

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Location: Wilton Town Hall: Selectmen Office
7:00 P.M.

FINAL MEETING MINUTES January 22, 2015

Members Present: Cary Hughes Chair, Don Davidson Vice Chairman, Betsy Castro, Harry Dailey, Caitlin Maki, Joe Torre, Bill Condra, Selectmen Rep., and Dawn Tuomala, Secretary

Audience: Chief Gary Zirpolo, Ambulance, Chief Brent Hautanen, Police; Ms. Pam Atwood, Ron Brown, Chief Ray Dick, Fire, Tom Schultz

1. Chairman Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Chairman Hughes opened the meeting thanking everyone for coming out tonight. The meeting next week will be on Saturday at 9 AM when there will be a complete set of numbers and final decisions will be made. He cautioned the members that the revenue figures are not quite up to speed yet. Tonight we will be reviewing the entire operating budget and look for opportunities to save money. Continuing, he cautioned about lowering the gasoline lines as there are indications that the oil prices will be going back up before the end of the year. The budgets should be sufficient to make it through the year without running over.

2. Review and Approval of January 14, 2015 Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Dailey, to accept the minutes of January 14, 2015 as written; seconded by Mr. Torre; 5 in favor; 1 abstained (Ms. Castro); motion passes.

3. Review and Approval of January 15, 2015 Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Dailey to accept the minutes of January 15, 2015 as written; seconded by Mr. Torre; 5 in favor; 1 abstained (Ms. Castro); motion passes.

4. Public Questions/Comments

Mr. Schultz of WWW, stated that there was a correction on the Town's budget relative to the hydrant rentals. The Water Works has a total of 99 hydrants and the budget for each hydrant is \$200, this comes to a total of \$19,800. Upon further examination it was determined that there are only 93 hydrants in Wilton and the remainder are located in Milford. Milford pays for the 7 hydrants that are located in Milford. This year the Town of Wilton should have been charged \$18,600 instead of the \$20,460. There is a difference of

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\$1,860. There was a billing error applying the wrong rate and they are sorting out the error to get the right number. In addition the liability insurance line was recently inserted in the WWW budget which they were not aware of. This will be discussed at their meeting next week. There will be discussion about who should pay for this since the buildings and wells are on the property owned by the Town of Wilton.

5. Changes, Additions, Deletions to any Budget/CIP

Chief Hautanen described various changes to line items in an effort to try to reduce the police budget. Under the budget for the building the sewer line was increased up to \$300 since there will be a sewer rate increase this year. Mr. Schultz stated that the commissioners haven't take a vote on the final amount but there will be a significant increase to cover the deficit of this year.

Chief Hautanen continued stated that under the Police Operating budget the advertising line has been cut from \$300 to \$150. Line 3014 regular salary had an overage remaining due to overtime amounts, he has found related cuts of \$9,300 coming out of that line. He is able to cover almost all of the sick and overtime can usually be covered in this line. He didn't loose anyone last year and there weren't any major disasters. The testing line was lowered to \$1 since he is not anticipating hiring anyone new who would require physiological testing. This can be covered from somewhere else in the budget. As a result of lowering the regular pay the Retirement Contributions also was reduced.

Chief Zirpolo stated there were changes to the ambulance budget including wages, insurances, telephone etc. The wages were reviewed; the number of EMT hours worked last year were determined and after comparison with the estimated number of hours projected for this year it was determined that there was a 700 hour deficit. The correct hours were used, the 3% raise applied and the total EMT line is now \$43,896. The intermediate hours were reviewed and adjusted downward to \$5,796. There is still sufficient room for someone to advance from EMT to the intermediate level for next year. The missing lease payment was found and added to the actuals line. The result is a \$8,000 deficit for the year. The income line was raised to \$143,000 to help offset the increases.

The recycling budget was reduced by \$1,000 when the insurances were reconciled.

Chairman Hughes began the review of the CIP; he stated that adjustments have been made to several lines. After review with the Fire Department it has become apparent that there are 2 fire trucks that only have about 3 years of life left in them. Engine 3 and the ladder truck will need to be replaced within the next 3 to 4 years. In order to accomplish this without leasing a vehicle the Capital Reserve amount will have to be increased \$275,000 for the next 5 years and then they will be on a 5 year rotation schedule to replace one of their vehicles. The Highway Department vehicle capital reserve has been increased from \$50,000 to \$100,000 since they will need a backhoe and loader in the next few years.

The bridges capital reserve has been estimated at \$8,000 to replace King Brook Bridge. Next year there is an estimated \$50,000 that will need to be put aside for Stage Coach Road Bridge.

Ms. Castro stated she had just received an email from the Library stating that during the storm on Sunday night there was the worst flooding to date and the drainage issue is getting

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very urgent before the entire bottom floor is ruined. They had to have a cleaning service come in and service the basement using enzymes to clean and prevent mold etc.

There was discussion about the school bonds and what they are for. Ms. Castro stated that they have specific purposes and that the interest is sent to the school each year for that purpose.

6. Work Session on Budget

Chairman Hughes started going down through the summary sheet reviewing the total budget for each department. Ambulance has increased from last week due to the salaries. MACC base has increased almost 20%. Mr. Torre explained that they are replacing some equipment; since they aren't allowed to have Capital Reserve accounts they have to spread the money over all of the Towns this year and next year it should be closer to the \$112K as before. There will be a reduction in the hydrant line to \$18,600.

There was discussion about the lighting in the park and it was stated that Main Street pays for those lights. There were several organizations that have asked for a "contribution" that didn't make the list. Ms. Castro has prepared a sheet describing each of the charities/organizations in the budget and how many people from Wilton they actually help. Chief Hautanen was asked to contribute information to this sheet before it is distributed to the members.

Mr. Dailey questioned the Main Street and the fact that they lost \$1,700 on Summerfest last year which was their big fund raiser. They also didn't have the golf tournament but put down \$5,000 for income. Ms. Castro stated that the man running the golf tournament got sick last year and was unable to do it. There was also discussion about lighting and decorating the Main Street for the holidays. Ms. Castro stated that PSNH wouldn't allow any lights to be strung on the poles. Chief Dick confirmed this stating that he was the one that got the nasty call from PSNH to take them down or go to jail.

Instead of doubling the Main Street request this year Mr. Dailey would prefer that the extra money be put towards the betterment of the downtown area for everyone in Town. He feels that they need to be more transparent with what they are doing since they have taxpayer's money. To receive money for expenses are fine but just to take a general \$100 is not a good practice.

Chairman Hughes stated that he had received a letter from Mr. Dick Putnam in regards to Main Street; he will scan this and email it to everyone. Mr. Torre asked if the Main Street meetings are open to the Public as he was interested in attending one. He is having a hard time getting any information as the web site is 2 years out of date. Ms. Castro stated she can get him the schedule.

Motion was made by Mr. Dailey to reduce the amount to Main Street from \$10,000 to \$5,000; seconded by Mr. Davidson; 5 in favor; 1 opposed; 1 abstained (Ms. Castro).

Chairman Hughes stated with the changes tonight the Operating Budget now stands at \$4,770,639. Including the adjustments to the Capital Items and Reserve Funds the bottom line stands at \$5,471,145. The revenue figures will be reviewed by the Selectmen on Monday night along with the Warrant Articles.

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Ms. Castro stated that last year they took \$1,256,000 out of Capital Reserves and now they only a minimal amount in the reserves. Only \$27,000 was put into reserves this past year, they were added to the Police vehicle fund. The philosophy of putting money away is to keep the taxes level without huge spikes in the tax rate.

Mr. Davidson made an observation that there is a 2.8% increase over the budgeted amount but that it is actually 9% over the actual amount. There must be an accounting of the actuals and how they weigh into the equation. Everyone should be thinking how to decrease the amount by \$150,000 or to spread 3% across the board so as not to hit any one department too hard.

There was discussion about the warrant articles and the request from the Conservation for 50% of the funds coming from the current use tax to be placed into the Conservation Land Acquisition Fund. Mr. Condra stated that the Board of Selectmen took a vote on that and they were 2:1 in favor of putting it on as a warrant article for the public to weigh in on it. Mr. Contra's concern is that the money should be used by the Town since it is actually a penalty that results from a deferment of taxes when land was put into current use. There was discussion about whether 50% is the right number, and what the other Towns that have this in place use.

There was concern stated that the NRI hasn't been updated since 2009 and that there isn't currently a solid accounting of the amount of land that is in conservation presently. There was continued discussion about what is conservation and that there should be a definition of what constitutes conservation land and land use.

Prior to spending any money out of the Land Acquisition Fund the Conservation Commission are required to have a public hearing and to meet with the Selectmen. There was concern expressed that in the past when the public and the Selectmen had voiced concerns and their objections against the project that the Conservation Commission went ahead anyway and purchased the land with taxpayer money. There should be more checks and brought before the Town Meeting. There was discussion about rescinding or modifying the language regarding the expenditure of those monies.

7. Other Business - None

8. Adjournment

The next meeting will be on January 31, 2014 at 9:00 AM in the Wilton Town Hall to finalize the budget in preparation of the Public Hearing.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Dailey and seconded by mr. Torre; all in favor. The Budget Committee was adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Tuomala, Secretary