and Alden Drive. Total miles: 1.50 miles. Inquiry was made as to the gravel plan for 2017. Mr. Bain confirmed that gravel is contingent upon how the weather turns out, and consulting with his grader operator. However, the current baseline plan is to do Hogback Road, Lower Loop, Mespelli Road, part of Perch Pond Road, Randal Road, Ryder Road and Wisser Road. Chandler Hill Road is done.

Hydrant Rental: Campton Village Precinct maintains the hydrants and the \$6,800.00 is the cost of rental and maintenance. Deer Run Dam line item, the State has declared that there is a dam at Deer Run and the Town has to pay a fee to the State for such dam. There will also be some repair work in the future for this dam which will require additional funding and this will be discussed this evening more extensively.

Solid Waste: Chair Laufenberg explained that the budget is reduced by almost \$45,000.00. It was explained that the Town of Thornton handles the operation of the Transfer Station, and instead of cutting a check to the Town of Campton for revenues, the Town of Thornton reduces the Town of Campton's expense contribution. Last year the Town of Campton's budget for the Transfer Station was approximately \$185,000.00. With this in mind, the Board felt comfortable in lowering the budget this year to \$225,100.00, leaving a little "wobble room", but also save the taxpayers money. Chair Laufenberg pointed out that the Transfer Station will have some renovation work done in 2017 and the Town of Campton will be contributing to the renovations; and the money for such are now available and will be expended out of the Town's Capital Reserve Fund.

Beebe River Utilities – Water & Sewer: The Town administers the Beebe River account and the costs (that are reimbursed) are budgeted at \$17,000.00.

Town Welfare: The budget has been lowered by \$5,000.00, which was based on usage. Most of that saving is based on May Brosseau's (Welfare Director) great job administering the budget and the cost of fuel has come down. Chair Laufenberg confirmed that the Town is legally obligated by the State to provide Welfare services.

A member of the public, who represents Genesis inquired about a possible contribution from the Town to Genesis for emergency services. She explained that the State does not provide such benefits, so funds have to be found elsewhere. It was confirmed that this expense would be under the line item Advertising and Regional Assoc. and the Board agreed to keep that line item flat; however, Chair Laufenberg apologized as the Board wasn't aware of any requests made. Chair Laufenberg invited the representative to a Selectmen's Meeting, (to come in before the next the 2nd Budget Hearing on February 21, 2017) to discuss this request further.

Parks and Rec: Increased a little, due to feeding a large number of children. Lisa Ash confirmed that she acquires snacks from the Food Bank and Walmart and Trader Joe's. Mrs. Ash also confirmed that revenue is around \$57,000.00, however, in response to a member of the public's inquiry, Mrs. Ash further explained by increasing participants, which she has done this year, will bring the revenue up and therefore any increased expenses will be a wash. It was also confirmed that the school supports some tutors to Parks and Rec. and some funding in the school budget, but Mrs. Ash was not sure what line item it is under in the school budget.

Library: Books and Periodicals increased \$1,000.00 and inquiry was made regarding the Library Study line item of \$5,000.00. It was explained that the Library Study line is not an operating cost of the library. The \$5,000.00 figure was generated for the purpose of doing a study to see if the public is actually interested in building a new library. It was confirmed that approximately \$2,500.00 of the \$5,000.00 will

be used to do a survey which will be sent out to the public. It was confirmed a budget was drafted for the Library Study line item and a draft can be provided to any interested person.

Conservation Commission: Budget remains about the same. Conservation Commission is going to provide a port-a-potty for the 250th Celebration, to be held at the Pattee field which is part of the Conservations Commission area; hence a \$250.00 expense included in the Conservation Commission Budget.

Long Term Debt-Principal: Budget is down \$36,600.00. The Fire Department Sub-Station has been paid off reducing the budget by \$25,000.00. A point of interest is: The fire rescue vehicle lease was taken out in 2016, and after the 2017 payment there will only be 3 years left on the lease; The backhoe contract was taken out in 2016 and after the 2017 payment there will only be 2 years left as it will be paid off in 2019.

Beebe River Road Betterment: This line item is a wash as it is reimbursed by tax payers.

Long Term Debt-Interest: New Town Bldg. Interest is down as it is based on unpaid balance of principal and that goes down every year. The John Deere backhoe is an itemized correction for 2016, as this line item was included in the Highway Department budget last year and now is moved to Long Term Debt – Interest as recommended by auditors. Fire Department rescue vehicle interest of \$5,970.00 represents the Town of Campton’s interest for financing our portion of the vehicle. The Town of Thornton paid their full portion upfront. The vehicle is being built at the factory and it should arrive in July, 2017.

TAN Interest: This is an estimated Tax Anticipated Note interest amount of \$6,000.00, if the Town should need a TAN. It is the goal of the Town not to take out a TAN; however, one was needed last year and Carina confirmed the TAN has not been closed out so there will be additional costs owing for the 2016 TAN.

Capital Reserve Funds – Funded by Undesignated Fund Balance – No Amount to be Raised by General Taxation: The Board decided to use the surplus (Fund Balance) to pay for the Capital Reserve items that are listed in this section totaling \$66,100.00 to save on the tax rate in the fall. This was discussed early in the Budget Hearing this evening explaining that this “upfront” procedure would create more transparency to the taxpayers.

Potential Capital Warrant Articles: Municipal Library Construction – Capital Res. – Discussion ensued as to why a potential separate Warrant Article was drafted. It was explained it was done by Petition to designate the funds specifically for a Municipal Library only.

Warrant Articles – Funded by Undesignated Fund Balance - No Amount to be Raised by General Taxation: Again, this procedure was decided by the Board in order to save the taxpayers money. Dam Reconstruction – Capital Reserve was discussed briefly early in the Budget Hearing explaining that the State has declared a mal-function in the Deer Run Dam and the Town has five years to complete the work which will be costly; therefore, the Board decided to commence saving for these repairs with a Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$10,000.00. The new cruiser is a Warrant Article in the amount

of \$40,000.00 and \$20,000.00 for the 250th Celebration have been included in this section. The total amount of Warrant Articles (not to be raised by general taxation) is \$70,000.00, to be expended from the Fund Balance.

This concluded the first Budget Hearing. Chair Laufenberg announced that the second and final Budget Hearing will be held at the Municipal Building, at 6:30 on February 21, 2017. The first Budget concluded at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor M. Dewey, Office Assistant and Recorder