

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 18, 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, Paul Blandford, Pat Labonte and Terry Stewart

Members Absent: Gus Benavides

Also in attendance were Finance Director Geoff Ruggles and Executive Secretary Sandra Bailey.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok stated that scheduled for tonight's meeting are Outside Agencies and any other outstanding issues brought forward by Committee members. He invited representatives of various agencies to come to the podium and make a brief presentation to the Committee on their organizations, beginning with Margaret Franckhauser, Executive Director of Community Health and Hospice.

Ms. Franckhauser stated that Community Health and Hospice recently merged with the VNA Hospice of Southern Carroll County. The purpose of the merger was to consolidate administrative costs so that more resources could be directed to clinical services.

She further stated that the agency receives no funding from the County, only from the Towns within their area. In addition, the United Way also makes a small contribution. Most clients are subject to Medicare and/or Medicaid coverage, but not all services are reimbursed.

Residents from Gilford received the third highest volume of services given by the agency, with first and second volume to Laconia and Belmont respectively. Brief discussion ensued regarding potential reductions in Medicare and Medicaid funding.

Planning Board member and LRPC representative Dick Waitt was in attendance to introduce Lakes Region Planning Commission Executive Director Kim Koulet to the Committee. At the Budget Committee Meeting held on October 14, 2010, several members indicated that they wanted further information on the agency, so Mr. Koulet was in attendance tonight for that purpose. He began with a brief overview of the agency and explained how each community's allocation is calculated.

Brief discussion ensued regarding LRPC's role as a facilitator with State highway traffic issues within the region, as well as the State statute that places them in that role. Mr. Koulet specifically cited their recent facilitation between the Town and State regarding

problems at the intersection of Belknap Mountain Road/Schoolhouse Hill Road/Route 11-A.

Skip Murphy stated that this State mandate adds another layer of government and any directives from the State of NH could be sent directly to the towns. He asked Mr. Koulet to provide further information that would justify their value to the Town of Gilford. Mr. Koulet stated that LRPC provides an opportunity for communities to partner on regional issues. They provide technical assistance to communities and are concerned with the overall health and prosperity of the region. He further cited the Watershed Management Plan that involves the collaboration of various organizations throughout the Lakes Region, for the benefit of the water quality of Lake Winnepesaukee. In addition, LRPC secured \$176,000 in funding from the EPA and NOAA for this program.

Skip Murphy expressed further concern with what would happen to programming when federal funding is gone. Mr. Koulet replied that LRPC survived the recession of the late 1980's – early 1990's, where the country's economic state was worse than it is now. Terry Stewart stated that when LRPC began in 1971, it made sense to have an agency to advise, represent and coordinate regional planning activities. Today, however, having personnel with degrees and certifications, as well as technology, this agency might be unnecessary. Despite this fact, it does not make sense to cut their funding now. Chairman Hickok agreed that it would do more harm than good for the Town of Gilford to give up their membership in LRPC.

Mr. Koulet stated that communities receive more than they put into LRPC. He also emphasized the importance of quality of life, not just financial matters. In closing, he thinks that the member communities of the LRPC work together well for the benefit of the region. LRPC consists of four full-time staff and five part-time staff to service their thirty (30) communities.

Skip Murphy moved to eliminate funding for LRPC and reduce the Department of Planning and Land Use budget by \$8,501. Dave Horvath seconded. Dale Dormody stated that since he has another commitment tonight and needs to leave this meeting early, he would like to defer voting on Outside Agencies until the January 6, 2011 meeting. Chairman Hickok agreed with this but stated that the LRPC vote could be taken care of now. Paul Blandford pointed out that this reduction to LRPC could easily result in additional costs to the Town budget for the extra burden on staff.

Sue Greene stated that the Town does not need another agency to take care of traffic concerns between Gilford and the State of NH because it should be able to be taken care of at the Town level. LRPC does add another layer of government.

A vote on the motion indicated 3-yes and 8-no. Motion failed.

The next presentation came from Margaret Pritchard, Executive Director at Genesis Behavioral Health. She explained their means of funding and reported that who they service is defined by RSA 135. Because it is defined by statute who receives services,

funding is a major concern for the organization.

Bob Adams, Director of the Laconia Area Community Action Program, stated that a petition would be forthcoming for their 2011 funding. He further stated that CAP receives 56% of its funding from the Federal government and 44% from communities and their primary support is directed at fuel and electric assistance. Gilford residents receive approximately 10% of their benefit and he thanked the Town for their support in previous years. Of these approximately 300 residents, 103 fell below the Federal poverty limit and 35% were elderly.

Dave Horvath inquired about any overlap with Town welfare. Mr. Adams replied that he and Welfare Director Erika Johnson communicate on a regular basis and it is not unusual for them to jointly offer support on cases. Dave Horvath further asked about guidelines used by CAP. Mr. Adams replied that their assistance is income based and dependent upon the number of people in each household.

Brief discussion ensued regarding concerns with aid recipients having cable television. Sue Greene asked Mr. Adams if income is verified and his reply was "absolutely yes".

The last Outside Agency was Child and Family Services, represented by Ruth Zax, Development Director. She reported that 83 Gilford residents received \$30,000 in services in the 12 months ending on June 30, 2010. Their primary services are directed at abuse and neglect issues with children. Child and Family Services frequently work with school districts on these matters. Ms. Zax stated that she, like the other agencies, is concerned with their continued funding.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the history of the organization and the ages of the people they service.

Terry Stewart made a motion, seconded by Paul Blandford, to approve the minutes of the November 11th meeting. Motion passed 11 to 0.

Terry Stewart made a motion, seconded by Paul Blandford, to adjourn at 7:57 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bailey
Executive Secretary