

## **GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**October 14, 2010**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Town Hall**

Members Present: Gus Benavides, Sue Greene, Dick Hickok, Dale Dormody, Terry Stewart, Kevin Roy, Phyllis Corrigan, David Horvath, Fred Butler, Paul Blandford, Skip Murphy and Pat Labonte

Members Absent: None

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Scott Dunn, Finance Director Geoff Ruggles, Executive Secretary Sandra Bailey, Director of Planning and Land Use John Ayer and Parks and Recreation Director Herb Greene.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Sue Greene stated that she will not be in attendance at the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting where the Cemetery budget would be discussed. Because she is very interested in this budget, she asked Chairman Hickok if the voting could be delayed until the next meeting on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Hickok stated that Committee members are permitted to re-open items after they have been voted on, but did agree to not vote on the Cemetery budget until November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Kevin Roy, representing the Department of Planning and Land Use Sub-committee, provided members with a summary of their findings from their meeting on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Sub-committee member Phyllis Corrigan began by stating that she had questioned Director Ayer at their meeting on the Department's 2010 overtime budget line item, which is already overspent by \$1,352. She had inquired how the Department planned to make up this loss and the response was that Director Ayer would have to be the person to come in and work since he has a salaried position.

Director Ayer, who was in attendance at tonight's meeting, provided further information on overtime issues within the Department. He stated that the employees are "catching on" that no overtime would be permitted. Selectman Benavides added that since building within the Town is down, it is necessary to also reduce wages.

Kevin Roy stated that the Selectmen were recommending a DPLU Wages & Benefits budget of \$263,788, which is a reduction of \$28,712 (9.8%) from 2010.

Dave Horvath inquired about NH Retirement contributions. Town Administrator Dunn replied that the levels of contribution are set by State statute. This led to brief conversation on the possible alternatives to the NH Retirement System. When it was pointed out that any changes would be effective for new employees only, Selectman Benavides stated that no hiring is taking place within the Town, only the replacement of police officers.

The next line item to be discussed was that of Professional Development. Selectman Benavides pointed out that it is important for the Town to invest in their employees and provide adequate training. Director Ayer further pointed out that the \$1,600 in the budget is for the entire department, including the Building Inspector and all Land Use Board/Committee members. Brief discussion ensued regarding the approval process for Professional Development.

The Department is looking to replace their existing photocopier, which is currently eleven (11) years old. The budget has allocated \$8,440 for a new copier and will be purchased by a 4-year lease.

The sub-committee questioned how the \$8,501 was arrived at for the Lakes Region Planning Commission, as well as what the money is used for. Chairman Hickok pointed out that the formula for the allocation is explained in John Ayer's e-mail dated 10/14/10. Terry Stewart expressed concern with this expenditure and suggested not using their services for a period of one year. Skip Murphy thinks that LRPC should be considered an outside agency and secure funding in the same manner as outside agencies. Chairman Hickok stated that this agency is defended by DPW Director Sheldon Morgan, who has extensive interaction with them.

At this time, Dick Waitt, one of Gilford's representatives to the LRPC, provided the Committee with some examples of how services are provided to towns. Skip Murphy expressed concern with the number of agencies in the Lakes Region that promote economic development. He further pointed out that the major industry within the Lakes Region is tourism.

Town Administrator Dunn pointed out that in applying for Federal grants, it is mandated that the process includes a regional planning commission. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the problems associated with the intersection at Belknap Mountain Road/Schoolhouse Hill Road/Route 11-A and the process necessary to have action taken to address the safety issues.

Kevin Roy moved to recommend \$294,440 for the 2011 Department of Planning and Land Use Budget. Selectman Benavides seconded.

Terry Stewart moved to amend the recommendation to \$285,939, eliminating funding for LRPC in the amount of \$8,501. Skip Murphy seconded. Dale Dormody stated that he thinks that it is important, if we were to eliminate funding for LRPC, that the Committee has a better picture of what they would be losing. He thinks that more information is needed. Several Committee members concurred that they would like to have a representative from LRPC attend a Budget Committee meeting. Paul Blandford pointed out that even if the Budget Committee were to eliminate funding of \$8,501, it is at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen whether or not to fund LRPC.

Fred Butler stated that if there is grant money available, it would be worthwhile to

continue funding LRPC. Skip Murphy disagrees because he thinks that something is really needed by the Town, it could be taken care of through the regular budget.

A vote on the amendment showed 5-yes, 7-no. Motion does not prevail.

A vote on the main motion of \$294,440 showed 7-yes and 5-no. Motion carried.

Dave Horvath moved to have Kimon Koulet of the LRPC attend a future meeting to provide further clarification on the workings of the organization. Terry Stewart seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 8-yes and 2-no.

Director Ayer suggested that Committee members submit their questions in advance so that Mr. Koulet will be able to provide them with the information they need.

Dale Dormody presented the findings of the Parks and Recreation Sub-committee, who met on Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>. He began by outlining the major factors affecting the 2011 budget: decreased part-time hours, an associated elimination of benefits for part-time employees, removing the annual contribution to the capital reserve fund and a reduction in requested overtime wage expense.

Dave Horvath, who is also a member of that Sub-committee, further stated that they are interested in knowing the impact of the proposed reductions on programming. He stated that when they met with Director Greene, he did not know what programs would be affected by these budget cuts. Director Greene, who was in attendance, stated that he is prepared to provide additional information on programming impacts at tonight's meeting.

He began by stating that there is no exact answer, but the reduction in part-time hours by 10 hours per week will result in a yearly loss of 520 work hours. He anticipates significant impact at the Town Beach, both by reduced staffing and reduced training.

Some of the programs that he expects would be eliminated include: Volleyball, skating, broomball, winter carnival, hiking, teen activities, adult softball, flag football, tots swimming lessons and Jr. Lifeguard lessons. Some of the programs that would have significant reductions would include: Youth basketball, adult volleyball, Sr. Momentum, adult hiking, snowshoeing, bike safety, family trips, pee-wee soccer and pre-school art and cooking. With the reduction in part-time wages, the hours of the Beach Manager would have to be decreased and filled in with less experienced seasonal staff. He also pointed out that the Beach Manager is also a certified instructor, which will be impacted by the reduction in hours.

Director Greene thinks that the Recreation programs provide a "big bang for the buck" and the Town will be losing a lot of programming as a result of the budget cuts.

This led to discussion regarding swimming lessons. Various options were raised that could make this program totally self-funded. Director Greene pointed out that it is

important for programming to be affordable to residents if it is to be utilized. He also stated that there is a potential for losing the employee who serves as Beach Manager and their certified instructor, because of the reduction in hours and loss of benefits. Selectman Benavides thinks that the residents of Gilford would be willing to spend additional funds in order to keep the swimming lessons self-funded.

Dale Dormody moved to recommend \$221,473 for the Parks & Recreation Budget. Selectman Benavides seconded.

Dale Dormody continued with his review of the budget, stating that the figure for the Community Band has been reduced by 50% to \$750. Director Greene detailed the costs associated with the Community Band, including a stipend for the Director, sheet music and lighting inside the High School if inclement weather moves concerts indoors.

General discussion ensued regarding the financial status of Old Home Day. Director Greene reported that the event is "back in the black" this year. Pat Labonte would like to see the date of the Old Home Day event changed to earlier in the summer.

Town Administrator Dunn stated that there is a change in the total figure for the Parks and Recreation budget, since the \$5,000 has been moved from the Buildings and Grounds budget. The amended figure is \$226,473. He further pointed out that the Department requested \$19,853 and the Selectmen reduced it to \$5,000.

Terry Stewart moved to amend the recommendation for the Parks and Recreation budget to \$226,473. Phyllis Corrigan seconded. Motion carried by 12-0. Back to the main motion, it also carried by 12-0.

Dale Dormody moved to recommend \$8,863 for the Ice Rink budget. Selectman Benavides seconded. The Sub-committee has suggested that the Recreation Commission consider pursuing private sponsorship of the rink to defray costs. Motion carried by a vote of 11-1.

Town Administrator Dunn reiterated a point that was made at a previous meeting. The Town of Gilford is very involved with legislation through the LGC to control unfunded mandates, such as those pertaining to the NH Retirement System.

Gus Benavides moved to approve the minutes of the October 7th meeting. Phyllis Corrigan seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Paul Blandford abstained.

Paul Blandford moved to adjourn at 8:46 p.m. Dave Horvath seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bailey  
Executive Secretary