

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING FINAL MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2016

**Location: Wilton Town Hall: Court Room
7:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Cary Hughes, Chairman; Betsy Castro, Harry Dailey, Joyce Fisk, Donna Pucciarello, and Dawn Tuomala, Secretary, William Condra (Selectmen's Rep.)

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

Chairman Hughes welcomed everyone to the meeting tonight. Tonight there will be a presentation of the operating budget, then public comment, followed by the presentation of the warrant articles followed by public comment. This Thursday evening there will be a Public Hearing for the school budget in the WLC media center; that budget is almost three times the amount of this budget.

Mr. Dailey explained the salary, wage and grade scale that was created during the past year is designed to bring every employee onto a scale and are being paid comparable to other towns of similar size around the area. Every year from now on there will be a full evaluation of each employee at the end of the year and they will get a raise based on merit instead of a certain percentage each year. Every position now has a job description and a grade scale with a corresponding wage. The ambulance and the library positions were the only two that the town was really behind in wages. Those are being corrected this year and will be put on the scale. There were some other minor adjustments between grades.

2. January 30, 2016, Review and Approval – were not completed at this time.

3. Presentation of the Final Budget

Chairman Hughes started by presenting the 2016 operating budget in the various sections. The first section is General Government and he highlighted several different areas explaining why they have had increases. This year was the first year that the town clerks office was split out from the Town government budget. Many of the line items in this section we don't have any control over such as the insurances and police retirements. The increase in wages also results in increases in FICA, retirement and insurances.

The next section is Public Safety which consists of the Police Department, the Ambulance, and the Fire Department along with Emergency Management and Building Inspection. There is an increase in the Police building budget due some replacement work that needs to be done in the building. The original carpet is now showing its age and needs to be replaced. The carpet will be replaced with carpet tiles, this will allow for any one section that wears out sooner than the others can be pulled and replaced instead of redoing the

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entire room. They also have to change two of the cameras so they work with the new computers. In addition there will be a couple of new ones added and audio put into the booking room. Included in this section are communications, hydrant rental which have remained constant.

The next section is Highways and Streets which include Highway Maintenance, Resurfacing and street lighting which have all been decreased this year. There is a savings of 2.4% overall in this section.

The next section is Sanitation and Water which includes the Recycling Center along with the Sewer Department and the Wilton Water Works. The recycling center operating budget is down but the building has increased slightly to do some repairs to the Office. Sewer Department is up while Wilton Water Works is down. Overall this section has been reduced by 0.36%.

The next section is Health which includes a number of organizations; they request a token amount of money when they provide services to help Wilton residents. The next section is Welfare which has been increased slightly over last year. This is due to a request for new software to better track participants. This section also includes Aid to Disabled St. Joseph's which is also known as Meals on Wheels; a full accounting of their expenses was received. There was a slight increase due to an increase in participants. Overall this section has seen a 0.54% increase over last years budget.

The next section is Culture and Recreation which includes Parks and Playgrounds, the Library, Goss Park and the Conservation Commission. Goss Park has a much larger budget due to work that needs to be done on the pier. Lyndeborough shares a part and pays a portion of the overall costs. Heritage has asked for an increase to \$1,500 for more signs and for replacement of a few signs that have damage. The Community Center are also included in this section asking for \$1,500. The Library has an increase for several reasons; salary increases and retirement costs. The committee has reduced the original request of over \$27,000 increase by \$10,000. This contained more than the amount needed for the wage increases. Main Street had originally asked for \$10,000 but came back yesterday with a reduction to \$5,000 after all of the other departments were asked to reduce their budgets. The amount of \$1 has been put in that line item so that it can be brought up at Town Meeting and discussed there.

Chairman Hughes explained that when the budget season began back in September we got word that we would be beginning the year with a \$161,000 reduction both in the revenues from the State to the Town and an increase in costs such as retirement funding for teachers and police. These budgets contain necessary expenses as each department is cut as close to the bone as possible without disrupting service to the public.

Chairman Hughes stated that the Selectmen have conservatively estimated the revenues that are used to offset the operating expenses. The final Operational Budget with all of the above changes is \$4,883,463. This is up 2.44% from last year; there is a difference of \$91,607 between the 2 years. This year includes an increase in wages and an increase in insurances.

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Capital Outlay

The Capital Outlay section is where the Capital Expenditures are placed. This year requests include a Pellet furnace for the Town Hall for \$152,000 which includes a \$25,000 grant. The budget committee has recommended \$1 since it was felt that this needs to be reviewed further for safety features and the technicalities of the system worked out. This has also not been on the Capital Improvements plan before and the existing system is still functioning.

The Town is required to be revaluated at a cost of \$30,000. We have \$15,000 in a capital reserve account already. King Brook Road Bridge has finally come up on the State's list and is scheduled to be designed and constructed beginning this year. Wilton only has to pay 20% of the total costs which comes to \$103,090. The police SUV is up for replacement this year for \$47,043 of which \$17,000 is coming from the capital reserve account. All remaining costs will come from taxation

The recycling center capital reserve fund is being requested to be eliminated and the monies placed into a revolving fund. This fund will help to equalize the center so that the town portions will remain constant with the increase or decrease in the overall budget. Any year with a surplus will be added to the account and in years of deficit the money can be taken out to reduce the impact. This fund can also be used to fund capital items and be used for emergencies. This year we are experiencing a deficit resulting in a large increase in costs whereas last year there was a significant \$70,000 surplus. There will be no impact to taxation on this article.

The highway department has requested a new backhoe. The existing backhoe will be brought to the recycling center and the current recycling backhoe will be traded in for a modest amount. The highway department can still use this backhoe in times of emergency for the roads. There is an application for a Safe Routes to School study to be done for \$15,000. The town has just received notice that we have been approved for the \$15,000 grant. This will be used to design sidewalks and drainage etc. between the two schools, making the routes safer for the children. This study can then be used to be able to apply for various grants for construction. There will be no impact to taxation.

A committee was formed this year to study the possibility of adding a Town Administrator. Both the committee and the Selectmen have decided to put it on as a warrant to ask the people of the town since they were both split. This position could have just been added into the budget but it was felt this was the better way to handle it, to get the input from the people. The request is for only a half year of the administrator totaling no more than \$50,000. The budget committee reduced this amount down to \$1 so that it can be discussed on the floor.

Capital Reserves

These accounts are used to put money aside so as to not have a large payment in any one year. The Fire Department is requesting \$150,000 be put aside to be able to replace Engine 3 because it is the oldest working engine we have at 53 years young. The Highway Department will be requiring more equipment in the coming years and \$35,000 is being put into that vehicle capital reserve fund.

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Revenues

The Selectmen have been preparing the revenues and are basing their decisions conservatively upon last year's figures. It is already known that there will be a decrease in revenue from the State, an increase in expenditures passed down from the State and a reduction in the recycling center revenues due to the decrease in the cost of commodities. The bottom line estimated increase in taxes with all of the adjustments is 0.67% which is better than the 9% that the committee started with on Saturday morning.

4. Public Comments and Questions

Questions were asked about the old police station end of the building and there will be quotes obtained for the design of the building. They have a preliminary amount presently but will look for up to 2 more.

Laurie McLean from Main Street questioned why the Main Street budget was dropped to \$1 and when could that be discussed. The Main Street has a vested interest in helping the economic growth of the Town. They have been putting on events and promoting the Town, she was able to obtain 4 new clients with the last event that was put on in December. Mr. Condra stated that they will have the opportunity to bring this up at town meeting and can suggest a dollar amount to be reinstated back into the line.

Chris Carter discussed the economic committee that the Selectmen were starting. There have been 4 names put on the list that wished to participate on the committee. There was discussion about having handouts at the Town Meeting to try to get the task force up and running. Mr. Carter asked if there were an outside group coming in to help. Mr. Condra stated that they had one man from UNH come and present to a group of interested citizens. He explained where to begin and what to do but that we would be creating the task force ourselves. There is an independent study being done by UNH that is a separate issue.

Mr. Elliott reminded everyone that \$3,000 was added to the Parks and Recreation budget to replace the electrical panel at Carnival Hill at Main Streets request.

5. Presentation of the Warrant Articles

Article 6 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) for the purpose of funding a Town Revaluation pursuant to RSA 35:1 and to authorize the withdrawal of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) from the Town Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The balance of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2018 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: this is a requirement we must do.

Motion was made to recommend Article 6 to have the Town Revaluation done for \$30,000 with \$15,000 coming from the capital reserve fund and the remainder by

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taxation by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 7 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to hire a Town Administrator. Monies are to come from taxation or to take any other action relating thereto. *(Not final wording per Selectmen)*

Discussion: Mr. Condra explained that this was a split vote by the Selectmen. He doesn't like to wording of this article as it should indicate that this is the cost for only a half a year and doesn't reflect the entire year's costs. Mr. Williams is in the process of re-writing this Article.

Motion was made to table Article 7 until the February 16th continued public hearing meeting by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; all in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 8.- To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred fifty two thousand dollars (\$152,000) for upgrading and replacement of the heating and ventilation systems in the Wilton Town Hall. Contingent upon receiving a grant for twenty five thousand dollars (\$25,000) and the balance of one hundred twenty seven thousand dollars (\$127,000) is to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2018 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: Alison Meltzer of the Energy Committee explained that this pellet boiler will also supply the hot water for the town hall. The Town of Peterborough has replaced their system with this type of a pellet system four years ago and are very happy with it and don't have any issues.

Mr. Daily stated that they looked into the system for FRES when the school was renovated last year. They decided that propane was the best system due to a better return on investment study. Tom Schultz stated that he doesn't support this as this is a historical building.

Jim Cutler representing the Fire Department stated that they have not been notified or asked their concerns regarding this type of system. He has concerns when the power goes out, the fire will keep going and if there isn't anyone here to address the system immediately it could cause a fire or fill the building with smoke due to the ventilation system being run by electricity. At a very minimum they will require that the building be sprinkled. Mr. Carter stated that he felt that the State Fire Marshall should also be contacted to sign off on this.

Dan Donovan stated that the electrical system in the building is also in poor condition and that should be reviewed along with the renovations at the old police station end of the building. He doesn't feel that there is any payback at this point since the oil prices are so low. The bulk delivery will need to have a lot of storage room. The warrant also doesn't mention that this is for a pellet furnace.

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Motion was made to table Article 8 for the upgrading and replacement of the heating and ventilation system in the Town Hall by Mr. Dailey seconded by Ms. Castro; 6 in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 9 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty seven thousand dollars (\$27,000) for the design plans, bid documents and construction inspections for renovation of the old police station area of the Wilton Town Hall. Monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2018 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: After a question regarding the inspection part of the warrant Alison Meltzer stated that this was for the design plans, bid documents and overseeing the construction inspections through to completion of the project.

Motion was made to recommend Article 9 for the design plans, bit documents and construction inspections for the renovation of the old police station area of the Town Hall by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; all in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 10 – To see if the Town will vote to authorize fifty percent (50%) of the Land Use Change tax up to a maximum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) per year to be placed in the Conservation Land Acquisition Fund per RSA 36-A:5, III.

Discussion: Mr. Dailey stated that in the past this was not recommended until a current report regarding the amount of land in conservation and current use was created. Bart Hunter stated that this has been completed and that NRPC will be presenting it to the Planning Board tomorrow night. The Planning Board had found an error in the data creating the plan so the map has had to be redone.

Mr. Condra stated that the land that is in current use doesn't pay the full value on the land. When it comes out of current use they have to pay a tax and he feels that this money should be put into the towns revenues since this is money that the town would have been due if they paid the full amount. Mr. Condra would like to see the Conservation Commission ask for the money to put into the account through the budget process and in a warrant article.

Mr. Hunter stated that they have asked for money in the past but they don't have much money in the account right now and if a piece of land were to come up they might not be able to wait and would loose the chance to conserve the land. The article is written to follow the State RSA's which allows the Conservation Commission to get their money through the land use change tax.

Motion was made to table Article 10 to authorize fifty percent of the land use change tax up to \$20,000 to be placed in the Conservation Land Acquisition Fund to the February 16th Continued Public Budget Meeting; pending the report by Mr. Dailey seconded by Ms. Castro; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

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Article 11 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$107,500) for the purchase of a backhoe for the Highway Department. Monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2018 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: This article should not be non-lapsing.

Motion was made to amend Article 11 striking the last sentence regarding the non-lapsing by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Motion was made to recommend the amended Article 11 for the purchase of a backhoe for \$107,500 and by striking the last sentence regarding the non-lapsing by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 12 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) for the Safe Routes to School Study. Monies are contingent upon the receipt of a grant for fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: Mr. Carter questioned the timing; it will be done this spring. The grant has been approved. This grant money will be ending soon and we are at the end of their process.

Motion was made to recommend Article 12 for the Safe Routes to School Study by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 13 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred three thousand and ninety dollars (\$103,090) for the design and construction of King Brook Road Bridge and to authorize the withdrawal of seventy thousand dollars (\$70,000) from the Bridge Repair Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The balance of thirty three thousand ninety dollars (\$33,090) is to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2020 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: Mr. Elliott stated that there are only two red listed bridges remaining on the State's list. Stage Coach Bridge will be the last one in the year 2020.

Motion was made to recommend Article 13 for the design and construction of King Brook Road Bridge for \$103,090 by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

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Article 14 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty seven thousand forty three dollars (\$47,043) for the purchase of a new police SUV. Costs to include purchase, equipping and lettering of the car and to authorize the withdrawal of seventeen thousand dollars (\$17,000) from the Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The balance of thirty thousand forty three dollars (\$30,043) is to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: Tracey Ewing questioned how many miles were on the cruiser now. Chief Hautenan stated that there was about 94,000 miles on it. Ms. Ewing stated that she had many more miles on hers so why should we replace this with so few miles. Chief Hautenan stated that this is has a lot more wear and tear on it than your normal family vehicle. There are many more ideal hours that are not recorded on odometer. The SUV is run 16 to 24 hours per day and it has been out all the time in the past 5 years so you are looking at equivalent of another 100,000 miles.

The cruiser has to be able to start and get to whatever call they are responding to very quickly. There have been paint issues with it in the past and it needs to be repainted again. The interior is falling apart. The plan is to change from the 2011 ford to a Chevy Tahoe.

Motion was made to recommend Article 14 for the purchase of a new Police SUV for \$47,041 by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 15 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to be added to the Fire Department Vehicle Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: Engine 3 has been on the CIP list for over 8 years. It should have been replaced 12 years ago.

Motion was made to recommend Article 15 to appropriate \$150,000 to be added to the Fire Department Vehicle Equipment Fund previously established by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 16 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty five thousand dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: The picture on the screen is the truck that was originally scheduled to be replaced next year but that might be switched with the loader depending upon what happens this year. Mr. Elliott stated that if he can keep them running both running for another year he will put off the request for next year. The 1990 was purchased used in 2006. The heavy equipment lasts longer than the trucks. The trucks are only lasting about 6 years before they start falling apart.

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Motion was made to recommend Article 16 to place \$35,000 into the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 17 - To see if the Town will vote to establish a Revolving Fund for the Recycling Center under RSA 31:95-h and to discontinue the Recycling Center Capital Reserve Fund established in the year 1982. Funds may be used for facilitating, designing, maintaining and/or encouraging recycling as defined in RSA 149-M:4. Funds may be deposited into the account from all or any part of the revenues from fees, charges, grants, donations or other income derived from the activities or services supported by the fund. The town treasurer shall have custody of all moneys in the fund and shall pay out the same only upon order of the governing body. Fund balance in the Recycling Center Capital Reserve Fund as of 12/31/2015 was forty thousand forty seven dollars and sixty three cents (\$40,047.63). Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the Recycling Center Revolving Fund or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: This will help to level the operating costs every year.

Motion was made to recommend Article 17 establish a Revolving Fund for the Recycling Center and discontinue the Recycling Center Capita Reserve Account by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 18 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four million, eight hundred eighty three thousand four hundred sixty three dollars (\$4,883,463) for the general municipal operation for the year 2016 or to take any other action relating thereto. Said sum does not include any of the special or individual articles addressed.

Discussion: none.

Motion was made to recommend Article 18 for \$4,883,463 for the general municipal operation for the year 2016, not including any special or individual articles addressed by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

6. Public Comments/Questions - None

Chairman Hughes thanked everyone for coming out tonight.

7. Other Business

Motion was made to continue the Public Hearing to February 16, 2016 at 7 PM in the Town Hall was made by Mr. Dailey and seconded by Ms. Pucciarello. All in favor motion passes.

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Motion was made to have monthly statements sent to the budget committee for review was made by Ms. Tuomala; seconded by Ms. Fisk; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

8. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Dailey and seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; all in favor. The Budget Committee was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Tuomala, Secretary