

Gilford Budget Committee Minutes
October 13, 2011
6:30 p.m.
Town of Gilford

Members Present: Richard Hickok, David Horvath, Dale Dormody, Kevin Leandro, Kevin Roy, Fred Butler, Pat Labonte, Gus Benavides, Rae Mello-Andrews, Skip Murphy, Sue Greene and Phyllis Corrigan

Members Absent: None

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Richard Hickok started the meeting going over the agenda, 2 topics to cover

- 1 Planning and Land use
- 2 Town Clerk Tax Collector.

Phyllis Corrigan asked if we are just testing the recording system this evening, she thought the vote last week was to try it, just wanted to clarify.

Richard Hickok stated that tonight was just a trial run.

Kevin Roy asked about public input part of things, did we take Phyllis's recommendation, to talk about budget, have public input then vote.

Richard Hickok confirmed.

Richard Hickok stated they would cover Planning and Land Use first as there are guests here tonight to help with the discussion with the Lakes Region Planning Commission, turned it over to the subcommittee.

PLANNING AND LAND USE:

Dale Dormody reviewed the 1 page summary of subcommittee meeting. Overall budget was just under \$250,000.00. Slight change to number in book, estimated number for LRPC was reduced by \$231.00.

- Non Discretionary spending overall reduction of \$40,479.00 or 15.3% due to reduction in staff 2 full time and 2 part time, without benefits.
- Discretionary spending, down \$4,600 or 15.2% (due to telephone costs, books and office equipment)

Focused on two specific areas;

- 1 Lakes Region Planning Commission annual fee – value vs. cost.
- 2 Overall department workload/activity

Due to those items subcommittee did not make a recommendation until those items are discussed. For purposes of discussion made a motion on the total amount of \$249,076.00 less the \$231.00.

Gus Benavides seconded.

Dave Horvath felt it appropriate to open discussion up to the public so the guests can speak regarding the value of LRPC. Questioned if there are other agencies that offer the same benefit for a lower rate, or can the town obtain these benefits directly from the state at a better value. Discussion ensued and it was determined to hold off on the LRPC in case others arrived to speak regarding this.

Phyllis Corrigan asked when the last time a master plan was done and when do we need to reevaluate that.

John Ayer stated that we had it done in 2004, the board does not want to do a large revision, discussed doing a small update.

Fred Butler asked if anyone addressed the professional development and meetings and dues. Noticed that year to date is only \$253, did not use the entire budget can you explain what this is for?

John Ayer stated the professional development training he went to this year he was able to register early and used funds for that from last year. He also has not submitted all expenses for that yet. There is a lecture series that comes out of this as well that still needs to be expensed.

Fred Butler asked what that series was.

John Ayer stated that this is sponsored by the Office of Energy and Planning and Municipal Association they give an update on the change in laws, there are three lectures and other commissions attend those as well.

Fred Butler asked if there was discussion with no concern.

Dale Dormody confirmed there was no concern.

Kevin Leandro asked about the two cell phones why two when there is only one employee in the field.

John Ayer clarified that he was assigned a cell phone as well by the Board of Selectmen.

Skip Murphy stated while looking at spreadsheets and the cost of the Department last year and the cost of permits last year it cost approximately \$600 per permit to process. Asked if there is an industry standard that says this activity should cost this amount of dollars. Approximately two man days for each permit is that high?

John Ayer is not aware of any industry standard. DPLU does more than just process permits that makes it difficult to apply a specific dollar value to each application/permit.

Richard Hickok pointed out that this department also supports other commissions and that takes time.

John Ayer stated that they support four boards; Board of Adjustment, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Historic District Commission.

Skip Murphy was just curious if there are some averages to see if we are above/below or spot on.

John Ayer stated the only thing he can think of applying a standard to is the permit fees. They just increased them this past November they provided suggestions to the Board of Selectmen and they approved them. DPLU did compare the fees charged to other communities. Even though permits are down revenues are up could be a function of increased fees.

Skip Murphy is trying to get more to the actual cost of the service.

Gus Benavides states that the reason that some fees were increased was to create a "user fee".

John Ayer pointed out that a lot of expenses come out of the user fees such as postage is paid from an abutter notification fee.

Skip Murphy still wondering if this department is overstaffed, have the Selectmen reviewed this?

Gus Benavides states that the Selectmen have looked at every department closely. They have taken away benefits, and this department has been affected.

Dave Horvath asked where the revenue goes, general fund vs. a specific account.

Discussion ensued money goes into a general fund with just over \$26,000.00 for building permits as of end of September and \$5,500.00 for application fees. Further discussion ensued regarding what this department does in the winter months.

Sue Greene asked if there was a way to look at the numbers from last year to compare costs.

Geoff Ruggles pointed the Committee to the revenue tab last year came in at \$41,867.00 discussion ensued regarding whether this year is trending up or down. It is trending up possibly due to the construction of Hannaford.

Sue Greene asked if there was any way to break out the permits by type.

John Ayer stated they do provide that at the end of the year.

Discussion ensued regarding any downward trend in permitting for this year.

Kevin Roy had a question regarding the vehicle maintenance line.

Discussion ensued regarding the two cars that are assigned one is assigned to the department and one is for general use for any town employee however they are both in this departments budget.

Richard Hickok moved the meeting to the Lakes Region Planning Commission.

Dave Horvath asked John Ayer about the value of being involved with LRPC.

John Ayer stated it is a great value for the money for services received such as access to discounted law books and working on Brownfield's reclamation available to the town. Lake Winnepesaukee water quality looking at a study of various drainage areas and water shed going into Lake Winnepesaukee, LRPC

has provided staff for that, they are doing the leg work, they also make maps for the town.

Richard Hickok asked if it would be a political detriment to not belong.

John Ayer stated that he believed it would be and a lot of those things are transportation related.

Discussion ensued regarding the \$8,200.00 LRPC came and spoke last year and it was determined that it was beneficial to keep this membership.

Skip Murphy asked if you can quantify the amount of services that we receive.

John Ayer spoke and stated that he has never looked at it that way and explained that our rate is based on population and thinks we get our money's worth.

Dick Waitt spoke – States that he has served on Local Planning committee for 12 years, served on Gilford's behalf LRPC for 10 years, served as Chairman of LRPC for 4 years, served representing the Executive Board on the TAC Committee - Tactical Advisory Committee to the DOT and introduced Kimon Koulet Executive Director of the Lakes Region Planning Commission.

Kimon Koulet spoke - LRPC represents 30 communities around the lakes region, there are 9 such entities around New Hampshire. Every community is a stake holder and every community has a representative. The reason it was started back in 1968 was due to Lake Winnepesaukee water shed and unregulated development in wetland areas. It was first staffed in 1971 and has continued since. Provided a packet developed to familiarize people with the planning commission and the services they provide.

- Has a focus on economic development, transportation, regional services, local services, household hazardous waste and education services.
- Focused on the charts in the back of the packet. For every dollar given from the communities they have attracted an additional six dollars for programs that affect each community.
- Better to work as a group for regional services.

Skip Murphy wanted to highlight the fact that money given to LRPC from Federal grant money is paid through taxes.

Gus Benavides asked if Kimon Koulet had numbers of how much money the town of Gilford has received.

Kimon Koulet stated he had numbers specific to Gilford.

- An update to the Hazard Mitigation plan required to get federal funding cost was \$6,700 with no cost to the town.
- Organized annual Household Hazardous Waste – site cost for Gilford was \$9,867.00 the contribution from Gilford was \$5,978, an approximate \$4,000.00 benefit to Gilford.
- Road Surface Management System has an estimated value \$4,000.00 with no cost to the town.

Richard Hickok stated his general conclusion was we have a system we are involved in and if we exit that system we will be penalized.

Dave Horvath thanked the guests for coming in.

Kimon Koulet handed out a booklet on alternatives to household hazardous waste that is an example of something they provide from grant money.

Discussion ensued regarding LRPC's involvement in HHW Kimon explained that they stepped in to fill a need in communities to start a seed program that started in 1986 to help communities dispose of hazardous waste as there was a void in this service.

Richard Hickok asked if there were any further questions as there was a motion on the floor to approve the budget of \$249,076.00

Skip Murphy motioned to reduce the amount by \$8,270.00 to not fund LRPC.

Kevin Leandro seconded.

2 yes

10 no

Motion failed 2 to 10.

Richard Hickok called for a vote on the original motion of \$249,076.00 for Planning and Land Use budget.

10 yes

2 no

Motion passed 10 to 2.

Richard Hickok moved onto the next topic of Town Clerk Tax Collector.

TOWN CLERK TAX COLLECTOR:

Dave Horvath spoke on behalf of the Subcommittee. Presented a summary of bullet points from this meeting would like to review them.

- No raise for department managers.
 - Department employees are budgeted at a 2.8% increase over last year.
 - This department lost a part time employee. Denise trying to come up with a way to compensate her.
 - Telephone budget is given by Finance Department
 - Health Insurance cost was biggest issue with increase of 24.2%. Reason was change of employee status from no coverage to family coverage.
 - Software license budget was \$4,800.00 Denise believed there would be an increase to \$5,200.00 tonight she said it actually increased to \$5,800.00.
 - Keep budget for record retention.
 - Publishing notices increased from \$1.00 to \$25.00
 - Most other lines were flat or reduced.

Richard Hickok asked why the increase in health insurance.

Gus Benavides explained that an employee that did not have coverage through the town now has a family plan.

Gus Benavides made a motion to approve the budget of \$378,339.00 for Town Clerk Tax Collector Phyllis Corrigan seconded.

Phyllis Corrigan asked Geoff Ruggles to comment on the retirement cost and Scott Dunn to comment on the phone costs.

Geoff Ruggles stated you have three different tiers of employees, 1. Regular employees 2. Police and 3. Fire.

- Regular employees - The state never supplemented the regular town employees into the retirement system so when they stopped funding that it did not affect the town's contribution to those employees. The legislature had those employees pay an additional amount toward their retirement which reduced the amount the town paid. Most of the departments you will see a slight reduction amount. With the exception of Police and Fire as they were handled differently.

Discussion ensued regarding the town offering an "opt off" plan and offering spouses insurance. Gus Benavides explained that it saves the town money to discourage employees from taking insurance if they are already covered elsewhere. Discussion ensued regarding the percentage the employees pay towards their health insurance; it is between 6 and 10 percent depending on the department.

Gus Benavides states that eventually all employees will pay 10% towards their health insurance and part time employees are no longer eligible for health insurance.

Discussion ensued regarding what other towns offer their employees.

Richard Hickok asked if there were any other comments and invited Denise Gonyer to speak.

Denise Gonyer clarified that the town has offered the “opt off” for over 15 years since she has been employed by the town. Her department has two employees that opt off and it has saved the town over \$190,000.00 over the last several years.

Dave Horvath moved off insurance as there was a motion on the table. The other question not answered was the increase in the software cost.

Denise Gonyer stated that this increase is a new line item to her department this year and wanted to explain the 3 items that are included in this account;

- 1 Blue book – used for vehicle valuation when registering vehicles. Registration is determined by list price, weight and year without blue book they are guessing at the value of the vehicle. This would be a source of revenue that would be lost if it were not for this software program.
- 2 Clerk works – all point of sale i.e. dog licensing
- 3 Tax system software.

Kevin Leandro motioned to amend by adding \$1,000.00 into this line item.

Skip Murphy seconded.

Rae Mello – Andrews had a question about meals and travel expenses.

Denise Gonyer stated it was for conferences that are required by RSA that they attend in the fall as part of their certification. This covers the whole department.

Gus Benavides asked as a matter of protocol if they should call for a vote on the amendment.

Richard Hickok called for a vote on the amendment to increase the budget \$1,000.00 for the increase in software.

11 yes

1 no

Amendment passed 11 to 1.

Fred Butler asked if Denise foresaw an increase in the postage.

Denise Gonyer stated that she did think there would be an increase.

Discussion ensued regarding the option of doing electronic billing. Denise Gonyer stated that tax bills must be sent out by U. S. Mail.

Skip Murphy asked if there is a primary this how much of a problem would that cause.

Denise Gonyer stated that if they put it in the budget for next year and it is held this year they will just remove it but does not know how they will pay for it this year.

Phyllis Corrigan asked if Scott Dunn needed to explain phone costs.

Scott Dunn stated that most phone line items are down this year due to not using the Centrix system.

Each department is billed by the number of lines they have and charged on a percentage basis. The town does not provide cell phones to employees but does reimburse \$10.00 per week for using their personal cell phone and that amount is taxable.

Gus Benavides called for a vote.

Richard Hickok states the motion on the table is to approve the budget of \$379,339.00

11 yes

1 no

Motion passed 11 to 1.

ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATIONS:

Dave Horvath states that unless things change there will be four elections next year. One item reduced the Cost of the Police Detail. The Selectmen would like to use salaried positions therefore there will be

no detail costs. Sub Committee recommended the budget of \$18,019.00

Discussion ensued regarding holding off voting unless it can be amended due to the uncertainty of the number of elections this year. Gus Benavides states that we can always come back.

Dave Horvath made a motion to accept the budget of \$18,019.00.

Gus Benavides seconded.

Fred Butler asked about the meals and travel.

Discussion ensued regarding the number of hours that the employees spend working on Election Day.

There is no travel that is just the heading of that account. The cost is providing coffee and donuts in the morning the school offers a lunch at a reduced price and then they bring in a meal for dinner.

Richard Hickok moved for a vote.

12 yes

0 no

Motion passed 12 to 0.

Richard Hickok moved to approve to minutes.

12 yes

0 no

Minutes are approved with all in favor.

Dave Horvath asked about the video taping of the meeting.

Dale Dormody stated that he had no problem operating the recorder.

Discussion ensued regarding putting the meeting on public access. Sue Greene is not happy with the way this all came about.

Dave Horvath motioned to put this on the agenda for another meeting.

Skip Murphy seconded.

Rae Mello - Andrews stated that this is an opportunity for those who cannot get out to the meetings to see the meeting.

Richard Hickok states that there is a motion, if you vote positively this is only a trial.

10 yes

1 no

Gus Benavides abstained.

Discussion ensued regarding when the tape we will be reviewed. It was determined that the video will be reviewed at the end of next week's meeting.

Richard Hickok asked if there was motion to adjourn

Gus Benavides so moved with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mia Gagliardi
Recording Secretary