

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Location: Fire Station
7:00 P.M.

FINAL MEETING MINUTES January 28, 2016

Members Present: Cary Hughes, Chairman; Don Davidson, Vice Chairman; Betsy Castro; Harry Dailey; Joyce Fisk; Donna Pucciarello; Kermit Williams, Selectmen Rep.; and Dawn Tuomala, Secretary

Audience: Chief Gary Zirpolo, Ambulance, Chief Brent Hautanen, Police; Ms. Pam Atwood, Assistant Administrator, Joe Torre, Bart Hunter, Dan Donovan, Alexis Pittman, Alison Meltzer & Jim Cutler

- 1. Chairman Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.**
- 2. Review and Approval of January 21, 2016 Minutes**

Ms. Pucciarello will expand upon the Highway minutes.

Page 6 line 15 change "serves" to "serve"

Page 6 line 22 change "hasn't done anything" in to "did help the"

Page 6 line 30 change "tract" to "track"

Motion was made by Ms. Castro to accept the minutes of January 21, 2016 as amended; seconded by Ms. Fisk; 6 in favor; 1 abstention (Mr. Williams) motion passes.

- 3. Public Comments**

Dawn Tuomala, Thanked all of the Department Heads for reviewing their budgets one more time; finding line items to be reduced. Thank You to the WLC School Board for eliminating one of their warrants totaling \$150,000. They will use the money in their capital reserve account to pay for the repairs needed on the leaking roof over the Media Center and Gymnasium. The \$150,000 will be spread over the next 3 years or in the forth year since there will be a spike in the principle payments for the FRES Bond in the next three years. The operating budget for the school is proposed to increase 1.25% at this point in time.

Mr. Williams was able to obtain a firm State Revenue of \$177,000. In September Mr. Williams came to the budget committee stating that we would have a \$161,000 reductions from the State. The town will be paying more for the Retirement Fund for the Police and the teachers. They will also reduce the highway subsidy by \$16,000 and increase the county tax which is still an unknown.

We all wish Chief Dick a speedy recovery since he was taken to the hospital this evening. Thank you to the Fire Department for allowing us to use their meeting room.

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Mr. Dailey wanted to clarify that there were only 2 departments behind that needed an equity adjustment. Those were the Ambulance and the Library. Everyone else should now be based upon merit.

4. Review Culture & Recreation (continued)

a. Main Street

Alexis Pittman stated that they are very optimistic that they will find someone to cover the fireworks portion of the Summer Fest. The Summer Fest is their major event planned for the year. A new budget was passed out showing there was a profit made last year and this year they aren't planning to lose money. There was more discussion about the \$11,000 surplus they have and what they are going to do with it.

They would like to create a reserve account so that they will be able to hire someone to handle the day to day tasks that the board members now have to do. This will free up the board members to do more planning work. Ms. Meltzer also stated that they have been in the Falls Mill building and have not been charged rent to date but this is not anticipated to continue this way.

Mr. Hughes stated that in the past several years there has been a general decline of the businesses on Main Street. Due to this the residential people end up paying more in the taxes. We need to invest in the long term goals to have it pay off in the future.

Mr. Williams stated that the surplus exists for 2 reasons. First there was an increase in the gaming revenues since there was a change in the legislations. Secondly, there is a new group of people in charge and they have been very careful in their spending.

Mr. Pittman stated that right now they have a dedicated group of people supporting Main Street. They have all worked their butts off this past year to have the surplus as their goal is to have an employee to help with the day to day items. The contribution from the town was formed with a public/private partnership all along. Their core mission is to promote businesses and growth in the town. Ms. Metlzer stated that they are having large turnouts with each of their events and it is very heartwarming. They are trying to create the right niche just like a little boutique. The business people have been contributing in other ways than in donations since they are struggling. They have been the ones to put on the December 3rd event which was a huge success.

5. General Government

a. Town Officers Salaries – no changes

b. Elections & Registrations – no changes

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c. Town Office Administration

There was a duplication of expenses; there was \$15,000 in the Town Hall budget for the town revaluation but it was also in the capital items so it has been taken out of the budget. Ms. Atwood stated that another \$3,000 in audit as a portion was spread out in other departments.

d. Clerk's Office

There was discussion about being an employee verses being elected and the effects on wages. Being elected they are paid regardless if you are out sick. This affects the wages since the hours need to be covered by someone so additional monies need to be built in.

They will be offering on-line serves and there is still the same amount of work going into every payment as if they are at the counter, but it is a convenience to the tax payer. An additional \$200 can be eliminated from the equipment line to reduce the amount of the chip and pin equipment. There are one time purchases this year associated with the on line services.

e. Town Hall Building – no changes

f. Benefits Package & Insurances

There was discussion about long and short disability and when they pay and when the Town has to make up the difference. It was questioned about whether an elected official should have long and short term disability since it doesn't make any difference since they need to be paid.

g. Planning Board

The only big expense over the past few years has been the preparation of the Master Plan Chapters which is required to be updated by law. The clerk salary has been increased by 20% due to the fact she was underpaid from all of the others in Town. There is still one that is paid more than all of the others. There was discussion about whether this should be initiated over 2 years or not, but this is such a small part of the budget and this clerk is worth every dollar she makes. There is more overhead involved with this position and not just with the applications. The Planning Board is required to meet every month with or without an application.

h. Zoning Board

The Zoning Board Clerk is the same as the Planning Board Clerk but they have only been having a few cases in a year. Their revenues are equal to the expenses so there is no net cost to the tax payer. They are on an as needed basis only.

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6. Public Safety

a. Police Department & Building

Chief Hautanen went through the budget and described all of the reductions he has made to his budget. The most difficult lines to reduce are the labor lines since just one unfortunate incident or natural disaster will use the entire over time budget. The Chief stated that his is the only department that is required to be on duty and staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Mr. Davidson stated that only 94% of the budget was used last year and asked why was there such an increase in the building budget. Chief Hautanen stated that the money was for improvement and additional camera heads and DVR since the DVR doesn't link with the new computers anymore. They will also be putting audio in the booking room. The other item is replacing the carpet which is really bad. They will replace it with new tiles that can be replaced individually in the future if one is bad. Devine Flooring in town has given an estimate and they stated this carpet will last 15 years.

b. Ambulance

There were some minor changes in the actuals and the insurances. There was \$2,000 change in the liability insurance. The supervisors wages have been updated with the Selectmen's review as completed and their recommended increase. The lease has been increased slightly.

c. Fire Department

There were no changes in the proposed budget. There was discussion about sending out the heating fuel out for bid, include all of the Town Buildings and team up with the School to have a larger contract and then get a better rate overall. The generator uses the propane so when power goes out they will go through more of the propane. All of the tanks are owned by the Town or School.

d. Building Inspection

The building inspector had filing cabinets given to him so the new equipment line has been reduced by \$600. There was discussion about there being an additional \$2,225 in lp, furnace and oil storage permit revenues that should have been put into the building inspector line and were included into the Town Hall income instead. This would bring his income to \$11,351.80

e. Emergency Management & Communications – No changes.

7. Review CIP – CIP Sub-Committee Recommendations

The only changes were in the pellet furnace replacement the Selectmen changed the anticipated amount of grant monies from \$30,000 to \$25,000. Under the school portion the warrant article for \$150,000 was removed due to the School Board rescinding the warrant article.

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Mr. Torre explained that the Fire Department has been waiting 12 years to get their new vehicles and that pretty soon this will become mandatory to replace them. Right now they have been passing inspections by a very slim margin. The CIP needs to be adhered to otherwise why bother with it.

8. Other Business

Motion was made by Mr. Dailey and seconded by Mr. Davidson to have the Selectmen review under the guidance of DRA if the operating budget be put on the warrant articles first since it is the large money item. 6 in favor. 1 opposed; motion passes.

9. Adjournment

The next meeting will be on January 30, 2016 at 9:00 at the Town Hall.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Dailey and seconded by Ms. Fisk; all in favor. The Budget Committee was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Tuomala, Secretary