

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 11, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Town Hall

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

Members Absent: Paul Blandford, Pat Labonte

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Scott Dunn, Finance Director Geoff Ruggles, Welfare Director Erika Johnson, Fire Engineer Bill Akerley, Fire Chief John Beland and Deputy Fire Chief Steve Carrier.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok stated that items scheduled for tonight's meeting are the Health and Welfare, Fire Department, Gunstock Acres Village Water District budgets and assigning members to sub-committees for the School District's budget review.

Welfare Director Erika Johnson briefed the committee on the increased level of requests for assistance that she had been receiving, especially in the area of rent. She also explained that St. Vincent DePaul was increasing their budget to assist Gilford residents and that the Community Action Program was only expecting 75% of the federal money they received last year for fuel assistance. She added that she would like to request an additional 10% over this year's budget.

Several committee members questioned the town's responsibility in this area and what the State statutes required. Geoff Ruggles explained that the statutes simply required the town to assist residents in need with no stipulations as to what or how much that assistance is limited to. He went on to explain that the town adopted guidelines as to what types of assistance the town would provide and to what extent the assistance is provided. Erika Johnson added an explanation of the procedures she follows in order to qualify applicants and assistance she seeks and receives from other agencies.

Phyllis Corrigan suggested that the budget should be increase by \$4,900 to bring it up to the level requested by the Welfare Director since it seemed pretty clear that the money would be needed. Discussion ensued on different philosophies of budgeting and Selectman Benavides noted that if more money was needed for welfare assistance than the amount being requested, the Board of Selectmen would have to find the additional funds in other areas of the budget.

Terry Stewart made a motion, seconded by Gus Benavides, to recommend \$77,189 for the Welfare budget. The motion passed, 7 to 3.

Fred Butler presented the report on the Fire Department budget from the

sub-committee, which also included Sue Greene and Pat LaBonte. He explained that the recommended fire-rescue budget of \$1,854,427 is up 1.1% from 2010. He added that there were some last minute corrections to the budget that reduce this number which he would explain when they got to that portion of the budget. He went on to highlight increases in non-discretionary areas such as health insurance and retirement costs.

Chief Beland then answered questions on additional item in the budget, including the Fire Inspector position. He explained that the increase was based on the budgeted merit pay and an increase in hours in 2010. He also explained that this position provides more advanced types of inspections, such as life safety code and sprinklers, than what a regular firefighter could provide within their normal training.

He went on to provide a rough breakdown of calls for service this year, noting that the current year to date level of 1,236 is above the level this time last year. He added that the severity of the calls has increased, noting an increase in structure fires, cardiac arrests, and accidents requiring the jaws-of-life. Several committee members asked about specific comparisons from last year which the Chief said he did not have with him but would provide to the committee.

Fred Butler explained changes to the original budget amount, including a reduction in the Special Projects account by \$2,200 to \$1,800 because not as many call firefighters needed to be equipped with descent gear as first requested, the \$25,000 allocated for the Ambulance Replacement Capital Reserve had been removed, and the \$10,000 allocated for the Water Supply Maintenance Capital Reserve was being moved to a separate warrant article. This reduced the department budget to \$1,817,227.

Gus Benavides made a motion, seconded by Sue Greene, to recommend \$1,817,227 for the Fire Department budget.

Skip Murphy asked whether or not the Chief would pay for dues and memberships out of his own pocket if those items were cut from the budget. Chief Beland responded by explaining that those memberships afford him access to, or reduced costs for, educational workshops that provide the information and tools necessary to better run the department and potentially reduce risks which benefit the town and not him personally so he would not pay those fees out of pocket.

Chief Beland then updated the committee on the status of the training facility, noting that there was no money in the 2011 budget for this project. He explained that the containers were assembled and the windows and doors were almost complete and the facility should be ready for training shortly.

A brief discussion ensued regarding building maintenance issues that had been moved to the capital reserve account for funding. Dick Hickok noted the roof problems and thought that it was caused by heat loss and lack of ventilation and offered to assist in resolving the problem.

The motion then passed by a vote of 10 to 0.

Phyllis Corrigan made a motion, seconded by Gus Benavides, to recommend \$3,908 for the Emergency Management budget. The motion passed, 10 to 0.

Phyllis Corrigan made a motion, seconded by Gus Benavides, to recommend \$51,066 for the Fire Protection budget. Chief Beland explained that this was the charge from Laconia Water Works for the 35 pressurized hydrants in Gilford connected to their system. The motion passed, 10 to 0.

Phyllis Corrigan made a motion, seconded by Terry Stewart, to recommend \$6,000 for the Forestry budget. In response to a question, the Chief explained that the \$1,200 in the budget for vehicle maintenance covers an old Jeep they've had for years and a refurbished F-350 truck. The motion passed, 10 to 0.

Fred Butler presented the proposed 2011 Gunstock Acres Village Water District budget. He explained that the district was funded through annual user fees and a precinct tax added on to their tax bill. He briefly outlined some of the ongoing projects of the district including remote pump and flow monitoring so that the system operator could detect and repair leaks more quickly and efficiently. Phyllis Corrigan made a motion, seconded by Skip Murphy, to recommend \$234,460 for the GAVWD budget. The motion passed, 9 to 0 with 1 abstention.

Gus Benavides made a motion, seconded by Kevin Roy, to approve the minutes of the November 4th meeting. Motion passed 10 to 0.

The committee then selected the following members for the school budget sub-committees.

Administration/District/Maintenance – Terry Stewart, Sue Greene, Skip Murphy, Dick Hickok.

Technology - Murphy, Fred Butler, Kevin Roy.

High School – Terry Stewart, Kevin Roy, Dale Dormody.

Middle School – Phyllis Corrigan, Dale Dormody, Kevin Roy.

Elementary School – Phyllis Corrigan, Dave Horvath, Skip Murphy.

Special Ed. – Dave Horvath, Sue Greene, Pat Labonte.

Terry Stewart made a motion, seconded by Phyllis Corrigan, to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Ruggles
Finance Director