

## **GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**April 26, 2007**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Gilford Town Hall  
Conference Room A**

Members Present: Dale Dormody, Terry Stewart, Skip Murphy, Bob Brent, John O'Brien, Phyllis Corrigan, Dick Hickok, Sue Greene, Doug Lambert, Margo Weeks and Gus Benavides

Members Absent: Bill Phillips

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 this is the 2007 Organizational Meeting and the first item to be addressed is the election of a Chairman. Skip Murphy moved to nominate Dick Hickok as Chairman and John O'Brien seconded. Motion carried.

Doug Lambert moved to nominate John O'Brien as Vice Chairman. Bob Brent seconded. Motion carried.

Each member of the Budget Committee introduced themselves.

Chairman Hickok stated that the issue of sub-committees and procedures would be addressed next. He provided an overview of how sub-committees functioned in the past. Doug Lambert suggested that the Budget Committee develop their own page within the Town's website and include more detailed information. Chairman Hickok suggested that the administrative portion of the budget be presented first, before all other departments. Discussion ensued on this issue.

The matter of sub-committee recommendations was discussed next. Doug Lambert suggested a template to help standardize the recommendations and create specific objectives and criteria. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett agreed with this idea and felt that it could be developed.

John O'Brien expressed concern with Committee members wanting to vote again on a specific budget that they may have been absent for when the original vote took place. Chairman Hickok agreed with Mr. O'Brien. Extensive discussion ensued on how to handle this situation. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett reminded Committee members that all votes, which take place prior to the vote just before the public hearing, are considered as preliminary recommendations.

Chairman Hickok pointed out the "time crunch" that is involved in the budget process. Dale Dormody stated that he feels all Committee members should have an opportunity to vote if they are absent at a particular budget session. At this time, Town Administrator Shackett relayed a concern expressed by Department Managers, when the recommendation made by the sub-committee is substantially different from what has been discussed. This issue was also extensively discussed, with most Committee members not seeing this as a problem. Dale

Dormody thinks that if the recommendation is substantially different from what is discussed at the sub-committee meeting, that the budget should be discussed again with Department Managers. Bob Brent stated that he does not feel that a Department Manager should be present when the sub-committee meets to prepare their recommendation for that department.

Doug Lambert feels that the sub-committees were fair and accommodating. Chairman Hickok stated that the procedures that have been discussed will be followed as they have been in the past. As far as other meeting matters are concerned, Sue Greene asked for one person to speak at a time. Phyllis Corrigan also pointed out being able to speak without being interrupted. Chairman Hickok pointed out that this issue was also brought to his attention by Committee member Bill Phillips.

Mr. Phillips also questioned who speaks on behalf of the Budget Committee. Chairman Hickok stated that any opinions expressed by Budget Committee members are their own personal views and only information released from the Chair is to be considered the view of the Budget Committee.

Dale Dormody pointed out that he feels behavior outside of a meeting should be the same as being at a meeting. He feels there should be a standard for Budget Committee members. Chairman Hickok feels that the conduct at the meetings is of reasonable politeness. School Board representative Margo Weeks pointed out that she feels the "line" had been crossed several times during the budget sessions, where people were insulted during a meeting and dishonesty was implied. Doug Lambert does not feel that you can limit speech. Chairman Hickok stated that if discussions become as "fiery" as they did on occasion during the past year, he will be shutting them down.

Dale Dormody also stated that he would like to see the same standard at Budget Committee as is present at the Deliberative Session. At the beginning of the Deliberative Session, the Moderator reads a statement on the expected decorum of the meeting.

Selectman representative Gus Benavides stated that he feels it is all right to be passionate about an issue and bring it to the table, but the Budget Committee members need to have high standards wherever they are, since they always are representing the Budget Committee. He pointed out the importance of all voices being heard, but at the same time, the Town also needs to be proud of its representatives. Chairman Hickok added that it is all right to disagree with civility.

Brief discussion ensued on public access television and how public participation would be incorporated into each meeting.

Dale Dormody then reviewed the points contained in his recent letter on "Best Practices". These points included training for Committee members, standards for sub-committees, website issues and more public sessions.

Phyllis Corrigan pointed out that she feels it is the duty of the Budget Committee members to bring opinions from the public to the meeting. Sue Greene pointed out that the Budget Committee conducts a public meeting every Thursday during the budget session months. Chairman Hickok also pointed out the fact that the Gilford Budget Committee puts in much more effort than other towns, making it unique.

Doug Lambert would like to have another meeting in May or June, to review the status of the

2007 Budget, particularly with the recent road damage. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett provided an overview of the road damage, which at this point appears to be at approximately \$100,000 of qualifying expenses for FEMA reimbursement. She also pointed out the Town's "no spending" directive that is frequently given to Department Managers, allowing them a very small window of time to "spend".

It was the consensus of the Committee that sub-committees will be established at the next meeting, which will be scheduled for June 2007.

Dale Dormody brought up the issue of conflict of interest since Katherine Dormody is the Gilford Library Director. He advised Committee members that he has researched this issue through a State of NH Ethics Committee Guideline booklet. He proceeded to define "conflict" from these guidelines and does not feel that it is necessary for him to recuse himself, as long as he completes a form disclosing the nature of his relationship with the affected person or entity. Accordingly, he provided a Declaration of Intent to Chairman Hickok, stating that he intends to participate and vote on all issues presented to the Committee.

Doug Lambert expressed concern with these guidelines and feels that conflict of interest is defined elsewhere in the State RSA's and he would like an opportunity to research it further. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that she called NH DRA regarding the matter of Dale and Katherine Dormody, and it was their opinion that no conflict of interest exists.

Selectman Benavides brought up the matter of public perception to Mr. Dormody. He stated that although his integrity is not in question, it is important to consider what the public might perceive. Mr. Dormody stated that regardless of what other information is reviewed, he is accepting these guidelines and has acted accordingly.

Mark Corey, a member of the public, questioned the availability of Budget Committee minutes on the Town's website.

Doug Lambert will conduct further research the RSA's regarding conflict of interest and the Budget Committee will continue the discussion of conflict of interest at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p. m. The next Budget Committee meeting will be scheduled for June 2007 at the Gilford Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey  
Administrative Secretary