

## Advisory Budget Committee

### Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2014

The following members were present: Dick McDanolds, Barb Dutile, Dick Fabrizio (in at 8:25 due to conflicting meeting), Andrew Maffei, Christopher Luurtsema, Laraine King, Jon Hobbs and Howard Hatch. Also present: Selectboard members Wayne Fortier (in at 8:25 due to conflicting meeting), Lynn Wheeler (in at 8:25 due to conflicting meeting), and Robert Roudebush; Town Manager Glenn English; Admin. Asst./Finance Officer Jo Lacaillade; Patricia Brady and Clerk Karen Hyde.

Members Excused: Peter Conrad

Dick McDanolds called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

TM English handed out the requests from the various outside agencies. Basically, his blanket policy was to level-fund everyone at last year's level. Laraine King asked if Patricia Brady representing Horse Meadow Senior Center could be acted on next. The Committee agreed. Patricia Brady is on the Board of the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, which is a parent of Horse Meadow Senior Center. She handed out paperwork from the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council. She did a brief review of the statistics from Horse Meadow Senior Center, such as Meals on Wheels and transportation services. Last year, the Town funded them at \$19,000, which they truly appreciate; this year, they are requesting \$21,000. The reason for the increase was that in the last 3 years, they have reduced employment throughout the Community Centers from 140 to 90. They had to cut programs to do that. The cut in funding came from State and Federal resources. A couple of other statistics that she wanted to point out were: (1) a recent study showed that 41.3% of people over the age of 60 in Grafton County are living at or below the poverty level, which is \$25,000 a year. They also had a Dartmouth College student do a survey of people who eat in the various dining rooms. About one-third of the people who were interviewed said that as the end of the month approached, they weren't sure if they would have food. The services that are provided become increasingly important. (2) If there are rural communities that can't provide transportation services to elderly who stay in their homes this doesn't work well. The goal of Grafton County Senior Citizens Council is to help people age in community – socialize, get good meals and transportation – and to avoid loneliness. If they receive the \$21,000, not a penny would be squandered. Jon Hobbs asked if the funds would go to the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council and was told that it would go to Horse Meadow Senior Center. Howard Hatch made the motion to approve the \$21,000 for Horse Meadow Senior Center; seconded by Barb Dutile and all approved.

The following Warrant Articles were reviewed:

**CASA** – CASA is an advocate for children going through the court system who need help with a parental situation that is not positive; these folks volunteer their time to assist. Motion to approve by Laraine King, seconded by Barb Dutile and all approved.

**Page Road Culvert Project** – TM English stated that the Page Road Culvert, which is a red-listed bridge inspected by the State. There are partners in this project due to the environmental value of replacing the culvert with a bridge as it aids in fish passage because it is an important tributary for breeding. The total project costs are \$150,000, which is taking out culverts and constructing a concrete box structure that will not restrict the flow of the stream over the ledge. Of that estimate, N.H. Charitable Foundation is being asked to commit \$60,000; Trout Unlimited \$10,000; U.S. Fish & Wildlife \$25,000, which is Federal money; leaving the Town with a match of \$55,000 as our share. Motion to approve by Laraine King, seconded by Barb Dutile and all approved.

**Recycling** – TM English stated that this was the same cost as last year. Motion to approve by Howard Hatch, seconded by Chris Luurtsema and all approved.

**Ammonoosuc Community Health** – Ammonoosuc Community Health has been funded for years and they are requesting \$6,000 this year. TM English stated that Federal and State cutbacks are having an affect locally and hurting all of these agencies. Chris Luurtsema stated that he realized that many of these nonprofits were asking for an increase, which they haven't asked for in a number of years. The cost of health care has not gotten any cheaper and this is a small price to pay in comparison to the outcome if these services weren't in the community. Jon Hobbs made the motion to approve the request of \$6,000 for Ammonoosuc Community Health; seconded by Chris Luurtsema. Howard Hatch voted in the negative; all remaining voted in the affirmative; the motion passed.

**No. Country Home Health** – TM English stated that they have asked for a substantial increase this year, also due to cutbacks. Laraine King made a motion to approve the \$15,000 request; seconded by Barb Dutile and all approved.

**RSVP** – TM English stated that RSVP stands for Retired Senior Volunteer Project. They provide security home patrols. Barb Dutile made a motion to approve, seconded by Chris Luurtsema and all approved.

**White Mt. Mental Health** – TM English stated that White Mt. Mental Health has addressed the Selectboard. He then stated that there is a mental health crisis in this country; the system is broken. There are incidences where the Police Department responds to a person whose mental health is questionable. White Mt. Mental Health is the local clearing agency that intervenes in those cases and, basically, cooperates with the hospital in the decision on how that person should be dealt with – committed or taken to Concord for observation. They perform a valuable service to the Town, specifically, the Police Department. He fully supports the agency. Barb Dutile made the motion to approve the \$6,012 request; seconded by Chris Luurtsema and all approved.

**Tri-County Community Action** – TM English stated that CAP saves the Town money. They provide fuel assistance; without that, the Town’s welfare costs go up. They work with the Welfare Administrator to save the Town money in general assistance. CAP operates a food bank, cutting down on welfare food vouchers. They have gone through some reorganization. He stated that they are asking for a major increase, but they do a great service to the Town. Motion to approve the level-funded \$4,000 request by Jon Hobbs, seconded by Barb Dutile and all approved.

**Burch House** – TM English stated that Burch House claims that they provided services to 508 victims of violence in Haverhill, Woodsville and Pike. AA Lacaillade stated that the Town does reach out to Burch House when there is a single mom in trouble or a pregnant mom in trouble. Chris Luurtsema made the motion to approve; seconded by Laraine King and all approved.

**Bridge House** – TM English stated that the Bridge House was a new organization that has come to the Town for funding of \$2,000. He knows very little about them. Barb Dutile stated that it has been a shelter in Plymouth for a very long time. Barb Dutile made the motion to pass over this amount for this year, requesting more information for next year; seconded by Chris Luurtsema and all approved.

**Alumni Hall (Court Street Arts)** – TM English stated that Alumni Hall has renamed itself Court Street Arts, which is the performing arts wing of the function. He is disappointed that the Visitor Center has not been manned, which was one of the reasons they have been funded by the Town. He would like to see them reestablish the Visitor Center. The Committee commented that they have not received a budget from Court Street Arts in a long time. A motion to approve by Laraine King, seconded by Chris Luurtsema, with a request to see Court Street Arts’ budget next year. Howard Hatch voted in the negative; Dick Fabrizio abstained; all remaining voted in the affirmative; the motion passed.

**Reserves** – TM English stated that the only new item here was the transfer of the Vehicle fund being taken out of the Fire Departments’ operating budget and put into one Fire Vehicles Reserve Account for all future purchases of fire trucks. Dick Fabrizio asked TM English who gave the Fire Departments permission to buy the trucks. TM English explained that it went through the Fire Equipment Committee. Howard Hatch suggested a smaller, AWD-type vehicle that was centrally located to go to smaller fires instead of rolling the big trucks. TM English stated that the Building Reserve was around \$50,000 and they were going to use a pretty good chunk of that on the parking lot of the JRM Building. Barb Dutile made a motion to approve the Reserves, seconded by Jon Hobbs and all approved.

The Selectboard will address the Advisory Budget Committee’s recommendations on February 10, 2014 at their regular meeting at 6:00 PM. The Public Budget Hearing is to be held on February 12, 2014 at 7:00 PM. Wayne Fortier thanked the Advisory Budget Committee for their hard work. Robert Roudebush commented that the Committee’s input was invaluable to the Selectboard.

Barb Dutile made the motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Laraine King and all approved.  
The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Minutes transcribed by Karen Hyde.