

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE  
December 17, 2007**

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:30 PM in the Meeting Room at the Conway Town Hall with the following members present: Chairperson Melissa Stacey, Robert Drinkhall, Pat Libby, Betty Boucher, James LeFebvre, Rick Paquette, Bill Jones, Phil Dighello, Crow Dickinson, Bill Aughton, Karen Umberger and Doug Swett. Also present were Earl Sires and Lucy Philbrick.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Bob Drinkhall moved, seconded by James LeFebvre, to approve the Minutes of June 25, 2007. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Bill Jones moved, seconded by Betty Boucher, to approve the Minutes of September 19, 2007. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Bob Drinkhall moved, seconded by James LeFebvre, to approve the Minutes of October 29, 2007. In favor: 10; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 2 - Phil Dighello and Bill Jones.**

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Stacey requested that members review the newest member list to make sure that all information is correct for each member. Bill Jones stated his e-mail address should be [wwjlci@aol.com](mailto:wwjlci@aol.com). Pat Libby stated that her e-mail address should be changed to [pjlibby@roadrunner.com](mailto:pjlibby@roadrunner.com). Chairman stated that her physical address needed to be changed.

Chairman Stacey reviewed the proposed schedule of meetings with particular attention to the meeting on February 18, 2008 as that is a holiday (President's Day). Chairman further advised that if this Committee did not meet on this date, then the Selectmen can not vote and we will have run out of time.

TOWN REVIEW

Earl Sires stated that since everybody has been through this before, he wouldn't go into too much detail. Starting in late September-early October department heads met with Earl for their recommendations; Earl then presented his recommendations to the Selectmen; each step resulted in changes or modifications. There are not a whole lot of surprises. The budget packet is organized the same way as in past with the Narrative first followed by brief summaries of each department. At the end of the packet is a chart showing the amount recommended, the proposed percentage change and totals at the bottom. Bottom line is \$9,131,361.00 which is an increase of \$320,000.00 over 2007 or a 3.6% increase.

Earl proceeded with a brief review of increases: employee benefits of \$80,000.00 which could have been worse. There is a proposal that the school is working with and talking with the union about. Police Budget: \$203,000.00 increase, largely costs associated with existing employees, proposal of a new patrol officer starting mid-year. Library increased by \$35,000.00, largely associated with staffing. Decreases: \$23,000.00 Debt Interest Budget; Ambulance decreased by \$16,000.00 based on the new contract; Solid Waste Budget and Landfill accounts. Land fill closure account as required by the State - Paul will explain and give more detail on the reduction of \$100,00.00.

Karen Umberger questioned that there was no increase in retirement contribution and Lucy Philbrick stated the increase happened in July; done in two year increments. Phil Dighello stated that he noticed the retirement contribution changes every two years and Lucy stated they are on a bi-annual budget. Phil stated the percentage was pretty hefty.

Karen Umberger asked if the Union contract was still in negotiations and Earl stated still in negotiations.

Karen Umberger stated she would like to see a status of the Revolving Funds and what the plan is for the use of them over the years.

Earl stated the Selectmen did authorize an adjustment into the General Fund to make the numbers work; they approved \$270,000.00 in the Rec Fund; left about \$20,000.00 or more in the Revolving Fund; they have not decided what to do with that. There is an estimated \$75,000.00 in revenue proposed but using \$65,000.00 in the Operating Budget.

Karen Umberger asked where the Police Department stands. Earl stated he would get that to the Committee at the next meeting.

Earl Sires proceeded with a more detailed Review as follows:

**Executive Budget:** Increase is less than 1%.

**Election Budget:** Increase of 12.5% because this year there are 4 elections: Town, National Primary, State Primary and National Election in the Fall. Costs associated with that are ballots and related expenses.

**Finance Budget:** 1.5% increase; \$12,500.00 to \$14,000.00 for audit.

**Assessing Department:** 2.6% increase - salaries go up; using summer temporary seasonable position for the purpose of helping with data input. This has to do with assessing standards; in 2009 will be doing this again. If everything is not okay with State, an audit can be costly. Information is getting better and better.

**Legal Department:** Dropped by \$5,000.00; looked at actual numbers, particularly low for 2007 but in 2005 at \$52,000.00; we are now at \$27,000.00; plan \$35,000.00 to \$45,000.00 before the year is out. Rick Paquette asked about the status of the letter to the Town Attorney and Earl stated he has that there should be a response by January 7, 2008.

**Employee Benefits:** Up 12% with 10.7% for health insurance; employee status changes from single to married or change to family.

**Planning and Zoning:** Increased by 1.7%; some salary increases. Project Manager includes overtime for night meetings. There is budgeting for microfilming but haven't done it yet this year, hopefully will get it done soon.

**Government Buildings:** Increase of 4.2%; basically fuel, heating and that sort of thing; have had discussions about trying to predict fuel and heat.

**Insurance:** Increased 10% due to property and liability insurance.

**Police:** Increased 9.1% - total of \$203,000.00 and when the Chief does his presentation, you will see that it is mostly in personnel. Pat Libby requested that when the Police come in, they should bring information justifying why another officer is needed. Bob Drinkhall asked if the increase is just bringing back to level what used to be and Earl stated that it would be part of the presentation. It was Earl's understanding that at some point in the past a position was apparently cut, so they are one officer down. James LeFebvre questioned the discussion about a new building and Earl stated no discussion that he could recall. Phil Dighello asked that he would like the Chief to provide the raises before they come in.

**Ambulance Contract:** New contract at \$154,000.00, \$203,000.00 last year; split between North Conway Ambulance and Conway.

**Emergency Services:** a) Includes non-precinct; amount paid by those not living within a precinct pay to have the service. The amount is based on prior year formulas; looked at \$222,000.00 last year; \$241,000.00 this year. Karen Umberger stated that this is not Lower Bartlett, it is simply North Conway Water Precinct portion. Lower Bartlett is its own district. Earl stated they would try and specify that part served by North Conway Water Precinct. Karen questioned the reason for maintenance being cut to \$500.00 and Earl stated there was a proposed Warrant Article to cover the maintenance.

b) Last year for the Emergency Management position asked for \$18,000.00 in salary and at that time it would be grant funded; as of the beginning of January, have used only half the actual salary; asking for the same amount. It is very beneficial having someone in that position. Betty Boucher requested a copy of the roads that were fixed and Earl stated he would provide a chart to show the projects going on. Karen Umberger questioned budgeting for grants and Earl stated it was taken as unanticipated revenue.

**Inspections:** Pretty much status quo at 2.7%; increase for salary. Bill Jones stated that he thought there was an Assistant Building Inspector and Earl advised there is not, but it has been discussed. Earl has told David that when David thinks he needs help, they will bring in contract

people. Phil Dighello asked if the salary figures included overtime and Earl stated it shouldn't. Betty Boucher questioned inspections and seminars was upped \$500.00 with no actual for 2007 and Earl stated spent more on books and manuals to guide on inspections. Betty stated she would like to see actuals and Earl stated nothing has been spent; trainings have been free. Earl stated that he did not plan to have the Building Inspector at a meeting unless the Committee wanted to talk with him.

**Highway and Solid Waste:** Both are status quo except for materials. Paul will go into further detail in his presentation. There has been a discussion with the Selectmen about the Dump Store; they will keep an eye on it. There was discussion of adding \$4,000.00 into the budget in case we have unrest in the Spring and need to hire additional staff.

**Health:** There is no change; may incur over \$1,000.00 in fees.

**Welfare or General Assistance:** About a 1% increase. Administration change for employee salary: 2006 - \$30,000.00, reduced to \$25,000.00 and will probably use around \$20,000.00. Since we are at \$20,000.00 now, \$25,000.00 seems like a good number. We are starting to see more activity relating to fuel; prices go up and weather is going down, have had more activity. We will continue to focus on giving help for the needy. BJ works closely with other organizations like Vaughn and the Food Pantry.

**Parks and Recreation:** John (Eastman) will give the presentation. There is a proposed decrease, projected \$71,000.00 in fees and using about \$61,000.00 to fund the Revolving Account; that approach is what we had anticipated being the function of the Revolving Fund. Nothing has been decided, but Earl believes that this is the Selectmen's position. Rick Paquette asked if the Selectmen would be sitting on this as it was not up to John Eastman and Earl stated the Selectmen have decided the budget being presented and anticipate using all or most of the Operating Budget. Karen Umberger stated that if the Revolving Fund is being used, that money should not be budgeted in the Recreation Budget. The first year is understandable, but from now on no reason for that to be in the budget because fees are collected. Karen personally saw no reason to have Recreation fees in the budget. Earl stated that he may not have been clear: the \$268,000.00 does not include anything associated with the fees and the Revolving Fund total budget is \$330,000.00. Karen stated that was not how it came across and Earl apologized for any misunderstanding.

**Library:** Up 9%, based largely on staffing. Margaret will explain the increase. Lucy Philbrick stated that Margaret has asked that her account be broken down in a different manner, so 2008 has nothing in front of it.

**Patriotic Purposes:** Up 15%, that is in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July cost of fireworks.

**Conservation Commission:** Increase of 9%. Paul Pinkham will discuss the list of projects to be done.

**Debt Principal and Interest:** James LeFebvre questioned the debt service and Earl stated there was an interesting discussion with the Selectmen. Current debt is \$573,000.00 for 2008; in either 2010 to 2012 the only

bond will be the Library; some discussion concerning in about 5 years we will feel significant relief; the real challenge in the next 3 or 4 years is to minimize the impact until we can get some relief; there is some light on the horizon.

**Capital Reserve Account:** Paul will update that. Basically the reserve fund for closure reduced by \$100,000.00; have \$43,000.00 for monitoring - some detail in the back about those accounts.

Earl Sires finished by stating that the bottom line is \$9,131,361.00 for a 3.6% increase.

Chairman Stacey advised that in January, Police, John (Recreation) and Margaret (Library) will present their budgets.

Bob Drinkhall questioned the possibility of a new Town Hall and the rationale for same. Earl Sires stated that basically the Selectmen talked about the building safety situation. In June the building was surveyed and there were a number of recommendations: have a door instead of swing arm; cameras in the hallway; all security stuff. Changes suggested in the General Assistance Office: space between employees and clients; having a direct entrance in from the hallway with a counter between BJ and the client; a majority of clientele are in need of help; do get people off meds and some extremely angry. There are other options out there and the Selectmen could form a Study Committee. When the Police building and Court building were built there was a space for the Town Hall between the two buildings; would share existing parking, etc.; just one of many options. Earl stated that in all seriousness, they have looked at the third floor, off site storage, and a building out back; a number of things have been looked at. Right now storage is really the problem. Doug Swett questioned if they had looked at next door and Earl stated that the building had been on the market for \$250,000 to \$300,000.00.

Earl Sires stated that the Warrant Articles would be presented at an upcoming meeting; Police have a couple for a computer server and a motorcycle; Warrant Article for Building Maintenance Fund. Chairman Stacey asked that the Police Department be informed on the requested information and Lucy Philbrick stated she had a list.

Chairman Stacey advised the Committee that the Precincts will come on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January; public hearing is on February 13<sup>th</sup>, with Deliberative for the Town on March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Kennett High School Auditorium.

Pat Libby asked about the proposed Default Budget and Warrant Articles and Earl Sires stated he should have for the next meeting.

Chairman Stacey reminded the Committee that the next meeting was at the Police Department on the 19<sup>th</sup> for the School Review. Pat Libby asked if the Committee would be getting the books ahead of time. Karen Umberger stated the Committee had most of the information. Chairman Stacey stated that as far as she knew, they were still on the second draft. Rick Paquette asked why George Fredette was not present and Chairman stated that he (George) had e-mailed her this morning advising that the 3<sup>rd</sup>

Monday of every month he has investment meetings. Phil Dighello stated the School Board was voting on the 19<sup>th</sup> and Pat Libby stated the meeting was at 4:30 PM. Chairman Stacey stated that it was her understanding that their last meeting was supposed to have been last week.

Chairman Stacey advised that at the School meetings she assumed that Carl, Becky and principals would come in and the last meeting would be with Jim and Maureen Soraghan for Special Education.

Chairman Stacey stated that a couple of non-profits have been received: Gibson Center and Tri-County Cap. Phil Dighello stated that the Minutes are on-line and Chairman stated Holly puts them on.

**Bill Jones moved, seconded by Betty Boucher, to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 PM. Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary