

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 09, 2008

6:30 p.m.

Gilford Town Hall

Members Present: John O'Brien, Sue Greene, Dick Hickok, Margo Weeks, Dale Dormody, Terry Stewart, Skip Murphy, Doug Lambert, Bill Phillips, Richard Young, Kevin Roy and Selectmen J. Kevin Hayes

Members Absent: None.

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Scott Dunn, Finance Director Geoffrey Ruggles and Recording Secretary Renee McMahon.

Dick Hickok called the meeting to order at 6:30pm, led the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed attendees and had the Budget Committee introduce themselves to help familiarize the new Town Administrator and Finance Director with the Budget Committee.

He outlined the purpose of the meeting which was to review the budget recommendations presented by the Town Administrator, Scott Dunn and Finance Director Geoffrey Ruggles for the 2009 fiscal year.

Chairman Hickok then began a review of the meeting handout noting an increase of 0.36% from the 2008 budget approved by the voters at Town Meeting. Mr. Dunn noted that Town is also faced with rising costs for Fuel, Sand, Salt, Tires, Trash Disposal and retirement expenses (through the NH Retirement System) which we have no control.

The handout consisted of the following requests for consideration.

1. a new account to care for old and abandoned cemeteries
2. an increase in the part-time hours for the Fire Inspector
3. additional maintenance on traffic light emergency responder devices
4. the conversion of a surplus police cruiser to be used for the Fire-Rescue Administrative purposes.
5. the training of an existing Fire-Rescue employee to become a paramedic
6. adding funds to rent equipment to be used for roadside ditching
7. adding funds for road maintenance (primarily resurfacing)
8. an increase in part-time hours for a Recreation Department Assistant
9. an increase in part-time hours for the Library.

Doug Lambert and Sue Greene questioned the additional vehicle for the fire department.

Dick Hickok questioned how the additional increase in hours would be filled. Scott explained that an employee of the P&R Dept moved to the Library and that left a vacancy that needs to be filled. Scott also explained that the hours would only increase to maintain the part-time status and no benefits would be issued to this new employee.

Geoffrey Ruggles went over the spreadsheet for the Capitol Improvement Program. Doug Lambert wanted to make note to thank Mr. Ruggles for having this information available IN COMPUTER FORMAT for the Budget review at the first meeting. This is something that Doug

has asked for in the past and it has not been available to them as such an early meeting.

Doug also wanted to thank the Board of Selectmen for their vote on the outside agencies for last year. Mr. Dunn was asked if the Town Budget will be supporting any additional outside agencies for 2009, his response was that the same outside agencies that were supported in the 2008 budget will be supported in the 2009 budget.

Terry Stewart noted that the Welfare Director, Erika Johnson was asking for an increase in the Welfare Budget by 30% over 2008 to a level of \$70,000. Erika's recommendation was based on the anticipated increases in the cost of home heating fuels, gasoline, rent and food. This increase was requested due to the amount of turn downs from the outside agencies.

Doug Lambert reiterated the spending cap pledge that he signed at the last meeting.

Mr. Dunn noted to the Budget Committee that you will see some of the department's budgets now have line items for merit pay (separate from wage accounts) and that each department will now be budgeting for its own vehicles fuel.

Sue Greene inquired about the amount of unpaid property taxes in the Town of Gilford. Sue requested from the Finance Department the comparison from last year to this year for unpaid taxes.

Terry Stewart asked Town Administrator Dunn what the moral was like throughout the town since the change in administration. Mr. Dunn replied that he thinks the moral is up and all is going strong. Terry asked if there had been any employees leave the town since the change. Mr. Dunn informed the committee that he had received one resignation last week.

Dick Hickok asked about the employee portion of the health insurance. Dick asked if there were a lot of employees paying the 5%. Geoff noted that the numerous new employees are paying the 5% and the grandfathered employees are paying the 2.5% and working their way up to the 5% over the next few years.

Scott stated that the police department's union agreement is in the hand of a MEDIATOR and that he has been in contact with AFSCME. Skip Murphy asked if the Evergreen Clause was passed. Yes it was.

Terry Stewart inquired about a schedule for the meetings and contact information for all members. Dick suggested that the members pass around a sheet of paper and write down their name phone number and email address. This will be typed up and handed out to all members to keep in their budget books. Sue Greene asked for all the Administration names, phone numbers and email addresses be added to that list.

Doug Lambert asked Mr. Dunn if there will be any large requests from departments that were turned down by the selectmen that the Budget Committee will be hearing about in the meetings. Mr. Dunn said that there were a few items to be discussed that were turned down.

Doug also inquired about the money set aside in DPW out of last year's budget. Selectmen Hayes commented on the spending and assured the committee that the money is still on hold and that Director Morgan was asked to minimize town wide paving. Doug questioned if the cost of liquid asphalt had gone up as much as they projected. Selectmen Hayes stated that it had not.

Skip Murphy asked Finance Director Ruggles what figures he used to project the fuel cost for the 2009 budget. Mr. Ruggles response was that the fuel is purchased through the state and what ever price the state locks into we are granted the same rate. Fuel is purchased at the pump station next to lily pond.

Margo weeks motioned to end the meeting, a second motion was stated and the meeting was closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee N McMahon
Recording Secretary