

**SHERMAN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
March 29, 2012**

Present: Clay Cope - First Selectman Chris Jellen - Selectman Andrea O'Connor - Selectman

Call to Order: First Selectman Cope calls the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Agenda: Continuing with the proposed budget for fiscal year 2012/2013

First Selectman Cope says the latest copy of the budget is in the Selectmen's folders, and on page 8 of 8 the combined number can be found, and he opens it up for discussion.

Selectman Jellen comments that the B.O.S. never really discussed a target number, and he inquires if First Selectman Cope has a number in mind that would be reasonable to bring forward to the public. First Selectman Cope feels the Board knows where they are with the Board of Ed, and in the expenditures budget they need to be below this 6.23%, because he would like to see the budget pass. First Selectman Cope says he looks at the budget by departments, to see what can be trimmed that way, and to combine it all to come up with something lower than it is now. He notes that the biggest changes (significant increases) are in Park & Rec and Social Services.

First Selectman Cope refers to p. 7, an addition below line 3957 – for the Senior Center leased vehicle (\$5,400) to replace the aging Taurus. As much as he appreciates the value from a safety standpoint, he is not sure this can be fit into this budget cycle. He notes the bottom line Senior Center is still at a 29% increase. The driver went down to 20 hours a week, and could possibly take that down a little further. Selectman Jellen comments that while he is concerned about liability, maybe the vehicle is a reasonable place to look for cost savings. Selectman O'Connor says she will mull this over. First Selectman Cope says the Selectmen can put it out there for voters to decide, or they can make it more palatable for voters. Selectman Jellen thinks the Board has a responsibility to put a reasonable budget to the people. Selectman O'Connor comments that the Board should put out that if they drop the lease, they will need mileage line 3914 at \$2,300. First Selectman Cope says it is a \$3,000 savings, if that \$3,000 can be found somewhere else in their department, then they will get their vehicle. He says it boils down to salaries and increase in the hours. He notes the Senior Center Clerk line shared with another line (same person) – both at 5 hours x 14 hours, is 36.40. He says even if that went down to 4 hours, they may argue for the need to have the person in the job with the way that the structure is changing in the other two jobs. Selectman O'Connor thinks the Board really has to look at the need for documentation, and there is a certain level of employee engaged with the Seniors who don't have the time to do the documentation, so having the clerk to do the documentation is important because it has to be done by somebody. She believes the Clerk also serves the Commission on Aging.

First Selectman Cope says salaries are one thing to look at, line 3932 Senior Activities Coordinator, if the Board is trying to give them as much as they feel they can for doing their jobs and get them that vehicle. First Selectman Cope says he can go back and see if he can find that 3,000 in the salaries, a little here a little there, but it is still an increase. Maybe they have some room with the Clerk. Selectman O'Connor notes there are trade offs all over the place. First Selectman Cope does not like employees using their own vehicles, and the Taurus from a liability standpoint. He says he is open for ideas. Selectman O'Connor notes she misspoke - they do have a 3928 separate clerk. First Selectman Cope could suggest they take away 1 hour from each 5 hour. Selectman O'Connor points out that time is running out, and the next meeting is the hearing on April 12th. She mentions that usually, budget sheets are given out all along to the public. First Selectman Cope would like to have another budget workshop on April 5th, if that works.

First Selectman Cope reached out to Park & Rec director regarding the concert series. On p. 7, line 3664, there was some question about whether there was a need for the \$1,500 he put back in the budget. First Selectman Cope suggests leaving it at previously funded level of \$1,500. Park & Rec says they can spend \$2,000 depending on the band. On p. 6, line 3601, First Selectman Cope states that the whole combination that had been suggested was taken out, so that extra position is out of this budget. First Selectman Cope also says take out \$1,500 from line 3664, and go back to the \$1,500 approved in the last budget. Regarding 3667, first Selectman Cope says they should be OK on that. \$1,500 is only cut that First Selectman Cope can find in Park & Rec.

P. 1 line 163 - First Selectman Cope says the Business Associate has been taken down to 18 hours, at \$22.89. The Selectman's Clerk (new position) has been taken down to 6 hours at \$13 an hour. Selectman O'Connor asks why the number is \$22.89, when the B.O.S. voted \$22.50. First Selectman Cope explains that is part of the 3% across the budget.

First Selectman Cope asks the Board for their thoughts regarding the Tax Collector's Office - line 362. Selectman Jellen says he would be in favor of a more middle of the road position here, something less than the \$650, something in the neighborhood of \$400 for all the various hours. Selectman O'Connor states she has had many questions on this for a while, and she mentions Pat (Werme) had sent her something. First Selectman Cope says he supports the Tax Collector, but also looks at what the voter will see when they see 188.49%. Selectman O'Connor says Pat's memo was broken into 2 parts, coverage needed for 4 weeks vacation, 5 sick days, 3 personal day, and 3 family leave days - 222 hours, and another 204 hours, for a total of 426 hours, and she seems to have sprinkled hours through the other months. Trish (Viola) had come up with a different figure, and Selectman O'Connor had come up with 342. First Selectman Cope inquires as to what the rationale was behind \$16.00 an hour for that clerk, when others are at \$14, and Selectman O'Connor says this is what Pat wanted. First Selectman Cope thinks it might make sense to bring it to \$14.00 instead, or reduce hours. Selectman O'Connor states they could possibly do both. First Selectman Cope is

working off the 426 hours at \$14.00. He says he can go back to the Tax Collector, tell her what he thinks Board can afford. Selectman Jellen thinks this is a reasonable idea. Selectman O'Connor is interested in what the current pay is for the position. This can be discussed further at the April 5th meeting.

On p.5, the overall utilities for the Fire Department, First Selectman Cope states the last Mitchell contract was in September, and he still does not know what those numbers are, so he is leaving it for now. He also has no answer on the health insurance issues, and does not know that there will be an answer on that by the 12th. Selectman O'Connor asks if he knows what the Board is planning on offering, and First Selectman Cope says "no".

Selectman Jellen has a question on 2628 Animal Control, a small increase there. First Selectman Cope says he is still waiting for Animal Control to give a figure. Selectman O'Connor mentions this is a late arrival.

Regarding Public Works line 2827, First Selectman Cope says the numbers are bumped up significantly, because of the purchase for the sandblaster. Selectman O'Connor wonders if it can be rented, and First Selectman Cope says he will check into this. Regarding line 2802, First Selectman Cope notes it is up 25%, but look at the rationale.

On p.7, line 4628 – First Selectman Cope says there was some discussion about this clerk, and did the board consider taking this clerk to 4 hours from 6 hours. It was approved for \$17.50, and he asks if there was some discussion about reducing this clerk. Selectman O'Connor does not recall that.

First Selectman Cope reiterates that biggest changes were the Senior Center and Social Services, and these areas will need to be revisited again. First Selectman Cope asks the other Board members for any additional input.

Selectman O'Connor asks if First Selectman Cope can walk through some of the changes made since the last meeting, as they are peppered through, and it will help her understand things - for example, the clerk salary had been reduced from \$14.00 to \$13.00 for the Board of Selectmen. Selectman O'Connor sees small adjustments throughout line 102, last week it was at \$750 now it is at \$600 based on historic data, where those changes have been made, so they can see what was done. First Selectman Cope says this is based on historic data, at the 3/15 budget, they increased it from \$13.00 to \$14.00, and then on the 15th, they said they would take it back down to \$13.00.

Regarding line 162, First Selectman Cope brought it down to 6 hours a week for a Grant Researcher. Dropping the Business Associate from 24 hours to 18 hours was a large savings.

Selectman Jellen notes a change on p. 2, line 510 – First Selectman Cope says the old increase was for data online for maps, and this was taken down to zero, that is how that went down.

Selectman Jellen notes a change on p. 4, line 1721 – technology. First Selectman Cope says previously, it increased \$69.00 plus additional \$1,400 for senior center. New number is \$269.

Selectman Jellen notes a change in line 2018 – First Selectman Cope says it was a \$50,000 contract – he still does not know what that number will be, it should be lower based on forecast.

Selectman Jellen notes a change p. 6, line 3248 - Workman's Comp. First Selectman Cope says previously there was a decrease. In the new schedule, it is all back to the insurance question. He is waiting for more information on this, but it might not be in time for April 12th.

Selectman Jellen notes a change in line 3249 – social security. First Selectman Cope says before it was a payroll of \$1,014,736 X 6.2% FICA and 1.45% Medicare, so that adjusted by 2%

Selectman Jellen notes a change in line 3250 – Contribution. First Selectman Cope says it changed now to reflect coming down 17%, had been at 4.67, and now it is at 2.50. It came down a small amount.

Selectman Jellen notes a change in line 3251 – Medical. First Selectman Cope says these numbers are not ready, there are 16 employees involved, and he will see what he can do to push this. Selectman O'Connor says she would like to see the separate spreadsheet for the life & medical, as it is a complicated computation because of how union is computed.

Selectman Jellen notes a change in line 3253 – Compensated Absences. First Selectman Cope comments that had been at paying of holidays not previously factored into wages. He believes it went down because Selectman O'Connor suspected this may have been in another line with the Senior Center. Selectman O'Connor says if these compensated absences assumed Liz was going to be full-time, would have lost some there. If the driver had been full-time and some full-time positions were included in the calculations, and if no longer full-time, that would account for the change.

Selectman Jellen notes a change in line 3402 – land acquisition operating. Selectman Cope says it went down slightly, via recalculating the Clerk's formula. It had been 2 hours a month x 2.5 plus the actual hours formula would equal 7 hours a month x 10 months x \$14.00 an hour equaled \$980.00. The change comes with calculating it at \$13.00 an hour.

Selectman Jellen notes a change in line 3665 – Spark. First Selectman Cope says this was reduced, because he believes at the last meeting the Board said they would take that back to 25.

Selectman Jellen notes a change in line 4728 – Housing Commission. First Selectman Cope says there is an increase. He thinks it is back to \$13.00 an hour for the Clerk, that is what they did across the board. Selectman O'Connor says originally it was \$1,500, now it is \$2,400. First Selectman Cope says he will check on this and come back with more information on April 5th

Selectman Jellen asks if the Board is comfortable with the capital non-recurring increase of \$250,000, noting that this was number that Eric (Holub) had recommended, there were a number of requests/wish lists, maybe ambulance, public works truck, wash station – these are all big ticket items. First Selectman Cope thinks the Board is comfortable with this number, although he is not sure if the public will be comfortable with it. He thinks the Board should stagger out these big projects.

Selectman Jellen makes a motion to continue this meeting at 5:00 on April 5th, Selectman O'Connor seconds, all in favor.

Adjournment: Selectman Jellen moves to adjourn the March 29, 2012 Budget Hearing Meeting at 8:00 p.m., and the motion is carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura J. Pettinato, BOS Clerk

Clay Cope

Chris Jellen

Andrea O'Connor

Minutes are not considered official until they have been approved and signed by a minimum of two Selectmen