

**MINUTES OF MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
February 13, 2006**

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:00 PM in the Cafeteria at the Conway Elementary School with the following members present: Chairperson Melissa Stacey, Phil Dighello, Randy Davison, Russ Seybold, Betty Boucher, Rick Paquette, Maureen Seavey, Karen Umberger, Deb Deschenes, Bill Aughton and Carl Rosenthal. Also present were Earl Sires and Lucy Philbrick.

TOWN REVIEW

Earl Sires stated he wanted to cover a few things and update the Committee on the current budget. Earl gave a brief summary and bottom line number primarily in the Police Fund, talked about Eastern Slope Airport Authority, police vehicles and PEG Articles. Recreation - have taken a different approach for charging other town's for participation. Moving from participation to evaluation charge rather than charge on kids participating. It ups the Town of Eaton by bringing in \$8,000 to \$9,000 more for the Recreation Program. Earl asked if there were any questions on the new total, \$8,709,232.

Earl began with stating Article 6 came about from the non-profit hearing. It is, in essence, a cooperative municipal entity. Selectmen's Article is a simple article, voted 5-0 to support that. If approved, it would then be included in the Operating Budget in years to come. Randy Davison asked if voted down, will we see it again. Earl Sires replied that he didn't know. Randy further stated historically not voted in. Personally he would like to see it go away. Betty Boucher stated this is the Selectmen's Article. Did they have to petition. Earl Sires stated no, just voted on it. Betty further stated gone from non-profit. Phil Dighello asked how \$12,000 was decided. Earl Sires stated the Board recommended \$12,000, asked Fryeburg as well, seemed to be appropriate from the Board. Russ Seybold stated this has bounced back and forth. I believe to a lot of residents there seems to prevail a misunderstanding of what the Airport does and what it contributes to the Town. To have us support a facility to the tune of \$12,000 as part of the Operating Budget to me doesn't seem to be out of line.

Karen Umberger asked Earl to go over how we entered into this Airport Authority business. Earl Sires stated on the Airport history: When the one at Settler's Green was discontinued, communities got together and organized a legal entity made up of towns. Clearly managed, clearly owned by participating towns. For years carried as a component of the Operating Budget; then in early 1990 removed from the Operating Budget. I think probably that by removing it and putting it with non-profits caused confusion.

Randy Davison stated his concern is historically this has been voted down. It would be difficult to support, but still put in front of the taxpayers each year. My opinion if voted down, not put in the Operating Budget next year.

Bill Aughton asked what our association with it is? Earl Sires stated basically there is a Board of Directors, By-Laws and legal status composed of cooperating towns. It is a legal entity that exists because supported and managed by the cooperating towns. The land is owned by the Town of Fryeburg.

Karen Umberger stated she was hearing what Randy was saying; disagreed with his point of view. We are legally obligated to support the Airport; how do you suggest we get out of that legal obligation. We have a legal obligation to support and fund. I assume we will have to come to grasp with that. I would assume the Town could go further and get themselves out of this Authority. We can't continue to participate if not willing to fund it. She thinks it needs to be understood the \$12,000 turns into multiple hundreds of thousands of dollars matched by the government.

Earl Sires stated the voters in the 1980's supported the Airport by Settler's Green, which was a private airport. People asked what are we going to do when it closed. In the early 1990's carried as part of our Operating Budget. Rick Paquette stated he was trying to understand if the Airport was back here in Conway, wondering if taxpayers would support. Earl stated he thought that may be the case, some may look at it as giving money to Fryeburg.

Carl Rosenthal stated better not to have the noise. Rick Paquette asked if there was an air taxi service. Earl Sires responded there is a charter service, but no regularly scheduled commercial service.

Betty Boucher asked did they get back to Earl on how many planes go in and out, more private than those that service the Town. Earl Sires stated now with a managing company it has improved tremendously. In terms of a business plan, business model authority not very efficient, took ownership of all hangars but one; have entered into a private partnership; 12 new hangars; built snow equipment storage; have done all challenged to do. What does it do? Brings in tourism; Stanley Tanger used. There is recreation, you can learn to fly, medical transportation.

Chairman Stacey stated she thought one of the bad things was that the Airport would never be in the black. Earl Sires stated that some things don't pay for themselves. For \$10,000 to \$12,000 per year that is a bargain. Lucy Philbrick stated that the vote was 7-5-0.

Maureen Seavey asked if used for fire and rescue? Earl Sires stated yes, they can bring people in to do that sort of thing. Randy Davison stated he was concerned about legal obligations; talked to people who vote against it; doesn't equate to spending tax dollars on it.

Earl Sires stated on Article 11, \$77,000 being contributed to Valley Vision. Monies received from franchise fees paid to the Town are transferred into a Trust Fund. Selectmen withdraw and use. What they intend to do, \$97,000 proposed to be added to the Trust Fund; balance of \$40,000 with potential changes in having the availability for a little money to continue some kind of broadcast and funding. There will be \$20,000 from this year; approximately \$46,000.

Earl Sires proceeded to Article 12, Capital Reserve Fund. Idea was started by trying to get out from paying finance charges. Selectmen proposing there is about \$33,000 under vehicle lines that would pay off existing leases on vehicles. There may be 4 total payments remaining and then establishing a Capital Reserve Fund to appropriate funds into the Fund. Selectmen use as they see fit, purchase two vehicles every other year. Payments end up being \$36,000 estimated. Basically what it does is saves money by paying for vehicles up front, avoiding \$3,500 to \$5,000 per year for finance charges, saving money in the long run. Originally thought to carry in the Operating Budget, but DRA advises should vote on each year.

Earl Sires proceeded to Articles 13, 14 and 15. Chairman Stacey asked if interest accounts have been updated; is there a figure of how much in there? Earl Sires stated somewhere in the area of \$48,000, will have for Wednesday night.

Randy Davison stated he had two questions: Town books close, figure for Operating Budget last year. Karen Umberger stated that information was handed out on Wednesday. Earl Sires stated \$74,000 under budget. Chairman Stacey stated she thought this was the final number. Earl responded \$73,913.28 is the final number; under 1%.

Earl Sires asked the Chairman about Wednesday night, does she plan to do the hearing like it has been done before. Chairman Stacey stated "yes" and that she had no problem with doing it that way.

Phil Dighello moved, seconded by Betty Boucher, to approve the Default Budget amount of \$8,583.373. There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rick Paquette stated he would like to be more clear on the article in the newspaper. As a budget member, he didn't recognize much that was in there; doesn't reflect flavor of meeting. We did ask many questions which is what our task is. Russ Seybold stated it should be very, very clear we have not voted on the School Bond issue; only thing voted on is the Town Default Budget. Chairman Stacey stated we have to wait for the public hearing before we can legally vote. Discussion followed on how the Committee meetings were covered in *The Daily Sun*. Chairman Stacey stated she would submit a letter stating the Budget Committee would like the taxpayers of the Town of Conway aware that we haven't voted yet. Russ stated could do that, but we are all capable of writing letters. Betty Boucher stated she would prefer it coming from

the Chair. Chairman Stacey stated the headline has been printed; we did not vote and on the 22nd will vote. Other than that, I will write a letter if you feel it is necessary. Karen Umberger stated she didn't think it necessary to do anything other than what we have done. Just let it go. We will vote and that will be covered. Phil Dighello stated he agreed with Karen. Once we vote, there will be an article then.

Karen Umberger stated she didn't want this to sound ugly, but she did consider what happened to be very much of a scare tactic because there is no scientific study, felt something should have been put out there. That is just my feeling. Personally, not happy about it. They need to have someone come in and find out what is really going on. Need to recognize there is a lot of traffic from buses and cars and that effects intake in many of the classrooms. Chairman Stacey stated Mark Hounsell and I are playing phone tag. Mark had a meeting this morning and I don't know what the results were, but am sure we will hear something on it.

Russ Seybold stated I did make a comment that I hope was not responsible for that when referring to Apollo 13. I agree with Karen that it is difficult to make a decision. Did ask about number and Jim said 400. If it doubles, that seems to me would be a problem. I would support getting additional testing done.

Carl Rosenthal stated that it seems ironic, the room we were in had terrible circulation. Randy Davison stated he thought there should be concern with the health and safety of the individuals. Maybe need to look at as a global concern and administration should look at global issues first. Bill Aughton stated his only comment on CO2 is that is a very high figure when we didn't have any facts. Chairman Stacey stated a letter was sent home stating they will open windows and place fans to circulate the air. Betty Boucher stated she had asked that this be done; they did the study one time and I don't want to see it done for just this school; want all schools. This is a health issue; will not vote for security alarms. Randy Davison stated they should send out and have a specialist come in. If it is a global issue, they should be looked at as a group. Don't use scare tactics, would have been more in support if done by a specialist.

Ted Sares addressed the Chair as to what was going on. Chairman Stacey stated this is our budget meeting and they are having the School Board meeting in the gym.

Randy Davison stated I don't know who sets times as there is a major meeting for Conway Water on Wednesday night. I don't know who double dates us, but facing a \$42M bond and only 85 parcels supporting; upset with the overlapping of the time. Karen Umberger stated our budget hearing was set up before the budget hearing for the Precinct. I believe within the last month they changed the Conway budget hearing. Chairman Stacey stated Karen Hallowell at the Town Hall goes by the RSA and that is why we have to have the meeting. Randy stated this happened last year also.

Ted Sares addressed the Chair asking if the Committee had approved anything and Chairman Stacey stated not until the 22nd. Carl Rosenthal stated the Committee did approve the Town Default Budget tonight. Mr. Sares asked if it was lower and Chairman Stacey stated "yes". Karen Umberger stated by about \$200,000. Mr. Sares asked if the utilities were taken out and Karen Umberger advised they have never been in.

Motion made by Karen Umberger, seconded by Phil Dighello, to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary