

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of the November 2, 2001 Department Heads' Budget Presentation Meeting

6:00 – 6:45 Parameter Setting w/Bill Wardwell

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Chairman Ann Seabury at 7:00 p.m.

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2. **ATTENDANCE**

Selectmen: Ann Seabury, Rhona Charbonneau, Robert E. Clegg, Jr., Shawn N. Jasper & Terry Stewart

Staff/Others: Paul D. Sharon, Town Administrator; Priscilla Boisvert, Executive Assistant; Steve Malizia, Finance Director; Kevin Burns, Road Agent; Tom Sommers, Sewer Utility Consultant; Ken Massey, Trustees of the Trust Funds; Cecile Nichols, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Joyce Cloutier, Supervisors of the Checklist; Coleman Kelly, Cable Committee; Howard Dilworth, Jr., Budget Committee and Jim Michaud, Assessor.

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3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Selectman Rhona Charbonneau.

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4. **BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

Chairman Seabury said their main goal was to bring salaries up to a competitive level with surrounding towns. The Assessor's request for office help may be the only article they would consider for additional employees. Selectman Jasper asked the Finance Director's how much money they can add to the budget without affecting the tax rate. Steve said \$300,000 would get them back to the tax rate they have now. Selectman Jasper said with the union contracts, they were already at \$1/2 million. Steve said with the current budget parameters, he put in \$800,000 as a revenue and left out a million for the Selectmen to decide on. Selectman Jasper said they should be looking at a flat budget of no growth, other than increase for salaries. Selectman Charbonneau said the services the people receive are very expensive because the Town is growing, whereas the School gets whatever it wants. The Town has saved a lot of money on its infrastructure by the Highway Department doing the work. They can stretch a dollar only so far. Selectman Clegg said the people can always vote down the contracts. Selectman Jasper said it all is subject to being voted down, but their job is to present a reasonable budget. He'd like to see a flat budget.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Charbonneau, to approve a default budget of \$20,868,787 carried unanimously.

A. **5550 Highway Department w/Kevin Burns, Road Agent**

Kevin said his total budget has increased by \$56,000. Of that, \$8,500 is in the salary accounts, but his other lines have decreased by \$28,000 and that does include the \$40,000 for the excavator. This is the fourth year he's presented a budget and hopes everyone is aware of his reputation for conservatism. It's lean and conservative.

5551 Administration

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to reduce Overtime Salaries 105 to \$2,000 and 108 FICA to \$9,560 carried unanimously. (Historically, they haven't spent all of the money in the Overtime account.)

5552 Streets

Kevin said in 101 there is a large jump in salaries. He has a 20-hour approved, part-time position that he wants to morph into a full-time position. Ten years ago, they had 29 full-time employees; today, they have 24, and do a lot more now. This is a position that was transferred from the Rec Department because they could do more with it. Selectman Jasper asked the Budget Committee Chairman if it is the policy of the Budget Committee to put positions that are going from part-time to full-time on the warrant. Mr. Dilworth said yes, because of the change in benefits. Chairman Seabury said if it goes on the warrant, he stands the chance of losing the part-time position. Selectman Charbonneau said they need extra help because of the work they now do at Benson's. She doesn't think the positions that were not filled were ever taken off the books. Selectman Jasper said if it's not funded, it went away. Benson's is going to be such a big undertaking, they aren't going to be able to use existing employees, but will have to contract out that work. Selectman Clegg asked if they line should be reduced back to accommodate a part-time position and then ask for a full-time position by warrant article and try to explain it in the body of the text. Selectman Jasper said that was too confusing. They would just say they are converting a part-time position into a full-time position. Kevin said if it goes to warrant, it will die. Selectman Jasper doubts if it would make it through the Budget Committee. Selectman Clegg said he'd rather make the Budget Committee the bad guys. Selectman Jasper said there is a directive by Town Meeting that says new positions will go to warrant. He wants to keep faith with the voters and this is a new position. The people have spoken on salaries

and new positions. He asked how many hours constitute a full-time position. Mr. Malizia said 35 is when the pension kicks in. Selectman Jasper said they could increase the part time hours to 35. Kevin said it might be hard to hire someone under those conditions. Selectman Jasper said maybe he could get two people to work part time, or college kids during the summer. Mr. Sharon said that constituted game playing. Discussion continued. Kevin wanted to plead his case to the Budget Committee. Selectman Charbonneau supported him, saying he needs this person as that department's workload has increased dramatically.

(Start Tape 1, Second Side)

Motion by Selectman Clegg, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to reduce 101 back to a part-time position and put a full-time position on the warrant to take the place of the part-time position, with the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen carried 4-1. Selectman Jasper was opposed.

Selectman Stewart questioned the request for a new vehicle, wondering who it would be assigned to and asked if this should go to the warrant. Mr. Sharon said smaller, rolling stock has been included in the Operating Budget. Kevin said it would be part of the fleet. The Town has accepted a lot of streets this year and they have the longest plow routes of anyone in the State. Selectman Stewart said trucks are assigned to Kevin, Jess and Tim. Kevin said there is also a Sewer Utility truck, a sign truck, a patch truck, the one-ton that the pipe crew uses, a flat-bed, etc. The truck would not wouldn't be assigned to anyone personally. It will be a working truck with a plow. Pond View Estates is nearly a plow route in itself.

Selectman Stewart asked about the 400 accounts. Kevin clarified that 401 is the excavator; 403 is the pickup truck; and 404 is the third year payment on the Mack trucks. Selectman Stewart said she supported the excavator, but wondered why they weren't splitting it 50-50 with the Sewer Department. Kevin said it does more on the drainage side than on the sewer side. They picked a line with the Sewer Utility and thought 1/3 – 2/3 was pretty close. Selectman Stewart asked if the (not discernable) was approved, if he would still need to lease the 320. Kevin said yes, it's a mobile piece of equipment and not big enough to do what the big track machine is doing. Selectman Stewart asked how many days/hours the current excavator has been down in the past year. Kevin said he can't get two days in a row out of it. It got so bad, they had to rent one at the end of the year for \$5,500 a month. The boom is cracked, the drive is gone and the engine won't pull itself up a hill. It worked every single day of its life and now time to put it out to pasture.

5553 Equipment Maintenance Kevin said what helped them hold the line on this account is fleet modernization.

B. 5560 Sewer Utility w/Tom Sommers

Tom said there is an overall reduction from last year as they will have completed the update to the Sewer Use Ordinance, so there's no more engineering fees. Salaries increased to cover the Sewer Utility Clerk's vacation. Investment expenses are reduced by \$2,000. Other increases are with postage and supplies.

5562 Sewer Operations & Maintenance

Tom said under 239 Sewage Treatment, they noticed a 5% increase in the past five years of what they pay Nashua. They finally reached the \$500,000, so they are recommending another \$50,000 to make sure there is enough money to cover costs, which they don't have control over. He and Steve review this with them annually. Large Operating Equipment is their share of the rubber tire excavator.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to increase 323 Sewage Chemicals from \$14,000 to \$18,000 carried unanimously. (Historically, they have used this much money. Tom will check with Jess. If it was reduced for a reason, it will come back.)

- **5563 Sewer Debt** There is no more sewer debt. It has been paid off.

- **5564 Sewer Construction**

Tom said they are still building surplus, but they have a major expense to Nashua this year, so they won't reserve as much surplus as they thought. Although Nashua doesn't plan an expansion right now, they probably will in five or 10 years, and he wants to be ready for it. Their plan last year was to take \$100,000 each year from Sewer Surplus and put it into this reserve. Under 624 Nashua Sewage Treatment Plant, there is a \$312,000 item. It comes down to a continuing payment on the sludge digester that they have installed. There are seven projects, which Hudson has to participate in of one time payments and a three-year payment primary tank covers and a computer system. This is part of the inter-municipal agreement Hudson has with Nashua.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to increase 630 Glen Drive Pump Station from \$30,000 to \$50,000 carried unanimously. (They mistakenly under-budgeted this last year. The person wants to sell as opposed an easement. This will come out of the Sewer Capital Assessment Reserve.)

C. 5020 Trustees of the Trust Funds w/Ken Massey

Chairman Seabury asked about the Animal Shelter. Mr. Massey said if the Charitable Trust Division of the AG's Office at the State does not file a response by November 4, it is considered that they agree with the Town. The petition has already been filed in Probate Court, but they don't have a date yet. The \$155,000 - \$160,000 is there and can be taken out very easily.

(Start of Tape 2, Side A)

D. 5025 Cemetery Trustees

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Clegg, to reduce 252 Other Professional Services from \$6,000 to \$4,500 carried unanimously.

E. 5030 Town Clerk/Tax Collector w/Cecile Nichols

There was no change to this cost center.

F. 5041 Moderator

Selectman Jasper said there are three elections upcoming: September Primary, General in November and the Town election in March. Mr. Sharon said there was no budget submittal this year.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Clegg to reduce 403 Small Equipment from \$7,500 to zero carried unanimously.

G. 5042 Supervisors of the Checklist w/Joyce Cloutier

Selectman Clegg said the AG's Office and Secretary of State are going around the State to hold legal seminars for Supervisors of the Checklist. There is a huge problem with same-day voter registrations and the State has come with a method everyone is supposed to be using to avoid confusion.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to fund 233 Mileage with \$50 carried unanimously. (The expectation is they will carpool.)

H. 5045 Cable Committee w/Coleman Kelly

Coleman said subscriber dissatisfaction with Adelphia is very high. He plans to finish refurbishing the ambulance as a remote van and to cable the Community Development meeting room, providing he has the manpower. Regarding his request for a warrant article, Federal law allows for an Institutional Network (I-NET), the subject of heated debate between Adelphia and the Consortium. Neither Litchfield or Milford are interested and Adelphia is resistant to do it. He thinks the Town should go forward now. If the I-NET hung at the same time as the rebuild occurs, there would be great savings in labor. The cost of making it work could be split between the Town and the School and Cable because all would realize some benefit. It would become a communication medium, thus both the Town and School would avoid a number of charges currently incurred for data exchange, communications, etc. The \$240,000 cost would be divided by three, which would hang the fiber and provide for a number of years for maintenance. He has met with the School Board Chair and the Superintendent to discuss this, and they had a favorable reaction. Mr. Sharon asked if Coleman has talked with the Fire Chief about utilization of the I-NET as part of Combined Dispatch. Coleman said no, but that would be a good use. The Board felt it was premature to go forward with this and they would need a more comprehensive presentation on the benefits to the community in order to sell it. Coleman said within 60 days, the cable company is going to be ordering the fiber that is going to run from Nashua Road in Londonderry into Hudson. He estimates a cost of 60 cents a foot for labor to hang fiber.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to transfer \$2,153 from 450 Reserves to 102 Part-Time Salaries and 108 FICA carried unanimously. (The Cable Committee performs physical labor to set up equipment at Town and School Meetings.)

I. **5050 Treasurer** There was no change to this cost center.

(Start Tape 2, Second Side)

J. **5070 Budget Committee w/Howard Dilworth, Jr.** There was no change to this cost center.

- K. **5080 Code of Ethics** There was no change to this cost center.

- K. **5400 Assessing, w/Jim Michaud**

Jim Michaud said 252 contains \$53,000 to finish off the reval contract and 265 is \$40,000 to cover them in case the warrant article fails. If it wasn't for those two items, the budget would be down 11%.

Motion by Selectman Stewart, seconded by Selectman Charbonneau, to reduce 216 Legal Documents from \$2,400 to \$1,200 carried unanimously.

(Start Tape 3, Side A)

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Charbonneau, to increase 265 Outside Hire by \$535 carried unanimously.

The Board briefly discussed the Community Grants, as they would be coming in first thing in the am.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Selectman Charbonneau, seconded by Selectman Jasper, to adjourn at 9:37 p.m. carried unanimously.

Recorded and Transcribed by Priscilla Boisvert
Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

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