

**GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**November 19, 2009**  
**6:30 p.m.**  
**Town Hall**

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

Members Absent: Doug Lambert

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

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok welcomed the Committee to this evening's meeting and advised them this session is intended to be a final review of the Town budget. Before beginning the review, however, he stated that he just received a letter of resignation from Committee member Doug Lambert, effective immediately.

Terry Stewart inquired what the legal process would be at this point, for a replacement. Chairman Hickok stated that he did not feel that it made sense, midway through the 2010 budget review process, to appoint a new member. Because Mr. Lambert's appointment would have run out in March 2010, Chairman Hickok would like to leave the position unfilled until March Town Meeting.

Town Administrator Dunn agreed with Chairman Hickok's reasoning and said that he would check the statutes to determine if there is any time frame to fill a vacant position.

Chairman Hickok noted that since members of the Fire Department were in attendance and there were some concerns brought up last week, he would begin discussion on the Fire Department budget. Sue Greene asked that the duties of the Fire Inspector be clarified. Deputy Chief John Beland stated that the role of the Fire Inspector is not just for new construction. He also deals with Life Safety Code issues with commercial buildings and schools, which is mandated by the State Fire Marshall. He also inspects daycare centers, foster home and shelters. The Fire Inspector also reviews plans for alarm and sprinkler systems.

Deputy Chief Beland continued with his presentation. He emphasized that part of the Fire Inspector's responsibilities is to add an element of safety for firefighters because code violations cause accidents. He also attends Site Study meetings, assists the Department of Planning and Land Use with plan review and provides backup for the Building Inspector. He is actively involved in safety issues at Gilford schools and is a member of the School District's Emergency Planning Committee.

Deputy Chief Beland provided salary figures for 2008 and the projection for 2009. Sue Greene further asked if he inspects residential property. Deputy Beland replied that he is responsible for residential inspections concerning heating systems or gas.

At this time, Terry Stewart commented on the discussion held last week regarding the privatization of ambulance service. He thought it made sense that the Town's personnel would

be at the scene of a medical call, performing other functions beyond just medical, but he questioned why the duty personnel could not perform inspections. Deputy Beland responded that the firefighters do perform general in-service inspections but they are not Life Safety Code inspections. The Fire Inspector performs much more technical inspections, including plan review. Contractors are frequently requesting his services.

Terry Stewart expressed concern that once a position is in place, it is there forever. Selectman O'Brien pointed out that the Town was able to save money being able to hire an individual for this job who was already trained.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the line item for ambulance supplies. Deputy Beland stated that an audit at LRGH created this issue, where Towns now have to pay for ambulance supplies. The buying power and convenience of restocking the ambulance at the hospital makes it the best method of purchasing supplies. Fire Engineer Bill Akerley pointed out that the hospital sells supplies to communities at cost with no markup.

Having completed the review of the Fire Department, Chairman Hickok asked Committee members if they had any other portions of the budget that they would like to review. At this time, Terry Stewart passed out budget worksheet showing the amount of merit pay raises proposed for each Town department. He stated that he is proposing these cuts because of the economic times we are in, not because Town employees do not deserve merit pay increases. He also realizes that some of the figures do include merit pay raises for Union employees.

Terry Stewart moved to reduce the Town budget by \$52,302.38 for merit pay raises, as indicated on his budget worksheet. Skip Murphy seconded. Kevin Roy commented that in his job, he sees many individuals in the private sector. He stated that he has questioned approximately 25-30 individuals about their views on merit pay raises, and none of them had an issue with it. He does not feel it is right to punish Town employees. Selectman O'Brien also pointed out that employees are also dealing with the loss of COLA pay increase and increased health insurance costs.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the fact that once a type of wage or benefit is removed from the budget it is very unlikely that it will ever be reinstated. Selectman O'Brien would like to keep good employees and does not support this motion. Skip Murphy pointed out that since the Budget Committee would be voting on the bottom line of the budget, the Board of Selectmen is able to still pay merit pay increases if they transfer funds.

Chairman Hickok pointed out that the Town of Gilford has already absorbed the \$100K+ additional expense for health insurance premiums for 2010. Because of this, he recommended that the Committee not cut the \$52,302.38 for merit pay raises. Dale Dormody agreed, stating that the Town employees are already addressing the \$100K+ shortfall for health insurance premiums and the Board of Selectmen worked diligently to come in with a lean budget.

Phyllis Corrigan also pointed out that over the past few years, the Town employees have consistently dealt with decreased wages and benefits. She does not feel the Committee should cut the merit pay raises. Further extensive discussion ensued regarding the matter of Town employee compensation. Town Administrator Dunn pointed out that with the loss of the sick pay bonus, which is being used to offset the increased health insurance premiums, employees are giving up a week's pay and will be paying additional for their health insurance premiums. The Town's Personnel Policies will be modified for January 1, 2010 to reflect these changes. A vote on the motion indicated 3-Yes and 7-No. Dale Dormody abstained. Motion failed.

Next, Fred Butler provided 2010 budget figures for the Gunstock Acres Village Water District. Brief discussion ensued regarding some minor changes being made to the proposed budget. Fred Butler moved \$238,115 for the Gunstock Acres Village Water District. Kurt Webber seconded. Motion carried with all in favor 11-0.

The following School District Budget Sub-committees were established:

Administration and Maintenance: Terry Stewart, Dick Hickok and Fred Butler

Technology: Skip Murphy and Mark Corry

GHS: Terry Stewart, Mark Corry and Sue Greene

GMS: Dale Dormody, Kevin Roy and Skip Murphy

GES: Phyllis Corrigan and Dale Dormody

Special Education: Sue Green, Phyllis Corrigan and Fred Butler

John O'Brien moved to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2009 Budget Committee meeting. Mark Corry seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Kurt Webber moved to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Terry Stewart seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bailey  
Executive Secretary