

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

February 8, 1999

Chairman Strong called a combined Budget Hearing and Selectmen's meeting to order at 7PM

PRESENT:

Harold Strong - Chairman
Lois Briere - Selectman
Susan Clay- Selectman
Burton Reynolds- Town Administrator

BUDGET HEARING

Board members took turns as each department operating budget was outlined in brief. Department Heads were present to answer any questions, but there were very few. One technical question arose as to whether Conservation could take in money and then share it with Forestry and FLESA. Burton was to research.

OLD BUSINESS

1) Chairman Strong said he was not yet ready to discuss the Cemetery Trustee letter.
2) Burton relayed the opinion of the Department Heads that spending authority or discussion thresholds should be: \$2,500 - \$10,000 the Selectmen should be notified of planned purchases of goods or services \$10,000 + a formal discussion was required before funds were spent. The Board felt these were high. Burton explained that many purchases, while sizable, are most often repeat purchases and the Department Head has many times before gone through the drill of seeing who is most competitive. There have been few problems. The guidelines are being suggested, not to correct a pattern of clearly poor decisions by Department Heads, but rather as a means to keep the Selectmen informed as to what is going on and to see to it that on major purchases, everyone is in agreement. The Board still felt that even purchases as low as \$500-\$1,000 should come to the Town Administrator's attention at the least, if they are for something new or unusual. No final decision was made.

NEW BUSINESS

1) The Board agreed to allow the Finance Committee's recommendation to appear after each money warrant article just as their's does. They felt the current committee worked very diligently and this would make it easier for the public, rather than having to ask at Town Meeting or thumb through their Town Reports, to find the Finance report.
2) All warrant articles were reviewed for wording and a decision to support or not placed only after the money warrant articles.

- 3) The money warrant articles were without comment by the public except for the request by petition for a capital reserve for land purchases. Bob Fesinger spoke in favor of the fund noting a similar program during the 80's had been very successful. This one would have possible matching funds by the State just like the previous program. He noted townspeople who attended the fall "town meeting" sessions concerning the future of the town had indicated strong support for such efforts. The Board voted not to recommend. While in agreement it was a good idea, they still wanted to research the idea of one fund for all land or building purchases. There was also the issue of being able to spend the funds in a timely manner rather than having to wait for Town Meeting.
- 4) When reviewing the article for the ambulance, it was mentioned the public might want to pay for it over two years. If so, we could do a lease purchase or go through the local bank.
- 5) There was some question as to whether explanations could follow the petition wording for petitioned articles. Burton said he knew the answer was "no" on the warrant but would check to see if informational wording could be placed in the Town Report as had been done at least once in the recent past. Also, did the Planning Board need to say after their warrant changes whether or not they recommended them?
- 6) The Board approved sending a letter to the Conservation Commission supporting their request for a grant to do some trail and bridge work in the Middle Branch river area over beyond the fairgrounds.
- 7) Besides some general downtown issues that will be addressed by the Planning Board in another Master Plan section update, the only "facilities" need the Board could think of (in response to the Planning Board request for info to update this chapter of the Master Plan) was town hall office space. Burton will send a letter to Claire after talking with Tim Cady about what options a new library addition might offer for storage and meeting space.
- 8) Consideration was given to revising the current elderly exemption but because it was just changed and even with the reveal there no more than a \$1,000 in assessment worth of change (that would be a savings of \$30 in taxes), it was felt it should stay as is until there is more like a \$3,000 in assessment increase.

A motion to adjourn was made at 10:45PM by Susan Clay, 2nd Lois Briere, all in favor.



Burton Reynolds
Town Administrator