



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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Budget Committee Meeting Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2016

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rob Prohl (Chair), Phyllis Piotrow (Vice-Chair), Joe Cardillo, Colin Campbell, Bruce Hudson, Lyndsay Lund, Tyler Beck, Chris Lorio, Suzanne Jesseman
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Nancy Rollins (Board of Selectmen's Representative)

STAFF PRESENT:

Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Ed Andersen, Police Chief
Steve Ensign, Board of Firewards
Linda Nicklos, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Lucy St. John, Planning & Zoning Administrator
Jason Lyon, Fire Chief

Chair Prohl called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Approval of Minutes

December 14, 2016

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Tyler Beck) to approve the minutes of December 14, 2016, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Selectman's Report – Kim Hallquist (reporting for Nancy Rollins who was absent)

Ms. Hallquist said a presentation on the Pleasant Lake Dam 60% plan from Dubois & King was given at the last Selectmen's meeting. They are very optimistic that the cost will be less than the half million dollars they were expecting. It is expected to be closer to \$400,000 than \$500,000. Dubois & King is now speaking with DES to see if the option selected can be approved, as they are new and have not been used in other projects. The Selectmen and Jud Donaghy are happy with the work Dubois & King are doing. Mr. Hudson asked if the construction estimate given was closer to \$300,000. Ms. Hallquist agreed that it is, noting that it does not include construction oversight costs.

The Selectmen have solicited health insurance quotes from CGI, the broker for Harvard Pilgrim, to see whether more cost-effective options are available for employee health insurance. A representative from CGI will come to the January 9th Selectmen's meeting to discuss health insurance plans.

Mr. Lee has submitted his letter of intent to retire effective December 15, 2017.

Ms. Piotrow asked if the Selectmen discussed funds for the transfer station consultant at the last meeting. Mr. Lee said this will still come up with the Solid Waste Committee. To use the Capital Reserve funds for Transfer Station Improvements, the request will need to come before Town Meeting via a warrant article.

Review of FY2018 Budgets

Executive

Ms. Piotrow asked about the phone system; the Police Department and the Town Office's phones sound to be outdated. They aren't asking for money for replacement this year. Is there any thought about talking to someone about an upgrade? Ms. Hallquist said the Town Office phones will be about \$7,000 to upgrade and they hope to purchase the new system from this year's or next year's budget (operating). She wasn't sure how much a system would be at the Police Department. Chief Andersen said they want to keep their system as long as possible because they have a local person who can come repair it if need be and it is a good system.

Ms. Piotrow said the Selectmen have agreed to give employees a 1% COLA based on the CPI of August/September. For November, the CPI is 1.7% and she questioned whether the 1% was appropriate and also questioned whether the Town should select a date to be used and use it consistently. Ms. Hallquist noted that the Selectmen have included funds in their budget to give all employees a 1% COLA on July 1st, and then an additional increase on the employees' anniversary date pending a favorable evaluation. This second increase will be in the amount needed to get the employee into a step. Chair Prohl said the Budget Committee does not generally make decisions on pay raises for employees. He feels the Selectmen have vetted this fully and they do not want to change it. Mr. Cardillo understands where Ms. Piotrow is coming from; as a Budget Committee they haven't gotten into setting a standard for this kind of COLA raise.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Ms. Piotrow asked how many Deputy Town Clerks there have been. Ms. Nicklos said they are on their third Deputy. It is part time, they need to be flexible as their hours fluctuate and people don't know what the job is until they start. It takes a certain individual to be able to handle the different tasks in that job.

Ms. Piotrow opined that since they have to pay for training each time people come in, would people stay if they had longer hours or were paid more? Ms. Nicklos said a new Deputy has to shadow her for 30 days and then go to DMV training. The Town only has to pay for travel, the training is free. She doesn't feel an increase in salary would help people stay.

The increase in the conference line is intended for Ms. Nicklos (not a new person) to get advanced certifications.

Mr. Cardillo asked if Saturday hours are well-received by the townspeople. Ms. Nicklos said it is very well-received. Also, they are considering possible evening hours.

Mr. Cardillo asked if the figures for elections should remain the same or go up during years that have increase in elections. Ms. Nicklos feels it can stay as-is; the expenses don't go up that dramatically.

It was asked about the advertising line which has gone up by about \$500. Ms. Nicklos agreed with Mr. Lorio's suggestion that she took the number from the 2016 actual.

Finance

Ms. Johnson said software related costs are the big ticket items. Muni-Smart is the largest cost. This program is used for accounts receivable/payable and the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Computer Support includes charges from Competitive Computers who is contracted to administer and oversee the office's systems for a monthly fee. Extra calls for service cost extra.

Advertising – this has dropped down a bit. All miscellaneous town advertising not otherwise allocated are charged to this account.

Postage – Ms. Johnson said that Ms. Nicklos is going to outsource the tax bills. Part of the cost for the bills will be reduced in the postage line. Ms. Nicklos said the May tax bills will be the first to be outsourced.

Chair Prohl wonders if they have much delinquency on tax payments. Ms. Hallquist said in New London they are mostly timely. A lot of people pay in advance.

Assessing

Ms. Hallquist indicated that New London contracts for assessing with Newbury and Sunapee. New London has to guess half of the amount for the service because we are the only town of the three on the fiscal year. The assessors are hired by the Town of Newbury and the other two towns pay their share based on the number of parcels in their respective towns.

Legal

Ms. Hallquist said they are already considerably over-budget. They won the last superior court case, however it cost the Town \$20,000. These cases take a long time to complete. She thinks they should stick with \$25,000 or \$30,000. Overages in this current fiscal year will be paid for out of other places in the budget. A lot of time the cases will settle out of court. This can't be assumed or anticipated, however.

Personnel Administration

Ms. Johnson said the first five lines are for reimbursing the Town for library expenses (payroll). Ms. Hallquist noted that there is the leave-time buy-out included in this area. She wouldn't touch this line. Ms. Johnson said the library trustees have been discussing salary changes for their employees and are inquiring about insurance.

The Selectmen have kept the \$1,000 deductible in the budget for the employees' health insurance at this point. Ms. Piotrow said high deductibles are insurance companies' way to recapture funds from the attractive low premiums they offer.

Chair Prohl asked how \$5,000 was chosen for education reimbursement. Ms. Hallquist said at least two people using it would have a maximum of \$4,000 total if they do well. The extra \$1,000 would help pay for a third person. This benefit is in the personnel manual and employees would appreciate having funds available to help pay for these costs. Ms. Hallquist feels this is a way to keep employees with the Town; if they leave within a certain amount of time, they are required to pay back the tuition reimbursement.

Planning & Zoning

Ms. Piotrow asked what percentage of time is spent in the office and what percentage in the field? They did not hire the compliance officer, but she does have two assistants that may allow her to be in the field more. Ms. St. John said she plans to do more work in the field in the new year. She plans to make 3-5 inspections a week. There has been a shift in the office with Amy Rankins doing more of Ms. St. John's administrative duties. They have someone hired to do minutes as well. The majority of her duties have been inside but she will go to a site if there is an urgent request. She recognizes she hasn't spent as much time in the field as she had hoped this year.

Chair Prohl asked what the services are that are provided by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC). Ms. St. John said Bill Helm and Liz Meller are the representatives

from the Town and New London pays dues to be members of the commission. They provide circuit riding services to a town. This is helpful for smaller communities. They look at things from a regional perspective. They get input from communities having to do with such things as housing, solid waste, transportation, population, and parking. She feels it is a worthwhile service and helpful when looking at broader regional issues and organizing studies.

Chair Prohl asked if the UVLSRPC could have helped with the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) discussion of late. Ms. St. John said they could have but they formed a Planning Board subcommittee to look at this. They acquired information from other communities, publications, and examples and studies. She feels the board was well-informed about this issue. They have decided not to include detached ADUs in the upcoming zoning amendment at the Town Meeting in March 2017. She wasn't sure the RPC would have been able to give as much attention to this issue as their subcommittee did. The line they are discussing is a placeholder to pay for studies or services that go outside their regular dues.

Mr. Cardillo said the Town doesn't have or require a building inspector. Ms. Hallquist agreed and noted that while the State of NH has adopted the International Building Code, towns are not required to enforce it, however the State can. She noted that some towns do hire personnel who make inspections to enforce the building code.

Chief Lyon said the Fire Department gets called a lot regarding plumbing installation with propane tanks. There should be someone there when installation happens, backfilling, etc. Often they are contacted by state entities alerting them about areas of possible concern due to how things were installed/planned improperly.

Ms. St. John said people are always surprised to hear there is not a building inspector in New London. Ms. Hallquist said New London does not enforce the building code, however the State does. Ms. Lund said an inspector from the state will come to inspect if called; she has had experience doing this in the past.

Chief Lyon said he handles code compliance but do not bill out for it. They only bill out for permits of assembly.

Mr. Hudson asked what the projection for the balance of this year was for training. Ms. St. John said both planning and zoning boards have participated in trainings at NHMA, OEP, PlanNH. They find them helpful in looking at the broader planning issues the town is facing. She feels this is a reasonable amount to keep in the budget.

Ms. Piotrow asked about the GIS updating. Ms. Hallquist said every map and plan in the town has been sent to the company. It will take a year and a half at least to complete the project. There were between 1,200 and 1,400 plans. It is on schedule.

Patriotic Purposes

Ms. Johnson said all towns have this line item. New London gives to the American Legion. It goes towards their Memorial Day ceremony and printing the program.

Other Business

Mr. Hudson asked about the library flooding this past weekend. Chief Lyon said it was the same pipe that burst last year. It was on an exterior wall. He isn't sure if the wall was spray foamed; it is hard with an exterior pipe. Ms. Hallquist said the library will pay the deductible and they have insurance for it.

With no other business, Chair Prohl asked for a motion to adjourn.

**IT WAS MOVED (Bruce Hudson) AND SECONDED (Suzanne Jesseman) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London