

## MINUTES

### FINAL BUDGET HEARING

FEBRUARY 10, 2016

The Board of Selectmen met at 6:30 p.m. at the Campton Municipal Building for the Proposed 2016 Final Budget Hearing. Present were: Peter Laufenberg, Charles Wheeler, Charles Cheney, Karl Kelly and Carina Park, Town Administrator and Eleanor Dewey, Office Assistant (recorder) with approximately 25 people (Town employees and the public) in attendance. Selectman Davis was not present due to a conflict in schedule.

At 6:30 p.m. Vice Chair Laufenberg called the meeting to order and welcomed the public to the Final Proposed 2016 Budget Hearing. Vice Chair Laufenberg had the Board and heads of departments introduce themselves to the public. Vice Chair Laufenberg explained that there are some changes to this year's budget. The major change is the personnel benefits (retirement, health and disability) are now included in each individual budget, rather than a lump sum. Another change is, overtime is broken out in each respective budget. Vice Chair Laufenberg explained that health insurance has actually gone down by 5%; however because of changes in employee plans (marriage/children) the net cost has increased slightly by 1%. Vice Chair Laufenberg stated that the budget reflects a 2% merit increase for employees which has been dictated by performance reviews.

Regarding the Town Warrant there are also some key changes as well and those changes are as following:

The big five budgets: Fire, Police, Highway and Town Clerk/Tax Collector and Park and Rec Programs have been broken out into their own separate articles.

The Selectmen have also adopted a policy of presenting any proposed new, full time benefited positions as a separate article to be voted on by the voters at Town Meeting. This year the Police Department is proposing a new officer as presented in Article 8.

The individual capital reserve funds are consolidated into one article in an effort to make Town Meeting more efficient. You can see that in Article 21.

Vice Chair Laufenberg stated that as the Proposed Budget is reviewed by the Selectmen, it will not necessarily be presented line by line. Major changes will be brought to the public's attention and any questions should be directed to Vice Chair Laufenberg for answering. He explained that if he could not answer the question, he would direct the question to the proper Department Head.

As the Proposed Budget was presented, some of the following questions and concerns (per Department) were presented by the public and discussed as follows:

Merit raises were discussed and questioned as to the interpretation of "merit raises" as it seemed the 2% was across the Board. Inquiry was made about the wage study which dictated the 2%. Concern was

raised that the Town is spending more than the revenue coming in and Social Security did not issue a COLA this year.

Inquiry was made as to how much money was acquired from Town auction. It was confirmed that \$139,000.00 gross funds were received from the auction.

Health Insurance was discussed and Vice Chair Laufenberg explained that the \$27,500.00 on Health and Dental Insurance line item is a roll over and there is a flex spending account for health reimbursement to offset the deductible for employees.

Under Town Mapping line item the hiring of an intern to assist with road frontage and other Town projects, i.e. road statistics, was discussed. It was brought to the attention of the Board that when the Town Mapping project was initiated, it was understood that it was going to be "an in house project". It was pointed out that there will be some new projects to be implemented that will assist the Highway Department and the Police Department and the new intern will be very helpful initiating these projects.

Under Gen. Government Buildings, an inquiry was made as to who the new vendor was for heating. It was confirmed that White Mountain Propane is the new vendor.

Under Insurance, Prop.Liab, Auto & Bond line item the question raised was does this cost go out for bid? Vice Chair Laufenberg stated it has not; however, the future practice of the Board will be to put it out for bid each year. The Worker's Comp item line was questioned as to whether the decrease was a one time savings. It was confirmed that Primex went through an audit and it was found that the Town was over charged; hence, the decrease; however, it is a one-time decrease, and it is a possibility the premium could increase next year.

Under the Police Department, Part Time Officers' Wages line item it was confirmed that if the new full time position is not approved, the part time wages will increase back to \$24,000.00. In the Police Department, under Health Insurance line item it was asked how many people are insured for the \$80,192.00. It was confirmed that 6 employees are on the plan. The public expressed that that was a lot of money for 6 people. The line item for Police Special Detail was questioned as to why that increased. It was confirmed that the increase was added because of the possibility of more detail work coming in the future. Questions were raised as to the Overtime line item. It was confirmed that because of personnel changes (loss of employees) the full time employees had to pick up the extra workload. Chief Warn explained how hard it is to get part time help and then costs involved with training and then they leave their employ with the Town and end up taking a full time position elsewhere.

Under the Fire Department, line item Legal Expense, Chief Defosses explained that the Department switched to a different legal firm and they were advised to use the \$6,000.00 figure as the Department is in the process of updating their policies, but it is hoped that all \$6,000.00 may not be used. Chief Defosses explained on call shift issues and stated that the schedule was changed which limits the cost of over time. Also, the Department is anticipating hiring a new full time person (in October) to lessen the burden on the 2016 budget. Questions were raised as to how much the cost will be for a full time

employee. The Chief explained that he does have these figures, but did not have them available this evening. It was expressed by the public that it is difficult for the tax payers to make decisions without full disclosure. Chief Defosses assured the public that there is no intent to hide information. There was discussion about the new fire/rescue truck and Chief Defosses indicated that it is hoped that the price can be reduced another \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 from the proposed quote. A meeting is being scheduled with the Fire Commissioners and joint Boards and Fire Department to meet with sales representative to review specs. and work on adjusting specs in order to lower the price.

In the Emergency Management budget a request was made for a breakdown.

Under the Highway Department, Vice Chair Laufenberg indicated that a highway plan is in the process, but will take some time, but once completed, the Board will review with Robert Butch Bain, Road Agent to make determinations. Mr. Bain stated the roads to be paved in 2016, are as follows: a portion of Bog Road, Winterbrook Road (.65 miles) and one-half mile on Pond Road. Inquiry was made as to whether or not the Board goes out and looks at the roads. It was acknowledged that Board members do inspect the road. Inquiry was made as to what roads were done with the \$34,000.00 allotted for gravel. Mr. Bain indicated that it depends on the winter what roads need gravel; however, this year he will be targeting Partridge Knoll Road, Perch Pond Road, Lower Beech Road and Bog Road. Mr. Bain explained he plans on using \$30,000.00 for gravel and leaving a little cushion for needed areas from the winter season. Mr. Bain indicated he will have a better idea of gravel distribution once he gets through the mud season.

In the Beebe River Utilities – Water Budget questions arose as to whether or not there is actually a maintenance service handling Beebe River Water? It was confirmed that Pump Systems is the management service. Concerns arose with the \$13,000.00 line item for Management/Maintenance when only \$6,017.52 was expended last year. Also, concern arose as to the Town carrying a large debt if property owners do not pay their quarterly bills, in addition to the outstanding debt already owed to the Town.

Regarding Potential Capital Warrant Articles it was announced there is a Public Hearing scheduled for February 22, 2016, at 6:30 p.m., at the Campton Municipal Building, for the purpose of discussing the proposed long-term debt agreement for the purchase of the new fire/rescue vehicle.

Another inquiry was made as to whether or not a Capital Improvement Plan is in place. It was confirmed no plan is in place, but is in the process.

The general concerns of the public expressed was over spending of the Town and for the past 3 years the budget has increased and property valuations have gone down resulting in less revenue. There was mention of many elderly property owners in Town on fixed incomes that are having a difficult time financially. Estimated revenue information, not including tax revenues was distributed to the public this evening. The public did express their appreciation for getting information to them prior to Town Meeting and felt “it was a step in the right direction.”

There being no further discussion, the Final 2016 Budget Hearing adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor M. Dewey, Office Assistant and recorder