

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 5, 2006

6:30 p.m.

Gilford Town Hall

Members Present: Doug Lambert, Skip Murphy, John O'Brien, Bob Brent, Sue Greene, Dick Hickok, Bill Phillips, Paul Blandford, Sean Murphy and Connie Grant.

Members Absent: Phyllis Corrigan

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Evans Juris, Assistant Town Administrator Debra Shackett and Administrative Secretary Sandra Bailey.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok advised the Committee that Tom Walters, representative of the Gunstock Acres Village Water District, has resigned. Brief discussion ensued on another representative being appointed to the Committee.

Chairman Hickok then turned the meeting over to Town Administrator Juris and Assistant Town Administrator Shackett. Town Administrator Juris welcomed the Budget Committee members and provided a brief explanation of how the COLA and Performance Based pay increases are calculated. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett proceeded to review a PowerPoint presentation she had prepared. This detailed presentation included an overview of the budget process, as well as highlights of each budget category. (Copy attached.)

At the end of the presentation, Town Administrator Juris provided an explanation of the proposed part-time Fire Inspector position. Following this explanation, a detailed discussion ensued on funding the COLA and Performance Based pay increases. Bill Phillips feels that the cost of living for New Hampshire should be less than other Northeastern states because of the lack of sales tax. Chairman Hickok stated that unless sales tax percentages change, it should not affect the COLA.

The Committee then discussed the matter of lump sum merit raises, which are for employees who have reached the top of their pay scale. Following discussion on Budget Sub-Committees, Town Administrator Juris asked that any requests to departments for additional information be directed through the Budget Committee Chairman.

Chairman Hickok then reiterated the process that the Sub-committees should follow. He especially emphasized the importance of Department Managers being made aware of the recommendations of the Sub-committee prior to their Budget Committee meeting.

John O'Brien moved that the Department Managers have at least one day prior to the meeting to be able to review what has been submitted. Sean Murphy seconded. Motion carried.

Assistant Town Administrator Shackett mentioned that last year, some Department Managers were shocked at the recommendations made when they attended the Budget Committee meeting. She reiterated the importance of Department Managers having access to the Sub-committee's recommendation sheet.

Discussion then ensued on Budget Committee review of Outside Agencies. It was the consensus of the Committee that all members will review the Outside Agency funding and there will be no Sub-committee.

Connie Grant moved to approve the minutes of the following meetings: September 27, September 21, May 18 and March 30, 2006. Doug Lambert seconded. Bill Phillips and Paul Blandford abstained from voting on the September 21, 2006 minutes and Sean Murphy abstained from voting on the September 27, 2006 minutes.

Brief discussion ensued on information from the Town being e-mailed to Chairman Hickok.

Skip Murphy then asked how the data he presented at the September 21, 2006 meeting would be used – does it provide a role? Chairman Hickok provided suggestions on how the data could be used by Committee members. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that any discussion regarding salaries should be directed to the Administration, rather than the individual department, since salary schedules and budget amounts are determined at that level. This prompted extensive discussion on the Town's salary schedule.

Chairman Hickok stated that he does not want to discuss salaries at every meeting. Doug Lambert stated that he doesn't feel there should be "across the board" increases. Skip Murphy feels that pay increases should be slowed down. Doug Lambert stated that he would like to take out a portion of a salary line item if he feels it is too high. Chairman Hickok instructed him that the Committee can make a reduction on the bottom line of each department and reminded Committee members that their responsibility is monetary, not individual positions.

Bill Phillips feels that when the Board of Selectmen sets wage scales, that they should use the wage data to set pay ranges. More discussion ensued on the matter of health care benefits. Bob Brent wants the Board of Selectmen to respond to Skip Murphy's data.

Town Administrator Juris responded to Mr. Brent's inquiry. He stated that he will be responding to the Skip Murphy's data, but tonight is not the appropriate forum. He also stated that his response would be coordinated with the Board of Selectmen. Town Administrator Juris is concerned that the tone of the meeting became adversarial. He also reminded the Committee that the Board of Selectmen is responsible for policy decisions.

Returning to the matter of when salaries should be discussed, Chairman Hickok stated that this should be done in the Administration portion of the budget, which is scheduled in November near the end of the Town portion of the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey
Administrative Secretary

