

HUDSON, NH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of the August 7, 2001
Budget Parameter-Setting Workshop

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Chairman E. Lorraine Madison at 7:00 p.m.

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2. **ATTENDANCE**

Selectmen: E. Lorraine Madison, Rhona Charbonneau, Shawn N. Jasper, Ann Seabury & Terry Stewart

Staff/Others: Paul D. Sharon, Town Administrator; Priscilla Boisvert, Executive Assistant; Steve Malizia, Finance Director; Kevin Burns, Road Agent; Frank Carpentino, Fire Chief; Richard Gendron, Police Chief; Jim Michaud, Assessor; Dave Yates, Recreation Director; Sean T. Sullivan, Director of Community Development; Coleman Kelly; Howard Dilworth, Jr., John, Derry News

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3. **BUDGET PARAMETERS**

Selectman Jasper said it's important to have an idea of where they are going this year and give some direction to the department heads before they prepare their budgets. Over the years, they have heard that if the department heads had known what the Board's goals were, they might not have spent so much time and effort into certain things. This year, knowing they have got three contracts with substantial expense, they have to look closely at other things. He referred to Page 5 of the Finance Director's memo to give them an idea of what they are looking at and where they are going. In the past, they have tried to stay within the 5% range, which might be a reasonable place to start. Mr. Sharon said it's awful early for department heads to make accurate predictions. Selectman Jasper said they ought to be looking at a range and won't know more at the end of October than they do now on some things, such as health insurance. To some degree, they are going to have to live with that, whatever it is.

Chairman Madison asked if Assessing was going to pick up \$30 million this year. Mr. Michaud said that's his estimate of actual new growth for the 2002 property tax year. Selectman Seabury said before the department heads present what they want, the Board should look at anything they might want to do. She hopes they can continue with Combined Dispatch. Chairman Madison said they already committed to that, which has to be budgeted. At the Benson's meeting this afternoon, the members were all for scratching the Library and putting the money towards Benson's. Selectman Charbonneau said that should be up to the voters. Selectman Jasper said warrant articles should stand alone and not be a part of this. He'd like to focus on the operating budget.

Chairman Madison received a wonderful compliment for the Public Works Department from Leo Dumont, who was impressed that everyone on his street was notified that paving was going to be done. The job went quickly and smoothly, with limited interruption. The people in Town don't realize what a wonderful value Kevin Burns is.

Highway Department--Kevin Burns, Road Agent, said his budget has been level-funded for three years. Last year, it would have been lower, if not for items he had no control over. They need to replace the rubber tire excavator, at about \$190,000. With a five-year lease, it will be about \$40,000/year. There is only one more year on the lease-purchase of the sweeper (\$25,000 a year for five years), so it would be a wash after a one year overlap.

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Fire Department--Chief Frank Carpentino said in addition to Combined Dispatch, he has three things, which all relate. They will be coming with two fire fighter positions so they can balance the shifts out at eight and keep the station open full time. They put in a CIP request to do renovations at the Burns Hill station and make it livable. Included in that is the cost of running a computer cable so they can tie into the department. If the expansion doesn't go through, they are looking at \$40,000 to run the computer cabling. Chairman Madison asked about his operating budget. Chief Carpentino said it's too early to tell, as they are only a month into the current budget.

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Police Department--Chief Richard Gendron said he met with his department and they decided to take out hiring additional police officers this year. They need another Captain and are desperate for a secretary for Support Services. They have not hired another secretary since the 1980's, except to add extra hours to Mary Wing. Support Services does recruiting and training, so the officers have to do the clerical work. The Kirby building, which was damaged when the roof leaked years ago, need to be completed. The only other item is to upgrade the firing range. Banks have to be put back up, asphalt should be put down and special targets are needed. They are in good shape, otherwise. Their fleet is upgraded and they secured grants for radar units.

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In the future, as a CIP item, they should look at upgrading the entire Town's communication system to allow them to communicate with each other. The Police is currently on an analog system but will have to switch over to a digital system, eventually. Everyone is on a different band, so nothing meshes. There are only four communities in the State that is on a UHF system: Nashua, Hudson, Derry and Hampton. To benefit from the LawNet package, he would have to convert his system to VHF, at about \$600,000. Derry and Hampton are going to migrate to VHF, so Hudson will be by themselves. He's working with the State Police now to put a console in Dispatch in case they go out of jurisdiction. Rather than just upgrade the Police Department, he'd rather see them put in an entire trunking system so

everyone can benefit. He's meeting with Motorola on Thursday to get a ballpark figure. It involves buying portable mobile radios for everybody and upgrading the towers.

Community Development Department—Sean Sullivan, Director, wondered if he should combine all of the divisions in his department. (Chairman Madison noted that the Budget Committee Chairman was shaking his head no.) Mr. Sharon thought he should keep track of the function classifications and try to track expenditures by object, making logical splits, which is not to say he can't do some shifting around. Selectman Jasper thought the subdivisions should be kept, even if they come under one budget heading in order to have a better understanding where the money is. Mr. Sullivan said their computers are old and slow and break a lot, so they could use a couple more. He hoped to get the GIS program up and running in two, three weeks. He's not certain if that will require additional equipment. If so, that is something they would request. Personnel-wise, two positions have opened. Chairman Madison asked Mr. Sullivan if he's talked with the Finance Director about the computers. He said yes.

Recreation Department—Dave Yates, Director, said he's looking at additional summer help, if they plan to stay open during lunchtime. They went from 650 kids last year to 750 this year. If they hired four or five 16 or 17-year-olds as CIT's for minimum wage, they could help cover the lunch hour. He would also like a part-time Administrative Assistant to help him out. The budget will go down \$22,000 because the playground is coming out this year. Chairman Madison said the Recreation Department fees will be increased. Mr. Yates said the break-even fee to cover the cost of the summer counselors and director is \$72 a person. Chairman Madison said they are looking at more than that as the summer program has turned into a babysitting service, and much cheaper than day care. Mr. Yates said he checked around and some towns are charging \$50 a week. He believes his budget will be nearly level funded after he takes out the playground and adds in the positions. Selectman Charbonneau was in favor of increasing the summer Rec fees to \$100-\$125, which would benefit working mothers.

Assessing—Jim Michaud, Assessor, said it's futile for him to submit a warrant article to add clerical support, so he's proposing to use a temp agency for administrative services and commercial assessors with appraisal skills. He didn't think the first year of the reval he'll need those assessors, so for next year's budget, he's not looking at that, but he will be asking for \$40,000 within the budget for a temp administrative assistant. The GIS maps are terrible and only 1/3rd of the community has been done. It should be completed, or that 1/3rd should be thrown out. If it is completed, money should be put in the budget. GIS without accurate geography is not worthwhile. Selectman Jasper said they should continue with GIS. There is one more year in the reval scheme, and then some money will be freed up. That's the time to address the GIS. Mr. Michaud said there will be a \$100,000 increase in his budget for the reval. Chief Gendron hoped they would continue with GIS. Mr. Sullivan and Chief Carpentino agreed. Mr. Sharon said the Town made a major investment in it already. He didn't think they need much more hardware.

Finance Department—Steve Malizia, Director anticipated his budget will be pretty much the same. He doesn't know what the health insurance will be.

Selectman Jasper thinks the Board was very generous last year. If they limit the operating budget to 5% this year, and if they look at Steve's number of 285 and back out \$100,000 to complete the assessing, \$40,000 for Kevin's equipment and some number for non-union, they are left in the \$100,000 range. If you figure in energy costs, you are done. This Board needs to take a firm stand on no growth. They listened to the department heads and made a commitment on the contracts, which is the lion's share of the money. After adding in a couple of other things, everything else needs to remain flat. Then they need to talk about parameters on warrant articles. Combined Dispatch is going to be a warrant article because they are on the building/construction/equipment phase.

Chairman Madison said it's not that she doesn't agree, but every year they hand the Budget Committee a very reasonable budget and then the School Department walks away with everything. Selectman Charbonneau said they can't control that. Every parent says they want the best for their kids. That's why the schools get away with murder. If they really dug into the School budget, they'd find a lot of pork in there. Chairman Madison had no problem with giving the schools everything, as long as they are accountable. Selectman Charbonneau said the contracts are a major expense, but that is something they had to do in order to stay competitive with other towns.

Selectman Jasper said the Rec Department may come in with an increase, but it will be offset by fees, so that is ok. It's the impact on the tax rate that counts.

(Start Tape 1, Second Side)

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Charbonneau, that the Board of Selectmen direct the department heads that the goal for the operating budget should be a zero increase, excluding the contracts, the \$100,000 for the reval, the \$40,000 for the Highway Department's lease-purchase, and for the utilities.

Selectman Seabury talked about upgrades to the Planning Board's Master Plan, which is required. Selectman Jasper said his motion indicates the Selectmen's goal. Anything that any department head feels they need, the Board will consider. If someone couldn't stick to it and gives the reasons why, it's up to the Board to make the choice. They may include that request and reduce someone else's budget by

that same amount. The motion is a directive to the department heads and a goal for the Selectmen. His intent is not to tell someone not to come in with something they feel they absolutely have to have; it's to say that this Board is not likely to go over a certain amount. He hoped when the Board got done with the budget, they would be on-target.

Vote: Motion carried 4-1. Chairman Madison was opposed.

Selectman Jasper said they should probably talk about a ceiling figure on the warrant articles. He didn't think they should be looking at adding more than another 5% or \$500,000. Mr. Sharon said if things crop in the next six months, it could change the picture. Selectman Jasper said regardless of what's out there, 10% is enough. If they can't get the things they need in one year with 10%, they ought to re-look at what they are doing. Selectman Seabury agreed. If they think a warrant article is important, they may slash something out of the operating budget. Chairman Madison said she'd like to see the warrant articles kept down, but she wanted the department heads to ask for what they feel they need to run their departments. It's their job to ask, even if the Selectmen have to take it out. Selectman Jasper agreed, saying department heads have an obligation to come in and ask for what they feel they need and the Selectmen's obligation is to decide what the Town can afford.

Motion by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Charbonneau, that it's the Selectmen's intention to not approve more than \$500,000 in warrant articles, aside from the contracts carried unanimously.

Chief Carpentino asked if they should come in with 20-year bond figures to spread out the spending on Combined Dispatch or the Burns Hill renovations because those two projects alone are \$500,000. Chairman Madison said they are committed to the Combined Dispatch, but he can be innovative. They have to stop spending *somewhere*.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

A. CIP

Chairman Madison said Selectman Stewart wondered what the Board's CIP projects were. The Planning Board suggested the one-way at Belknap and County Road project, which would take care of the coffee shop issue. Selectman Charbonneau said that was a ISTEIA project that should have gone forward. Selectman Seabury said that site has five entrances. Selectman Charbonneau didn't think that was possible. The other Selectmen said they're already there; it's the old Citgo station. Selectman Charbonneau asked who in their right mind would allow five entrances. Several Selectman said the court did. Chairman Madison said the only way they can get around it is to go for the Belknap-County Road one-way project. Mr. Sharon said the original plan was to extend Birch Street across and then close off both ends of County Road. At one point, they were trying to encourage the owner to dedicate that. Chairman Madison said if that goes in, it will be extremely dangerous.

She noticed that Howard Dilworth had his hand raised. The Board did not object to her recognizing him. Mr. Dilworth suggested the Town buy the lot and instead of having A Street end on County Road, bring it out to Lowell Road, which would be a 90° intersection and have County, at the stop sign, come to A Street. Selectman Jasper said they should have bought that lot a long time ago. Selectman Charbonneau asked if they could pick up that lot by eminent domain. Chairman Madison said the Planning Board told the owners that plans were in the works to make County Road one way, so they have been warned. Selectman Jasper said they weren't going to be doing anything with that this year as they have too many things on their plate. She asked what direction they should give Selectmen Stewart. Mr. Sharon said if they were going to do that, the Board should condemn it before it becomes developed, not just put it on the CIP for three years down the road. Selectman Jasper said they don't have any facts or figures and that site had five entrances when it was a gas station. Selectman Charbonneau said there was less traffic back then.

Selectman Stewart wondered if they should put the Town-wide communications system on the CIP. Chairman Madison thought they could get Federal help on that. Chief Gendron said if they do that, then they should put Combined Dispatch on a back burner because it will take serious money to upgrade. Selectman Jasper said those types of things are for department heads to put on, not the Board of Selectmen.

Chairman Madison asked the Board if they wanted to include the one-way at County Road and Belknap project on the CIP. Everyone but Selectman Jasper was in favor as they don't have any plans developed and they can't just throw things on the CIP. Selectman Charbonneau said there was a plan engineered.

B. Block Party

Chairman Madison said she received an e-mail from Chief Gendron regarding a flyer that has been circulating, advertising a three-day party on Copeland Drive over Old Home Days, called Old Jim Days. A permit has not been pulled yet, but a neighborhood resident complained that last year, there was a lot of loud noise, which kept them awake and frightened their children. The Board reluctantly approved it last year, and did so only because the neighbors were not opposed to it. The party is

complete with kegs of beer, tents and live music. The Chief expects a request for a permit may come in at the last minute. Selectman Jasper said if it doesn't make the agenda deadline, no exceptions should be made. Chairman Madison said if it makes the agenda, they can discuss it at that time. Mr. Sharon said last year when this came up, only certain neighbors were invited. Selectman Jasper said there is nothing to stop him from having a party on his lawn. Mr. Sharon said even so, the Town will respond to a noise complaint.

5. **NONPUBLIC SESSION**

Motion to enter Nonpublic Session by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Charbonneau, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (d) real estate issues carried 5-0 by roll call vote.

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Motion by Selectman Charbonneau, seconded by Selectman Stewart, to seal the Minutes carried unanimously.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. by Selectman Jasper, seconded by Selectman Seabury, carried unanimously.

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

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Chairman E. Lorraine Madison

Rhona Charbonneau

Shawn N. Jasper

Ann Seabury

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