

Advisory Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2014

The following members were present: Dick McDanolds, Dick Fabrizio, Jon Hobbs, Andrew Maffei, Christopher Luurtsema, Peter Conrad, Laraine King and Howard Hatch. Also present: Selectboard members Wayne Fortier, Tom Friel, Rick Ladd, Robert Roudebush and Lynn Wheeler; Town Manager Glenn English; Admin. Asst./Finance Officer Jo Lacaillade; Recreation Director Sherri Sargent; and Clerk Karen Hyde.

Members Excused: Barb Dutile

Dick McDanolds called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Peter Conrad made the motion to approve the minutes of the 1/6/2014 meeting; seconded by Jon Hobbs and all approved.

TM English then made two corrections to the 2014 Town Manager's Budget Highlights. The first correction was to the Recreation Director's hourly rate of pay; it changed from \$12.64 to \$13.92 to the correct \$15.81 to \$17.39 per hour. The second correction was to the median of the police budget. It was changed to say that the hourly rate of pay would bring the pay a little above the median salaries of similar departments.

TM English then introduced Sherri Sargent, Recreation Director. Sherri then handed out some statistics for the various programs that she oversees. TM English stated that the Recreation budget was down in real dollars from the previous year. Dick Fabrizio asked TM English if the Rec Director position was full time and TM English responded that it was. TM English also responded that it was a 40-hour week, but Sherri exceeded that on a weekly basis. Laraine King asked if it was a salaried or hourly position and the response was salaried. Wayne Fortier asked if the hours worked over 40 hours was every week and TM English stated that it depended on the time of year. Chairman Fortier stated that the Board would like to know what those hours were for the year. Sherri then stated that if she knew she was going to be working after hours or on the weekends, she would take time off during the week to make up for those hours. Tom Friel asked if Sherri's 2013 salary of \$32,716 was based on a 40/hour per week, 52/weeks a year or 40/hour per week, 50/weeks a year with 2 weeks' vacation and TM English stated that vacation was part of the salary. Sherri stated that she went through the programs that she had in 2013 and tried to note what kind of involvement she had in those programs, whether it was simply overseeing, making sure facilitators were following procedure, had the appropriate registration forms. She also listed the programs that she worked after hours, weekends, etc. She then explained the statistics of the HARP Program. There were 79 children attending the program at some point during the summer. July 19, 2013 had the highest number of children at

44. The numbers for HARP were up from the previous year. She had charted what towns the children had come from; there were some Bath, Benton, and Canaan. These families are paying a non-resident rate. Dick Fabrizio asked about Sherri doing the scheduling for the RECM Building. TM English stated that Sherri was now doing the scheduling for the Clifford Building use and the JRM Gym use, along with the total supervision of Railroad Park in Woodsville. TM English also stated that Sherri is very anxious to start adding new programs and he has counseled her that she can only do so much as an individual. Some of the new programs, like Zumba and the Senior Yoga, are contracted services with outside agencies. These are handled by other people and the Town gets a percentage of what they charge. They are run through the umbrella of the Recreation Department, but Sherri doesn't spend time running those programs. Sherri then discussed the Pool participation. Season pool passes for 2013 were 121; 757 people came in and paid the daily general admission rate. One thousand three hundred and eighty-six (1,386) total number of daily pool passes were used. Peter Conrad asked if she was getting much better pool attendance than she used to and Sherri responded that she was. Sherri explained that this past summer the pool was prepped, cleaned, drained and painted by herself and volunteers such as her husband and TM English. She stated that the pool looks great; the bath house was a work-in-progress. The reports on water quality from the State were impeccable. There was no Emergency Action Plan in place for the Pool; she has since drafted an Emergency Action Plan. She has also drafted an Emergency Action Plan for the RECM Building. In 2012, the Pool admissions were 1359 and in 2013, there were 4,235 admissions. TM English stated that the Pool had a bad reputation in terms of its condition for a number of years and they have made a sizeable investment to get it where it is, but it has paid off.

Chris Luurtsema asked about Pool Maintenance, which is down to \$8,512 from \$20,765 in 2013. TM English explained that the paint for the pool was very expensive. He also explained that a handicap lift machine was installed at the pool to be in compliance with State and Federal regulations. A robotic vacuum for the pool was also purchased in 2013. These were one-time expenditures. Laraine King stated that she had done Water Aerobics at the pool for the last few years and the difference in the quality of the pool was amazing this year. It was a pleasure for her. Jon Hobbs asked Sherri if the price for Pool passes would be the same in 2014 as in 2013. Sherri responded that they would as there was an increase in 2013 and the non-resident rate was also added in 2013. Jon then asked about the increase in salaries for the lifeguards and counselors. Sherri explained that it was not for additional staff, but to remain competitive with Mountain Lakes and Hall's Pond staff.

Sherri stated that she had a super Rec Commission and she tended to tap into them to volunteer at one time or another. She is not only an administrative person; she is out there managing, painting and cleaning. She is a working Rec Director who tries to keep communication open with the public. TM English stated that the Rec Commission is always

looking for people to come to meetings but also to do some work, which is not really hard work, just time.

Sherri then described to the Committee the different fundraisers that were done in 2013 to bring in revenue. Chris Luurtsema asked how much it costs for the eight-week HARP Program. Sherri responded that it was \$98/week for residents and \$108/week for non-residents. AA Lacaillade stated that with the scholarship money, they were able to service all children who needed a scholarship. Laraine King asked what the hours of camp were and Sherri stated that the hours were 9-3, with early drop-off and late pick-up hours. The children are busy from the time they get there until they go home. Everything is very structured now. Sherri is very proud of the Program.

Howard Hatch asked if all these programs were being asked for. He stated that the burden is on the taxpayer, whether it's the County or the Town. Sherri stated that she was hired to do the job that the previous Rec Director did, which did not include a lot of the programs that she does. She wanted to have a Rec Program that had multi-generational programs for everyone. Peter Conrad explained that Sherri has expanded the Rec Program and in so doing, has made more work for herself. TM English stated that whenever they have asked for public input, the #1 request was for a recreational program. AA Lacaillade stated that the Rec Commission has instituted fees in many of their programs that did not have fees before in order to generate revenue. TM English stated he was in favor of user fees and they were headed in that direction with these programs.

Laraine King asked if there was lighting at the Pool so that there could be swimming at night. Sherri stated that there was lighting at the Kiddie Pool, however, it does not shine to the bottom of the pool and that was a concern. Without having the pool lit at the bottom, she did not feel comfortable with having a night swim.

Wayne Fortier stated that he was not questioning what the program was about, he was looking at function. He stated that he didn't think Sherri's functions had changed from what she was presently doing. He thought that Railroad Park was already in Sherri's duties. When he heard that the School was going up by \$1 on their rate and the Town was about 83 or 84 cents without the Warrant Articles or the bond, it just comes to the point in time where the Town has to come to grips with how much they can sustain. In addition to that, there is a 10% increase in the Director's salary and that is an exception according to TM English's highlights. It was his feeling that if the function is already being performed by that individual, not much has changed as far as responsibilities are concerned. Howard Hatch asked Mr. Fortier if he was asking the Committee to bury this. Mr. Fortier stated that it was hard to argue because the proposed budget is down, but only by \$611. He was not trying to discredit Sherri because he knows what she does, but with the financial difficulties they see coming, it comes down to one word – sustainability.

Rick Ladd stated that if they could lease or rent some of the RECM Building, they could bring in revenue to offset some of the costs. Mr. Fortier stated that the Board hasn't aggressively gone out and rented or leased out parts of the Building. That may be something that the Board will have to look into to bring in more revenue. Peter Conrad stated that as far as the Director's salary, he doesn't think that Sherri is overpaid compared to what other people in Town are earning. Laraine King asked if there were other places in the Rec budget that could be tightened up. She stated that the percentage of the raise sounded worse than what the dollar figure really was. Tom Friel asked how the person on the street was going to perceive the 10% pay increase when they are only getting 1% or 2% increase in pay. He stated that they needed to look at the whole budget, not just a small area of it. AA Lacaillade stated that the difference between the request the Town Manager put in for Sherri and the 2% cost-of-living increase was \$1,553. Chris Luurtsema stated that if the summer program keeps just a few children from hanging around the house, he would like to keep the Rec Program going. He personally thinks this program is well worth it. Laraine King stated that since they haven't discussed anything else in the budget such as the increase in the Selectmen's budget and the Data Processing budget, she would like more details on why. TM English stated that the Town government was under a microscope and thinks that this budget is very easy to understand. Unfortunately, the largest tax burden is the school budget. Not only is it not understandable to the average person, but the average taxpayer doesn't go to the meeting. It's a given that it will pass.

Jon Hobbs stated that the cost of not having the Rec programs open to all facets of the public far outweighs the actual cost of keeping the program running as it is. Mr. Fortier stated that he was not suggesting they drop this program. He was just posing the question that in the next year or two, they have to come to grips as a Town, as to what they really want and what they can afford and sustain. Rick Ladd asked Sherri if she was providing any programs that replicated what the schools were doing. Sherri stated that she maintained the programs that she already had (youth baseball and basketball) and had increased the programs for adults. She further stated that there was no overlap with what she was doing and what the schools were doing.

Laraine King made the motion to table the vote on Parks & Recreation until they review the rest of the budget; seconded by Howard Hatch and all approved.

The following expenditures were reviewed:

Selectboard – Laraine King had questions about the EX Supplies line item, which increased to \$3,000. AA Lacaillade explained that they had to transfer money into the Selectboard budget in 2013 due to a few over expenditures, so they cut down at the end of the year to try to offset what they needed. TM English stated that it normally runs \$3,000 a year. Laraine then asked about the Equipment and the Computer Upgrade line items. TM English stated that the computer upgrade was a little misleading, but that was the legal account that needed to be used. The Town has an IT person on a contract basis responsible for maintaining our computer

systems, which includes all of the computers in the Selectboard office, the tax collector, and the police department. The Police Department has a very sophisticated, maintenance-required system. Laraine asked if this line item was just for the Selectboard, or was it for the entire Town. TM English stated that it was for the entire Town. The system was due for a major upgrade; not only hardware, but software as well. Chris Luurtsema asked how long this upgrade would last until there would have to be another. TM English did not know the answer as everything changes so quickly. AA Lacaillade stated that the IT person has everything backed up so that we won't lose everything in the case of a failure. Dick Fabrizio asked about the increase in the Professional Services line item. AA Lacaillade stated that this included the Cartographic Mapping Company at \$8,000/year, a maintenance contract of \$1200, LogMeIn remote access at \$300, Charter internet is \$1250/year, an FSA account at \$360, domain registration of \$200, Jim Marshall, the IT person, is \$15,400/year, \$1,000 is miscellaneous and \$804 is the annual fee for the 3G to carry the service. Dick asked if this was going to be an ongoing expense and AA Lacaillade stated that it was. The Computer Upgrade would not be an every-year expense.

Howard Hatch asked how many people were on payroll. AA Lacaillade stated that it was about 17 normally. Howard then stated that in the summer, they have about 40 on payroll and they are never down. AA Lacaillade stated that it does happen. He wanted to know the dollar amount to keep the Town's computer system up. AA Lacaillade stated that the Town needs a computer system and they don't run by themselves. There is always going to be bugs and things that happen. The system needs monthly updates and upgrades. Howard then questioned the cost of the system and the upkeep. TM English stated that the number of employees is not the factor. Government accounting is different from private accounting. It is much more complicated; there are much more issues. There is additional recording that needs to be done. AA Lacaillade stated that the system includes more than payroll. It also includes the assessing and mapping programs. Chris Luurtsema asked what the mapping program was. AA Lacaillade stated that Cartographics, Inc. keeps all of the tax maps current. They add 911 addresses and buildings. It is required that you have tax maps. TM English stated that the maps are automated.

Wayne Fortier asked how many hours the IT person puts in on a regular basis. AA Lacaillade stated that he comes in remotely and does a lot of the work. He comes into the office when he is called for problems. Laraine King asked if the Town used a payroll service or if it was an in-house system. AA Lacaillade stated that the Town used an in-house software program called BMSI out of Franconia. Rick Ladd stated that the Planning and Zoning Boards use the Cartographics program all the time for subdivisions, etc. AA Lacaillade stated that the only downfall with the tax maps online is that they do not show the sketches. Howard Hatch asked if the program did away with pictures and AA Lacaillade stated that the pictures were there. He then asked about the cost of the Town website. AA Lacaillade stated that the only cost was the

domain coming out of the Professional Services. There was also a fee of \$3200 for the first year and then it would go down every year after that. There was no cost for a person to do the website as she does it. Rick Ladd asked how much an hour the IT person made and AA Lacaillade stated that she thought it was around \$50/hour. She would have to double-check that figure. The IT person maintains the computers in the Selectboard office, the Police department, the Tax Collector office, the Welfare Administrator office, and the Highway department.

Dick Fabrizio made a motion to pass the Selectmen's budget, seconded by Peter Conrad. Chris Luurtsema asked if the computer upgrades could be done any cheaper by putting them out to bid. TM English stated that the IT person makes all the purchases of the necessary hardware and software, so he shops on the Town's behalf. TM English stated that the IT person does not add much to that cost. AA Lacaillade stated that the IT person also doesn't buy the computers already built; he actually builds them himself. Chris thought that \$17,000 was quite a lot for computer upgrades. AA Lacaillade provided them with a list of what the IT person was going to be doing. Chris asked what the virtualization software was and AA Lacaillade stated that all she knew was that it preserved our information offsite. Howard Hatch asked if the Computer Upgrade line could be moved to somewhere else. TM English stated that they could add a note next to that line item stating "Applies Townwide". Rick Ladd asked to do the same with the Professional Services line item. The vote for the Selectmen's budget was in the affirmative.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, January 14th at 7:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Minutes transcribed by Karen Hyde.