

MINUTES OF HAVERHILL TOWN BUDGET HEARING
Wednesday, February 12, 2014
Draft Subject to Review, Correction and Approval at Following Meeting

Board Members Present: Wayne Fortier, Tom Friel, Lynn Wheeler and Robert Roudebush

Members Excused: Rick Ladd

Town Manager: Glenn English

Administrative Assistant/Finance Officer: Jo Lacaillade

Clerk: Karen Hyde

Advisory Budget Committee Members: Dick McDanolds, Laraine King, Chris Luurtsema, and Howard Hatch

Members of the Public Present: Ashley Luurtsema, Regis Roy, Police Chief Byron Charles, Road Agent Stuart McDanolds, Richard Guy, Susan Brown, John Rutherford, and Recreation Director Sherri Sargent

Call Hearing to Order: Chairman Fortier called the Public Hearing on the proposed 2014 budget to order at 7:00 PM.

Review of proposed 2014 Town Budget:

Chairman Fortier first reviewed each revenue account. The revenue from taxes is increased to \$2,571,964. Revenue from Licenses, Permits & Fees is \$748,000, with revenue from Motor Vehicle Taxes being the highest at \$710,000. The Total Revenue from Other Governments is \$400,341. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Grant of \$25,000 will help offset the cost of the \$150,000 Page Road Culvert Project. The total revenue from Other Revenue is \$401,490. NH Charitable Foundation and Trout Unlimited are donating \$60,000 and \$10,000, respectively, to the Page Road Culvert Project. The Town will have to come up with the remainder of \$55,000 to complete the project. The total Budget Revenues are \$4,121,795.

Chairman Fortier reviewed each department budget request. He started with the Board of Selectmen, which is considerably lower this year due to the fact that Professional Services and Computer Upgrade have been moved to their own category under Information Technology. All Computer Upgrades and Equipment have been moved to Information Technology. He then went to the Town Administration, which was a 2% increase in salary for the Town Manager. Regis Roy asked about the increase in Health Insurance as it was up considerably. TM English explained that they have an HMO plan similar to what the school has. The rates are due to increase 9% in July. Town Meeting was up slightly and Trustees & Trust Funds stayed flat. The Town Clerk figures were stable. Voter Registration/Elections is for the people manning the polls and running the checklist. Accounting & Auditing figures were for AA Lacaillade and Clerk Karen Hyde as well as the audit. Tax Collection figures were for Sandra Roy, who is also the Deputy Town Clerk. The budget for the Treasurer stays flat. Information Technology is up due to software upgrades and development of an offsite backup location. Revaluation of Property and Legal Expense are up due to the assessor's work load and the lawsuits with the utilities. The Planning Board budget stays about the same as does the Zoning Board. Robert E. Clifford Memorial Building is primarily utilized by Sherri Sargent, Recreation Director. The \$29,000 under Repairs & Maintenance is to make the bathrooms ADA compliant. The building is utilized and he thinks that the use will increase

as time goes on. Haverhill/Bath Covered Bridge budget is up slightly. TM English stated that there was some damage done in 2013 and \$2,000 was for repairs. Insurance not Otherwise Allocated is for 2 policies and there is a deductible on each one. Regional Associations is up slightly. The JRM Building Repairs & Maintenance budget is increased due to the cost of repairing the JRM parking lot, where the funds will come from the Buildings Capital Reserve Fund. Sewer/Business Park is a standard item in the budget. The total General Government budget is \$823,288.

The Police Department now has 7 full-time officers. The budget for the Police Department is \$944,084. The Police Special Duty category is going to appear as a Warrant Article to Establish a Special Revenue Account. The Police Dept. Vehicle Lease budget is up so that the Police Department can lease a new cruiser this year; this budget is actually for 3 leases. Susan Brown asked where the vehicles were coming from now that Grafton Motors was gone. TM English stated that the vehicles are bought through a State bid. Service on the cruisers is now done by R&M Automotive in North Haverhill. Chairman Fortier explained the Fire Department budget has a new category, which is for Prof Services-Inspections. He explained that the Fire Departments are going back to inspecting for Life Safety and Fire Codes. Richard Guy stated that of the \$148,048 budget for the Woodsville Fire Department, \$5,000 was for inspections. TM English stated that that was so in order to catch up on the backlog of inspections. The Emergency Management budget is for Steve Robbins, the Emergency Management Officer. The Cemeteries budget is staying flat. The Airport is a self-sufficient entity. The total Public Safety budget is \$1,426,492.

The proposed Highway budget is up slightly due to the possible hiring of a part-time worker for the summer. Chairman Fortier stated that for several months, the Board had discussed floating a \$1 million bond to improve the roads, but at two meetings ago had decided to back off that projection or request. The rationale for that was the Board had a plan, but they didn't have a Comprehensive Strategic Plan on how they were going to attack these roads. It is a very high priority after Town Meeting to come up with a Capital Improvement Program. The Highway Dept. Veh/Hwy Reimb budget has always been in the budget; Woodsville taxpayers are reimbursed for some highway money. The total Highways & Streets budget is \$1,105,983.

The budget for Animal Control is for Linda Smith and her salary. Ambulance is staying flat. Health Officer is also Steve Robbins. There is a minimal budget for him, with a little added for training in Groundwater Protection. General Assistance is for the Administrator, Leslie Ramsay. The second part is for people who come in for assistance. Chairman Fortier stated that Leslie does an excellent job of screening people. Chairman Fortier next went to Parks and Recreation. He stated that a year ago, Sherri had been asked for numbers and they seemed to be low in the HARP program. Those numbers have increased significantly. The Recreation Plan was identified in the Master Plan as being a big deal for the Town. TM English stated that significant work had been done at the Pool, which resulted in increased usage. Libraries and Patriotic Purposes will remain the same. Haverhill Heritage Commission will remain flat. The Conservation Commission is remaining the same. Economic Development was down due to the Business Survey having been done. Debt Service has changed only slightly. The total budget, without the Warrant Articles, was \$3,805,343.

Chairman Fortier then went on to discuss the Warrant Articles. The addition of the Page Road Culvert Project was discussed earlier. There were some slight increases to the various entities. The last item was Reserves. Chairman Fortier stated that the total of the budget was now \$4,121,795. He stated that the Advisory Budget Committee met throughout the month of January; they looked at this budget and have approved the budget as it is presented. Susan Brown stated that people were happy with what the Town has done. Chairman Fortier stated that the budget was up approximately \$295,000, which is about 7.7%. The Board will deliberate more and decide if they want to do anything more with the proposal.

Chairman Fortier closed the public hearing at 8:10 PM. There was a brief recess of 5 minutes.

Chairman Fortier called the meeting back to order at 8:15 PM.

Lynn Wheeler had one item that she wanted to bring to the Board. She thought the Board should increase the Legal Expense category. She stated that there was going to be some issues raised on the apartment buildings in Woodsville that are being gone into and inspected. She said that there are going to be lawsuits and she knew of one that is being brought forward. AA Lacaillade stated that \$7,000 was carried over from last year to the Legal budget in their carryover transfers, so that makes the actual budget \$22,000 for 2014. Lynn stated that the lawyer who had talked with her indicated that there may be more than one building that he is challenging. Lynn stated that we would probably be sharing with Woodsville, depending how everything tied in. Tom Friel stated that he thought a lawsuit was around \$25,000 and could go for 2 or 3 years. Chairman Fortier asked if the Town was involved because of the ordinance. TM English stated that that would have to be proven in court. Robert Roudebush asked if the Legal Expense budget needed to be doubled to \$30,000. TM English stated that \$20,000 or a portion of the FD Prof Services-Inspections could be transferred to Legal Expense. It was the Board's decision to move \$10,000 from the FD Prof Services-Inspections to Legal Expense, which would not change the budget's bottom line.

Chairman Fortier stated that the budget was up \$295,000 and Tom Friel stated that it was actually \$303,000. Tom also stated that the Board needs to look at ways of increasing revenue, such as user-pay. The Board discussed the Page Road Culvert Project and the \$55,000 wasn't coming out of the operating budget; it was a separate Warrant Article. AA Lacaillade commented that at Town Meeting, it should be stressed that this was a State red-listed bridge and the Town did not actively go out seeking this. Chairman Fortier stated that if they do not repair this now, it could come up again at a later date as an emergency repair and the funds wouldn't be available. TM English stated that a new bridge would have no weight limit on it. Tom Friel made the motion to approve the budget; seconded by Robert Roudebush and carried unanimously.

Tom Friel made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Robert Roudebush and all approved. Chairman Fortier adjourned at 8:47 pm.

Minutes transcribed by Karen Hyde