

TOWN OF SEABROOK

BUDGET MEETING

DECEMBER 4, 2008

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

6:00PM

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

PREVIOUS MINUTES - NOVEMBER 13, 2008

Ms. Wood had change on second page to add, "Mr. Brenner and Ms. Knowles didn't know how the default budget was created".

MOTION: Paula Wood To adopt the minutes of
Second: Don Hawkins 11/13 with changes.
Unanimous

ELECTION & REGISTRATION - 142

Bruce Brown explained why they budgeted for a special election. He explained every 10-years names have to be taken off the checklist by law and they took about 1200 names off this year.

Mr. Eaton said if the money is not budgeted for a special election it would need to be found somewhere if there was a special election.

MOTION: Paula Wood To approve the figure of
Second: Ivan Eaton \$14,264.00.
Unanimous

FIRE DEPARTMENT - 230

Chief Jeff Brown was present for his budget and gave an overview of the department and services offered. He explained the ambulance fees and how they are applied to a new ambulance. He said he utilizes in-house talent to help with costs but he is unable to control the calls for service.

Mr. Hawkins asked the Chief to explain the shift schedule and call out procedure as his questions are aimed at the cost for overtime. Chief Brown explained there are 5 employees per shift with 24-hours on and 3-days off. He explained when an ambulance call comes in they do call in 2 employees in case another call comes in. An average ambulance call is about an hour and 45 minutes. Most of the overtime is for coverage when an employee takes sick or annual time about \$180K is for callbacks.

Chief Brown said they have had about 2114 ambulance calls to date and about 875 fire calls without an ambulance and actual fires are about 53.

Mrs. Wood asked how much of the overtime is contractual. Chief Brown said all of it is contractual.

Mrs. Wood asked if the revolving account is approved what would the funds be used for and could they be used for the purchase of equipment. Chief Brown said the funds could only be used for an ambulance or items associated with the ambulance.

Mr. Hawkins asked what are the part-time employees used for. Chief Brown said they are used when there is a box alarm and if they make 60% or better of the calls they get paid a stipend of \$3K per year.

Mr. Eaton asked about line 510. Chief Brown said the number should have been reflected in the 2008 budget and it is to pay the ambulance billing service.

Mr. Hawkins asked if there is any concern with fatigue or safety with the 24-hour shifts. Chief Brown said no the men do take advantage of the down time.

Chief Brown explained how the employees are paid for holidays. He said the vacations are backfilled with employees at the overtime rate.

Mr. Hawkins asked how much money is reimbursed for mutual aid ambulance runs. Chief Brown said it all depends on the person, insurance, type of call, etc. He said they bill for 100% of the calls and receive about 40% back from collections.

Mr. Hawkins asked the Chief to explain the pros and cons of farming out the ambulance runs or keeping in-house. Chief Brown said once you go from a firebase EMT to private service you can never go back. The private companies make their money by details and may not offer 24-hour coverage. You would not have mutual aid agreements with a private company. The only thing a private company does is transport a fire truck would still need to respond to a call. He believes a firebase EMT is more reliable.

Mr. Hawkins asked if the Chief had any areas in the budget where he felt they could collect more money. Chief Brown said he has asked the planning board numerous times to charge impact fees.

He has been told we can't and last year alone we lost about \$4 million dollars.

Mr. Khan asked when would the ambulance fund become self-sufficient. Chief Brown said it is hard to answer but once we hit \$300K for collections we would be looking at about a 10-15% reduction in the budget.

Mr. Hawkins asked if there are any concerns with the workers compensation. Chief Brown said they highlight safety and he has had very few claims. His concern is that the insurance carrier doesn't go after subrogation money.

Chief Brown said the rescue 1 truck goes out the most often on a call or the expedition depending on the nature of a call.

Mr. Maguire asked about the policy for use of a vehicle on a non-emergency call. Chief Brown explained they do go out and do inspections on a daily basis. They also run administrative errands and pick-up food for their shift.

There was general discussion over the ambulance billing of Seabrook residents.

Mr. Maguire mentioned the memo that was written in April 2008. Chief Brown said that memo was never intended to be seen by anyone other than the then current Town Manager and Board of Selectmen. He was asked to write his worst-case scenario and that is what he did.

Mr. Brenner explained it was intent of the Selectmen to maintain existing levels of service and if a default in 2009 we will have a hard time meeting that. He said we are very close to the budget now. He explained there is an extra week for payroll this year and that was not budgeted for.

Ms. Wood commented that if the correct numbers were put in for 2008 this budget would not be over. She asked how the numbers are justified when they don't match with the 2008 default. Mr. Brenner explained that they have to use the numbers for 2009 as they are contractual whether or not the numbers were correct in 2008.

Chief Brown explained why line 621 decreased and how they are looking to do something different that will actually reflect the donation or grant money.

MOTION: Ivan Eaton

To approve the figure of

Second: Paula Wood \$2,921,023.00.
Unanimous

FIRE HIRE - 231

Chief Jeff Brown was present for his budget.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To approve the figure of
Second: Ivan Eaton \$12,638.00.
Unanimous

FIRE STATION - 235

Chief Jeff Brown was present for his budget.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To approve the figure of
Second: Aboul B. Khan \$55,501.00.
Unanimous

Committee took a 5-minute break at 7:27PM.
Committee reconvened at 7:36PM.

WATER DEPARTMENT - 520

Curtis Slayton was present for his budget and gave an overview of the department. He explained what the department does and the services offered. He is looking at 3 warrant articles this year and explained the articles. One article is for a vehicle and he said he does need to have 5 trucks in order to get the job done. Another article is for the I95 project but the project is moving forward.

Mr. Hawkins asked if there would be any contingency money added to the cost for the I95 project. Mr. Slayton said yes there is \$22K added.

Mr. Maguire asked for an explanation on the importance of the project. Mr. Slayton explained it is very important as all water sources are on the west side of Town and the mains get the water to the other side. He said something can happen at any given time and is unpredictable. The hydrant-flushing program has not been implemented due to the break. Mr. Slayton said he is unsure of the condition of the other 2 water mains.

Mrs. Wood said the budget increased by about \$180K and about \$100K is in the full-time line item. Mr. Slayton explained that there was an error in the personnel worksheet and one employee was not accounted for and that employee had been working for the town for about 13 years. This employee was not included in any budget and had to be added into the line for 2009. The rest of the increase is for the Chief Plant Operator position.

Mrs. Wood asked if the water department has always owned the vehicle they are requesting to replace. Mr. Slayton said yes it is not one that should have been sold but wasn't.

Mr. Slayton said the new position is needed especially at that time when everyone will be in at startup. He estimates it will take about 12-16 months once ground is broke. He is looking to have the position start during the final phase. The EPA and DES to operate the plant mandate this position.

Mr. Slayton explained if a water main is broke by a company and it is their fault they pay if it is not marked correctly by us then we pay.

Mr. Hawkins questioned the decrease in revenues. Mr. Brenner said in 2006 and 2007 money was transferred in from the fund. Ms. Knowles explained the transfer is to capture the actual cost to run the department and it is paid through property taxes.

Mrs. Wood questioned the plans for the water treatment plant. Mr. Slayton said he has received the 95% design phase but he sent them back as he had issues with the plans. He expects new plans by Christmas. Mr. Brenner explained the steps after the plans are accepted by the Town.

Mr. Hawkins questioned line 865. Mr. Brenner explained it is for the water meter project that was never finished. He is looking into having the money transferred back into the budget to cover this cost.

Mr. Hawkins questioned line 438 and asked if this is just an in case situation or are there plans to replace the equipment. Mr. Slayton said it is just in case.

Mrs. Wood is concerned over the water main and asked why the water ban was lifted. Mr. Slayton said it is day-to-day use and is not affecting the wells but a major fire could cause the tank to not fill quickly enough. Mr. Maguire commented that lifting the ban is a supply issue and the main is a distribution concern.

Mr. Eaton said he is concerned with having an article for the water main break and it not being in the budget. Mr. Brenner explained why he felt it needed to be a stand-alone article and his concern was if the budget didn't pass it could not be fixed.

Mr. Maguire questioned line 111 and the backflow inspector position and asked if there would be enough demand to keep in

this budget. Mr. Slayton explained this person also handled the best management practices that took about 3 months to complete.

Mrs. Weare asked if it would make a difference if they changed to an 8-12 inch water main. Mr. Slayton said he is not sure.

Mr. Khan said he has asked Mr. Slayton to bring more information on the Route 95 water main break to his next monthly meeting with the Board of Selectmen. He also commented on the fees for a backflow inspection and should consider having the Town employee do it to cover the salary. There was general conversation on this. Mr. Khan believes this should be looked into seriously as right now it is paid to a private company. Mr. Slayton commented that they have always had a private company do the inspections.

MOTION: Ivan Eaton To move the figure of
Second: Don Hawkins \$1,225,082.00.
Unanimous

GRUHN SITE REMEDIATION - 525

Curtis Slayton was present for his budget.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To move the figure of
Second: Paula Wood \$26,902.00.
Unanimous

Mr. Eaton asked how long this project would be going. Mr. Slayton said he is working on either saving money or doing away with it all together.

Mrs. Wood questioned the money that was put up by Kohl's for the repairs on Route 1. Mr. Brenner said the funds have not been received but would need to be in order to get a certificate of occupancy and then the money would go into a special account. The money is dedicated to the project to help with the traffic on Route 1. Mr. Hawkins said the project is the bridge on Route 107 and they are working on getting the bridge included in the 10-year plan with the State.

There was general discussion on the accounts the planning board has that they are holding. Ms. Knowles will get the information and provide it to the budget committee.

There was discussion on the human service agencies and if any should come in to meet with the committee. The committee will wait until after the meeting and see if any questions arise.

Mr. Maguire commented about the member who has not been in attendance. Mr. Hawkins said he did look into that and the RSA is very specific if a member misses 4 consecutive meeting that member is automatically dismissed.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To move the quorum
Second: Don Hawkins from 5 members to 4
members.

Mrs. Wood said she would request that they follow the RSA to keep the right amount of members that the Town voted for originally. Mr. Hawkins said he asked that question and was told the only issue would be the quorum.

Opposed: Paula Wood
Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.
Minutes taken by Kelly J. O'Connor

Approved and endorsed:

Don Hawkins, Chairman

Date: _____