

Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2008

Present: Andrea O'Connor, Ed Hayes, George Linkletter

First Selectmen Andrea O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Award bid for financial audit services:

Eric Holub, Treasurer suggested after reviewing the bids that we stay with our current services. Ed moved to award bid to Levitsky and Berney, George seconded and all voted in favor.

Discussion and possible action to appoint a new actuary and pension administrator:

Following a brief discussion, the consensus of the Board was to switch to Charter Oak Pension Services as the Town's new actuary and pension administrator. George moved to make the switch with the provision that before we change the actuary appointment we analyze what our needs are. Ed seconded and all voted in favor.

Budget Workshop:

Andrea presented a proposed budget for discussion.

She proposed a 2.5% cost of living salary increase for non-union employees.

In the Selectmen's budget, the audit and printing line will be \$12,550 based on one-half the cost of the audit plus printing of both the budget and the annual report. It was agreed to mail an abbreviated version of the budget, with full line-item copies available on line and at various locations. The Selectmen's dues/meetings line was reduced by \$250 by moving the proposed increased mileage to the Collections/Recycling line to support Ruth Byrnes' attendance at monthly recycling meetings in Brookfield.

Treasurer - reflects salary increase and no change in supplies

Tax Collector Office - reflects salary increase as well as increase in the fee paid to DMV

Town Clerk Office - this budget includes placing the land record indices on line as well as \$2,000 to complete the records project

Assessors Office - as presented, decreased mileage to last year's figures in anticipation of purchasing a vehicle for shared use by several departments, which requires approval by Town Meeting. Mileage reimbursement needs to be available if a personal vehicle must be used when the town vehicle is already in use.

Board of Assessment Appeals - modest increase to the budget for legal notices

Building Department - no changes to request

Land Use Enforcement Officer - increase of 40 hours as discussed and decrease the mileage assuming the use of a town vehicle

Planning & Zoning Department - Considering having regulations printed here, which would save \$1,000. Andrea also proposed decreasing both fees to state and legals by 25%; both are recaptured in fees paid by applicants, so there is no issue if applications cause these to exceed the budgeted amount

Zoning Board of Appeals - as presented

Wetlands Department - as presented

General Counsel and Court - may be safe to take down \$5,000. We're going to have to pay for the development of bid specs for the various projects, but that money could be paid out of the projects lines

Registrars - Registrars provided registrars' salaries for three small towns. The average of these led to Andrea's recommendation to increase the registrar's salaries from \$13.75 to \$15.50/hour and the deputies from \$12.00 to \$13.50/hour. Additionally, the registrars and deputies are paid from the Registrars Workers line for elections, so this line was adjusted accordingly

HVA - Added \$250 membership, based on their advocacy over the Towner Hill funding issues

Engineering Consultants - decreased by \$5,000, under the assumption that when the town's engineer is called in for a specific application, the fee is charged back to the applicant; any work for the town in relation to the projects can be charged to the projects

Govt. Postage - up 10% to cover land use certified mailings

Utilities up 8%, held heating oil to a 5% increase, 5% increase for phones

Town Hall Maintenance - proposal to upgrade electrical outlets in individual offices, add motion sensors for bathrooms, replace time clock, install a panel surge protector, kitchen make over and exterior painting included in this budget; proposal to replace fluorescents and ceiling tiles and paint the interior deferred for now

Town Hall Technology - included \$2,500 to put field cards on website

Andrea suggested adding a "general building maintenance: category in future budgets to allow for expenses related to Scouthouse and Playhouse as well as other Town-owned buildings

Town Garage - as presented

Resident Trooper Supplies - increased by \$200 for water

Scouthouse - increased 8% for propane and electricity

Public Safety Supplies - proposed funding requests for education, office supplies, and digital camera for \$100; there is an available computer with the stipulation that it remain in Town Hall

Police Protection - increased 10% for overtime

Fire Department - reduced by \$5000 for upgrading the AED's

Public Works - CL&P discovered 2 new street lights belonging to the town, which added \$165 to the line item for streetlights

Collections/Recycling - includes \$250 for mileage since Ruth is attending meetings

Health Department - decreased mileage by \$100 to mileage in anticipation of town vehicle

Debt Service - This figure includes debt service on refinancing bonds plus interest on bond anticipation notes and \$12,000 for issuance costs when the BANs need to be renewed in August. Debt service is decreased by \$140,000 in earnings on the BAN funds which was designated as "debt reserve" by the Board of Selectmen to be applied to this line.

Defined Contribution Plan - based on salary increase

Reserve for Capital Expenses - left at \$125,000

Land Acquisition Fund - as proposed

Library - as proposed

Park & Recreation - as proposed except for the capital improvement; funds for refurbishing docks were put in capital expenditures budget

Celebrations - added \$1,500 for possible volunteer recognition event

Senior Center - van driver dropped from \$5,000 to \$3,000

Probate - Andrea will e-mail John Hodge. George proposed we go back to \$2,000. John was supposed to send info to Andrea per his discussion with George

Board of Education – BOE Chairman Paul Mucci indicated that grant offsets were calculated at 80% of what they expect to get

Selectmen Comments:

Ed - Expressed concern about town paying almost 54% of the library's budget and the costs of instituting the SAT program. Eric explained that the on-line SAT course is \$250 a year. Ed further noted that if a town vehicle was purchased, Land Use Enforcement Officer, Assessor, Fire Marshal, possibly the Health Director could share it but there would have to be a schedule. The vehicle could use town gasoline, which would be a savings.

George - Uneasy about the size of the proposed increase for the Land Use Enforcement Officer in view of the lack of prompt remittance of receipts. Andrea indicated that she has spoken with parties involved as directed by the Board. George thinks we should increase the employee contribution to the costs of the health care plan should be increased; Andrea's would be to revisit this issue next year. The general goal would be to gradually bring the employee contribution from the current 12% to 15%.

In response to suggests by Eric Holub, Treasurer, consideration will be given to adding \$30-50,000 in "unidentified projects" to the Capital Expenditures Plan, since there are always additional projects after the plan has been approved. It was suggested to try to bring the Capital Non-Recurring Fund contribution to \$130,000 and then see the effect on the bottom line of bringing it to \$150,000 for 08-09. Regarding setting aside funds for post-retirement benefits, George suggested designating about 20% of the calculated liability (about \$11,000) as a post-retirement reserve. Eric indicated that this could be done in June.

Public Comment:

Audience member questions the need for existing staffing in the Selectmen's Office. Another audience member asked whether consideration had been given to her request for a 6% pay increase.

George moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm. Ed seconded and all voted in favor.

Next regularly scheduled BOS meeting to be held on Thursday, March 27, 2008 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hollis

Board of Selectmen

Andrea O'Connor

Ed Hayes

George Linkletter