

TOWN OF ALTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
BUDGET COMMITTEE
APPROVED 11/17/09
MEETING MINUTES
November 3, 2009

Members Present: Karen Painter, Chair
Greg Fuller, Vice-Chair (arrived late)
Loring Carr, Selectmen's Representative
Steve Miller
Richard MacDonald
Marc DeCoff

Members Absent: School Board Representative

Others Present: Russ Bailey, Town Administrator
Members of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

K. Painter called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Computer specifications was added by K. Painter under old business. Under correspondence, K. Painter added an e-mail from Terri Noyes regarding school representative. L. Carr added the attorney response to the Cost of Living Adjustments under old business.

Motion to approve agenda as amended by S. Miller, seconded by M. DeCoff. Passed by unanimous vote (KP, SM, MD, RM, LC)

V. OLD BUSINESS

L. Carr handed out the attorney response to the COLA question from the Budget Committee. The Selectmen's position on the memorandum sent by the Budget Committee is that they are going to keep the COLA as they do not feel it is correct to ask employees to give back their raises. Further discussion of this was placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Specifications for new computers were made available.

Budget Committee meeting with Board of Selectmen was set for November 19, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of minutes of October 22, 2009 was tabled.

October 27, 2009 minutes – on page 2 under the warrant article \$3,600 over 3 years needs to be changed to \$36,000. On all pages, footer needs to be changed to October 27, 2009.

Motion to accept minutes as amended by L. Carr, seconded by M. DeCoff, carried by unanimous vote (KP, GF, LC, MD, RM, SM).

Budget review for meeting on Thursday, November 5, will include Government, Parks and Recreation, Tax Collector, and Library.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

CEMETERY

Shirley Lane, Chairman, Karen Poor, Trustee, and Mark Divito, Caretaker presented. When asked about budget highlights, S. Lane stated that the only highlight was that they had asked the Selectmen to pick up their FICA and Medicare as the other departments get picked up. Request was refused. No changes in personnel. There is a request to purchase a boom sprayer for the tractor as part of this budget. No lines of the 2009 budget will have more than 5% remaining; they do not expect to overspend. There are no salary increases/step raises planned for 2010. All lines remained intact.

The Committee reviewed the budget line-by-line. To date, there have been 20 burials with one scheduled for Saturday. Average is 30 per year. There is no corresponding decrease in work due to fewer burials. There are 9 cemeteries under trustee jurisdiction. Total revenues to date are approximately \$24,000, with a yearly average of \$25,000 to \$30,000. Cemetery operates solely on trust fund, which now stands at \$329,680 in the principal and \$253,000 on the income side. Percentage of annual return on the nonexpendable fund is 2.80% (in a 5-year CD invested by trustee of trust funds). The \$253,000 is earning 1.04%. The revenue is used to offset expenses. The Trustee's salary is paid by the town. S. Miller questioned whether the remaining budget would be spent in the remaining 1 ½ months of the year. R. Bailey and S. Lane explained how remaining monies would be spent. Cost of burials and cremations was given. Fuel costs for next year were based on the Town's figures.

HIGHWAY

Ken Roberts explained the seasonal functions of the Highway Department, the mission statement, and the objectives for 2010. Selectmen increased lines for crack sealer and calcium chloride, which will both add to longevity of roads. Cold patching is done once a month. Yellow line painting will no longer be done by the town; this is only done on state roads, by the state. Stop bars will no longer be done by the state; the town will do this. "Stop Ahead" signs will no longer be done by the state. Roadside mowing is done by a contractor, if available. Brush/tree cutting is done when needed. Culvert flags are being put in place now. All signs are maintained by this department; theft and breakage are big issues. Guardrails are maintained. History is maintained through work-order system. Deceased wild animals are picked up.

Mission statement was given. 2010 objectives are rebuilding of Coffin Brook Road in its entirety, rebuilding of Stockbridge Corner Road on the New Durham side, and at least the survey and rebuild of Trask Side Road. Bay Hill Road drainage will be corrected. Budget highlights are the decrease of Line 139, General Expenses, by \$5,000, which was added to Line 207, Vehicle Expenses, which is way over.

2010 expenditures include increases for sand and gravel contracts, and a decrease in line painting. The Selectmen increased two line items; crack sealing and calcium chloride. Travel line is used for occasional travel to conferences in private vehicles. Consultant line is used for occasional wetlands surveys. New equipment is mostly for the mechanic. There are no new personnel with the exception of the flagger position, which was not funded in the default budget last year, but was utilized as needed. There are no salary increases. Secretary salary was adjusted because it was not in the default budget. There will be several lines with a greater than 5% overage, but it is too far until the end of the year to project. There will be no overage in the overall bottom line.

S. Miller asked about project completion in 2009. Muchado Hill Road was not done; Hayes Road was completed, Quarry Road was done, 11-D was shimmed, and Old Durham Road and Rand Hill Road were not shimmed due to funding. Hollywood Beach Road and Quarry Road were surveyed. S. Miller asked about accounting for repair parts for work done on other department vehicles.

Line-by-line budget was discussed. Pay scale/steps were discussed. Function of mechanics was discussed in regards to overtime. K. Painter asked for figures as to how overtime is used for mechanics – mechanical work-v-other tasks. Decrease in office supply line discussed. Pothole repair line was discussed; all potholes are repaired. Sand line is \$62,694 per contract; average of 6,000 yards used per year. The cost of salt went down. Gravel is another bid item. Line 147 for Crack Sealing was increased by the Board of Selectmen to \$12,000; this will help keep water out of the roads and make them last longer. Catch basins are checked yearly and pumped as needed. Roadside mowing is contracted due to increased productivity. Signage was discussed because in 2012 all street signs will have to be increased from 4” to 6” lettering. As they’re lost or stolen, they are being replaced with 6” lettering, which is more visible.

New Equipment includes replacement shovels, brooms, etc, as well as new equipment for the mechanic. Miscellaneous equipment is small tools/items not covered by another line item, including chain saws, paint sprayers, etc. S. Miller asked Russ Bailey the value of mechanical work done outside; it is around/above \$50,000, and varies from year to year. K. Painter asked if it is typical for a town to have their own mechanics, and what the liability might be. R. Bailey answered that it is about half, and that there is no liability. Inspections are done by an outside inspector. K. Painter voiced concern that running a mechanic department is not part of the mission statement; there’s a lot in this budget for the mechanics, which may not be known by the taxpayers. Vehicle expense is at \$42,000 with the transfer; will exceed that due to a couple of major breakdowns. Bottom line will remain flat because of freezes in other areas. Tire line covers maintenance; there is a full set of summer and winter tires for each vehicle.

Fuel has gone down due to cost set up by the state and because anything with construction is taken out of construction account. Cost of electricity is set by town hall. Building fuel cost is kept down due to the use of waste oil furnace. The repeater system on Mt. Prospect is free. Dust control was increased to \$28,000 by Selectmen; calcium chloride added to the roads will keep the materials in place much longer. Line painting decreased because yellow lines are not being painted anymore. Infectious disease covers testing to make sure K. Roberts maintains protection from rabies.

York rakes will be maintained in the spring. Spreaders (2) are maintained. Plow equipment is mostly for blades. Wetlands delineation line is to pay wetlands consultant as needed. CIP will come in on the 17th to meet with the budget committee; ½ of department heads will meet after CIP and other half on December 1, 2009.

S. Miller suggested that the Highway Department should have a 3 or 5 year plan. K. Roberts informed him that is being worked on right now; should not be a dated policy with projects numbered and bumped up the list next year if they are not finished this year.

BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

Cemetery – S. Miller still concerned about this department spending up to their budget amount by the end of the year. Burials are down 30%, which should be less work. Selectmen discussed and voted on reducing to part time coverage. R. Bailey stressed the obligation to maintain the cemeteries.

S. Miller made a motion to reduce Line 4195-016 (Part Time Wages) from \$10,506 to \$1. There was no second. Motion failed.

There was discussion concerning Selectmen's discussions on this budget. K. Painter wanted to know how much the savings would be to cutting the full time to part time; there would be about a 25% savings on the benefit lines.

K Painter made a motion to reduce Line 011 from \$39,541 to \$31,632 with the intent of decreasing that position from 40 hours to 32 hours per week, and that they also reduce all dependent lines based on the number of hours.

S. Miller asked why they would reduce the full-time caretaker and have him look for other work, as opposed to letting the part-time go. R. Bailey explained how the workload fluctuates seasonally.

K. Painter withdrew the motion.

There was further discussion concerning ways to staff the cemetery effectively while still eliminating funds from this area.

S. Miller made a motion to cut Line 016 by \$10,504 to \$2. V. MacDonald seconded the motion.

There was further discussion about coverage.

Motion passed with 5 votes in favor (KP, GF, MD, VM, SM) and 1 abstention (LC).

V. MacDonald made a motion to cut Line 305 (Water) to \$1,000, seconded by K. Painter.

There was discussion concerning the fact that this line is low because there was little need for watering this past summer. Figures from past years were discussed.

Motion passed with 5 votes in favor (KP, GF, MD, VM, SM) and 1 opposed (LC).

S. Miller made a motion to accept the budget of \$84,775; G. Fuller seconded. Motion passed with 5 votes in favor (KP, GF, MD, VM, SM) and 1 opposed (LC).

HIGHWAY –

S. Miller made a motion to reduce Line 440 (Radios) from \$1,048 to \$500; seconded by M. DeCoff. Motion carried by a vote of 5 in favor (KP, GF, MD, VM, SM) and 1 opposed(LC) .

S. Miller made a motion to reduce Line 450 (Infectious Diseases) to \$600; seconded by V. MacDonald. Motion carried by a vote of 5 in favor (KP, GF, MD, VM, SM) and 1 opposed(LC) .

S. Miller made a motion to reduce Line 527 (York Rake) to \$750; seconded by M. DeCoff. Motion carried by a vote of 5 in favor (KP, GF, MD, VM, SM) and 1 opposed(LC) .

M. DeCoff asked for an inventory of parts left at the end of the year; that is the request of the committee.

S. Miller made a motion to reduce Line 535 (Plow Equipment) to \$8,000; seconded by V. MacDonald. Motion carried by a vote of 5 in favor (KP, GF, MD, VM, SM) and 1 opposed (LC) .

S. Miller made a motion to reduce Line 599 (Delineation of Wetlands) to \$1,000. Motion was withdrawn after discussion.

The purpose of the emergency reconstruction line was discussed.

S. Miller made a motion to reduce Line 699 (Emergency Reconstruction) to \$6,000; M. DeCoff seconded the motion. Motion carried by a vote of 4 in favor (KP, GF, MD, SM) and 2 opposed (LC, VM).

G. Fuller raised concern about pricing for computer budget. There was discussion concerning replacing computer for this department.

There was discussion concerning the lines that were increased by the Selectmen; maintenance needs to be increased versus building new.

K. Painter made a motion to reduce Line 202 (Miscellaneous Equipment Expenses) to \$1,500; M. DeCoff seconded the motion. Motion carried by a vote of 5 in favor (KP, GF, MD, SM, VM) and 1 opposed (LC).

S. Miller made a motion to reduce Line 447 to \$23,800. Motion was withdrawn when it was pointed out that this is contracted.

K. Painter made a motion to reduce Line 201 (New Equipment) to \$5,000; seconded by S. Miller.

R. Bailey pointed out that this is being held until they are sure they are not going to overrun the bottom line. Most of this is tools for the mechanic.

S. Miller withdrew his second. Motion failed.

V. MacDonald made a motion to reduce Line 206 (Uniform and Safety) to \$5,000; S. Miller seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 4 in favor (KP, MD, SM, VM) and 2 opposed (LC, GF).

K. Painter made a motion to increase Line 147 (Crack Seal) to coincide with the Board of Selectmen \$12,000; seconded by M. DeCoff. Motion carried by a vote of 5 in favor (KP, GF, MD, VM, LC) and 1 opposed (SM).

K. Painter made a motion to increase Line 447 (Dust Control) to coincide with the Board of Selectmen recommendation of \$28,000; seconded by S. Miller. Motion carried by a vote of 5 in favor (KP, SM, MD, VM, LC) and 1 opposed (GF).

K. Painter made a motion to recommend a bottom line of \$990,080 (includes the lines increased by the Selectmen). M. DeCoff seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 5 in favor (KP, GF, VM, SM, MD) and 1 opposed (LC).

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

E-mail from Krista Argiropolis that she would not be at this meeting; Mary Tetreau is covering. She will be at the next meeting on Thursday, but will be late; meeting will be downstairs.

E-mail from T. Noyes that there is a PMHS Board meeting this evening; there will be no rep. Sandy Wyatt will be the rep for Thursday meeting. T. Noyes will attend all school budget sessions. L. Goosens mentioned questions from last meeting; info was given to Pat Rockwood by both school districts.

VII. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

S. Miller requested a meeting to see where all the departments come in according to their budgeted numbers. Public hearing is January 12; budget has to be ready for that meeting. This meeting was set for December 10, 2009.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

M. DeCoff made a motion to adjourn; seconded by G. Fuller and passed by unanimous vote (KP, GF, SM, LC, MD, VM).

Meeting adjourned at 10:25.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Tetreau
Acting Recorder