

FINAL



WEARE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
November 13, 2006

PRESENT: HELEEN KURK, CHAIRMAN; JOSEPH M. FIALA, VICE CHAIRMAN; DONNA M. OSBORNE, SELECTMAN; TOM CLOW, SELECTMAN; CRAIG SLATTUM, SELECTMAN

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: Fred Ventresco

RECORDING SECRETARY: Cherry Palmisano

GUESTS: Frank Campana, Will Ottery, Chip Meany, Dick Butt, Matt Esenwine, Naomi Bolton, Judy Rogers

6:03 p.m. Chairman Kurk called the meeting to order.

Chairman Kurk announced to the public the tax rate will be set on Friday, November 17, 2006 at the Town Office Building. For further information please contact the Selectman's Office.

1. MANIFESTS

Chairman Kurk moved, Selectman Osborne seconded, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign Manifest and order the Treasurer to sign checks dated November 16, 2006. Passed 5-0-0.

Accounts payable	\$224,498.09
Gross Payrolls	<u>\$33,433.36</u>
Total	\$257,931.45

2. BUILDING DEPARTMENT BUDGET – Mr. Chip Meany informed the Board he is presenting 2 versions of his budget; one with his secretary at her current hours and another with his secretary being full time. Mr. Meany said his budgeted salary was \$44,507 but the actual is \$44,886 actual from his pay checks. Mr. Meany said he thinks this happened because he was paid 13 weeks at one rate and 39 weeks at another rate.

Mr. Meany discussed the other wages line and informed the Board this was for someone to replace him if was out, he has saved this expense in the past by scheduling vacations around certain times of the year. Mr. Meany said his health insurance will be going down because he will no longer be considered on the 2-person plan.

Mr. Meany presented the Building Department Budget as follows:

Medicare slight increase

FICA – budgeted \$3904, actual \$3,895.26 up to \$3,995 for next year

NH Retirement - budgeted \$3,000 actual \$3489.85 over by \$500

Life Ins – budgeted \$3,400 actual \$5,460

Workmans comp – budgeted \$2,640 actual \$2,908 – \$2,705 for 2007 savings of over \$200

Telephone \$1,200

Seminars \$1,200 - 0 increase – spent \$320 actual but would like to carry the whole amount

Dues \$400 increased to \$450 – State Building Officials raised prices

Copies \$55.00 over – increased by \$55.00

Office Supplies gone way over (2 monitors were purchased, fax machine and print cartridges)

Asking for 2 CPUs from the Capital Reserve Fund

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Computer Software upgrades – would like the Assessing, Land Use, Accounting and the Building Department to combine a software package – Black Bear program cost \$600

Office equipment asking for \$25.00 increase

Postage – a lot more spent on legal notifications, \$75.00 increase requested

Fuel – asking for \$306 increase (estimated on \$3.00 a gallon)

Vehicle Maintenance – carried \$1,500 in maintenance budget before getting new vehicle, budget \$500 for 2007

Books and Updates \$700 – the State has adopted a new code, new books \$600

Vehicle Insurance - \$411

Tools and Equipment - \$400

2007 requested 3.19% under last year's budget (vehicle maintenance and health insurance helped to reduce)

The difference in the 2 budgets is having the Building Department Secretary as a full time employee, with health insurance and benefits, at a 12% increase. Chairman Kurk asked Mr. Meany to justify having a full time secretary. Mr. Meany said she spends a lot of time taking care of business from 8:45 to 3:45 and doesn't even take lunch because the phone keeps ringing. Mr. Meany said there is a high volume of work because of more zoning and court time, research and data collecting, writing letters for building permit expirations. Mr. Meany said they are trying to give better services to the citizens in town. Chairman Kurk said when they discussed this position becoming full time in the past it was because of the position actually being cross-trained in other departments. Mr. Meany said it would be beneficial to train her to help in Assessing; she is here 30 hours a week; 5 days a week for 6 hours. Mr. Meany gave the Board a copy of the actual expenditures to date.

Mr. Matt Esenwine, Finance Committee, commented on workman's compensation getting paid at the end of the calendar year. Mr. Esenwine asked about the meetings/seminar line not being fully spent. Mr. Meany said he didn't attend several seminars and training this year because of the tight budget. Training for the Secretary will help Mr. Meany with the reviewing of plans and permits.

3. LAND USE BUDGET – Ms. Naomi Bolton presented the Land Use Budget as follows:

Land Use Coordinator Wages/Hourly – increase \$286.00

Health Insurance \$1,532.00

Medicare and FICA reflected on increase

Pass Thru Engineering (need to carry)

Telephone \$449.00 (would like a fax machine and fax line)

Recording Fees \$800 (overspent but is off set by applicants)

Meetings/Seminars \$1,040.00 (cross training for Finance Department accounting \$90, Supervisor I class \$750,

Planning Conferences \$240, Municipal Law Lectures \$360

SNHPC has not received new figure

Mileage \$250.00 (never requested mileage in the past and has used her own vehicle)

Office Supplies (purchased previously on her own) increased \$250.00

Office Equipment increase of \$1,500 (fax machine, new copier, printer to print 13'' x 19'' maps. Share cost of fax and photo copier with the Highway Department) \$28.25 a month for the phone line for the fax machine 529-7525. Fax machine \$100.00, printer cost \$499 3 years ago

Postage increase by \$1,378.00 (because it was decreased last year because of budget cuts, offset revenues by applicants) would like to go back to the budgeted \$1,950.00

Books and Updates increase \$50.00 because of rising costs

Workers Compensation, Unemployment, Life Insurance – based on rate given

Requested bottom line \$74,575.00 with a 10.5% increase and with raises \$75,516.00 with an 11.9% increase.

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Ms. Bolton said if she did not have to replace the 2% taken away from her budget last year then she wouldn't have to request the increase being put back into her budget this year.

Selectman Slattum asked about the longevity bonus. Ms. Bolton said it was implemented a few years ago to help to keep long term employees employed with the town and is a bonus as spelled out in the personnel policy.

Vice Chairman Fiala thanked Ms. Bolton for her written explanations of increases in her budget.

Chairman Kurk commented on the legal expenses and the ZBA budget being higher than budgeted. Chairman Kurk said there was \$20,000 for legal expenses that dealt with Selectman's Office, \$1,031.70 for the Police Department, \$22,000 for Planning Board and \$12,000 for ZBA. Planning Board has spent over \$25,000 and ZBA spent over \$13,000. Ms. Bolton said when this was budgeted for in January it is hard to determine who would sue the town. On the Planning Board side there are 7 main issues, the 2 in review are zoning and vesting issues, 2 fairly involved lawsuits, 1 the town won, 1 settled out court, open space easement deed cluster subdivision with pesticide issues, 7 items, 2 of which cost the town a lot of money. Ms. Bolton said the GMO took 2 years for the town to complete in which the town won. Chairman Kurk asked what the anticipated request for ZBA and Planning Board will be. Chairman Kurk remembers a budget of \$55,000 for last year. Ms. Bolton said they only have 1 lawsuit pending on the Planning Board side. The Board discussed they will be receiving a bill from Bill Drescher before the end of the year.

4. ASSESSING DEPARTMENT BUDGET – Ms. Judy Rogers presented the Assessing Budget as follows:

Longevity Bonus - \$250.00

Hourly Wages – proposed \$29,994 with raise \$30,758.00

Health Insurance - \$13,255.00

Medicare - \$439.00

FICA - \$1,875 with raise \$1,923.00

Tax Map Maintenance - \$3,000.00

Appraisal expertise if needed \$500.00

Telephone - \$600.00

Registry - \$500.00

Seminars/Training - \$100.00

Dues - \$50.00

Mileage - \$50.00

Avitar Contract \$227,770 (needs answer from Board)

Photocopies - \$300.00

Office Supplies - \$600.00 (\$300.00 decrease)

Computer Upgrades Avitar - \$1,200.00

Computer Support – licensing \$2,800.00

Office Equipment - \$200.00

Computer Equipment

Postage - \$600.00

Books and Updates - \$50.00

Workman's compensation - \$99.00

Unemployment - \$45.00

Life insurance - \$52.00

Assessing Total for 2006 Budget \$285,425.00, 2007 without raises \$58,895.00 with raises \$59,781.00.

Avitar Contract Option 1 – General Assessing Only \$42,100 current - \$100,095.00 (come in office and take care of assessing, values, meeting with people)

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Avitar Contract Option 2 – Gen Assess/Data Verification \$75,476 current - \$134,371.00 (checking certain blocks/sections look at properties, reviewing certain number of properties) Chairman Kurk asked if this system would adjust assessments yearly. Ms. Judy Rogers said yes it would. Selectman Slattum commented on not seeing the need for option 2 or 3 if the town still needs to reassess every 5 years.

Avitar Contract Option 3 – 5 years @ \$101,120 per year \$160,015.00

It was discussed regardless if they signed another contract with Avitar, Avitar would still deal with all the abatements from 2006 at no extra costs. Selectman Clow said in the meantime in reviewing the Assessing we still need to have someone to do the assessing in town. Chairman Kurk said the problem is if it takes the town 6 months to decide they need something in place when the contract expires on January 1, 2007. Mr. Ventresco said Assessing photocopies and postage are over budgeted. Ms. Rogers said this was because they used a different printer because of the volume due to the reevaluation. Bottom line – just fewer than 10% left in the Assessing budget for 2006.

Chairman Kurk asked Ms. Rogers to inform taxpayers on abatement process. Ms. Rogers said they should be getting tax bills shortly. If they do not agree with the assessment they need to file an abatement, they have lost no rights, there are new abatement forms coming from state. They can come into the Assessing Department and see Ms. Rogers and check the computer for variables. She said when tax bills come out, her office will be extremely busy, and asked residents to please be patient. People will have to pay what the tax bill says and file the abatement to see if they will get a refund. It does not cost anything for taxpayers to file through the town but it will cost to appeal to the State.

Mr. Esenwine commented on going with option 1 General Assessing – the Board needs to make a decision on sharing or hiring an assessor. Vice Chairman Fiala does not want to assume that hiring the town's own assessor is the right thing to do; it has not been decided yet.

Chairman Kurk said they have Avitar software and so do most towns. Chairman Kurk informed the Board she will be going to Tri-Town Assessing meeting with Ms. Rogers.

Ms. Rogers said they are still being monitored by the State.

Chairman Kurk asked Ms. Rogers about the mobile homes. Ms. Rogers said the mobile home sales are very close to the assessment given by Avitar.

5. CORRESPONDENCE – Chairman Kurk suggested once all information is gathered they will have to discuss things further. She is concerned with the 10% increase and how raises are dealt with. Chairman Kurk said it seems that the system of merit increases in place is really not a wise one because you have different people with different standards and opinions. Selectman Slattum said they definitely want to see the employees get a raise asked if it should be on a warrant article. Chairman Kurk said the raises should not be in the default budget and wondered if you could put it in a warrant article stating if the proposed budget does not pass. Chairman Kurk said the voters passed a hefty bill because every article was passed except one. Chairman Kurk said she is hearing people being really concerned about supporting a budget.

Selectman Clow commented on merit pay and cost of living and how they shouldn't see someone's income go down with the cost of living going up because of merit and need to acknowledge merit as an employee's efforts. Chairman Kurk said merit to her way of thinking is going above and beyond what you were hired to do. Chairman Kurk said they need to have a budget that is trim but gives fair raises. Selectman Clow said it is all about people and if your people aren't motivated because they don't feel they were treated fairly then the town does not benefit.

Selectman Osborne asked the Finance Committee if they had an opinion on the cost of living increase of 3%. Mr. Esenwine feels the 3% increase should be given every year to the town employees. Mr. Ottery commented in private sector you're not always giving a cost of living increase.

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Vice Chairman Fiala feels because all salaries are public knowledge and not giving the merit and giving varying raises would do more harm than good because some employees will feel they are not valued.

Selectman Slattum is in favor of a cost of living increase.

Selectman Clow said every time he looks at bottom lines of the budget he gets very nervous. Selectman Clow commented on worker's compensation being paid in lump sums at the end of the year and not having the funds to pay.

Selectman Clow said the largest items in the budget for the remainder of the year is wages and all associated benefits which have to be expended.

Selectman Slattum said his concern lies with some things that are not accounted for like legal expenses not yet billed. Mr. Ventresco said he spoke with all Departments directly and sent letters informing them of how close the bottom line budget is running. Selectman Slattum said you can over spend your budget by unanticipated revenue.

Discussion on the landfill repair, Chairman Kurk said during May-June floods they had spent money on problems and since they got unanticipated revenue to do these repairs the funds should go back into the budget. Discussion on where in the budget the FEMA reimbursement appears.

Selectman Osborne asked Mr. Ventresco to check with Mr. Knapp on what he needs before the end of the year.

The Board discussed FEMA reimbursement money being put back into the budget to cover expenditures. Mr. Ventresco will research this from DRA.

Discussion on freezing the budget, Mr. Ventresco said departments understand to halt all spending and get approval before spending. Selectman Clow said unfortunately the biggest items in the budget cannot be frozen like wages, associated costs and fuel.

Mr. Ventresco said they need to keep a tighter control on the expended budget at all times.

Chairman Kurk discussed meeting every Monday in December.

Chairman Kurk informed the Board they received a volunteer form from Florence Corey who would like to serve on the Benefit Review Committee.

Selectman Osborne moved, Selectman Slattum seconded to appoint Florence Corey to the Benefit Review Committee for a 3 year term. Passed 5-0-0.

It was discussed a Department Head should be on the Benefit Review Committee.

Selectman Slattum moved, Selectman Clow seconded to appoint Naomi Bolton to the Benefit Review Committee for a 3 year term. Passed 5-0-0.

6. CABLE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION – Mr. Will Ottery reminded the Board they started updating the cable equipment in 2005 and received a recommendation list to put out into bid, the equipment has been installed, but some of the equipment installed prior to 2005 has hindered. Mr. Ottery informed the Board that the majority of the work on the cable channel is performed by volunteers. Mr. Ottery distributed the following list of equipment needed:

Labor to correct DVD burner issue in the editing computer

Process of testing the physical I-Net lines to make sure it is operating appropriately

Remote Modulation Unit – take anywhere to broadcast live from other locations

Processing equipment necessary to allow the RMU to be routed and switched to the cable company for broadcast onto channel 6

Labor required to set up the Hub site processing equipment and test the process from all town I-Net locations to make sure it is functioning appropriately

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Once the aforementioned tasks are completed, you will have the ability to broadcast from any of the I-Net locations in the Town, forward the signals to the cable company with automatic switching, and be able to capture those signals at the studio for recording and/or other processing.

Mr. Ottery informed the Board he will be working with Integriss all day Thursday.

If they have this piece of equipment they can go live, record and replay when wanted from the Library, Town Hall, 3 schools, Town Office, Safety complex not hooked up yet.

Chairman Kurk reminded the Board of the difficulties in past airing and recording of the Deliberative Session. \$19,000 remaining in the Capital Reserve Fund. Chairman Kurk asked how long the repairs would take if it was approved.

Mr. Ottery said the equipment availability was the problem in the past. The materials for the Remote Modulation Unit have to be ordered. Selectman Clow asked if the computer up there was the problem. Matt Esenwine said no, the problem lies with the DVD burner driver. Digital editing software is on that computer, which works fine, just can't burn it because of the driver issue. Integriss installed what they were contracted for and when the process got started they got a better handle on what they needed and are trying to get up to the level needed to control programs automatically. Chairman Kurk asked if Integriss realized they were missing the software. Mr. Esenwine said the reason they want to be able to burn the DVDs is also because the DVDs will act as the archives to store all the programs.

Chairman Kurk said she wants to make sure Channel 6 is ready to go for the Deliberative Session February 3, 2007. Mr. Ottery said that is what they are trying to do. Mr. Esenwine said they want it ready as well because it reflects the Cable Committee. Selectman Osborne commented on Integriss usually asking for half down for deposit.

Selectman Clow asked about clarifying the General Fund. Chairman Kurk said they are talking about the General Fund Surplus, \$750,000 and then just paid \$200,000 to the school. Mr. Ottery commented this money came from Comcast originally. Chairman Kurk told Mr. Ottery to contact Ms. Tina Pelletier to contact the Trustees of the Trust Funds.

Mr. Esenwine commented that if they are unable to get this approved they will be in the same situation as last year at the Deliberative Session and will be unable to record. Selectman Clow asked if they can move on this tonight because it wasn't on the agenda. Chairman Kurk is not sure if they can vote on this because it was not on the agenda. Vice Chairman Fiala feels they can vote on this tonight but would feel better not moving on this until the next meeting.

Discussion on the Comcast contract will be brought up again at the next BOS meeting. Mr. Ottery said they need to get a copy of the Comcast contract and have it faxed to the Selectmen's office.

Motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

A True Record.

Cherry Palmisano, Recording Secretary