

GILFORD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 28, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Town Hall

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

Members Absent: Sue Greene

Also in attendance were Town Administrator Scott Dunn, Finance Director Geoff Ruggles, Executive Secretary Sandra Bailey, Director of Public Works Sheldon Morgan, DPW Operations Manager Dustin Muzzey and Cemetery Trustees Susan Leach, Judy Cott and Dee Chitty.

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickok reported that Don Chesebrough, Manager for the Gilford Community Band, was in attendance and wanted to respond to the 50% reduction in funding to the Band. Mr. Chesebrough proceeded with a presentation on the history of the Band and how the funding reductions would impact the band. He thinks that the Band is a positive factor for the community and school and asked the Committee to reconsider their position.

Brief discussion ensued regarding donations for the band and the cost of sheet music, which cannot legally be reprinted. Chairman Hickok announced that the Committee would re-examine this matter if a motion is brought forward by a Committee member. He thanked Mr. Chesebrough for the information he provided for the Committee.

Chairman Hickok stated that the Cemetery Budget has already been discussed under the Administration portion of the budget and the \$14,000 requested has been agreed upon by the Cemetery Trustees, Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen. Brief discussion followed regarding the goals of the Trustees and the work that has been accomplished so far. Chairman Hickok reminded the Committee that this budget would be voted on at the next meeting, at the request of Sue Greene.

Dale Dormody stated that he would be making the presentation on behalf of the Public Works Budget Sub-committee, which also includes Dave Horvath, Pat Labonte and Skip Murphy. He began by providing Committee members with a summary spreadsheet that includes all budget categories that are included in the Public Works budget. Overall, wages have increased 4.8% and the operating expenses have decreased by 1.4%.

Dale Dormody moved to recommend \$268,207 under the Building and Grounds portion of the budget. Selectman Benavides seconded. Town Administrator Dunn then pointed out that \$5,000 has already been approved in the Recreation budget and

another \$30,000 was transferred out as a special warrant article. In light of these adjustments, Dale Dormody changed his motion to recommend \$233,207, a reduction of the \$35,000. Selectman Benavides seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 11-0.

Under DPW Administration, Dale Dormody moved to recommend \$268,532. Selectman Benavides seconded. Following extensive discussion on single stream recycling, the motion carried by a vote of 11-0.

Under the Highway portion of the Public Works budget, Dale Dormody reported an 8.2% increase, with the largest drivers being the purchase of a sidewalk plow with year-round capabilities and the replacement of a front-end loader. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the versatility of the sidewalk plow (skid steer), as well as the possibility of outsourcing the plowing and not purchasing the new equipment.

Also included in the discussion were the projected lifespan of the equipment and the feasibility of the School District's tractor being able to keep the sidewalks clear. Paul Blandford stated that the School's tractor would not be able to keep the sidewalks clear because of the extensive plowing of areas around the schools that cannot be completed by Town equipment. Skip Murphy expressed concern with the Federal government mandating that the sidewalks be kept clear because of their funds being utilized for part of the construction.

DPW Director Morgan elaborated on some of the other tasks that could be completed by the skid steer, freeing up other Town personnel and equipment. Paul Blandford agreed that this was a minor cost (\$28,000) with a large benefit to the community.

Moving onto the front-end loader, Dale Dormody stated that this piece of equipment was purchased in 2001 and the replacement vehicle could be purchased from funds that are already in the Capital Reserve Fund. The amount that is actually needed could possibly be less than the \$182,500 that is being requested.

Pat Labonte stated that this loader has received a new motor and transmission during its lifespan and should last for several more years. Director Morgan stated that they generally run loaders for ten years on the road and then an additional ten years at the Solid Waste Facility.

Town Administrator Dunn clarified that the correct figure for the Highway portion of the Public Works budget is \$1,835,979 and does not include the \$182,500 for the new front end loader, which will be a warrant article. Dale Dormody moved to recommend \$1,835,979 for the Highway budget. Selectman Benavides seconded.

Terry Stewart moved to amend the motion to \$1,807,979, reducing it by \$28,000, the cost of the sidewalk plow. Skip Murphy seconded. Selectman Benavides defended the frugality of Director Morgan and his staff and thinks it is the Town's responsibility to keep the sidewalks clear of snow and ice, which will in turn make them safer for the school children who use them. Chairman Hickok agreed that they should be kept clear

but thinks this service should be outsourced. After extensive discussion, a vote on the amendment showed a vote of 4-7. Amendment failed.

A vote on the main motion showed a vote of 8-3. Motion carried.

Brief discussion ensued regarding a recommendation for the front end loader. Finance Director Ruggles clarified that the Committee would need to make a recommendation prior to their public hearing in January.

Moving onto Bridges and Street Lighting, Dale Dormody moved to recommend \$29,849. Skip Murphy seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 11-0.

Dale Dormody then moved to recommend \$201,700 under Vehicle Maintenance, adding that the 2011 budget reflects a decrease of 6.2% from the 2010 budget. Selectman Benavides seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 11-0.

Under Solid Waste, Dale Dormody moved to recommend \$616,776. Selectman Benavides seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 11-0.

Dale Dormody moved to recommend \$862,118 under Sewer. Phyllis Corrigan seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 11-0.

Chairman Hickok advised the Committee that he has been asked, by the public, to comment on the School District's budget. Chairman Hickok's position is that it is far too early for any comment on the School District's budget, since the first copy to Budget Committee members will be near Thanksgiving.

Gus Benavides moved to approve the minutes of the October 21st meeting. Dave Horvath seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Paul Blandford moved to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Dave Horvath seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bailey
Executive Secretary