

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of November 29, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Bruce Breton, Selectmen Ross McLeod, Phil LoChiatto, Kathleen DiFruscia and Roger Hohenberger were present, as was Town Administrator David Sullivan and several department heads. Mr. Breton called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, opened with the Pledge of Allegiance then read the agenda into the record.

BUDGET WORKSHOP:

Recreation – The Board met with Cheryl Haas, Recreation Coordinator, to discuss the Recreation budget. Discussion ensued regarding the Park Ranger hourly rate and the proposal to provide a step increase to the two employees that have been in this position for four to five years. It was explained that these employees typically do not receive an annual step increase due to the seasonal nature of this position. Mr. Hohenberger asked about the impact of a cost of living increase, should one be provided to all non-union employees for 2013, that effectively these employees would get an additional pay increase and Mr. Sullivan noted this would apply to all town employees that are on steps. It was noted that one of the Park Ranger positions is funded by the Conservation land fund. Discussion turned to other areas of the budget and Ms. Haas noted that there is a proposed decrease in Field Maintenance to make up for the additional dollars proposed in the Equipment Maintenance line item, as the Committee is requesting to replace the beach raft in 2013. Mr. McLeod asked for further explanation regarding the field maintenance portion of the budget, as to whether there is enough for the upcoming field needs, such as the Nashua Road swale work. Discussion ensued regarding what was expended in 2012 and projects needed for 2013.

Mr. Hohenberger then asked about the Salem High band playing at the Christmas tree lighting and Ms. Haas noted that they have volunteered to continue to do this until the Windham High band is fully up and running, and there is no cost associated with this. Mr. Hohenberger expressed his appreciation to the Salem High band director. Mrs. DiFruscia asked about the ASCAP license and Ms. Haas explained why this item is required. Mr. Sullivan made the Board aware of continued concerns regarding the cost of the Senior Christmas party and that by paying for 400 people, we will run over budget in this line item, as in past years. Ms. Haas noted that generally the overrun can be funded from elsewhere within the Recreation budget, as the Board has been hesitant to charge seniors for these tickets in the past. Discussion ensued regarding how many tickets are distributed and how many get returned due to illness, no shows etc, and how Ms. Haas tries not to have the Town budget pay for seats that don't get used. Mr. Sullivan noted that seniors don't get turned away, and consensus of the Board was to let Ms. Haas manage this process in the manner she has described. Mr. Sullivan also brought to the Board's attention that our electricity costs, predominantly for Griffin Park, are running higher than what was budgeted in 2012 and suggested we slightly increase what was initially budgeted for electricity for 2013, based on updated usage. A brief discussion ensued as to whether the Windham Baseball/Softball League was contributing to the cost of operating the lights at Griffin Park. Mr. Sullivan reiterated that the WBSL is not contributing, per an earlier vote of the Board which only required the league to pay if the Recreation budget for electricity, overall, exceeds \$10,000. Mr. McLeod motioned to increase the line item by \$390 and Mr. LoChiatto seconded; passed 4-1 with Mr. Hohenberger opposed.

Assessing – Mr. LoChiatto asked a general question about the Supplemental Retirement plan and Mr. Sullivan explained this was initiated back in the 1970's to provide a benefit to non Police & Fire employees due to the vast difference in State retirement benefits that are provided to these latter groups.

Mr. Norman requested \$2,500 be added to the budget (IT) for the use of Cartographics, Inc.(CAI), the vendor that currently hosts the GIS site, for GIS mapping services that are more specific than what we have now; this would include making all corrections to subdivisions that Mr. Norman sends them and to

correct any items that are brought to his attention. \$2,500 is the annual maintenance cost, which would be in addition to the \$1,800 hosting fee we currently budget and pay through the IT budget. Mr. Norman noted that the IT Director has taken on the GIS role, and he is able to create maps and utilize the software, however mapping is not his specialty, thus his request that funds be added to contract this out, similar to what was done in past years. Mr. Breton suggested we talk with SNHPC to see if they provide any of these types of services and that we discuss this further when we look at the IT budget because GIS costs are in the IT budget, even though the service is predominantly for the Assessing department. Mr. Hohenberger asked Mr. Norman to clarify what is included in the annual \$2,500 maintenance fee (which includes one data refresh). Mr. Sullivan explained that instead of the IT/GIS Director making the changes and then forwarding them to CAI, CAI would do this work for the additional fee. Further discussion ensued regarding how often changes should be made, what services we get now from CAI, and whether we could put out to bid both the GIS updates and hosting. Mr. Norman discussed that he could utilize contracted services funds in the 2012 budget to utilize CAI to do initial updates to get through mid-2013 and budget an additional \$2,500 for 2013 updates, and consensus was in agreement. No changes were made to the Assessing budget as proposed.

Library – Mr. Heidenblad noted that the Library operating budget has been level since 2009. The only increase requested in the 2013 budget is for some additional hours for one of their part time employees. Mr. Heidenblad, on behalf of the Library Trustees, also asked the Board to consider a cost of living increase for this year. Mrs. DiFruscia asked about the level of cost of living they are requesting. Mr. Heidenblad noted the Library is agreeable to the range proposed by Mr. Sullivan, as they have always wanted to work with the Selectmen and be on par with other town employees.

Discussion ensued regarding the HVAC system, the cost of the annual maintenance contract, the age of the system and potentially evaluating the system as a whole; whether an assessment has been done, the results of the energy audit and whether any grants may be available. Mr. LoChiatto asked about other building maintenance needs and whether assessments have been done. Mr. Heidenblad noted that a lot of the work (exterior painting, lighting, etc) had been done as part of past CIP funds. Mr. Heidenblad noted that the most significant interior need is carpeting replacement and the Trustees are looking at requesting CIP funds for 2014. Mr. Heidenblad also noted that roof replacements may be needed in upcoming years as well. No changes were made.

Legal – Mr. Sullivan discussed the overages in the Union portion of the legal costs due to an unusually high level of grievances, but on average, he feels that level funding this budget remains appropriate. Discussion ensued regarding Union arbitration and mediation costs. Discussion turned to the allocation for the ZBA and how the overexpenditure is offset through savings in other areas of town budget. Mr. Sullivan noted that beginning in 2012, \$5,000 was simply moved from the general services line item for Town counsel to a ZBA category but that the legal budget as a whole did not increase; the 2013 budget proposes the same overall level as 2012. No changes were made to this budget.

Debt – No changes were made to this budget.

Health & Human Services – Mr. Sullivan noted that all line items have been level funded and no new items have been added. Discussion ensued regarding CART and the limited use by Windham residents. Mr. Sullivan suggested the Board hear from Ms. Melanie Neishem from the new Family Promise organization and perhaps reallocate some funding from other agencies, such as CART to provide some start-up funds for this organization. The Board also requested that Lee Maloney be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the CART budget.

Ms. Neishem presented a summary of the request for \$5,000 for Family Promise of Greater Rockingham County. She noted this organization offers homeless families shelter through a network of congregations

referred to as an Interfaith Hospitality Network (INH). The organization plans to open its doors in January 2013 and is requesting a \$5,000 contribution from each of the 16 communities it will serve, in order to fund operating costs. Ms. Neishem also noted that there are currently 8 Windham families that are in need of assistance from this organization. Discussion ensued as to the merits of the program and whether this should be funded through the general assistance budget line. Mr. Sullivan noted the Town does not typically utilize the \$7,500 historically budgeted for Hardship Abatements within the General Assistance budget, because in recent years the Board has instead entered into forbearance agreements. It was suggested that this line item could be reduced by \$5,000 in order to fund Family Promise. Mr. LoChiatto motioned to fund the line item as stated and Mrs. DiFruscia seconded. Motion passed 5-0. No other changes to the General Assistance budget were made.

Senior Center – No changes were made.

Street Lights – After a brief discussion regarding the lights that will become the Town’s responsibility once the State transfers ownership of certain roads in the future, no changes were made to the budget.

Trust Funds – Mr. Sullivan explained the proposal by Administration to take advantage of one-time savings in the Workers Compensation insurance of \$46,000, due to a premium holiday for 2013, and reallocate those funds to the Property Maintenance and Earned Time Expendable trust funds. Regarding Property Trust, an increase from \$30,000 to \$50,000 is proposed for 2013, due to the multitude of building projects that have been discussed with the Board previously. Regarding the Earned Time Trust, Mr. Sullivan discussed the \$1.1 million liability for employees’ accumulated earned time and that the trust has not been funded for the past several years due to cost saving measures. In addition, the Town has had several long-standing employees retire in 2012, thus a large portion of the trust could be depleted by the end of 2012. Mr. Hohenberger asked about the potential to buy-down some of the liability and, in return, make changes to the program going forward to help minimize the long-term liability. Mr. Sullivan noted that if the Earned Time trust article should pass, this could be a potential use of those funds. Discussion ensued regarding the “risk” of both trust funds being stand-alone warrant articles and that the operating budget should include some funds to ensure the buildings are properly maintained. It was noted that there are funds in the operating budget for smaller projects, but that the Property Trust funding is needed in order to accomplish larger projects. After continued discussion, no changes were made to the budgets as proposed.

Retirement – No changes were made.

Insurance – No changes were made.

Town Officer Salaries – Mr. McLeod motioned to cut the Board of Selectmen salary to \$0 and Mr. Hohenberger seconded. Passed 5-0.

Searles – Mrs. Call noted the budget slightly decreased due to the telephone answering service no longer being necessary. No changes were made to the budget.

Animal Control – Mr. Sullivan noted the budget is the same, and the Town continues to benefit from the services of Mr. Seifert at a low cost. No changes to the budget were made.

Administration – Mr. Sullivan discussed the items in the budget that had changed from the previous year. It was noted that a new line item for Contracted Services contained a \$4,800 one-time fee to have the Town’s financial software provider, Munis, conduct an investment analysis similar to what was done in 2012 in the Tax Collector’s office, and was very successful. Mr. Hohenberger made a motion to remove the \$4,800 and Mr. Breton seconded. Mrs. Call asked if she could make a presentation to further explain

the details of the item being requested, and went on to explain that the project was specific to the Town's payroll module, which was originally established back in 1988. Many of the rules and regulations have changed and the complexity of running the payroll has increased significantly. The funds would be utilized to have Munis review the design of the system and help determine how best to adjust the set-up in order to utilize features and functionality that are available to us but are not currently used. Administration would like to pursue the use of these features, but guidance from Munis is needed in order for our staff to implement any necessary changes. The motion failed 2-3 with Mr. McLeod, Mr. LoChiatto and Mrs. DiFruscia opposed.

Discussion then turned to the Committee Expenses line item and the request to fund additional AED units for town buildings that do not currently have them. Discussion ensued as to whether these could be purchased over a two-year period. Mr. Sullivan reminded the Board that this was proposed by the Joint Loss Management Committee, and that additional AED units are in the Fire Department budget for replacements needed for the fire apparatus. Discussion then turned to the possibility of using 2012 funds that may be remaining, in order to purchase the units now and remove from the 2013 budget. No changes to the budget were made at this time.

Revenues – Mrs. Call presented a brief overview of the Revenue section of the budget and noted that the preliminary estimates are then updated in the fall of 2013, prior to setting the annual tax rate.

Mr. LoChiatto motioned and Mr. McLeod seconded to adjourn. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Call
Asst Town Administrator-Finance

NOTE: These minutes are prepared in draft form and have not been submitted to the Board for approval.