

January 15, 2013
2013 Budget Meeting

Present: (P. McGinnity, Ch. absent), A. Richards, C. Moser and A. A. Milkovits

F.A.C.: R. Larochelle, L. Lavoie, B. Schulman

Also present: 2 residents

Meeting opened at 7:02 PM.

Departments:

1. Fire Department: Fire Chief David Baker presented budget and discussed the following:
 - Decrease some budget lines to enable an increase in members' stipend – Fire & EMS now has 31 members.
 - Fire Admin. Assistant – Chief needs to find someone qualified to fill the position. Job entails filing forms with the State for Fire and EMS Departments. Chief Baker has been doing most of the work himself.
 - Officers' expenses – supplies for building, mileage, food for firefighters at calls. This line was slightly reduced.
 - Selectman Moser questioned number of line items that were not fully spent in 2012: EMS supplies, EMS training, Vehicle maintenance. Chief explained that training is \$750/person and he does not want to decrease other lines.
 - Keep waterhole line item the same.
 - Change communications line to \$39,000 – Emergency Departments and Highway are pursuing change to the dispatch service to Hollis Communications. Selectman Moser gave the background on changing dispatch services. Police Chief Hutchins, present for this discussion, explained some of the reasons for the change: safety, reliability.
 - Keep Emergency Management line item the same – the budget line needed to be raised to cover expenses and training for this position and in emergency times.
 - Warrant articles: (1) replace safety gear for firefighters – 18 sets would cost \$32,850 - \$16,500 just for coat and pants, then boots and helmets – all three are for \$45,350. The Chief was able to purchase 8 sets of gear in the 2012 budget. It was decided to replace the gear over three years. The article for 2013 will be \$16,500 to replace gear for the Fire Department. (2) Replace SCBA bottles. This too will be done over a three year period. The article for 2013 will replace five SCBA bottles for \$4,325. (3) Article for \$10,000 for the capital reserve for addition for Fire Station, as established in 2012. Chief will also be pursuing grants for construction of this addition.
2. Police Department: Police Chief Barry G. Hutchins presented the PD budget:
 - Personnel issues – changes have caused Chief to raise the first officer's wages to \$45,000 and to increase the second officer to \$40,000, which is barely the hiring rate for a police officer just out of the Academy. First

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Officer will be a Sergeant position. Also, fast turn-over causes higher costs in equipment and uniforms.

- Training – increased -New employee will be going to the Part-time Academy for 200 hours. This will take most of the budget line with the remaining to cover regular training (Tazers, firearms).
 - Cruiser fuel – this line was cut 3 years ago and has been over budget since. The line is now based on actual usage from 2012.
 - Chief noted that he did not overspend the 2012 budget – Offsetting funds came from various sources, such as grants, trust, etc.
 - Retirement is higher –Town pays 28%, with no share paid by state.
 - Equipment & Maintenance – overspent in 2012 due to purchases of safety vest, rifles, night vision, and ammo. New hires require more outfitting too.
 - Communications expense for PD is actually telephone expense - FairPoint, U.S. cellular. The title for this line will be changed to reflect the charges.
 - Warrant articles: (1) \$9,000 for capital reserve for cruiser fund, as previously established. (2)Fencing off area for outside evidence – Chief still needs to get an estimate for a installing a stockade fence to prevent visibility. Selectmen questioned on whether the town’s liability insurance will increase. (3) Firearms replacement: need 7 new handguns as the present handguns are 15 years old. Chief Hutchins explained that all officers in the PD will carry the same gun which is extremely important in times of stress. All officers need to be familiar with the weapon and have no problems with interchanging ammo, etc. The Chief has been in contact with Smith & Wesson to get a price for trade-ins. New weapons could cost around \$700. Chief agrees to purchase guns over two year period. Question asked whether there are any funds available from Homeland Security to purchase weapons. Chief Hutchins will look into this.
3. Highway Department: Road Agent Fred Greenwood presented the Highway Department budget:
- Increased Road Agent’s salary – Mr. Greenwood has held the position for almost two years with no increase.
 - Increased salaries for full-timers by 2%.
 - Reduced overtime budget – Road Agent has increased efficiencies and feels this is an area that will have savings.
 - FAC member Brady Schulman raised a concern for the sharp decrease in the workers’ comp. line. Selectman Moser explained that the two agencies Primex and LGC were instructed by the court to return extra held funds to the towns by 2013. These funds are referred to as “premium holidays” and reflect a significant savings on the workers’ comp. lines as well as some savings on the health and dental insurances. To better reflect this one time differences in the costs, it was suggested to have the budget lines for the workers’ comp. and health and dental insurances the same amounts as in 2012 and add another line to show the credit received, to balance the accounts.
 - Consulting Engineer – reduced to \$500 (about 5 hours). This is a reimbursable cost, paid by developer.

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- Paved Road Restoration: in 2012 Road Agent saved money on other lines to apply funds to the roads to try to catch up on maintenance. \$123,000 will work and any savings on the HD budget during the year will be applied to maintenance of the roads.
- Patch reduced –as roads are improved, less patch is needed.
- Culverts: many were replaced in 2012 and more will be done this year.
- Plowing – only using 2 hired trucks at this time.
- Salt increased – presently paying \$63.07 per ton.
- Hired Equipment – line will be spent to hire a crusher this year. Crusher is not needed every year maybe every third year.
- Items reduced: tree work – HD employee is experienced with tree care.
- Guard rails will be replaced on Black Brook Road
- Sweeper should be same price as in 2012.
- Aggregate – won't need as much in 2013.
- Building Maintenance: Presently there is no heat in the Highway barn. The heating unit has failed after two years. Road Agent has 2 quotes for new heaters: forced hot air heater for \$4,250 and an infrared tube heater, which runs on propane for \$7,800. The forced hot air heater will require new duct work as the duct work installed two years ago is undersized for the building and heater. The infrared heater could be re-installed and moved to a new building, if the need arises and is expandable. Questions arose on the efficiency differences of the heaters. Infrared heats up surfaces; hot air causes condensation when cold trucks come in. Infrared heats equipment not building. The Highway barn is an extremely porous building so the hot air heater would also be blowing hot air to the outside. FAC inquired whether the new heater should be a warrant article. Selectmen prefer to include the new heater in the Highway Building Maintenance. This would raise that budget line to \$11,000. Selectman Moser feels that in the long term, it would make more sense to purchase the infrared. Selectmen requested that the Road Agent seek more bids for the infrared heater. Mr. Greenwood will review his budget to see if there are other areas to trim for savings for the furnace. A decision on the heater will be made at the next Selectmen's meeting.
- Equipment Maintenance: tough time in December for repairs as there were many breakdowns.
- Edges – HD still has some edges for plows.
- Chains line increased due to increase in costs of chains.
- Tools: While remodeling in the Highway barn, more tools were found.
- Vehicle Fuel – estimated at \$4/gallon
- Resident raised a question on health insurance for 4 full-time HD employees. Mr. Greenwood explained that two of the employees pay 20% of the insurance as Town Meeting decreed in 2011. The other two HD employees are “grandfathered” for 100% paid health insurance coverage.

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- Warrant article: (1) Money from sale of scrap metal in 2012 (fund balance) to be transferred to the Highway Department Building Capital Reserve, as established in 2012. (2) \$50,000 for road repairs.

No final decisions were made on any of the budgets at this time. The next budget meeting was set for Tuesday, January 29th at 7 PM at the Mann House. This will be a total budget review. All department heads will be invited to attend to answer any questions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.