

Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2017

Present:

Chair- William Cote, JP Morrison, Don Milbrand, John Sellers, Betsy Schneider, Scott Sanschagrín, Dave Carr, Tom Keegan, Wayne Anderson, Bob Emerson, Kevin MacCaffrie, Rob Glassett, and Ashley Dolloff.

Absent: None

Others Present: Jeff Chartier Water/Sewer Supt., Shawn Lagueux Selectman, Police Chief Michael Lewis, Fire Chief Ben LaRoche, and Members of the public.

Call to Order:

Committee Chair William Cote called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Annual Public Hearing Discussed:

There was discussion regarding the Executive Operating Budget, the numbers presented this evening do not add up to the operating budget from meeting of February 6, 2017 meeting, there is a \$3,000 dollar difference which is larger than actual. It was suggested that Nick Coates Town Mgr. was not able to adjust the budget from the line items that had been taken from. Consensus is that committee has faith that the numbers will reflect the actual numbers.

Police Department Budget: There was much discussion about the increase of personnel for the Work Force Housing 25 unit building to be constructed. The chief was asked directly if he was intending to increase personnel because of this complex. The chief responded that there were no personnel increases for the 2017 budget. It was then asked by the public if he anticipated an increase of calls because of this housing unit and chief responded that yes in his experience it does and it would cost the town more money.

There was also discussion regarding the K-9 unit budget, the public questioned the \$1,000 budget which town was told that money to support this program would come from forfeitures not from taxpayers. The chief responded that many people in this town have generously donated to this program and has adopted an account at local bank for K9 program (also veterinarian costs and food costs are donated). Public would like to see line 01-4210-667 zeroed out and only donations used for additional items and incidentals. Chief also told public and committee that upkeep from this program is now solely from forfeitures and donations.

Member of the public also expressed concern that our PD, FD & Ambulance are servicing surrounding towns for free and asked why these towns are not paying for these services, Police Chief responded that there was no mutual aid to Alexandria; Chief stated that even if town requested they would not respond.

Fire Department Budget: The public voiced concern regarding the ambulance member fees from surrounding towns they asked the Fire Chief to explain this more, Chief feels that we could ask for more money from these towns but we could run risk of losing these contracts. These contracts do help with the operating budget for salaries and maintenance for the 2017 budget and the revenue lost could be around \$350,000. The Chief also explained that these contracts were negotiated by former Fire Chief,

board members and other chiefs from surrounding towns and feels it is a good contract but does have room for improvement. He said if you were to take a broad look at service calls actual cost to provide the ambulance it is about half of what is billed. Chief did not have numbers from 2016 service calls but in 2015 we had only 1 call that the town had to rely on mutual aid.

Fire Betterment: Member of the public asked what this \$10,000 was needed for. Response was that the water department has maintained the town's fire hydrants for years, clearing snow from them in winter and painting them in spring.

Land Use/Health Office: The select board had asked to make the Health Officer's job to increase from a 2 day a week position to a full-time position and final decision was made to make this a 3 day a week position.

Welfare Services: Public asked under the budget for Welfare Rent was this budget for fuel and rent? Response from board member was that this was not subsidized and that taxes are paid.

Recreation: Public asked what this revenue is for? The response was that this facility provides the Community with recreational programs for the residents of Bristol, also that Bristol residents do pay a portion for this facility and surrounding towns that use this facility also contribute.

Library: What do other towns pay to Bristol for the use of the Library? There is a onetime fee of \$25.00 to use the library outside the school district. Also the library does accept outside donations. It was asked if there was a school or daycare going on in the library. Response was no that the only programs are to educate the children and public.

Capital Expenditures: It was asked by the public if the committee could not get closer to the fund balance amounts so that these large amounts are not being contributed ever year. Committee responded that this was not actual money but taxes that have not been paid yet, it is considered account receivables.

Warrant Articles Discussed:

Article 2: The budget asked to be raised for the replacement of dewatering equipment will not raise residents rates, should be able to be funded with current rates.

Articles 3: The budget asked to be raised for Water, Sewer and Roadway improvements on Central Street would increase resident's rates. There is capital reserve funds available and surplus could be used to bring down debt.

Article 9: These numbers will be corrected before Election night.

Article 12: Vote to raise and appropriate sum of \$95,000 for architectural design and engineering study for future municipal buildings. Public expressed that this study should include the design for an addition to existing building.

Article 14: Vote to raise and appropriate sum of \$25,200 to replace Police Department's portable radios. Public expressed that this should be placed in PD budget and not as a warrant article.

Article 17: Vote to raise and appropriate sum of \$5,000 for future locations of small cell or cell tower locations. Public expressed opinion that these could be placed in local Church Steeples and would help with town service and churches would benefit from being paid for use of steeples.

Review of Minutes: Don Milbrand made motion to approve minutes of February 6, 2017 and Rob Glassett seconded. The motion passed 13-0.

Correspondence: None

Old Business: John Sellers asked about the revolving reserve fund for 2015, the committee has received 2016 but has still not received 2015. Bill Cote said he would follow-up on this.

New Business: Wednesday night the Budget Committee will meet at Town Office at 6:30 pm for a short meeting to correct numbers the 2017 Town Budget.

Member Comments: None

Select Board Comments: None

Adjournment:

Ashley Dolloff made motion to adjourn at 9:47 pm, seconded by Don Millbrand. Motion passed 13-0

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Sarto, Minute Taker