

MINUTES OF ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE
Thursday, January 19, 2017
Draft Subject to Review, Correction and Approval at Following Meeting

Advisory Budget Committee Members Present: Howard Hatch, Jon Hobbs, David Joslin, Peter Conrad, Barbara Dutile and Daniel Brady

Selectboard: Darwin Clogston, Tom Friel and Mike Bonanno

Town Manager: Jo Lacaillade

Police Department: Chief Charles, Sergeant Trott, Sergeant Alling and Lori Aldrich

Call Hearing to Order: Chairman Brady called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

No action was taken on the minutes for the January 18, 2017 meeting since they had not had time to review them. They will do so at their next meeting.

Police: Chief Charles gave an overview of the statistics for 2016 and staffing. There was a brief discussion about the police academy process and the reimbursement agreement that is in place if a new officer graduates and decides to change employment. The Chief was asked why statistics seem to be down and he felt that some of the numbers were down because of the presence of the Police Department on the streets. There was some discussion about the heroin issue in the area and the use of Noroxin that may not be giving a true picture of the drug problems in our Town; because of Noroxin, some cases may not be reported. The topic of attrition from the department and whether that has stabilized was discussed and the Chief felt that the department is solid at this time, as long as the Town remains competitive with benefits and pay, it should keep officers here. There was a question regarding the County Prosecutor. Chief said that she is new but she is doing fine; she is now full time because she is also working for another Town but we get our full allotted hours. Chief gave a further overview of changes to the law with regards to felonies and how that may affect the department. The replacement of vehicle schedule was discussed. Jon Hobbs made a motion to approve the police budget as outlined in the Town Managers recommendation. Seconded by Barb Dutile. Howard questioned why budgets were being passed including the pay increases; and wondered why they were not looking at them across the Board instead of individual departments; he asked that they do them as a whole. There was a brief discussion about this and the majority of the committee felt that they were considering all areas of the budget, including payroll as they approve individual budgets. Chairman Brady asked for a vote on the Police budget and it received unanimous approval.

Police Department Vehicle: There was a brief discussion regarding the type of cruiser and the State bid price. Barb Dutile made a motion to approve the budget, seconded by David Joslin and carried unanimously.

Information Technology: Jim Marshall gave an overview of his budget which is basically software maintenance but it does include the Interware software that the Town Clerk is requesting. There was discussion about whether adding another software into the system; even though the cost is more would it be better to use a vendor that we already have in the system. There was discussion about our current security systems in place and off site storage. The professional service detail for that line item was discussed. Also discussed was what the program is going to provide the Town Clerk office that she is not already able to do. Jim stated that the Microsoft licensing that the Town Manager removed from the budget this year, will have to be in the budget for 2018. There was a brief discussion about what was in the equipment line. The Town Clerk will be using a credit card system in the near future and Jim has no concerns about that process. There was discussion about Jim's hourly rate and the number of hours per month that he is paid. He stated that he puts in far more hours per month than he is paid for. The committee tabled the IT budget until Jim and Jo have time to go over the options with Tina.

Cemeteries: The bid for cemetery maintenance came in at \$43,168. Barb Dutile made a motion to approve the budget; seconded by David Joslin and carried unanimously.

Highway Reimbursement: TM Lacaillade said that the night they reviewed the Highway Budget the committee did not vote on the highway reimbursement to Woodsville line. Even though it is set by Statute, the committee has always voted on that budget. There was a brief discussion about how that number is formulated. Barb Dutile made a motion to approve the budget; seconded by Peter Conrad and carried unanimously.

Animal Control: Howard stated that the costs have just continued to go up in 36 years it used to cost \$500 and was handled by the Police Department. There was discussion about the hours of operation and the need for a kennel. If we do not have a licensed kennel the dogs would have to transport to Littleton or Enfield. Dan felt there is a value to the animal officer outside of just a pound. Jon felt that last year there was a lot of discussion about raising the fees to generate more income and this year the revenue is down. The number of times people were issued warnings without collecting a fine was mentioned. The licenses and fines line is down also after the committee asked that those numbers be increased. TM Lacaillade said that the Dog licenses and fees line is a fee set by the State and the Town Clerk collects those, the dog boarding line is down; she did raise the fee but she is not getting dogs boarding. Jon said this is not a money making part of the budget, he understands that. There was a long discussion the costs of operating this department. There were concerns that the officer is not issuing fines; is spending time on calls that are nothing to do with dogs; and going for issues they don't believe should fall on the animal control. TM Lacaillade said that the duties of the animal control officer are those that a lot of people will not want to do, especially for what we pay. Chairman Brady said that they need to review the statutes and see what the law requires. Darwin referred to a dog ordinance that the Town has that does not talk about dogs in hot cars or chasing goats and perhaps that should be reviewed as the focus of the duties; it was strictly for loose dogs. The committee decided that they did not need Linda to come in but they want to see more enforcement including fines. They also would like to see the outcome of notes left for owners. They feel that if there is an animal in the road, that should be handled by the Police Department and not her. They suggested changing the title on the budget to Dog Control. The budget was tabled until a future meeting.

General Assistance: It was noted that the Welfare Administrator has had good reports for several years; TM Lacaillade concurred. There was a brief discussion about cremations being covered. Barb Dutile made a motion to approve the budget, seconded by Howard Hatch and carried unanimously.

Capital Reserves: Howard said that he has called a couple of his contacts to see do a review of this building to see what could be done about the heating and AC. TM Lacaillade said that she felt they need to look at all options. Chairman Brady felt that what Howard is suggesting is for his contacts to come in and meet with the building manager and look at the space and what is here and make suggestions and there is no cost to that. Barb gave information regarding a Gil Richardson from Pike who is an energy professional and Jo could reach out to him. Howard will get Jo the contact for Dead River. The Capital Reserve budget was set aside for this meeting.

The Committee asked that the Libraries and Airport budgets be scheduled for January 31st.

David Joslin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm; the motion was seconded by Peter Conrad and carried unanimously.

Minutes transcribed by Jo Lacaillade