

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 5, 2009
6:30 p.m.
Town Hall

Members Present: John O'Brien, Sue Greene, Dick Hickok, Margo Weeks, Dale Dormody, Doug Lambert, Kevin Roy, Phyllis Corrigan, Fred Butler, Mark Corry, Terry Stewart and Skip Murphy

Members Absent: None

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Scott Dunn, Finance Director Geoff Ruggles and Executive Secretary Sandra Bailey.

In the audience were Cemetery Trustees Sue Leach, Judy Cott and Dee Chitty, Police Chief John Markland, Deputy Police Chief Kevin Keenan, DPLU Technical Assistant Stephanie Verdile-Philibotte, Conservation Commission Chairman John Goodhue and Conservation Commission Vice Chairman Lee Duncan.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok welcomed the Committee to this evening's meeting and turned the meeting over to the Cemetery Trustees for their presentation. Cemetery Trustees Vice-Chairman Judy Cott provided a PowerPoint presentation for the Budget Committee, comprised of several photographs of cemeteries in Gilford. For each photograph, she provided a detailed explanation of issues pertaining to the gravestones, trees, stone walls, etc.

Sue Leach also provided a brief history of the Town of Gilford. She stressed that for a long period in Gilford's history, the gravestones are the only vital records that are actually available. She also emphasized the importance of tree removal before cemetery restoration can be started. The removal of certain trees will also help lower future maintenance costs. Sue Leach also pointed out the fact that Gilford's Bicentennial commemoration will be in 2012.

Doug Lambert asked about the possibility of a local service organization "adopting" a cemetery. Judy Cott replied that she contacted the local Boy Scout Leader, who was not very enthusiastic. Doug Lambert does not think that removal of trees is a requirement and thinks it could be completed in phases. Judy Cott stated that with some of the cemeteries, it is very difficult to get equipment onto the site and as a result, the tree removal should be completed at one time. She also explained that the stones cannot be reset until the tree issues are resolved.

Doug Lambert brought up the matter of abandonment – he is concerned that the process for declaring a cemetery abandoned has not been completed.

Town Administrator Dunn then explained that the \$14,000 budget decrease approved by the Board of Selectmen for Old Cemeteries does not tie into the \$14,000 itemized for tree removal. Phyllis Corrigan asked about actual family ties to some of the cemeteries. Margo Weeks asked which cemeteries were prioritized for tree removal – the reply was it the Weeks and Ames cemeteries are prioritized.

At this time, the Cemetery Trustees distributed handouts to the Committee members, which contained extensive information on Gilford's cemeteries. Dale Dormody asked if the Trustees

had ranked the various cemeteries based on the amount of work and expense involved in restoring them. Judy Cott replied yes, and the Weeks Cemetery has the most need. Skip Murphy suggested that the Trustees take care of the cemetery requiring the least amount of work first, rather than last. Dee Chitty is concerned that, in the meantime, the Weeks Cemetery could be lost.

Doug Lambert again expressed concern regarding the procedure for having cemeteries being declared abandoned – it should be done before any work is being performed. Skip Murphy suggested that the Trustees check with the Town Clerk regarding the abandonment issue.

Town Administrator Dunn then explained the difference between the budget line items for the Old Cemetery Maintenance and Cemetery Expense. Old Cemetery Maintenance is for the abandoned cemeteries and is handled by the Cemetery Trustees. The line item for Cemetery Expense of \$30,000 is allocated to the Pine Grove and McCoy Cemetery Association. Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of combining the two entities. Skip Murphy reiterated his concern for finding out the abandonment status of the old cemeteries.

Sue Greene credited the Cemetery Trustees for their hard work but asked about a service organization helping out. Judy Cott explained their situation with trying to find flag donations for Revolutionary War soldiers that are buried in Gilford for Memorial Day. Both the American Legion and DAR were not willing to help out, but Wilkinson-Beane Funeral Home was happy to make the donation. She also pointed out that it is essential for the tree removal to be handled by professionals.

Terry Stewart moved to approve \$12,000 for Old Cemetery Maintenance, in order to restore some of the funding to the Cemetery Trustees. Margo Weeks seconded. Terry Stewart is hopeful that this funding would enable the Trustees to take care of most of the tree removal at the Weeks Cemetery.

Doug Lambert would like to see more publicity because he feels that people who are interested in Gilford's history would be willing to help. Dee Chitty pointed out that the Gilford Steamer has had two recent articles regarding Gilford's cemeteries. Brief discussion ensued regarding the lack of a sub-committee to review the Cemetery Trustees' budget.

A vote on the motion indicated 7- yes and 5-no. Motion carried for a total of \$43,600 under Care of Cemeteries.

The next budget to be reviewed was for the Conservation Commission. Chairman John Goodhue asked Vice Chairman Lee Duncan to explain the increased budget request for Groundwater Protection. Vice Chairman Duncan provided an overview of the lake and tributary monitoring, specifically Black Brook and Gunstock Brook. The Commission is concerned with the lake's contamination, which has increased since 1998 data. If this contamination reaches a certain level, the EPA could intervene and restrict building and development in Gilford. Discussion ensued regarding the factors contributing to the contamination, including fertilizer, too much impervious surface and large rain events in recent years. Doug Lambert feels that the issues causing the contamination should be addressed.

Doug Lambert moved to decrease the Conservation Commission's budget by \$8,400, of which \$8,000 would come out of the Invasive Species Management line and \$400 would be removed from the Meetings/Travel Expense line. Skip Murphy seconded.

Mark Corry asked how consultant Nancy Rendall is paid. Chairman Goodhue replied that she is paid from the Conservation Fund.

Discussion then ensued regarding milfoil removal (Invasive Species Management). A brief history of the work previously done was explained by Chairman Goodhue. Various opinions were expressed regarding the pros and cons of hand pulling vs. chemical removal. Sue Greene is in favor of keeping the funds intact for this line item. It is important to preserve the lake and work completed to date is very commendable. Skip Murphy asked about the anticipated rate that would be needed in the budget to keep this problem under control. Chairman Goodhue stated that it is important to continue with the hand pulling efforts or the milfoil will return and they would need to start the process over again.

Chairman Goodhue also stated that the contribution received from the State for milfoil removal was due to the extensive private contributions that were also made.

Margo Weeks inquired about the testing done through the Water Quality Monitoring Program. Vice Chairman Lee Duncan responded that the representatives from UNH or PSU make recommendations to the Town on what to do as a result of the testing, i.e. best management practices.

Skip Murphy expressed concern with the possibility of continued State funding for the program. Chairman Goodhue responded that the State has sent their dive teams, at no charge to the Town, to assist in the hand pulling process of milfoil removal. Vice Chairman Duncan added that the State looks at the percentage contribution. That is, the higher the private contributions, the better your chances are of receiving State funding. Selectman O'Brien spoke in favor of the milfoil removal and pointed out that many organizations and private residents contribute personally to the milfoil removal. Doug Lambert thinks that the milfoil should be removed by chemicals.

DPLU Technical Assistant Stephanie Verdile-Philibotte urged the Budget Committee to return the \$400 to the budget line for Meetings and Travel Expense. The Conservation Commission is a very active group and their volunteers are eager to learn. The interests of the Commission go beyond that of Lake Winnepesaukee. Terry Stewart does not think that the Budget Committee should remove the funds for milfoil removal. Vice Chairman Lee Duncan pointed out that the \$18,000 expended in 2009 for milfoil removal covered four different areas. A vote on the motion, which would change the total budget amount to \$13,240, resulted in a vote of 3-yes, 9-no. Motion failed.

Dale Dormody moved to approve \$21,640 for the Conservation Commission. Phyllis Corrigan seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 9-yes and 3-no.

The last budget to be reviewed was that of the Police Department. Members of the Police Sub-committee were Kevin Roy, Sue Greene and Dale Dormody. Dale Dormody began the review of their worksheet with full-time wages. The number of personnel is the same as in 2009 and the proposed increase for 2010 is only 0.50%. He also noted that two long-term employees retired in 2009 and has been replaced by newer, lower-seniority staff.

He also pointed out that the Life and Disability line item shows a 61.9% increase due to an error in the Police Spreadsheet, which erroneously shows the Fire Department costs, which are substantially higher. Although the 2009 actual expense is considerably lower than the budgeted amount, at this time, it could exceed it outfitting two new police officers who have just

been hired. A complete set of uniforms can cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the General Supply expenses that can be incurred during Motorcycle Week, as well as the food and medical expenses under K-9 Maintenance.

Dale Dormody moved to approve \$2,202,189 for the Police Department. Mark Corry seconded. Phyllis Corrigan asked about the increase in NH Retirement. Finance Director Ruggles explained how, between the Town's contribution increasing and the State's contribution decreasing, the line item indicates a sizable increase.

Doug Lambert asked Chief Markland about grant money. Chief Markland replied that grant money is available for specific purposes, such as DWI patrol, radar purchases and attendance at a supervisor's course at the Police Academy. Following 9/11, grant money has trended more towards fire departments.

A vote on the motion indicated 10-yes and 2-no. Motion carried.

Chairman Hickok asked Committee members if they would like to invite Alida Millham to a meeting to explain the County budget. Skip Murphy moved to invite Alida Millham to a Budget Committee meeting. Margo Weeks seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 12-0.

Margo Weeks moved to approve the minutes of the October 29, 2009 Budget Committee meeting, with the correction previously noted by Doug Lambert via e-mail. Phyllis Corrigan seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Margo Weeks moved to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Sue Greene seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bailey
Executive Secretary