

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Location: Wilton Town Hall: Court Room

FINAL MEETING MINUTES January 9, 2014 – 7 PM

Members Present: Cary Hughes, Chair; Don Davidson, Vice-Chair; Betsy Castro, Harry Dailey, Caitlin Sullivan, Joyce Fisk, Donna Pucciarello, Joe Torre, Dan Donovan, Selectmen Rep., and Dawn Tuomala, Secretary;

1. Chairman Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes of January 4, 2014:

A motion to approve the minutes of January 4, 2014 as written was made by Mr. Donovan; seconded by Mr. Torre; all in favor; motion passes unanimously.

3. CIP Requests

a. Conservation Commission

Ms. Draper passed out informational sheets on the history of monies that were previously allocated and how they were spent. Another sheet describes how various lands have been acquired such as trail easements from subdivisions to purchases. She also included a Fact sheet on why they need the money, how long it takes to use the money and the percentage of land in conservation. There is information about taking land off tax rolls and the different ways that the land is protected. They took information from the State Guide Book and the Wilton Master Plan in regards to why people preserve land.

Ms. Draper summarized describing how they can expand capacity and provide new properties. Many of the projects are eligible for matching funds; these funds are only available for a limited time. The requested \$20,000 is a realistic cost estimate to add to what they already have and it should last for about 2 years. There are potential grants that help, along with other funders who get involved, all joining forces resulting in only 10 to 20% of the total costs coming out of the fund. The funds are used to purchase land, to help land owners put their land under easements, along with the associated legal fees. There are many properties already under easements such as the Frog Pond, the Talarico land, Fox Howe Easement, McGettigen Easement along with the Temple Community Farm. Costs can run as high as \$45,000 depending upon what is involved.

This is a reoccurring request that they have made in the past but have not received money for many years. It is important to understand that having money in the fund is important when dealing with land owners as it shows a commitment and interest. Many of these projects take a couple of years to happen but others come and go much quicker. At this point there are 120 undeveloped lots in the Town of Wilton. The Conservation Commission is not out to put every piece of land into conservation but those that are important for a mix of diversity.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes for January 9, 2014

1 Chairman Hughes steps down from the Budget Committee and recuses himself from the next
2 project as he is involved with the High Mowing School and there would be a conflict of
3 interest. Vice-Chair Davidson assumes the duties.
4

5 Ian McSweeney of the Russell Foundation in New Boston which creates land and farm
6 conservation presented a request for \$80,000 to be able to purchase land on High Mowing
7 and on the Frye Property. This property will connect several other pieces of conservation land
8 creating 240 acre conservation tract. There is additional conservation land that is only one
9 property removed which contains several hundred acres in conservation. The farmland is
10 federally prioritized as farmland; it is over 5% of all of the farm land in Wilton. Farmland is a
11 very scarce resource.
12

13 Mr. McSweeney explained that if the property is developed into 5 residential lots the cost to
14 the Town for additional Fire, Police and schools would be \$80,000 in the next 20 years. He
15 described the tax impact due to residential development, commercial or industrial verses
16 farmland. Residential lots cost the Towns roughly \$0.13/dollar; Commercial property make
17 \$0.65/dollar and Farmland makes \$0.44/dollar. Therefore the most cost effective would be
18 commercial or industrial then farmland and then residential property.
19

20 Presently the Conservation Commission is generally favorable but no final decision has been
21 made. They will discuss it at their Meeting on Monday night and will take a formal vote. Ms.
22 Draper stated that presently she believes that 17% of the land is protected and the Society
23 recommends 25% of the land in a Town should be put into Conservation. There was 16% of
24 the land in 2009 and many properties have been added since.
25

26 Mr. McSweeney explained that by putting this property into conservation they will be creating
27 one large block of land in conservation and they will be protecting over 900 feet along the
28 Souhegan River. There will be scenic vistas that will also be protected. The question was
29 asked about how many acres of land are currently in conservation now and what the
30 percentage of land in conservation exists now.
31

32 There have been people interested in developing this land and it is assumed that there will be
33 a development on it since there are 38 existing lots in close proximity to this lot. There could
34 be up to 6 lots on this 160 acres of land. This property is under contract and the money needs
35 to be secured prior to this coming July.
36

37 Chairman Hughes returns to the Budget Committee.
38
39

40 **b. Highway/Parks & Rec/Cemetery CIP**
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42 Mr. Elliott stated that the bridge deck of the Old County Farm Road Bridge (near NH Route
43 101) was replaced last year and that the \$50,000 came out of the Resurfacing Budget due to
44 issues at Town Meeting. There are still 3 other bridges on the red list to be done; Stage
45 Coach in 2021; King Brook in 2017 and Frye Mill in 2022. There needs to be \$163,000 on
46 hand in the account and currently we have \$148,000. Every year that goes by, the cost of
47 replacement increases 5%. By the year 2017 we will need \$102,000 in the account for the
48 King Brook Bridge. The last two bridges will cost \$332,000. He is asking for \$50,000 to be
49 put into the account this year but we should put enough in to bring the amount up to at least
50 \$163,000. Right now the assumption is an increase of 5% per year but by the year 2021 it

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes for January 9, 2014

1 could be as high as 7 to 9% since the State doesn't have any money either. The goal is to put
2 the money away and if we can to rebuild the bridge cheaper before the time.

3
4 Mr. Elliott continued with a request of \$37,000 to replace the Highway Departments Ford
5 Pickup Truck including a snow plow and a toe package. He brought in pictures depicting the
6 shape of the truck and the mileage at 132,870. Presently, this truck is used as a backup when
7 the 6 wheeler is down. The plow and equipment can't be transferred over to the new truck
8 since even the plow has been rebuilt.

9
10 Mr. Elliott is also requesting to replace the 6 wheeler; this truck started its life as a tractor
11 trailer truck hauling a trailer down the road and has 557,830 miles. He would like to replace
12 this with a Freightliner for \$172,000 which will also have a plow, a whole body sander that
13 when the top comes off it can be used as a dump truck to haul. This is the last of the
14 converted road tractors that we had. They were designed to tow and not to carry a load. Mr.
15 Donovan stated that basically you need to drag your feet to stop it and it isn't safe. A new
16 radiator had to be purchased last week for it for \$500 just to keep it on the road for the winter.

17
18 **c. Police CIP**

19
20 Chief Hautanen stated that he will be requesting the purchase of another cruiser next year.
21 There are a couple of options just to purchase the vehicle out right next year or to put money
22 away in the capital reserve to help defray the costs. The Capital Improvements Plan calls for
23 \$27,000 to be put aside this year; that is what his request is for. The oldest car he has is a
24 2009 Crown Vick which has 97,000 miles on it. The Detail car is a spare marked unit and has
25 54,000 miles on it. The SUV also has 54,000 and the new car just purchased in November
26 has just over 10,000 on it.

27
28 **d. Recycling Center** – there are no anticipated Capital Projects this year.

29
30 **4. Additional Budget Changes**

31
32 The Wilton Water Works has put an extra \$100 into the 457(b) plan and 50 new water meters
33 were added for \$10,000. Contract Services has been increased by \$5,000 to \$30,000.

34
35 The sewer agreement with Milford was almost doubled and the usage fee increased by
36 \$10,000 last week. The sewer agreement changes every year and an exact amount isn't
37 determined until the end of the year. It was over \$11,000 this year so \$15,000 was put in but it
38 varies from year to year.

39
40 The Police Department added money for sick time and the 457(b) plan. The raises were
41 discussed with the Selectmen and they decided to go with the 50/50 plan over the 2 years to
42 help defray costs. The increase in the other two items has diminished the savings realized by
43 the splitting the 50/50.

44
45 Chief Hautanen explained that he completed a study on what it takes to replace an officer if
46 one is lost and it exceeds \$71,000. The hiring process can take 9 months to a year to
47 complete. Then they have to train and outfit the officer with equipment and send them to the
48 academy which only accepts a certain amount of people and is only offered a few times per
49 year. Once out of the academy, the officer still isn't ready to go out on the streets on their own
50 and must have someone else with them.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for January 9, 2014

1 Chief Hautanen explained that he did a pay study in 2006 but it wasn't followed through
2 especially when the economy went down in 2008. Now that the new 2013 pay scale is out he
3 has brought it back to the table. This pay scale has been well vetted through many people in
4 the state. The Selectmen have voted to support the idea but they wanted to break it up over a
5 2 year step. Temple/Greenville officers are making more than our people are. Instead of
6 training, other Towns are now buying out the remaining years of the contract as it is cheaper in
7 the long run than starting over hiring someone new. Mr. Davidson asked why there was also a
8 457(b) plan when the officers are on the State Retirement plan and this is for the civilian
9 employees.

10 Chief Zirpolo explained there is an issue with the ambulance since there is now a change from
11 volunteers to the on call which pays every 2 weeks instead of paying out the 4th quarter in the
12 next fiscal year. If this were to remain as it is then there will have to be a 5th quarter added to
13 cover the extra costs this year. It was decided to make a journal entry that reverses this and
14 puts the costs back into 2013 where they belong. This will be a one-time expense that will put
15 it into 2013.
16

17
18 Last week the Library requested that \$2,400 be put back into the technology line which is
19 reflected in the total budget this week.
20

21 22 **5. Work Session**

23 24 **a. Review of Budget**

25
26 There was discussion as to whether the tree and chimney repair and if the roof repair
27 should be put into the Library regular budget verses putting it out as a warrant article. The
28 definition for the Capital Improvement items has changed requiring a total of \$10,000.
29

30 **A motion was made by Ms. Castro to put the Tree costs, the chimney repair and the**
31 **roof repair into their operating budget instead of a warrant; seconded by Mr. Dailey.**
32 **Discussion to amend the motion by Mr. Davidson to recommend \$9,999 be put into**
33 **the budget instead of \$10,000 so that the threshold is still met. Seconded by Mr.**
34 **Donovan; Ms. Castro agreed; all in favor; motion passes.**
35

36 Ms. Castro noted that the Community Center request for \$1,500 wasn't included under
37 Culture and Recreation as it should have been. Ms. Tuomala will correct this oversight.
38

39 **b. Salary Discussions**

40
41 Chairman Hughes explained that we will have an initial salary discussion tonight to begin
42 the process but a decision will not be made tonight. There have been various amounts
43 submitted as requests and that originally we had set a goal of 2%. Most have come in well
44 over the 2% amount. The police were the only ones that came in with a plan in mind.
45

46 Discussion ensued debating the 2% and whether the department held their bottom line
47 down or not might be used as a criteria. There are exceptions across the board if you look
48 at each individually. Many of the Departments have increased their budget due to the CIP
49 definition change. Mr. Donovan stated that given what Chief Hautanen has now submitted
50 that it is even more compelling reason to review the raises. We need to be responsive to

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for January 9, 2014

1 all employees. Several years ago a raise wasn't given when the FICA went down 2% and
2 that being their raise but then the FICA increased last year so essentially it has resulted in
3 a negative raise. Mr. Donovan stated that Mr. Elliott has declined his own raise in the past
4 and distributed it among his workers. The Fire Department hasn't given out an increase in
5 several years.

6
7 It is difficult to compare one to another as they are all very unique and should be looked at
8 separately. This could be a fairer way to review it across the board. There could be side
9 effects from this type of review that each department is treated differently. A wage and
10 scale or step and raise type of a system would take care of most of these issues and would
11 help in the future. There should be a committee set up to review this for the future. Mr.
12 Zirpolo stated that our Paramedics make \$6 to \$7 per hour less than they do in Amherst or
13 Milford so we need to come up with a plan to bring them up to the scales. For this year we
14 might have to look at each department on a case by case basis.

15 16 c. Finalize Ambulance and Recycling Center Budgets

17
18 Budgets were presented for the Ambulance Service and the Recycling Center and it was
19 suggested to add revenue information to the recycling budget. There has been a change in
20 Ambulance policy by going from volunteer to an on-call. The wages have been moved
21 around as they are now being broken into the different levels; EMT, Intermediate and
22 Paramedic.

23
24 The Ambulance revenue has increased but the expenses are also above the 2013 budget.
25 This is due in part to there being 27 pay periods verses 26 pay periods in 2013 due to the
26 way the dates fell. The Recycling revenues are down this year. Mr. Elliott will review them
27 but the third market has been down significantly. There are also materials waiting to go out
28 when the price is right.

29 30 31 6. Other Business

32
33 Mr. Davidson apologized for being absent from the meeting but he has had demands at work
34 for the past two months. The proposal was delivered on Monday. He will be on vacation for
35 the next week but then he will be fully engaged after that.

36 37 38 7. Adjournment

39
40 The next meeting will be on January 16, 2014 at 7:00 PM at the Wilton Town Hall.

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42 ***A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Donovan and seconded by Mr.***
43 ***Dailey; all in favor. The Budget Committee was adjourned at 8:45 PM.***

44
45 Respectfully Submitted,

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47
48 Dawn Tuomala, Secretary