

**MINUTES OF MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
January 31, 2005**

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room of Conway Town Hall with the following present: Janine Bean, Bill Jones, Russ Seybold, Ted Sares, Melissa Stacey, Betty Boucher, Phil Dighello, Randy Davison, Michael DiGregorio, Rick Paquette, Doug Swett, Maureen Seavey, Selectmen's Rep., Karen Umberger; School Board Rep., Deb Deschenes. Also present were Town Manager, Earl Sires; Finance Director, Lucy Philbrick; Police Chief, Sean Billert; and Police Commissioners Whetton, Porter and Dougherty.

Approval of Minutes: It was agreed action on the Minutes for 1/24/05 and 1/26/05 would be deferred to Feb. 2nd. Note was made by Mr. Jones that he was present for the Jan. 26th meeting; however, his name was left off the list of attendees.

Valley Vision Budget: Mr. Sares questioned why Valley Vision was not present to present their budget. Mr. Bean explained a letter had been sent to them inviting them to attend, this was followed by a phone call indicating they would attend, followed by a subsequent phone call indicating that they would not be in attendance. Copies of their budget were distributed for the Committee's review. Mr. Sares wished to file a protest that Valley Vision is not complying with the warrant article that was passed last year, that he is vehement regarding their attitude. He noted they have already presented to the Selectmen and it is arrogant of them not to meet with the Budget Committee.

Ms. Bean reported she did contact Meg Baker at DRA, read her the warrant article, and requested her input. Ms. Baker's response was that it means nothing for this Committee, it was passed by the voters, but because Valley Vision is a private non profit, they are not required by law to come before the Budget Committee. Ms. Bean stated we can review their budget and make recommendations, but the only thing that comes before this Committee is the PEG funding. Mr. Sares stated he will accept that, but will not accept in the future the Selectmen taking money from Adelphia per their agreement, and then rolling over a good portion of that money to Valley Vision without this Committee involved in that transaction.

Mr. Seybold disagreed, stating it is a government sponsored contractual agreement between the Selectmen and the PEG station, it is franchise fees and does not involve tax revenue, therefore, he is not "miffed" that they are not coming before the Budget Committee as long as the Selectmen do due diligence with respect to their contract. He stated there are many issues involved with the PEG station and Valley Vision, there are lots of things of value that they provide to a community – the value has to be evaluated by the Selectmen.

Ms. Bean said she does not have Adelphia so does not pay the franchise fee, it is not her money involved so she can see the other side of it, but she understands that PEG money is for the benefit of getting public access to the residents on all the public stuff that might be going on out there – the PEG money that we give to Valley Vision is for government/education programs. Mr. Sires noted that about 260 hours is government meetings, and about 90 to 100 hours are of other events – getting more access for people in the community who want things put on there. Mr. Sares said this is not about programming, it is about money and an illegal agreement that

they had until last year when we made it legal. Mr. Bean felt that was an oversight and was not intentional.

It was Mr. Davison's opinion that if it were not for Conway this PEG station would not fly, and he thinks it is carrying the surrounding towns, that it seems as though the surrounding towns get the benefit off the backs of the people who are paying the fee. He stated it is sad that they are not presenting their budget. Ms. Umberger noted it involves the hours that the Selectmen voted on, along with money for the equipment to be placed in the Library so that people in the community can use it – it can be more for community kind of stuff rather than just Valley Vision programming. She noted there is between \$68,000 and \$70,000 out of PEG money, plus the \$6400 for equipment that would be going to Valley Vision. The warrant article goes in for the full franchise fee. Mr. Sires pointed out the Selectmen have the prerogative to place any or none of the funds into PEG - they have not made that decision yet. There will be a Memorandum of Agreement between the Selectmen and the agency that is providing the service to us. The Selectmen were concerned as to whether Valley Vision was going to be able to provide those services next year. He said their budget was for \$152,000, of which the Selectmen are negotiating for another figure.

Ms. Bean said this does not mean we cannot look at their budget and make recommendations. Mr. Jones expressed disappointment that Valley Vision chose not to show up to give us a chance to ask some questions and stated it behooves the Board of Selectmen to look critically at this request and realize the will of the people who voted last year has been snubbed. He felt in a time when they are trying to raise funds and create a better image, it would have been better for them to have come here. Mr. Davison said he was caught up with the amount that Conway hands over to Valley Vision when you equate that with the number of hours that the public gets.

Town Budget – Mr. Sares asked Mr. Sires whether there has been a determination as to why Conway Conservation Commission has asked for a 10.4% increase in their budget. Mr. Sires stated the Chair of the Commission indicated that each year they identify a list of projects – sometimes because of nature or other causes, they do not get all of them done. Mr. Sares said that would be good in a year in which we were not faced with new assessments like the new school, library bond, etc. He stated each cost center manager must be circumspect about his fiscal responsibilities and he is adamantly against this.

Mr. Davison said each year over the last four years they have had a surplus of almost \$7,000, they should be budgeting \$16,260 this year. Mr. Sires pointed out that up through 2004 the Conservation Commission has reimbursed the town for their expenses from proceeds from their own operations; there was no loss to the town in the sense that they went under budget. He said in identifying \$16,000 for the coming year, it looks like for 2005 in their reimbursements of funds to the town they have about \$16,000. The Commission's suggestion was to take up with the Selectmen whether they would cover the difference between \$16,000 and \$23,000. Ms. Stacey wished to know why the timber proceeds do not come back to the town. Mr. Sires noted they are a town entity. Ms. Philbrick explained a number of years ago the town voted to put Current Use penalty monies into a separate account for the Conservation Commission to purchase land. They would get 100% until the account reached \$100,000, and then would get 50%. They then asked the Selectmen to put proceeds from timber sales into a separate savings account. They now do not have enough in their savings account to cover their entire budget

amount for next year. She said it is her understanding that anything from timber sales would now go into their savings account.

Mr. Sares questioned how the \$3,000 translates in revenue to the town. Ms. Philbrick said they do not know what they will get next year from timber sales. Mr. Sires said in their budget it says \$0 revenue – they are not anticipating any timber sales this year. Mr. Sares said that is all the more reason to not accept their budget. Ms. Stacey questioned whether they have a schedule of what they are going to do. Mr. Sires referred her to a projects list attached to the budget.

Answers to questions posed by Mr. Sares to the Town Manager:

Question of surplus for town's budget last year and 3 years ago when they managed a default budget. Mr. Sires said the default budget was adopted for 2002, expenditures were \$206,429 under appropriated budget, or 2.8% of the total budget; in 2003 expenditures were \$2,546 under the appropriated budget, or .03% of total budget. The Town projects that expenditures for 2004 will be approximately \$53,000 below appropriated budget, or .66% of the total budget.

Question of additional employees being requested/any new employees in planning? Mr. Sires reported there are no increases in regular staff proposed; there are seasonal administrative aides proposed for Assessing and Recreation.

Question of Discretionary Funds – Mr. Sires said there is less than \$80,000, which is less than 1/10th of 1%, being in this category. Mr. Sares said this means if you did not have any of this to spend, the world would still spin, but there would be consequences - he wants to know "musts and wants" - he questions education and dues. Mr. Sires said this is for our membership in NHMA, Town Manager's Assn., professional organizations that we feel benefit the town.

Differences between the budgets proposed by staff/Town Manager and the Selectmen – Mr. Sires said things happened – better insurance quotes, seasonal aide positions. Town Manager/staff budget = \$8,472,490; Selectmen's budget = \$8,477,190, a \$4,700 difference.

Recycling Revenues – Revenues from Albany & Eaton, commodities, fees, fines – total \$426,065 for 2004. Mr. Sires noted this peaked in 2001 in overall revenue, now is down by about 10%. Mr. Seybold noted a near doubling of fees from \$50 to \$80. Mr. Sires said the commercial haulers got a better deal somewhere else; however, this does extend the life of our landfill.

Increase in compensation for Supervisors of the Checklist – Mr. Sares questioned a number of entries for notices to newspaper. It was explained this is to advertise hours for Supervisors to accept new voters on the checklist.

Adopt A Highway Program – Mr. Sires noted this is now a separate warrant article from the original where it was included with the public works department safety equipment.

Sunoco Station Property - Ms. Stacey questioned whether the tanks have been removed. Mr. Sires stated they are removed; he has been informed that DES received results from an engineering study which indicated there are no environmental issues at that site. He said if this

were to pass, the town would do its due diligence to make sure that was the case. Ms. Stacey questioned how far from the center of Rt. 16 the State owns. Mr. Sires said he did not know, but does not believe there is a taking of any land as that intersection is not being changed; it was done fairly recently and is not part of Phase 5B of the bypass. The sidewalks belong to the town.

Vehicle Registration Equipment – Mr. Sires reported that program has been put on hold indefinitely; however, the Town Clerk's Office will still be in need of Clerk Works computer software (\$4800) as the program they are now running can no longer be serviced.

Mr. Sires stated all warrant articles have been reviewed by DRA.

Mr. Sares referenced the article on Capital Improvement Program Committee, noting this is the first step in the direction of impact fees and will allow the Selectmen to appoint a committee which will then go off and work the process.

9-1-1 Street Signs - Ms. Stacey questioned how many private streets we would be raising funds for, and of this money whether we are supporting more public streets than private, and if more private then maybe we should ask those people to come up with some funds. Mr. Sires said the argument is that those residents are still taxpayers.

Mr. Sares said he thinks one could argue that the town budget is a good budget but for the fact of the Conservation Commission. He said we must make sure we do not make the mistake of not voting against it just for that \$3,000.

Police Budget – Chief Billert and Commissioners Whetton, Porter and Dougherty joined the meeting. Mr. Sares provided definitions of benchmarks job and compa-ratio, and explained weighted average. He stated compa-ratio is a good way of making comparisons. If highway workers are at 95% there is a lot of seniority, and if police say they are around 50% it says they have a lot of people early on in the job. He stated once you are at the mid point the increases slow down. What he wants to see is the compa-ratios for the police and school. Regarding the contract, he said he is generally in agreement with it primarily because police are different from other employees in the town. Mr. Sares said with respect to the 30-town survey he would recommend this approach, but should revise the language in Article 21 so it would become a central, but not the sole reference point, in determining salaries.

Mr. Dighello said regarding the 30-town survey, the police calculated their survey differently than the town even though they are on the same system. Mr. Billert said he went back to the beginning and they are done differently, but he does not know why. He explained the formula as the current pay rate divided by the new pay rate to give a person's average wages. For instance, if making \$35,000 and the new average is \$38,000, they come up with a percentage. Then the person is evaluated. If he gets a 4% raise, it is added in; if he falls below 92% we make it 92%, if above, then that is his increase based on the most current data.

Mr. Davison said it is difficult to follow why the police dept. merit raise percentage (6% each year) does not mirror that of the town. Mr. Billert said we do not follow the town's, and have not. He said when they started it, he was not part of the procedure - this is the system we have. Mr. Davison said he would assume that is the Commissioner's job for the benefit of the town. Mr. Sares said considering the question "Why does not the town's matrix mirror the

police?” the town and police are apples and oranges. Mr. Davison said his concern with that is people in general get 5% and 6% every year added on to what they are making. Mr. Sares explained wage determination is determined many ways – one is through collective bargaining, another is through supply and demand.

Mr. Davison questioned turnover rate, noting if people are not happy we would see that in the turn over rate, and if it is high you have to do something with benefits and salaries. Mr. Billert stated when he first started turnover was astronomical. He explained to hire a replacement it takes six months to train them; they have taken steps to slow down that rate - if we can offer them a competitive salary it slows them down. The department is down one officer now. He said if starting with a new officer in Feb., we will not be ready until Sept. Mr. Paquette asked for an explanation of the hiring procedure, where the person is coming from. Mr. Billert said last year they were able to hire one officer who was certified. If they have to hire someone “green” that person has to pass an agility test, if they pass that there is an oral interview, written test, background investigation, psychological test, polygraph test, then they meet with Commissioners, then attend police academy (13 weeks) then 7 weeks of in-house training. Mr. Paquette questioned whether an effort is made to hire returning veterans. Mr. Billert told him yes.

Mr. Dighello questioned whether all non officer personnel are under the same contract. Mr. Billert said there are nine. Mr. Dighello questioned their turnover rate. Mr. Billert said dispatch turn over has slowed down, they have hired some good people – if they are paid well, they do not have to leave. Mr. Dighello expressed concern that last year non officer raises ran from 5.5% to 18%, this year minimum is about 5.5% to 6.5% which is about twice what other people in town are getting. Mr. Billert stated that is due to the matrix, that the new one will not have those higher salaries as you go down the line. Mr. Dougherty said we cannot hire officers at 87.5%, explaining they went through over 100 applicants to find one last year. He said they should not both be the same [referencing Mr. Davison’s comment about mirroring the town’s matrix]. Mr. Sares noted the 92% of the average of the 30-town survey and felt that people do not understand that. Mr. Sires said 100% is the mean, with 92% they are 8% below the mean.

Mr. Sares questioned how the 11 holidays compare with other towns. Mr. Billert said average of other towns is 10.8. Ms. Umberger questioned floating holidays. Mr. Billert said there are two; in looking at other departments some have “earned time.” He will research this further and report back.

Mr. Sares questioned mileage allowance compared with IRS allowance. It was stated that the \$.36.5 is the IRS allowance, police previously got \$.30.

Mr. Sares questioned whether there is any monetary retro activity in the contract and was told no.

Mr. Sares questioned educational incentive. Mr. Billert said we are close to what everyone else is offering – some offer it by percentage, some just by reimbursement.

Mr. Sares questioned call-in pay. Mr. Billert stated 90% of the people who take the test do it on duty, do not get overtime – it amounts to nothing.

Mr. Sares questioned personal leave. Mr. Billert said it is currently 3 days, that compares with the average – some towns have 4, some have 2.

Mr. Sares questioned salary increases in the contract, holidays, etc., stating he needs to see total increase of all the salary impact increase, and any other items that have a monetary impact and what it represents as a total percentage increase.

Ms. Stacey questioned where the officer in the school falls in the budget.. Mr. Billert said he is a Corporal. Ms. Stacey wished to know why it falls under the school budget. Mr. Sires explained a few years ago Selectmen agreed to place in it the town budget because they wanted the officer to be under the control of the police dept. and also felt ultimately it benefited the town to have the officer there. Ms. Stacey noted all benefits are under the police so if needed during school vacations, is he back with the police? Mr. Billert said primarily his function is the police department, but he is assigned to the school. Ms. Boucher questioned whether with the new school eventually coming on line they will put an officer there and will he be in the town budget also? Mr. Billert said that is a question that will have to be asked and answered. Ms. Stacey questioned when the police officer was put in the school. It was estimated it was 7 to 8 years ago. It started as a grant program.

Mr. Dighello questioned sick days. Mr. Billert explained people get 15 days a year, accrue up to 90, and after 30 get paid for half or can change it to vacation. If they use no sick time and have 15 days and want to put it into vacation time, they will get 7-1/2 days. Mr. Dighello noted regarding vacation, it says those with 1-5 years of service get one vacation day for each month of service. Mr. Billert explained someone with five years of service would get 15 days – it goes from 10-15-20, after ten years there is no more additional time.

Raise in annual compensation for Police Commission – Mr. Sares expressed that it was not appropriate to question Police Commissioners about that, that it is for the Budget Committee to look at. Mr. Sires said it had been some time since they had had a raise and they felt, based on their time and expenses, they deserve it. Mr. DiGregorio asked how much time they feel they are putting into what they do. Mr. Sares said it is wrong to have this discourse. Ms. Bean pointed out we did have discussion on the Supervisors of the Checklist. It was Ms. Deschenes' feeling that in looking at the warrant articles if you have questions there is no harm in asking those questions because the more information you have, the more informed decision you will make as to whether you will support those articles.

Mr. Porter stated the Police Commission meets every other week and have to attend other special meetings such as Budget Committee and Selectmen's meetings, and they spend time negotiating labor contracts. It is estimated they spend 250 hours annually, dedicated to Police Commission projects for the benefit of the taxpayers of Conway. Mr. DiGregorio questioned whether it costs them any money personally for phone calls, supplies, etc. and was told it does not.

Conservation Commission – **Motion was made by Mr. Sares, seconded by Ms. Stacey, that the Committee recommend to the Selectmen that the Conservation Commission budget be leveled to last year's budget, or zero increase.**

Mr. Davison said in looking at the overall budget he found leveling would be \$16,260, last year they spent \$14,414. Mr. Sares said we are making assumptions about why they did not spend what they budgeted, and have no assurances that that won't recur this year. Ms. Stacey said if we look at the 2005 proposed budget, they are proposing they will spend \$16,260. Mr. Davison said he went back three budgets and, historically, they have had about a \$6,000 surplus each year. Mr. Paquette suggested that they be asked to spend what they have in their savings account as a budget. Ms. Stacey said she would like to see it go down somewhat because when we asked the Town Manager about them going to the Selectmen and asking them to cover their budget, he stated we are coming close to what DRA recommends we keep as an amount. Mr. Sares said we approved the budget last year and for us to cut that is punitive.

Ms. Umberger said the Conservation Commission has always paid for everything that they have spent out of timber sales. In that savings account they have \$16,000. This year for the first time, they will be asking for tax dollars to support the activities of the Commission as opposed to in the past their activity has been paid for by timber sales - prior to 2005 there was no tax impact because of timber sales, this year there will be an impact of \$7100 if we approve their budget. Ms. Bean said they do not see any timber sales being done this year to generate revenue. **Ms. Stacey withdrew her second, Mr. Sares withdrew his motion.** Mr. Jones noted that Ms. Philbrick said in the savings account they have that \$16,260 and that is what they should get for the budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Sares, seconded by Mr. Jones, to send a recommendation to the Selectmen that the budget for the Conway Conservation Commission be set at \$16,260.

Ms. Seavey pointed out that is just a portion of their budget, there are other items such as consulting and management, publications and inventory documents, etc. Ms. Bean said the \$16,260 is funding it from last year's actual spent. Mr. Seybold noted in the summary the \$16,260 covers the forest and wetlands management, there are other items in their budget such as conferences and education, etc. If we only approve the \$16,000 those other items would not be covered. Mr. Sares said it is his understanding that they will ask the Selectmen to fund the balance, and he says "no" to this. Ms. Seavey argued it has to be in their budget in order for them to spend it even though it is offset by revenue. Ms. Bean said that \$16,000 was not raised by taxes, the \$23,100 would be a definite tax impact. Mr. Seybold said in the past they have generated funds and put them in the savings account, do we know what the prospect is for the next few years? Ms. Umberger said we do not have a schedule of planned timber cutting for the next several years. Ms. Stacey said every year they have under spent their appropriation, this year will be the first year they will affect our tax rate, and questioned why we would want to affect our tax rate?

Ms. Boucher said last year she questioned whether they gave all the money back - they do not, they have money in a fund to purchase more land for the town of Conway. It is estimated to be \$100,000. Ms. Umberger said that money is not accessible except for land purchase. Mr. Sares felt if they run into trouble during the budget year they can come up with the cash.

Mr. Sares' motion carried with 11 votes in the affirmative, 0 negative votes, and Mr. Seybold, Ms. Umberger and Ms. Seavey abstaining.

Motion was made by Mr. Sares, seconded by Ms. Stacey, to recommend that the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager include the Budget Committee in on the process that relates to the transfer of money for the Memorandum of Agreement between Selectmen and Adelpia for the transfer of monies to Valley Vision.

Mr. Sares said he wants to be able to have a say in how much the Selectmen give to Valley Vision. Ms. Umberger stated they will not finalize the Valley Vision agreement until after the vote is taken in April as that funding comes from the PEG warrant article. She said what we agree to are the number of hours that we are going to obtain from Valley Vision for services rendered to the town – 260 in government hours, 40 for whoever wants to do it, 45 hours in Valley Vision programming. In addition to that, anyone who wants to drop off a tape can do so and it will be played, but that is not a discussed hour. Ms. Bean said that does not get funded until the PEG money has been approved in April, so the money for Valley Vision does come out of the PEG warrant article.

Ms. Stacey said she would like to have had a say on the \$6400 for equipment, etc. Mr. Sares' said his motion is to give the Selectmen our expertise, as he feels they need it with respect to this subject. Ms. Umberger said with regard to Ms. Stacey's question on the equipment, every five years, in addition to the franchise fee, Adelpia also provides \$10,000 for equipment which is then owned by the town; for that reason we are proposing to put it in the library so that everyone in the town has access to it. Valley Vision people will train anyone wishing to use it. Ms. Stacey said this town is funding a high amount of this program.

Ms. Boucher noted sometimes when Channel 3 goes black, unless someone calls in we are not getting our hours worth of programs, and wished to know where that money goes. Ms. Umberger said the normal occurrence of black screen or blue is not in the initial presentation of that particular subject on a station, it is a repeat of whatever was going on - what we are paying for is the hours to produce it. The number of times it is shown is up to the programming people at Valley Vision. Ms. Bean said we are paying for production time, not viewing time.

Mr. Seybold said he is sure that Valley Vision is looking for those equipment funds and trying to solve those problems - it is a small organization trying to do the best job they can. The government's reason for having them is so there is more knowledge of what is going on – Conway should be concerned with Conway. Ms. Bean said she did not know until now that the 345 hours was production hours. We are paying for people to be involved in producing. Mr. Sares said it is the 345 hours that he is working, trying to become a part of the equation that analyzes this. He said he does not trust anyone else to make that decision – does not like what's happening to that money.

Ms. Stacey questioned grant writing with regard to Valley Vision, and whether they have applied for any grants, noting they did not present their budget, never showed up to explain why they need it. Mr. DiGregorio said in the production hours it included one showing of the program. Ms. Umberger said one of the things we are working on is to look at the option of how we can make this a Conway area broadcast and not include Bartlett, Jackson, etc.

Ms. Deschenes noted 345 hours are paid out of the franchise fee, if Valley Vision tapes a football game at Kennett, does someone pay monies to tape and broadcast that show? Ms.

Umberger said if someone says “here is \$200 to tape KHS football,” they go there, tape it, and take the \$200 to use as they wish - we are talking about non sponsored things like New Year’s Eve fireworks, Mud Bowl, concerts in the park. Mr. Jones called for the question. **The motion carried with 11 votes in the affirmative, 0 negative votes, and Mr. Seybold, Ms. Umberger and Ms. Bean abstaining.**

Mr. Davison recommended that Legal be changed from \$45,000 to \$40,000, noting that only \$28,000 was spent last year. It was noted that attorney’s fees have increased this year from \$125 to \$135 per hour. **Motion was made by Mr. Sares, seconded by Mr. Davison, to recommend that the budget for Legal be reduced to \$40,000.** It was Mr. Sares suggestion that if Mr. Malia’s fee is too high they should find someone whose fee is not too high. Mr. Seybold said last year’s budget was for \$44,000, this year they spent \$28,000, the Budget Committee is making recommendation for \$40,000; we can play with the numbers, but should be prepared if, for instance, the Planning Board has an issue come up that costs us money in legal fees. We have been historically budgeting more than we spend. **The motion carried with 12 votes in the affirmative, Mr. Seybold voting in the negative, and Ms. Umberger abstaining.**

Ms. Boucher recommended that the Welfare budget be reduced to \$55,769. There was no second. Ms. Boucher argued that we gave up the food dept. to the food pantry, also there is electricity, homeless, etc. Ms. Bean stated by State law we have to fund welfare. Ms. Boucher noted that Vaughan Community Services gives out money for medical, food, we are duplicating some of these programs, plus there is the health center who does the medication program. Ms. Bean said this is for some who might fall through the cracks – we have to provide this. Mr. Paquette suggested going after the non profits rather than the State mandated program.

Ms. Boucher said she has been fighting for years to delegate some of these non profits to take over some of the expense for welfare so our town budget would not be so high. Ms. Bean said they are only asking for \$728 more than was spent - the people who came here had to get it from us. Ms. Seavey felt the town does very well with what they do, noting it used to be much higher than it is now. Ms. Umberger noted also that other services of non profit agencies do not all have the same criteria as the town.

Mr. Sares noted even though the Budget Committee recommendations are a small percentage of the total budget, it would be a mistake on the part of the Selectmen to interpret that as that they are not that important. He commented that the Selectmen entertained the Valley Vision budget, but the Budget Committee did not get to. Ms. Umberger stated the Selectmen were given the budget in the same way the Budget Committee was – there was no discussion, they have not gone through it or asked any questions.

(Mr. Seybold then left the meeting, therefore, all subsequent votes will total 13.)

Motion was made by Mr. Sares, seconded by Ms. Boucher, to recommend that the article on Maintenance of Town Buildings and Facilities Capital Reserve Fund be reduced to \$120,000 and slide \$5,000 for painting out. Ms. Bean stated when they presented that they said that they might be moving some of these projects around, but still keep in the \$125,000 so they can have their garage at the end. **The motion was defeated with Messrs. Swett, Sares and**

Paquette and Ms. Boucher voting in the affirmative, 9 votes in the negative, and Ms. Umberger abstaining.

Motion was made by Mr. Sares, seconded by Ms. Stacey, to recommend that Selectmen withdraw the proposed warrant article for safety equipment for the public works department (\$12,700).

Ms. Umberger questioned what safety equipment Mr. Sares would recommend we do instead, noting we are looking out for our public works people, why would we not support the safety of our workers? Mr. Sares said no one is questioning endangering our workers. He said he had a hard time with it because it is a “backdoor” way for the “feel good about the highway program” article to get in. He stated we have a highway engineer who is paid a high salary and should go around and see how other towns are doing it. Ms. Stacey said we do not have a list of what kind of safety equipment they have. Noting one of the items on the list is a manhole box, Mr. Swett said we cannot operate under OSHA if we do not have a trench box. Mr. DiGregorio stated this should have been in the regular budget, and questioned whether there are items listed that they would have to stop operations for if they do not have them? Ms. Boucher stated we do have one [a trench box] because it was used in front of the Library.

Mr. Jones recommended that this article be moved into the budget because that is where it belongs. Ms. Deschenes said she feels safety equipment is important and should be in the operating budget and should not be in a warrant article because warrant articles can fail. Ms. Seavey said generally when it is a warrant article it is a one time thing, if it is in the budget, then next year it will be in the default budget. Mr. Sares said this feels like it is an afterthought.

Mr. Dighello suggested the Committee needs to get the information as to why it is needed then could recommend it, noting Mr. DegliAngeli has a lot of credibility and should be able to tell us why he needs it. Mr. DiGregorio said we should ask Mr. DegliAngeli what items on here he has to have that he does not have this year. Mr. Dighello said as a taxpayer he would rather have a one time request that won't be repeated than having it in the major budget. Mr. Davison said it should be in the budget and not a warrant article. Mr. Sares said if they put it in the budget he would fight it there as well. Ms. Boucher said she would like to ask Mr. DegliAngeli if any of this is to replace equipment that has worn out. Ms. Stacey said under the 2005 tool budget account they have a place to replace miscellaneous tools - \$2000. **The motion carried with 6 votes in the affirmative, Messrs. Dighello, DiGregorio and Jones, and Ms. Seavey and Ms. Bean voting in the negative, and Mr. Swett and Ms. Umberger abstaining.**

Motion was made by Mr. Sares, seconded by Ms. Boucher, to recommend that the Selectmen withdraw the warrant article for Safety Equipment for the Town “Adopt A Highway” Program. Ms. Deschenes questioned why. Mr. Sares said it is not compelling, that we do not need people to come in and adopt his highway. Ms. Deschenes said every year in the spring she looks forward to seeing those volunteers out on the road, this is asking for safety equipment – orange vests, etc. – she would hate to see them get hurt doing a job they do not get paid for, but are volunteering their time. Mr. Sares stated that is done on Valley Pride Day. Mr. Jones said he feels safety equipment for this type of operation would include protective gloves, spears to pick up things, etc., it is a meager amount of money to supply equipment for

volunteers. Ms. Stacey said usually companies choose to adopt a highway, it is their personal choice to provide the equipment. It was noted the purpose of this article is for organizations like Kiwanis, Rotary, Key Club, etc. to help out; it is the town's adopt a highway program.

Mr. Sares stated if someone wants to do that let them, but he does not want to pay for it. Ms. Boucher said we already have a group that have people go out on Valley Pride Day now the town wants to pay another \$1,000 to have it taken care of. Ms. Umberger noted Valley Pride Day is one day a year, the Adopt A Highway Program is at least three times a year for pick up. Mr. DiGregorio said regarding the different businesses providing their own equipment, signs cost about \$400 each, traffic cones are \$30, each - we cannot expect companies to buy this equipment. If they want to do it, they could come to the town and get the equipment to use. It is short money to save somebody's life. Ms. Stacey asked how many years the State has had an adopt a highway program. It was thought about 10 years. **The motion was defeated with 6 votes in the affirmative, and Messrs. DiGregorio, Dighello, Jones, and Ms. Deschenes, Ms. Bean and Ms. Seavey voting in the negative, and Ms. Umberger abstaining.**

Motion was made by Mr. Sares, seconded by Mr. Paquette, to recommend that the Selectmen withdraw the warrant article dealing with 9-1-1 Street Signs. Mr. Dighello said they have done this in Maine and it works – every street and fire lane is marked – you know where you are going. Ms. Bean said she would like to see NH use the same system. Mr. Sares considered this a non compelling item. Mr. Davison agreed we have to do our jobs on the Budget Committee. This municipality is small enough, it is not a good use of money. **The motion carried with 7 votes in the affirmative, Messrs. Dighello, DiGregorio and Jones, and Ms. Bean and Ms. Seavey voting in the negative, and Ms. Umberger abstaining.**

Motion was made by Mr. Jones, seconded by Ms. Stacey, that the Budget Committee recommend the Selectmen reduce the amount of the warrant article dealing with Vehicle Registration Equipment from \$7500 to \$4800 to cover equipment needed for the Town Clerk's Office [Clerk Works software].

Mr. Sares said he does not like this, he has not heard anyone making an argument that it makes sense, it is almost a luxury item, it is before its time, this is a year to be tough. Ms. Umberger stated it is not for the vehicle registration program, but for Clerk Works software for the Town Clerk's Office. Mr. Sares said if it is because the current software cannot be serviced he would be in favor of it. He was assured that was the case. **The motion carried with 11 votes in the affirmative, 0 negative votes, and Mr. Davison and Ms. Umberger abstaining.**

Motion was made by Mr. Jones, seconded by Ms. Stacey, to recommend that the Selectmen withdraw the warrant article dealing with raising compensation for the Supervisors of the Checklist. It was Mr. Jones' opinion that it is not necessary, they are getting paid now. Mr. Sares stated public service in NH is a privilege and should never be a means of making money, and he particularly has a problem with the timing. **The motion carried with 11 votes in the affirmative, 0 negative votes, and Ms. Umberger and Ms. Seavey abstaining.**

Motion was made by Mr. Jones, seconded by Ms. Boucher, to recommend that the Selectmen withdraw the warrant article dealing with raising compensation for the Police Commission. The motion carried with 12 votes in the affirmative, 0 negative votes, and Ms. Umberger abstaining.

Motion was made by Ms. Stacey, seconded by Mr. Sares, that the Budget Committee send a message to the Selectmen that this Committee is extremely disappointed that Valley Vision did not present its budget. The motion carried with 12 votes in the affirmative, Ms. Umberger voting in the negative, and 0 abstentions.

It was agreed that the Budget Committee would convene again on Feb. 2nd to deal with the School budget.

At 10:00 p.m. Motion was made by Mr. Paquette, seconded by Mr. Dighello and carried, that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail T. Currier, Recording Secretary