

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 30, 2006
6:30 p.m.
Gilford Town Hall
Conference Room A

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

Members Absent: Paul Blandford, Skip Murphy 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 Land Conservation Task Force and Fire Truck Warrant Articles. He also stated that the Default Budget would be reviewed by Budget Committee members.

Land Conservation Task Force – Chairman Hickok expressed his opinion on the acquisition of the Bean property. He feels that this is a one time opportunity and encouraged other Budget Committee members to support the Warrant Article with a long-term bond. Bill Phillips agreed, feeling that preserving the land will reduce the demand on municipal services. Selectman Grant stated that the Board of Selectmen supports this conservation effort. Bob Brent stated that he would have liked to have seen some private funding involved in this project. This prompted further discussion on private funding.

Assistant Town Administrator Shackett advised the Committee members that the details of the Conservation Easement are still being worked out between the Beans and the LCTF. Doug Lambert stated that he has a problem with the Town spending so much money for something that they will not own. More discussion ensued on the matter of protecting land from development, rather than owning it. It was noted that private funding efforts will continue, to be able to reduce the amount of the Warrant Article.

At this time, Joe Hoffman distributed a letter to members of the public and Committee members. John Goodhue also distributed an information sheet containing statistical data on Gilford. He advised the Committee that the Beans are donating \$1,000,000 in value to the Town of Gilford. Everett McLaughlin also encouraged the Budget Committee to consider how this acquisition will reduce the stress on municipal services. He estimates the payback for the property will occur within three (3) years of the purchase.

More discussion ensued on the issue of hunting on the property. Selectman Doten feels that any hunting issues are beyond the realm of recreation.

Bill Phillips moved to support a Warrant Article for the acquisition of the Bean property in the amount of \$1,025,000, to be purchased through the issuance of a long-term bond. Doug Lambert seconded. Motion carried by voice vote 6-1-1. John O'Brien abstained and Bob Brent voted no.

Fire Truck – Assistant Town Administrator Shackett advised the Budget Committee that this \$325,000 Warrant Article is supported by the Board of Selectmen, with the understanding it will be a lease/purchase agreement over three years, with the first year being paid for by a withdrawal from a Capital Reserve Fund.

Connie Grant moved to support a Warrant Article for the purchase of a new fire truck, in the amount of \$325,000, to be purchased through the issuance of a three-year bond. Bob Brent seconded.

Bill Phillips asked Chief Hayes to explain the difference between a pumper and an attack pumper. Fire Chief Jim Hayes provided this explanation. Bob Brent referred to a letter written from Gilford resident Jack McDevitt regarding the purchase of a fire truck. Chief Hayes indicated that this letter contains some information that is not accurate, including the matter of contractual mutual aid. Chief Hayes also responded to several questions regarding how fire apparatus is used, the use of foam in fire suppression, the differences between the Laconia and Gilford Fire Departments, the size of the fleet, and ISO ratings. Sean Murphy expressed disappointment over the fact that no Budget Committee members attended the recent Open House sponsored by the Fire Department, where many of these issues could be better explained.

A show of hands vote indicated four (4) voting yes and three (3) voting no. Motion carried.

Default Budget – Assistant Town Administrator Shackett provided an explanation of the 2007 Default Budget. She stated that this budget has been prepared consistently since the inception of SB-2. Doug Lambert questioned the inclusion of wage increases in the Default Budget, as well as the fact that some default budget items are greater than the proposed budget. ATA Shackett also advised the Board that she has consulted with NH DRA on the preparation of the Default Budget and the only guidance that they provided is that it must be consistent.

Selectman Grant suggested that this discussion be postponed to the December 7, 2006 Budget Committee meeting, after the members of the Board of Selectmen have an opportunity to further review the Default Budget. Chairman Hickok will advise the School District that their portion of that Budget Committee Meeting will commence at 7:00 p.m., following the Default Budget and Skip Murphy's proposal.

Sean Murphy moved to recommend \$335,600 as follows: Warrant Article for Bridge Capital Reserve - \$271,600; Warrant Article for Highway Equipment Capital Reserve - \$30,000; and \$34,000 to Laconia Water Works. Doug Lambert seconded. Motion carried by voice vote. These items were inadvertently not voted on at previous meetings.

Connie Grant moved to recommend \$10,000 for Invasive Species Management. Sean Murphy seconded. Motion carried by voice vote 6-1-1. John O'Brien abstained and Doug Lambert voted no. This item was inadvertently not voted on at last week's meeting.

Bob Brent moved to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2006 meeting. Doug Lambert seconded. Motion carried.

Connie Grant moved to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2006 meeting. Bob Brent seconded. Motion carried. John O'Brien abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p. m. The next Budget Committee meeting will be

Thursday, December 7, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at Gilford Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey
Administrative Secretary