

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 26, 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, Connie Grant and Phyllis Corrigan.

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

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok began the meeting by stating that recommendations would be made for the Fire Department budget.

Bill Phillips moved \$1,071,379 for the 2007 Fire Department budget. Doug Lambert seconded. Mr. Phillips explained that this figure represents a reduction of \$1,291, comprised of \$555 for NH Firefighters' Association dues, \$486 for Motorcycle Week food and \$250 for a hard copy of the Fire Code. He also explained his rationale for making the reductions, which prompted discussion from other Committee members, particularly with NH Firefighters' Dues and benefits and the hard copy of the Fire Code.

At this time, the meeting was interrupted by Gilford resident Joe Hoffman, who passed out materials to members of the public and Committee members.

A vote on the motion by a show of hands indicated Yes – 5, No – 6. Motion fails.

Sean Murphy moved \$1,072,670 for the 2007 Fire Department budget, restoring the items that were reduced in Mr. Phillips' motion. Paul Blandford seconded. Doug Lambert reiterated his previously stated position that he is not comfortable approving a department budget with the wage issue not yet addressed. Bob Brent stated that he felt the Sub-committee should have been able to cut more from this budget.

Mr. Phillips then made a suggestion to schedule departments differently next year so that the "smaller" budgets are taken care of before the "larger" budgets – such as Fire, Police and DPW. Chairman Hickok reminded Committee members that any Department budget can be re-opened during the budget process. At this time, Skip Murphy stated that he had a memo prepared for Committee members regarding his proposed \$68,000 reductions to the Fire Department budget, based on wages and overtime, but he would not be distributing it until he reviewed it with Chief Hayes. Brief discussion ensued on when Mr. Murphy's memo should be addressed by the Budget Committee.

A vote on the motion by a show of hands indicated Yes – 4, No – 6. Motion fails.

Discussion then ensued on identifying cuts to the budget. Chairman Hickok stated that although the Budget Committee typically identifies any cuts, it is not necessary. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett pointed out that it is the Budget Committee's function to prepare a budget and they must be prepared to defend it at the public hearing. She also mentioned State

forms which require specific budget information.

Bill Phillips moved \$1,071,724 for the 2007 Fire Department budget, restoring \$345 for NH Firefighters' Dues for call company personnel. Doug Lambert seconded.

A vote on the motion by a show of hands indicated Yes – 2, No – 7. Motion fails.

More discussion ensued. Chairman Hickok suggested that the vote be taken next week. Chief Hayes asked that the Budget Committee take action tonight.

Sean Murphy moved \$1,071,934 for the 2007 Fire Department budget, restoring \$555 for NH Firefighters' dues. Bob Brent seconded.

A vote on the motion by a show of hands indicated Yes – 6, No - 5. Motion carried. Skip Murphy will meet with Chief Hayes tomorrow, October 27th, at 1:00 p.m. The matters contained in his memo will be discussed at the November 9th Budget Committee Meeting.

The next portion of the Fire Department budget deals with Forestry expenses. Bill Phillips moved \$9,210 for Forestry - \$5,000 for part-time wages, \$1,210 for equipment and \$3,000 for a truck. Sean Murphy seconded. Brief discussion ensued on refurbishing a DPW truck for Forestry use.

A vote on the motion by a show of hands indicated Yes – 8. Motion carried.

Moving onto the Capital Outlay portion of the Fire Department budget, Bill Phillips moved \$18,654 for New Ambulance Equipment and New Fire Equipment. Sean Murphy seconded. Brief discussion ensued on the shelving and equipment racks for the Rescue Trailer.

A vote on the motion by a show of hands indicated Yes – 10 (Unanimous). Motion carried.

Under New Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund, Bill Phillips moved \$50,000. Bob Brent seconded. Skip Murphy reported that after meeting with Chief Hayes, he endorses the two (2) ambulance system.

A vote on the motion by a show of hands indicated Yes – 10 (Unanimous). Motion carried.

The Budget Committee then began its review of the DPW Budget. Doug Lambert began the Sub-committee's presentation by providing a brief overview of the department, then reviewing each of the five sheets he prepared for the Committee. Mr. Lambert also commended the Department of Public Works for their resourcefulness in re-using items for their department.

Brief discussion ensued on Emergency Management, where the Board of Selectmen approved \$1,000 for this purpose.

Under Highways and Streets, Doug Lambert indicated that the Sub-committee felt that the part-time wages could be reduced under Seasonal Employees, since the department has had difficulty filling all of the seasonal slots. The Sub-committee also suggested that roadside mowing be subcontracted, rather than renting the equipment. More discussion ensued on the use of gravel, culvert replacement and ice control. Director Morgan explained the reasoning for not purchasing salt too far in advance.

As far as Solid Waste is concerned, Director Morgan also provided an explanation of how the recycling program is unpredictable and some items are fee supported to offset their costs. Discussion under Vehicle Maintenance focused primarily on the cost of fuel. Although the cost of gasoline has decreased, concern was expressed at reducing the per gallon cost too much, since the cost could escalate again during the 2007 budget year. Sheldon Morgan responded to a question on Specialized Services, explaining that it is more efficient with some types of repairs to have the work done by outside vendors.

Under Bridges and Street Lights, Director Morgan advised the Committee that there are 156 street lights in Gilford and are very important for safety concerns. Included in the budget breakdown were the different sized street lights and their monthly cost.

The next item covered was Capital Outlay. Director Morgan provided an explanation regarding the reduction of \$10,000 under the New Highway Truck. Following this discussion, the Committee briefly reviewed the GIS Project, although this will primarily be discussed under the Department of Planning and Land Use Budget presentation. Moving onto the Sewer Budget, Doug Lambert provided an explanation of proposed reductions in Engineering Services and Contracted Services. It was also pointed out that the Sewer Budget is basically self-funded.

The last area covered under the DPW Budget covered Buildings and Grounds. The Sub-committee has recommended a reduction under the Overtime Line Item to \$4,000. Under Specialized Services, extensive discussion ensued on the matter of the Magnetic door holders. Among those issues covered in the discussion were phasing in the door holders, what the Selectmen's intent was in their recommendation and what impact a new police addition could have if the entire building needs to have sprinklers installed. Various Committee members also expressed concern that the Town Hall is not in code compliance on this issue.

The Committee then reviewed Fire Station Maintenance. Sheldon Morgan updated the Board on the proposed boiler replacement for the Fire Station. He stated that he should have additional information before the next meeting. Brief discussion also ensued on Rowe House Maintenance and Library Maintenance, which had already been discussed during the Library's presentation.

John O'Brien stated that the DPW Department Sub-committee will have final recommendation figures for the Budget Committee for the November 2nd meeting.

Chairman Hickok asked Director Morgan if he feels that the \$500,000 designated yearly for road construction could ever be reduced. Director Morgan offered an explanation of how road repairs are scheduled and the fact that they try to take care of any roadwork before the road's condition becomes very bad. He also stated that with escalating costs, the road construction budget would never be a "small" amount.

Doug Lambert pointed out that the total recommended DPW reductions total \$58,994.

John O'Brien moved to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2006 Budget Committee Meeting. Doug Lambert seconded. Motion carried.

Bob Brent asked the status of the draft letter he passed out last week. Chairman Hickok advised him that this matter will be discussed under the Administrative portion of the budget. He would like to have all issues with salaries discussed during this one portion of the budget.

process.

Doug Lambert suggested a larger meeting room be scheduled for the Administrative portion of the budget, such as the High School lecture hall. The Administration will look into this option.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey
Administrative Secretary