

TOWN OF SEABROOK

BUDGET MEETING

NOVEMBER 13, 2008

Present: Don Hawkins
Peg Weare
Paula Wood
Richard Maguire
Aboul B. Khan
Barry Brenner

6:00PM

Mr. Hawkins opened the meeting at 6:03PM.

MEETING MINUTES - NOVEMBER 6, 2008

Mr. Hawkins recommended holding the minutes until the next meeting for review as they just received them this evening.

FINANCE MANAGER - DEBRA KNOWLES

Ms. Knowles said the auditors did a preliminary audit of the books on or about April 10. Basically things were posted to the wrong account numbers and the adjustments needed were made to correct the errors.

Mr. Hawkins asked if any large numbers were missed. Ms. Knowles said no only that things were put in the wrong place.

Mrs. Wood said the \$62K she questioned were contractual items that were not put in the default budget. Mr. Brenner commented that he provided to the committee the information he had. He said he would like the Finance Department to focus on the 2009 budget and the default numbers without going back to 2008 and putting their efforts there.

Mrs. Wood said she has been asking for this information and the committee made a motion to receive this information and doesn't understand why they cannot get it. Ms. Knowles said it could be done but questioned if they had the time to do it. She said her staff is working on the numbers for 2009 and making sure they are accurate.

Mr. Hawkins said he agrees with Ms. Wood that they have asked for this information and not received it. He also believes that reconstructing something that will do no good is not conducive to getting business done. He suggested that the Department Heads explain when something was left off the default budget. Mrs. Wood stated that she wants the information requested and that she cannot work on the 2009 budget without knowing what happened to last year's budget.

Mr. Maguire commented that he agrees and senses Mrs. Wood's frustration but thinks we should move forward with the budget for 2009.

Mrs. Wood said the right to know law states they should receive the information requested. Mr. Maguire said he is comfortable moving forward with the budget. He said it is what it is and no one can change it. Mr. Khan commented if Mrs. Wood is claiming under the right to know law we should supply the information. Mr. Brenner addressed the right to know law and said it addresses existing documents. He said we do not have to create what someone is looking for and the law does not address this. Mr. Brenner said when the Department Heads are preparing the default budget they might be in a position to say what was not included in the 2008 default budget. Mr. Hawkins asked if they could summarize the items and what was left off in 2008.

Mrs. Wood said when she spoke with the Finance Office staff there was a piece of yellow lined paper with the items that were left off of the default budget. Ms. Knowles said if that piece of paper exists and she can locate it she would provide a copy of it to the committee members per Mrs. Wood's request.

Mr. Maguire asked if any Department Heads expressed concerns with the default numbers. Mr. Brenner said the Fire Chief did express some concerns.

Mr. Maguire said he has had several conversations with residents and they are displeased with an increase in the budget. He read a quote from the budget law book on how the budget committee and governing body debate the budget and what the end result is.

Mr. Brenner said the 7% increase is a gross figure of expenditures. He said the other side is revenues and then the tax bill. He said the DRA is coming to set the rate and it would be done soon.

HIGHWAY - 310

John Starkey was present for his budget. He gave a brief overview of the department and services. He said they do a lot of preventative services that wouldn't be noticed unless they are stopped. He will not be asking for anything in the form of a warrant article.

Overall this budget has increased by 3% and maintains existing level of services. Mr. Starkey said we are in line with the surrounding communities for expenditures. He said revenues could be expanded upon in the rubbish department.

There are no staffing increases and the Town Manager and Selectmen are in agreement with the numbers.

Road salt is the largest increase and it is purchased on the state bid price. Health insurance cost increased but is a contractual item. The diesel fuel increased and the fee is charged by the Fire Department.

Mrs. Wood asked why the Department Head request column is not shown in the budget. Mr. Brenner explained he worked diligently with the Department Heads to prepare the Town Manager's proposed budget. There was general discussion over why the column is not present.

Mrs. Weare said the budget does not seem out of line. She asked about the part-time employees. Mr. Starkey said he hires seasonal in April but currently has 3 employees who work part-time. He said all of his employees are cross-trained to work other areas.

Mr. Maguire also questioned the cost of the part-time employee line item and feels we would not come anywhere near the \$60K appropriated. Mr. Starkey explained the items that would fall under other contract services. He said items under this could be deferred and his budget could be in the black and not in the red. The vehicle maintenance line item will have money spent out of it by the end of the year. Mr. Starkey said he sees highs and lows with the workers compensation. He is working on getting the employees more training.

Mrs. Wood questioned the increase in the life insurance. Mr. Brenner said it is due to a change in personnel or family circumstances. He said he would provide the increase percent, as this will affect all the budgets. Ms. Knowles said this line also includes the short and long term disability insurance. The health insurance increased by 3.9%, dental insurance increased by 3.7%, short-term disability decreased by 9.3% and the life insurance and long-term disability had no increase.

Mr. Brenner touched on the gas and diesel increases and said the committee would see this in all departments that use this.

MOTION: Don Hawkins To move the selectmen's
Second: Peg Weare figure of \$1,173,929.00.

Mrs. Wood asked if all contractual items were put in last year's budget. Mr. Starkey said yes but sometimes the state comes up with things and not sure if those are considered contractual.

Mr. Maguire asked if he would come in under budget this year. Mr. Starkey said it is dependent on the weather.

Opposed: Richard Maguire
Motion passed 4-1.

The committee took a 5-minute break at 7:57PM.
The committee reconvened at 8:05PM.

STORMWATER - 320

John Starkey was present for his budget. He said the EPA has not set the parameters for 2009 so he is proposing a decrease. This would allow him to maintain what has already been done.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To move the selectmen's
Second: Peg Weare figure of \$116,000.00.
Unanimous

RUBBISH - 330

John Starkey was present for his budget. He said there is no change in this budget. The waste oil furnace heats the building. He said people are not throwing things out, which have kept the costs down.

Mrs. Wood questioned the overtime and the staffing levels on Saturday and Sunday. Mr. Starkey said to some extent it is state driven and some union. The Town had to pay a fine for the first time as someone had put something in the brush pile that should not have been there.

The health insurance and deferred compensation decreased due to employee changes.

Mrs. Wood said she has also spoke with residents regarding the budget and one way they could cut the budget is to eliminate the second run at the beach to pick up trash. She agrees with this and stated reasons why this should be eliminated. She asked that Mr. Starkey provide a cost for the second run. There was general discussion over this and Mrs. Wood asked what the justification is for the second run when residents in mobile home parks don't get their trash picked up. Mr. Brenner asked if the roads in the mobile home parks are public. They are not but the beach roads are, which is why they have trash pick up. Mr. Maguire commented about the cost for trash pick up and said the same could be said about the people who pay to educate our children when they do not have children in school. Mrs. Weare said it has to do with the public and private roads and not whether or not they are commercial. She also said it is a

health issue with the seagulls at the beach scattering the trash.

Mr. Hawkins asked about the workers compensation. Mr. Starkey said it could be an issue as this is a dangerous profession. He does have a new truck and hope that with training of proper lifting it will get better. The part-time employees get some training but the full-time employees get more training.

Mr. Brenner said this budget represents the current level of services. The voters can increase or decrease the services.

Mr. Khan said he would always support reducing the hours at the transfer station.

Mr. Maguire asked about outsourcing the rubbish pick up and thinks it is something we should look into to see if there would be any costs savings to the Town. Mr. Starkey commented that we have capital to be considered as well.

MOTION: Paula Wood To hold off on budget until Mr. Starkey can provide a figure for the second trash run at the beach.

No second motion denied.

MOTION: Aboul B. Khan To move the selectmen's figure of \$1,363,342.00 and allow to be opened by any member at a later date.
Second: Richard Maguire

Opposed: Paula Wood
Motion passed 4-1.

CEMETERY - 340

John Starkey was present for his budget. He said the increases are in the health insurance, landscaping materials and equipment maintenance.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To move the selectmen's figure of \$136,040.00.
Second: Paula Wood
Unanimous

STREETLIGHTS - 350

John Starkey was present for his budget. He said there are 385 streetlights in the Town. This budget is based on current rates and projection of current expenditures.

MOTION: Paula Wood To move the selectmen's
Second: Don Hawkins figure of \$67,182.00.
Unanimous

MOSQUITO CONTROL - 440

John Starkey was present for his budget. He said we have a 2-year contract and we are in the 2nd year. The additional spraying is for EEE and/or West Nile.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To move the selectmen's
Second: Aboul B. Khan figure of \$64,100.00.
Unanimous

PARKS DEPARTMENT - 450

John Starkey was present for his budget. This budget has only increased by \$450 and the difference is due to the new employee and the health insurance chosen.

Mr. Maguire questioned other professional services. Mr. Starkey said he could support the figure from 2008 based on new information he received from the Foreman.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To move the new figure
Second: Don Hawkins of \$82,950.00 with
Opposed: Paula Wood decreasing line 390 to
\$2100.00.

Motion passed 4-1.

BEACH & PIER - 451

John Starkey was present for his budget. Budget reduced by \$500 and is due to the new beach rake.

MOTION: Paula Wood To move the selectmen's
Second: Richard Maguire figure of \$18,228.00.
Unanimous

WELCOME CENTER - 466

John Starkey was present for his budget.

MOTION: Paula Wood To move the selectmen's
Second: Aboul B. Khan figure of \$10,251.00.
Unanimous

PUBLIC WORKS GARAGE - 511

John Starkey was present for his budget. The increase is due to electricity and natural gas. There is not enough waste oil to heat both buildings so cannot look into obtaining another waste oil furnace.

MOTION: Don Hawkins To move the selectmen's
Second: Richard Maguire figure of \$33,237.00.
 Unanimous

SOLID WASTE BUILDING - 512

John Starkey was present for his budget. Same increases as public works garage budget.

MOTION: Don Hawkins To move the selectmen's
Second: Peg Weare figure of \$26,172.00.
Abstain: Richard Maguire abstained as he provides a service to this department.
 Motion passed 4-0.

The committee would like the Police Chief to come in on December 1 at 6PM for his budget review.

Mrs. Wood requested the amount of money in the unfunded fund balance for the past 5 years.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To adjourn the meeting
Second: Paula Wood at 9:15PM.
 Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.
 Minutes taken by Kelly J. O'Connor

Approved and endorsed:

 Don Hawkins, Chairman

Date: _____