

Gilford Budget Committee Minutes  
October 27, 2011  
6:30 p.m.  
Town of Gilford

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

Members Absent: Dave Horvath and Rae Mello-Andrews

The Budget Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Richard Hickok started the meeting with the agenda review first will be the Cemetery Budget, then Public Works. No subcommittee reviewed the Cemetery budget, will review budget as a whole Committee.

**CEMETERY BUDGET:**

Richard Hickok asked Sheldon Morgan if there are 12 Town maintained Cemeteries.

Sheldon Morgan stated there are 14, two active and twelve historic.

Richard Hickok stated he had no questions.

Gus Benavides moved to approve the Cemetery budget of \$28,412.00.

Kevin Roy seconded.

Pat Labonte asked why the cemetery maintenance is done by seasonal employees when it was done privately before.

Scott Dunn stated that in 2011 the town, by vote of town meeting, took over the two private cemeteries they are now owned by the town of Gilford in addition the Cemetery Trustees took over the intense care of the 12 private cemeteries. For less money than the town had spent on all of the cemetery maintenance in the past, the town has done a fabulous job of improving what we do in our cemetery maintenance over the year. It is a whole new ball game because the Town took over the cemeteries last year by a town meeting vote.

Gus Benavides stated that if anyone would like to volunteer to take care of the cemeteries they would be more than happy to accept. One alternative discussed is using Department of Correction inmates to do maintenance as well.

Sheldon Morgan states that each one of the Cemeteries has had trees cut and trimmed bushes trimmed, stones straightened and iron work done. Also wanted to mention not only are they doing this with seasonal employees they now have a revenue stream, currently there is a 19% return on money that has been expended from sale of lots, cemeteries have never looked this good.

Richard Hickok asked if the Seasonal Employees are hired specifically for the Cemeteries.

Sheldon Morgan stated they were hired specifically for that however since they are seasonal they could be placed anywhere they were needed.

Richard Hickok asked if the money received is segregated out.

Scott Dunn confirmed the money does not go into the general fund.

Richard Hickok states that he has struggled with the \$30,000.00 in the past, money was paid for by earnings from investments. With low interest rates little to no earnings the Town has to pay anyway, the State is pushing towards that, by default.

Scott Dunn states that the Private Cemetery Trustees found out that they had no insurance on the grounds and the price to insure was too much so they went out of business.

Sue Greene asked about the overtime of \$17.00 expended, made a motion to amend that account and change it to zero.

Skip Murphy seconded.

Dee Chitty explained that the Cemetery employees were sharing the van with Buildings and Grounds and were late getting the equipment back to the shop.

Richard Hickok called for a vote on the amendment to zero out the overtime line item.

9 yes

1 no

Amendment passed 9 to 1

Fred Butler asked about the ground maintenance line to date spent \$2,426 with a budget of \$13,000.00 do you know what will be run up in the next couple of months.

Discussion ensued regarding last year's budget adding \$10,000.00 back in for tree removal.

Scott Dunn states that it should cover tree removal, monument maintenance, gate repair, and poison ivy maintenance the invoices have not come in yet. The plan was to spend the entire \$13,000.00. The detail is in the budget package.

Sheldon Morgan states that the numbers shown are from the end of July there has been major work completed since. Gates have been done big trees were removed, poison ivy removal and head stone repairs.

Fred Butler stated that there will be a state contract for poison ivy removal may be able to join in.

Discussion ensued regarding the state contract. Sheldon Morgan stated he will check into it.

Richard Hickok asked if there was any further discussion or public input.

Sheldon Morgan stated there was an issue with the public water supply the Trustees had that line item taken out. They went with a self contained water supply at no expense, is working well saving approximately \$600.00.

Kevin Roy commented on the gate at Weeks Cemetery, it is beautiful. Discussion ensued regarding how good the cemeteries look.

Sue Greene states that the amount should be reduced by \$1.00 to \$42,380.00.

Richard Hickok calls for a vote on the Cemetery Budget of \$42,380.00.

10 yes

0 No

Motion passed with all in favor.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS:**

### **ADMINISTRATION:**

Kevin Leandro started the discussion with the Administration budget in DPW. The Budget of \$175,851.00, recommended by the Selectmen is down \$92,000 due to the elimination of Dustin's position. The Sub Committee recommends funding it as proposed by the Selectmen.

Gus Benavides moved to approve the budget.

Phyllis Corrigan seconded.

Fred Butler asked why the telephone amount dropped, in 2011 it was \$6,400 and 2012 is \$1,708.00 what was split off.

Scott Dunn stated that in 2011 they budgeted approximately \$21.00 per line for the Centrex system however that system did not work. We bought the equipment in 2011 so the fees for 2012 are significantly reduced all line fees are through one T1 line all telephone expenses went way down because they purchased the equipment already.

Phyllis Corrigan asked how the four people that split the Operations Manager's position Town Administrator, DPW Director, Highway Superintendant and the Executive Secretary are doing with the work load change.

Sheldon Morgan states that it is time allotment and so far is working pretty well.

Gus Benavides states they have heard from the residents that we should be doing more with less and they used this opportunity to do just that and share the job responsibilities.

Discussion ensued regarding the Operations Manager Position and what it entailed prior to Dustin taking the position.

Richard Hickok called for a vote on the DPW Administration budget of \$175,851.00.

10 yes

0 No

Motion passed with all in favor.

**HIGHWAY:**

Kevin Leandro stated that this is the one budget he felt he had a financial conflict of interest with and in those areas will abstain from voting and will let Pat speak on those issues. In Summary \$1,888,368.00 up by almost \$58,000.00 attributed to the purchase of a 1 ton plow truck.

As a Subcommittee took issue with one item, tools hardware and uniforms – two pairs of boots at \$150.00 each, feels it is too generous and would like the Selectmen to take that into consideration when negotiating the next contract.

Richard Hickok stated it is in the union contract.

Kevin Leandro confirmed it is in the union contract therefore they cannot touch it.

Gus Benavides stated that during the negotiations that was one item they specifically asked for. If one pair got destroyed could they get a second pair of boots? This union as a result gave up a lot of other things that far exceed the \$300 boots such as cost of living adjustments, not getting guaranteed raises, agreed to give back sick pay bonus, they are already paying 10% for their health and dental insurance. Not all employees actually get a second pair however they need to budget as if they would.

Scott Dunn stated that the prior contract included \$150 for first pair of boots and \$75 for a second pair, union felt they could not get a second pair for \$75.00 basically threw that in as a bone because of all concessions they made the net cost of this contract was much less than the previous contract even with the second pair of boots.

Kevin Leandro moved onto traffic control. Pat Labonte recommended cutting \$8,000.00 out of road striping and also recommended cutting \$100,000.00 out of new road construction.

Richard Hickok clarified that was cutting \$100,000.00 out of the \$575,000.00.

Kevin Leandro confirmed.

Pat Labonte stated that it is a large budget for the highway department, all talking about cutting the tax rate in town and cutting this out of the budget won't hurt anybody and feels we need to cut.

Skip Murphy asked how they arrived at the amount of \$8,000.00.

Pat Labonte stated he just chose that number the original amount was \$22,000.00. Discussion ensued regarding speeding on roads that have been striped.

Dale Dormody asked if there were safety issues involved with not striping the roads.

Sheldon Morgan states absolutely there are safety issues. People have a harder time seeing the shoulder of the road, the fog line helps with that. The roads with the highest traffic count are the ones that are striped. Discussion ensued regarding road visibility during bad weather and the need for lines on the road.

Gus Benavides moved to approve the highway budget of \$1,888,368.00

Kevin Roy seconded for discussion.

Richard Hickok stated that he does not like the idea of cutting the budget while roads still need to be maintained just to have to increase it again next year to pay for it.

Sheldon Morgan stated that even though there was no increase in the road construction budget there was an increase in cost to do the work.

Richard Hickok stated that \$575,000.00 doesn't buy as much road as in the past.

Skip Murphy asked about LR Striping.

Sheldon Morgan stated that is Lakes Region Striping they do the parking lots and stop bars for Gilford, the areas that the big trucks can't get into.

Scott Dunn stated that the Board of Selectmen already reduced the striping budget by \$7,000.00.

Pat Labonte moved to amend the road striping line item reducing it by \$8,000.00.

Skip Murphy seconded.

Richard Hickok asked why there was such a big increase in the merit wages for the Highway Department. Scott Dunn stated primarily due to two reasons.

- 1 The Highway Department had three new employees.

- 2 The amount budgeted for merit increase in 2011 was 2.75% and for 2012 it is 3%.

Fred Butler asked about the road sealing account going down does that affect square footage.

Sheldon Morgan stated that we used to do a lot of sealing to increase the life of the road, to seal the cracks. People are less tolerant of that system even though it is half the cost of asphalt. The Board of Selectmen reduced that amount to zero however once it was explained that the intention to leaving it in the budget this year is to utilize this application in the Gunstock Acres they put money back in. There are two advantages using this application in the Acres.

- 1 Better traction on steeper roads.

- 2 Holds salt in place in winter.

Geoff Ruggles wanted to clarify the increase in merit wages. The Highway Department has several employees that have hit their max pay rate and therefore get a lump sum payment instead of an hourly increase.

Richard Hickok called for a vote on the amendment to reduce the road striping budget by \$8,000.00.

3 yes

6 no

1 abstained.

Motion failed 3 to 6 with one abstaining.

Pat Labonte made a motion to amend the road construction budget by reducing it \$100,000.00.

Skip Murphy seconded.

Richard Hickok asked if there was any discussion. Called for a vote on the amendment.

3 yes

6 no

1 abstained

Motion failed 3 to 6 with one abstaining.

Richard Hickok called for a vote on the original motion to approve the Highway budget of \$1,888, 368.00

7 yes

3 no

Motion passed 7 to 3.

### **SPECIAL PROJECTS:**

Kevin Leandro stated that the purchase of a new backhoe would be on a warrant article. Would like to see more money spent to get a better quality machine, in the end you spend more money on parts and repairs with a less quality machine, talked about getting a smaller machine with a multi use front end. Sheldon Morgan stated they would like to downsize the machine to better fit the Departments needs and spend the money getting a machine that will last.

Skip Murphy asked for an explanation on the \$120,000.00 in the Capital Reserve Fund.

Geoff Ruggles stated that the money is already available and will not affect the tax rate.

Skip Murphy clarified that this money will reduce the amount in Capital Reserve with no funds budgeted this year to replenish the account.

Pat Labonte stated he has a hard time just giving \$120,000.00 without knowing what machine will be purchased, made a motion to table this discussion until a specific machine is chosen.

Skip Murphy seconded for discussion.

Gus Benavides stated that every Department Manager spending more than \$5,000.00 has to go before the Board of Selectmen in a public hearing and explain what will be purchased and cannot make a

purchase without the approval of the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion ensued regarding the status of the front loaders at the Department of Public works. Scott Dunn reminded the committee that this is a purchase of a backhoe not a loader.

Pat Labonte withdrew his motion to table this matter, feels comfortable with the Board of Selectmen's process. Skip Murphy is fine with the withdrawal.

Phyllis Corrigan made a motion to approve the \$120,000.00 for the purchase of the backhoe.

Kevin Leandro seconded.

Richard Hickok called for a vote to approve the \$120,000.00

10 yes

0 no

Motion passed with all in favor.

**BRIDGES:**

Kevin Leandro stated that the Department requested \$60,000.00 however the Board of Selectmen reduced the amount to zero.

Kevin Leandro made a motion to approve the zero budget.

Phyllis Corrigan seconded.

Fred Butler asked what the implications were of not funding this year.

Sheldon Morgan stated there should not be any. The account currently has over a half million dollars with only two bridges needing work, finishing the Alvah Wilson Bridge and the Bridge on Old Lakeshore Road.

Richard Hickok called for a vote to approve the zero budget

10 yes

0 no

Motion passed with all in favor.

**STREET LIGHTING:**

Kevin Leandro stated that there is only one line item in this budget and has been flat for two years.

Gus Benavides moved to approve the Street Lighting budget of \$24,849.00.

Kevin Roy seconded.

Skip Murphy asked if this was under the new power company.

Geoff Ruggles stated that it was not this is separate, not metered usage. Discussion ensued regarding PSNH and the new power company.

Richard Hickok called for a vote to approve the budget of \$24,849.00

10 yes

0 no

Motion passed with all in favor.

**VEHICLE MAINTENANCE:**

Kevin Leandro stated that the vehicle maintenance budget is \$233,373 up \$31,673 due to fuel costs and radio upgrades.

Kevin Leandro made a motion to increase the oil, fluids and grease budget stating this is not an area we want to skimp.

Richard Hickok asked why contracted services had such a large expenditure last year.

Pat Labonte stated that a truck needed an engine replacement.

Kevin Leandro stated that the sweeper truck needed a new pony motor.

Sheldon Morgan stated that there was internal breakage. The department is trying to farm out this type of repairs as our department does not deal with this type of repair on a daily basis.

Kevin Leandro stated that he feels more comfortable with sending out major component rebuilds.

Discussion ensued regarding increasing the oils, fluids and grease account. Kevin Leandro asked what the procedure was for over expending an account. Sheldon Morgan stated that funds would need to be

offset by another account.

Kevin Leandro continued with the radio issue, he is not versed on the subject. The budget is for purchasing new 100 watt radios verses teaming with the police and going with a repeater system using a lower watt. Kevin asked Police Chief Keenan to speak to the committee regarding this issue.

Police Chief Keenan stated that the repeater sits on Gunstock Hill and repeats back, giving better coverage around town. Currently the radios talk to dispatch thru an antenna that goes through a phone line. DPW talks to their trucks through an antenna on the Fire Department. The police have been looking at going to a repeater system for a long time. The cost for a repeater system would run approximately \$25,000.00, \$18,000.00 for the Police Department and \$6,500.00 for Public Works. Sheldon would need to relicense his radios. A repeater system would also save the town \$105.00 per month per phone line, PD currently has 4 lines.

Kevin Leandro asked if both Police and Public Works would need their own repeater.

Police Chief Keenan stated they would. If they shared whoever keyed the radio first would take priority potentially leaving personnel in a dangerous situation without communication. If both departments go with a repeater system the work can be done at the same time utilizing one location. Safety wise it is good the radio company has been asked to do a study looking for dead spots to have an idea of how well it will work in Gilford.

Discussion ensued regarding going with one repeater and how much Public Works utilizes the radios.

Skip Murphy asked if there were recurring costs.

Scott Dunn stated that going with a repeater system would actually save the town \$6,500.00 per year.

Gus Benavides moved to accept the Vehicle Maintenance budget of \$233,373.00.

Kevin Roy seconded.

Kevin Leandro asked what the radio transition deadline was.

Scott Dunn stated January 1, 2013.

Skip Murphy asked what the hand slap would be not switching over by the deadline.

Scott Dunn stated they would lose the ability to communicate. They are doing away with broadband radios.

Sheldon Morgan stated that the sound would be scrambled.

Discussion ensued regarding Motorola radios and the possibility of leasing equipment.

Richard Hickok called for a vote to approve the Vehicle Maintenance budget.

10 yes

0 no

Motion passed with all in favor.

#### **SOLID WASTE:**

Kevin Leandro stated that there is not a lot that you can control with this budget. The Department asked for an additional \$400.00 for Household Hazardous Waste Day the actual cost to participate did not come in until just this week recommended approving the Solid Waste budget of \$613,581.00.

Skip Murphy asked if the increase was for Lakes Region Planning Commission.

Kevin Leandro stated it was and moved to amend the budget adding \$400.00 to the HHW line item.

Skip Murphy seconded for discussion.

Fred Butler asked if the \$400.00 could be found somewhere else in the budget.

Sheldon Morgan stated that it could.

Kevin Leandro withdrew his motion to amend the budget.

Skip Murphy did not have an issue with the amendment withdrawal and moved to amend this budget by reducing the amount paid to LRPC by \$1,000.00 bringing that line item down to \$5,300.00.

Kevin Leandro seconded.

Gus Benavides stated that he understands the philosophy behind reducing the budget but the reality is that cost still needs to be paid. The money would need to be taken from somewhere else in the budget.

Discussion ensued regarding Household Hazardous Waste day Gilford has been involved for 24 years. Only one company bid at the last request for proposal to dispose of the waste, there are not many companies that deal with hazardous waste.

Richard Hickok called for a vote on amending the budget reducing HHW line item by \$1,000.00

1 yes

9 no

Motion failed 1 to 9.

Gus Benavides moved to vote to approve the Solid Waste budget of \$613,581.00.

Kevin Leandro seconded.

9 yes

1 no

Motion passed 9 to 1.

### **SEWER:**

Kevin Leandro stated that the department asked to add \$1,500.00 for a software program that was not previously included.

Geoff Ruggles stated that the Sewer Department has two software programs that it uses one for the reader gun and one for billing. The amount for each program is close when Finance looked at the budget they thought it was for the billing program and when the Department looked at the budget they thought the amount was for the software for the reader gun.

Discussion ensued regarding the budget and whether the additional \$1,500.00 could be found elsewhere in the budget general feeling that it could.

Kevin Leandro motioned to approve the Sewer budget of \$854,543.00 that amount includes \$10,000.00 Capital Reserve.

Gus Benavides seconded.

Richard Hickok called for a vote to approve the Sewer budget.

10 yes

0 no

Motion passed with all in favor.

Richard Hickok stated there were a few changes he would like made to last week's minutes and would like to hold off approving them until the changes are made.

Phyllis Corrigan stated that she noticed one change at the end, should be School Subcommittee.

Gus Benavides wanted to clarify that John Ayer did not get \$1,000.00 for his phone. Each Department Manger gets \$10.00 per week towards the cost to use their personal cell phone.

Geoff Ruggles reminded the Committee they needed to review the Health Officer budget.

Gus Benavides made a motion to approve the Health Officer budget of \$3,095.00

Sue Greene seconded.

Fred Butler asked why there are Medicare charges.

Richard Hickok stated that the stipend pay has costs associated with it.

Richard Hickok called for a vote to approve the Health Officer budget of \$3,095.00.

10 yes

0 no

Motion passed with all in favor.

Discussion ensued regarding merit wages. The only group that can be affected is the non union employees and there are 35 non union employees. Richard Hickok states that this should be a topic for another time.

Gus Benavides motioned to adjourn.

Kevin Leandro seconded, with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mia Gagliardi  
Recording Secretary