

Budget Committee
November 18, 2015
7:00PM
Town Office/Police Station Conference Room
Approved: December 16, 2015

Budget Committee Members: Judy Brotman, Susan J. MacKenzie, Robin Taylor, Richard Jones, Charles Ragan, Wilkes McClave, Phil Barta, Brian Cook and Elizabeth Glenshaw. Select board members: Patricia G. Jenks and Charles J. Smith. Library: Director, Judy Russell; Trustee, Patty Hudson. Community members: David & Barbara Roby.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Chair Brotman.

1. Public Comment: David Roby thanked the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee members for their hard work at formulating a Town budget. In addition, he believes that fair pay for the Town's employees is a critical issue.
2. Ms. Glenshaw moved to approve the draft minutes of September 16th, 2015 meeting, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Jones. Three corrections were made to the draft minutes: correcting a typo, adding a statement acknowledging the River Road challenge and correcting the dollar amount needed to create a zero increase budget. Voted in favor with 2 abstentions (Barta and Cook).
3. Judy Russell discussed the Library's budget request. The heat line has been reduced to reflect current usage. The Books line has been increased due to the cost of books and the reduction in the Blisters for Books program. The Custodial line reflects the need for a second custodian to do the major cleaning that occurs weekly over the weekend. Library salaries are showing a higher-than-normal increase due to the fact that the present salaries are considered low by comparison on the state-wide scale.
4. The Board of Selectmen pared down the earlier draft budget by \$5,000. One savings came from cutting the dog program this year. This year's budget is very close to being fully utilized, and the Board of Selectmen didn't feel that they could significantly cut further into the projection for next year. The only area that might be expendable is the Parks & Rec/beach budget. It was noted that the Pond Program is funded by user fees. The lifeguard program might be discontinued, but that could put the Town in a precarious position if the beach were to be left open. Revenue projections were reviewed. Various ways to increase revenue were discussed, including increasing the cost of trash bags/cards; making recycling voluntary (vs. mandatory); assessing a higher town fee for car registrations; charging for the 'resident' sticker.
5. The "homework" assignment was introduced, with Mr. Jones leading the way by indicating the wage increases being proposed by both the Board of Selectmen and the Library Trustees exceeded the typical cost-of-living increases. He suggested a straight forward cut of \$10,000 from the bottom line of the budget, allowing the Board and Trustees discretion to find the cuts. Other suggestions included adding technologies to replace some personnel functions; consider eliminating the life guards at the beach and posting 'at risk' signs; continue to level fund the community services lines. In addition, committee members supported the work the Board of Selectmen had done in presenting a lean budget, while supporting the Town's valuable employees. There was broad support for adequately compensating our employees. With respect to the new staff support employee, the question was raised about benefits for the 30-hour position. The Board of Selectmen agreed to get back to the Committee on the need to provide health insurance for this position if programmed at 30 hours/week. No votes were taken on any of the items discussed above.

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6. There was a consensus of the committee to level-fund the Town contributions to the service agencies. This will mean a slight reduction in several of the requests to the town.
7. Public comment: Mrs. Roby asked about the Cemetery funds and how they are used for perpetual care. Mr. Roby stated that he felt this was a fine budget. Mr. Smith noted that this revised Board of Selectmen budget was essentially a 3% increase over the current budget.
8. Ms. Glenshaw moved to take an advisory vote in support of the revised budget of \$2,159,601.15. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion.

Voted in Favor: 7 (Glenshaw, Cook, Barta, McClave, Taylor, Ragan, McKenzie) ;
Against: 1 (Jones). Motion carried.

9. There being no further business before the committee, Mr. Ragan moved to adjourn, Mr. Cook seconded the motion. Voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Lee Shelnut Brotman
Budget Committee Chair

Next Meeting: December 16, 2015.