

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 18, 2007

6:30 p.m.

Gilford Town Hall

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

Members Absent: Terry Stewart

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 welcomed the Committee to the first meeting to discuss the 2008 budget. He turned the meeting over to Assistant Town Administrator Debra Shackett, who presented a PowerPoint presentation, which included both an overview of the budget process and highlights of each budget category. (Copy attached.)

Doug Lambert inquired if the budget that was being presented included all line items, with the exception of the Police Department addition. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett replied yes.

Highlights of the Administration budget included moving the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's salary from Executive to Town Clerk/Tax Collector and a reduction in the Technology budget due to contracted support in lieu of wages and benefits. Discussion ensued on the projected increase in the Appraisal Department. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett explained the advantages of having an outside contracted firm provide staff for appraisal functions, which can fluctuate during the year. Bob Brent asked how many hours are included in the appraisal contract. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that she would be able to provide this information.

As far as Legal Expenses, a 33% increase is projected for 2008, due largely to additional costs resulting from Union activity and increasing litigation in the land use area. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett also elaborated on how legal expenses have been broken down into line items to reflect General Legal, Litigation and Personnel Matters.

Under Personnel Administration, discussion ensued on the matter of health insurance costs decreasing, due to employee premium contributions, attrition and rate decreases. Cemetery expenses are increasing and "outside agencies" have been level funded. Under Welfare, this section of the budget has been broken down by category, such as heat, electricity, food, housing and medical.

Under Capital Projects, bridge inspection and maintenance was discussed. The Town Clerk/Tax Collector's budget is increased due to a reclassification of the wages of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector, several elections in 2008 and the purchase of a voting booth. At this time, Doug Lambert asked about the situation regarding the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's salary. Selectman Benavides replied that the Selectmen intend to address the compensation of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector by presenting a warrant article that would fully comply with NH law.

After further questions, Town Administrator Juris advised the Budget Committee that the Board of Selectmen needs additional time to adequately address this issue and was not prepared to comment beyond the statement made by Selectman Benavides. Doug Lambert then brought up the issue of the Board of Selectmen having the authority to transfer funds between line items of the budget.

Brief discussion then ensued on milfoil removal. Town Administrator Juris explained how milfoil removal funds were expended in 2007 and the fact that the Board of Selectmen has specified \$10,000 of the \$15,000 being proposed must be used at the Town docks. The Buildings and Grounds budget has seen a slight savings due to personnel changes.

Discussion ensued on the purchase of a jet rodder. This piece of equipment will be towed by Town vehicles and its cost will be divided between Public Works and the Sewer Fund. The Parks and Recreation budget reflects a 7% decrease, partly due to the establishment of the Recreation Revolving Fund. Discussion ensued on the request from Parks and Recreation to establish a Capital Reserve Fund to replace playground equipment at the Village Field and continue other maintenance projects. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that the Capital Reserve Fund will be part of the three-year program of playground improvements, with \$20,000 being designated for each year.

Extensive discussion then ensued on the matter of keeping capital projects separate from the regular operating budget. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett detailed the reasons why she believes that the two should remain separate, especially as it relates to a default budget.

Moving onto the Library budget, Phyllis Corrigan inquired who will be accepting the new library after it is constructed. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett replied that a Certificate of Occupancy would be issued by the Building Inspector, prior to acceptance by the Town.

Assistant Town Administrator Shackett then briefly reviewed the projects that were considered, but not included, in the 2008 budget. Skip Murphy then inquired about having access to the CIP. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that the CIP Committee would be meeting again soon, but she is able to provide him with a copy of the 2007 CIP.

The Committee also briefly discussed the proposed fiscal year change and how the existing library building will be utilized after the new building is constructed. Town Administrator Juris stated that SAU 73 has expressed an interest in obtaining the existing building and this could be a long, legal process in locating the heirs.

John O'Brien stated that he would like additional information prior to the review of Outside Agencies and has created a form that he feels will be helpful in obtaining this information. Extensive discussion ensued on how to procedurally handle the review of Outside Agencies. Chairman Hickok does not feel that receiving this additional information will affect the outcome of the vote by the citizens of Gilford. The possibility of creating a warrant article for each Outside Agency was also suggested. John O'Brien clarified that his intention with the creation of the form is to get additional information, not cut the funding.

Bill Phillips moved to send out a letter to the Outside Agencies, requesting the information outlined by John O'Brien, as well how much money is received from other towns and government entities. Doug Lambert seconded. Motion carried. Chairman Hickok directed the members of the Administration Sub-Committee to further define John O'Brien's letter, prior

to it being sent out.

The Committee reviewed Sub-Committee assignments and added Doug Lambert to the Police Department Sub-Committee. Doug Lambert stated that he is happy with the budget presented tonight, which reflects previous suggestions made by the Budget Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey
Administrative Secretary