

DRAFT to be approved at the Monday, June 7th BOS Meeting

A Public Budget Hearing of the Board of Selectmen was held on Thursday, April 29, 2010 at the Town Office Building.

Present for the Board: First Selectman Kate Donnelly, Selectman Roger Dionne, Selectman Mike Chapel

Staff Present: Marlene B. Aulten, Recording Secretary

Call to order: First Selectman Donnelly called the meeting to order at 7:30p.m.

Audience Comments/Questions:

Vi Marquis asked why the tax collector assistant was receiving a raise. She also questioned why the building inspector's clerk was receiving a raise since building is down. First Selectman Donnelly requested Tax Collector Baum come to the meeting at 8:00p.m. to provide further information on his assistant's increase.

Gay Wagner noted that prior to the tax collector's assistant being hired, there was an assistant who "floated" between departments and was not assigned to just one department. She also inquired about the pay increase for the Democratic Registrar of Voters, and whether or not the Registrar's request for retroactive pay would be accepted.

Vi Marquis inquired about the P&Z *Legal & Engineering* and *Planning Services* line items. Treasurer Rodriguez noted these fees are a break-out of charges formerly included in the Town Counsel budget line item.

Bob Burgoyne asked if we intend to hire an engineer on retainer for committees to utilize as needed. First Selectman Donnelly noted the Board's intent was to look into this in the future.

Ed Burchfield inquired if part of the fees for line item 6012.00 were for the Community Center. Treasurer Rodriguez stated they are.

Bob Burgoyne also asked about line item 6012.00 *Auditor/Fixed Assets audit*. Treasurer Rodriguez noted it was a separate required audit that is folded into the Marien & Company audit report.

Rose Bisson asked if the Community Center gets audited through the Recreation Department. Treasurer Rodriguez noted the Recreation Department does get audited and hence the Community Center will be part of that. This year's audit will be more in-depth as pertains to the Community Center.

Bob Burgoyne asked if some of the charges for the Community Center are offset by income. It was noted that they are to some degree.

Gay Wagner noted the building for Community Center was free, and the rehabilitation work was paid for by a Grant.

Rose Bisson suggested that there are many ways to support a funded activity. If the audit shows the Community Center is not paying for itself after a reasonable amount of time, then the Town should look into what it can do to have it pay for itself.

Gay Wagner stated that the annual cost per household for the Town's contribution to the Community Center is *approximately* \$4.00 per household.

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Ed Burchfield inquired as to how many households actually utilize the Community Center. Gay Wagner said ½ of the people. He also inquired whether or not the new federal health insurance regulations will help the Town with the cost of health insurance line item. First Selectman Donnelly noted that is an unknown at this time.

Bob Burgoyne asked whether the increase is attributable to increase in health costs or an increasing number of people receiving medical coverage. Treasurer Rodriguez noted both factors play a role.

Ed Burchfield spoke regarding the *Road Maintenance* line item and noted assistance for the last storm damage may not be forthcoming as previously anticipated. He noted that the Board should consider budgeting for the repairs to the Fisk Road bridge, and Windy Hill Road.

Vi Marquis wondered what we would do different for Fisk Road so it doesn't wash out again. Ed Burchfield noted that to fix it correctly would incur significant costs, and that a cement box type drain would need to be installed so that it does not wash out again.

Bob Burgoyne noted that 6201.00 and 6201.01 are interconnected and it should be noted that Estabrooks Road repairs added significantly to those line items.

6300.01 - *Sanitation Payroll* line item increase - Treasurer Rodriguez noted that, in addition to the two Transfer Station employees, the highway crew also did quite a bit of work there this year. Their hours were used to calculate what we *may* need in the coming year. If the highway crew does not work there as much in the coming FY, that line could be reduced. That line item also includes in 1% salary increase for the transfer station employees.

Bob Burgoyne noted that Parish Hill has held their budget for 3-4 years now during a period of declining enrollment, and stated that this means the cost per student is increasing.

Gay Wagner noted that Hampton elementary teachers declined to forego their contractual raises this year, though virtually all teachers in our region did. John Burnham questioned the veracity of that statement.

Bob Burgoyne wondered how the Town support for the Library compares to their self-funding, and questioned if the Town is giving them the larger portion of their income. Jim Ryan noted that the Town is contributing most of the funds. Mr. Burgoyne noted this could make the Town liable for the Library's activities.

Ed Burchfield noted that the Library may be affected by this as pertains to their not-for-profit status, and that they should be 65% self supporting to maintain that status.

Randy Thompson questioned the Town's contribution to the Walking Weekend; we contribute monetarily, and the funds are used for Last Green Valley activities.

Ed Burchfield noted that putting open space funds in at the end of the year rather than up front be considered. Bob Burgoyne expressed the opinion that the Land Acquisition fund is going away as it is not properly protected. He noted that if the Town vote puts it into another account, open space acquisition could disappear.

Vi Marquis wondered why the dogs available for adoption were not listed in the paper. Marlene Aulten noted that because they are at the Chaplin Dog Pound, the listing in the

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paper says “Chaplin”, but the animals for adoption are both Chaplin and Hampton dogs and cats.

Harry Baum spoke regarding Vi Marquis’ question regarding the Tax Collector’s Assistant receiving an increase in salary. Mr. Baum noted that his assistant was not receiving an hourly wage increase. The increase is a budget increase. The assistant will be working additional hours as needed, but her hourly rate of pay will not be increased, and she will not work beyond what is available in the budget for that position.

Bob Burgoyne asked if the original reason to have a Tax Collector assistant was for the two crunches of tax time, why was additional time needed now? Mr. Baum noted that is assistant performs other duties such as managing the elderly transportation program, and these duties are ongoing throughout the year.

First Selectman Donnelly noted that as the budget stands now, there is no mill rate increase this year.

Bob Burgoyne noted that there may be a mill increase if Item 11 on Town Meeting Call goes through.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marlene B. Aulten
Recording Secretary