

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 7, 2010
6:30 p.m.
Town Hall

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

Member Absent: Phyllis Corrigan

Also in attendance were Superintendent of Schools Paul DeMinico; Asst. Superintendent for Business Scott Isabelle; Town Administrator Scott Dunn and Finance Director Geoff Ruggles. Also in attendance was Executive Secretary Sandra Bailey.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok welcomed the Committee to this evening's meeting and stated that tonight's review will begin with the School District Budget. He stated that the School District is submitting a warrant article for a 25-year lease agreement for Administrative office space. Asst. Superintendent Scott Isabelle stated that the District would like the Budget Committee to make a recommendation on this article, in which the School District will pay the Town the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) per year for the office space at 2 Belknap Mountain Road. If the warrant article is not approved at the School District and Town Meetings, the agreement would be renewed annually.

Sue Greene inquired about naming the building for Wilbur and Louise Harding. Town Administrator Dunn confirmed this, by request of the heirs, and further stated that a plaque will be placed on the building to this effect.

Margo Weeks moved to support the Warrant Article for a 25-year lease agreement for Administrative office space, as written. John O'Brien seconded. Terry Stewart questioned why the Budget Committee was making a recommendation on this article. Brief discussion ensued and Scott Isabelle stated that recent legislation does allow them to request a recommendation from the Budget Committee on a non-monetary warrant article.

Skip Murphy stated that he is opposed to supporting this warrant article because he thinks that the offices should have been relocated to the Gilford Elementary School. Margo Weeks replied that there were pros and cons to both locations. Chairman Hickok stated that the old library building exists and it should be used. Margo Weeks replied that it is hard to take space back after it has been designated for a different use. A vote on the motion indicated Yes-8, No-1 and Abstain-1. Motion carried. At this time, Chairman Hickok briefly described the format he will be following at next week's public hearings, which led to brief discussion regarding the difference between a public meeting and public hearing.

Chairman Hickok stated that the Committee will now begin their review of the Town's 2010 Budget. Town Administrator Dunn stated that the Committee needs to make a recommendation on the Collective Bargaining Agreement with AFSCME, petition warrant articles from the three outside agencies and the "sweep" article, which is Article 12 in the warrant and requires a tally of the Budget Committee's vote.

Town Administrator Dunn reported that the DPW employees willingly gave up their sick pay bonus, in order to offset the increased health insurance rates. Terry Stewart inquired if the goal was achieved regarding reductions in the total budget to offset the increase in health insurance rates. Town Administrator Dunn replied no, but the issue is still outstanding with the Police Department Union. John O'Brien further stated that Board of Selectmen is still the negotiating with the Police Department Union.

John O'Brien moved to approve \$15,603 to fund the agreement between the Town and AFSCME, for the year April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011. Margo Weeks seconded. Terry Stewart stated that he has trust and confidence with the DPW union and at the time he suggested cutting all merit increases for 2010, he

was not sure if enough funds would be cut to offset the increased health insurance rates. He will support this motion. A vote on the motion indicated Yes-10. Motion carried with all in favor.

Moving onto discussion on the petition warrant articles, Dale Dormody does not think a recommendation should be made until after the public hearing next week. Terry Stewart replied that the Budget Committee knows what they will say. Margo Weeks added that the support of the outside agencies is ultimately up to the voters of Gilford. Mark Corry pointed out that the Town's e-mail blast has been helpful, since the petitions for support of outside agencies have been posted on the Town's website.

Further extensive discussion ensued regarding financial disclosure of outside agencies and when a recommendation from the Budget Committee should be made. After comments were made regarding representatives from outside agencies attending various meetings to support their causes, Terry Stewart pointed out that they cannot be helping people and knocking on doors if they are constantly attending meetings. He also feels that all outside agencies should be funded at the County level.

Dale Dormody stated that he would like to see more information from the outside agencies before making a recommendation. Terry Stewart moved to postpone the recommendation on outside agencies until after the public hearing on January 14, 2010. Margo Weeks seconded. A vote on the motion indicated Yes-6 and No-4. Motion carried. Margo Weeks also added that she does not blame these organizations for not coming to meetings in multiple towns, because they need to be providing services to people, not attending meetings.

Moving onto a vote of Article 12, which represents the operating budget of \$11,113,660, Chairman Hickok pointed out that the Default Budget is greater than the proposed operating budget. Kevin Roy moved to recommend \$11,113,660 for the 2010 operating budget. Mark Corry seconded. Brief discussion ensued regarding the small difference between the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the recommendation of the Budget Committee. Town Administrator Dunn reported that the Board of Selectmen will make their final recommendation at their meeting on Wednesday, January 13, 2010. A vote on the motion indicated Yes-10 and No-0. Motion carried.

Margo Weeks moved to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2009 Budget Committee meeting. John O'Brien seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 10-0.

Terry Stewart made a brief statement concerning his recently published remarks regarding the December 17, 2009 Budget Committee meeting. This led to further discussion regarding proper decorum at meetings.

Margo Weeks moved to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. Mark Corry seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bailey
Executive Secretary