

**TOWN OF NEW HAMPTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OFFICES
NEW HAMPTON, NH 03256
December 14, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Selectmen Paul Tierney, Charles Bartley and Kenneth Mertz were present.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Lucas joined the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Paul Tierney called the budget work session of the Board to order at 4:09 p.m. He noted that in addition to budget work, there was also a tax manifest to the County to be signed by the Board.

WORK SESSION:

Belknap County Payment

The manifest for the County of Belknap in the amount of \$300,000 was signed by the Selectmen.

Budget Work Session

Working from budget summary worksheets from December 8th, Mr. Tierney led Selectmen in a line item review to seek reductions to the proposed budgets received from the Town Departments. Below are noted the substantive changes made in this meeting.

Regarding Executive Overtime, this line item was reduced by \$300.00 and utilizing staff flex time to make up for any additional time necessary for a particular project. This was acceptable to the Board.

It was agreed to reduce the budget line figure for Administrative Postage to \$2,000. This was acceptable to the Board.

Under Tax Collector Contract Services, the town had previously hired a company to produce and mail the two tax bills. Mr. Tierney recommended town staff could do this work and the budget was reduced by \$1,500. Mrs. Lucas advised BMSI software can produce the tax bills in the town offices and handing them in house provides more control, but postage costs would be greater because they cannot utilize a bulk rate.

Training and education reimbursement for the Town Clerk's office was cut to the previous year's level. Most of the training is available at no charge through the State, but if someone with no experience is elected they may require some training through BMSI.

It was discussed and agreed to drop Printing and Advertising to \$300.

Town Clerk's postage budget was reduced to \$1,200 and the Tax Collector's Office Supplies dropped to \$400.

Mrs. Lucas has a maintenance and service contract for the Administrative office computers and suggested that since computers were a year old and the

bookkeeper's computer was being replaced they could consider suspending the service. The service includes updating software as well as dealing with any hardware issues that may arise. Mr. Tierney stated his preference was to protect the continuity of town services if a computer station failed and that the contract should be maintained. Mr. Bartley asked Mrs. Lucas see what warranty protections still exist for the year-old computers. She will research and report back to the Board.

Regarding the Planning Board's budget, Mr. Tierney asked that contract services be maintained because the Master Plan will require an update in the coming year. The largest portion of the cost for the update was printing. Mrs. Lucas noted that funds previously included for stenography services had been removed to part time wages. One dollar was left in that line item in case those services would be needed in the future.

Printing and advertising is the newspaper notices for public hearings. Postage included return receipt mailings for abutter notices. Mr. Mertz asked for the figures on postage and printing for the past several years. Hearing the figures for 2007 and 2008, Mr. Mertz then recommended leaving the budget item as proposed.

The General Building Repair and Maintenance budget had been previously reduced by \$900 at an earlier budget workshop.

Cemetery mowing had been a contracted service in past years until a part time person in the Highway Department had been given the task. Money for this line item could be moved to the Highway Department budget. The Selectmen asked that those funds be replaced to show under Cemetery Mowing for clarity.

Regarding the Cemetery Association budget item of \$5,000, the Selectmen reviewed the warrant article from several years ago that provided an additional \$4,000 to the Cemetery Association over the \$1,000 that had been in the budget. While requested by the Board in a meeting with the Association representatives, no figures on work completed in 2009 or work proposed for the coming year has been provided to the Board. Mr. Tierney recommended reducing the figure to \$3,000. Mr. Mertz noted he was in favor of leaving it at \$5,000 for fixing up the cemetery, but he wanted to see some improvement to the Cemetery property. Mr. Bartley stated he wanted to see some accounting for the work done there. After reviewing the warrant article and the minutes of that deliberative session, the Board left the figure at \$5,000 and stated that they would pursue getting better information on the expenses incurred by the Association. If the Board found that the funds provided by voters were in excess of actual expenses, they could consider a warrant article to reduce the figure to a more appropriate sum.

Advertising and Regional Association fees are down \$400.

The Board contacted the Police Chief by phone and asked that the figure for "Other Employee Insurances" be provided. Chief Salmon advised he would

have the figure to Mrs. Lucas tomorrow.

Telephone and cell phones was reduced to \$3,500.

Medical Services covers immunizations and inoculations needed by police personnel. It was suggested to reduce the figure but an accounting of what the staff needs will be should be provided to the Board by the Thursday meeting and this item will be revisited by the Board.

Police Vehicle Repair was reduced to \$5,500 by agreement of the Selectmen.

The Fire Department uniform and gear budget was reviewed and the proposed budget figure was maintained as submitted by the Chief. Because of grants pending and proposed, this figure may be revisited.

Fire Department equipment line item has gone from \$7,000 in 2009 to \$10,000 for 2010 while the total Fire Department budget has remained at the same level as last year. The budget for 2009 was prepared by Chief Drake's predecessor, but funding has been moved by the Chief within his department accounts to better meet his needs. Substantive improvements have been achieved.

The highway budget has been reduced by \$42,000 and their heating fuel budget is being dropped to \$2,500.

Equipment Rental proposed to dropped to \$10,000.

Equipment Maintenance Repair was dropped to \$12,500.

Fuel Oil and Grease was dropped to \$35,000.

Sand, Gravel and Cold Patch were funded at \$25,000.

Winter sand and salt was reduced to \$40,000.

Vehicle Maintenance and Repair was reviewed and left at \$30,000.

The Transfer Station Budget was reviewed. Noteworthy changes include: Hauling Services dropped to \$24,000 for a savings of \$3,000.

Tipping fees were left at \$80,000.

Equipment Rental was reduced to \$100.

Dues subscriptions dropped to \$250.

Highway Department Supplies was increased \$200 to \$1,000.

Regarding the Animal Control Budget:

Animal Control is remaining with the Belmont facility and is budgeted for \$2,000. The NH Humane Society proposal was \$3,800.

Recreational Department Supplies was reduced to \$250 from \$500 after review of expenditures in 2009.

Old Home Supplies was dropped from \$600 to \$300.

The Conservation Commission Budget was reviewed and their Contract Services was dropped to \$200; Dues and Subscriptions were dropped to \$600 and Office Supplies dropped to \$50 from \$75.

Estimated and actual town revenues to date were reviewed by the Selectmen. Some figures from the state have not been received as yet, but Mrs. Lucas provided some estimated figures for the Board to consider. Reimbursement payments for Central Street Bridge work and FEMA repayments are still to come, but the Board feels anticipated revenues for rooms and meals, timber revenues, excavation, license renewals and similar items are expected to be lower in the coming year. Revenues saved through the Town's spending freeze this year are anticipated to contribute to a modest figure that will reduce property taxes in the coming year.

Selectmen asked Mrs. Lucas to hold any appointments for the next Thursday Board meeting so they can prepare or review proposed warrant articles.

Chief Drake has a number of warrant articles he wants to submit, so the Board asked Mrs. Lucas to ask Chief Drake to attend Thursday's meeting to address them and provide a complete status of the grants he is or has applied for and figures on any matching funds the town must raise.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Mertz noted that he received complaints that the nursery is selling tree stands as well as trees. The permit the nursery received stated "locally grown trees". Mr. Tierney stated he would like to speak with the complainant. Mrs. Lucas noted that because the nursery was in the commercial zone these items were permitted. Mr. Tierney suggested Mrs. Lucas speak with the Town Attorney for clarification.

Mr. Tierney noted that he had a conflict on Monday night, so the budget meeting for December 21st has been cancelled. Another meeting is scheduled for December 23rd Wednesday morning at 9 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None was heard.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Selectman Mertz to adjourn, seconded by Selectman Bartley. The vote passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin J. Harmon