

01/30/2008 - Budget Committee Minutes

Hopkinton Budget Committee Town Hall Minutes January 30, 2008

Present: Karen Irwin, Chair; David Lancaster; Danny Coen; Tom O'Donnell, HVP Representative; Joy Bloomfield, School Board Representative; Barbara Unger; Tom Congoran, Selectmen Representative; Bob Carpenter, CVP Representative; Jane Bradstreet and Patrice Gerseny.

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Chairman Irwin went over the process to come up with any proposals that different from the budgets. Tom Congoran let the Budget Committee know that on Monday at 5:30 J.D. Colcord is going to come to present an update of the county budget. Patrice Gerseny noted that the school surplus has been larger the last several years. Chairman Irwin stated if we were going to reduce a fund we should look at the building repair trust fund versus the retirement fund or the special education fund. The surplus fund balance for the school is expected to be \$531,000 for the FY 06/07 year and \$587,000 in the prior year. Tom O'Donnell stated that a 7% increase is excessive when the average wage went up 2.3%. Chairman Irwin pointed out there was a \$48,000 increase in administrative costs. David Lancaster suggested cutting a first and third grade teacher and reduces costs by about 80,000 per teacher. Barbara Unger stated that it is hard to cut teachers and even when enrollments are expected to go down. Marshall Rowe asked whether the budget committee would like to hear the board's position on teacher reductions. Marshall Rowe stated that classroom size of 20 is not a School Board policy. First and second grade are critical years for learning especially reading and math. A question about 4.5% raises for non-union employees was asked. Marshall Rowe explained that those employees are seeing union employee's salaries rise a higher rate.

The Budget Committee recommended that we reduce the special education and the building maintenance trust funds in the amount of \$25,000 each, new administrative positions by \$48,000, eliminate the portable classroom for \$50,000 and reduce supplies by \$52,000, reduce wages by \$15,000 for wage reductions from 4.5% to 3% and a \$75,000 revenue increase in the budgeted commitment of the school board for surplus. All were in favor except for Joy Bloomfield.

Next the Chairman went over the Town Budget. David Lancaster had recommendations of reducing the Executive budget: Conferences by 1,000, Contingency by \$2,500, dues and subscriptions by \$1,000 and selectman's expenses by \$3,000. For the Town Clerk budget: reduce professional services by \$2,000. He also recommended reducing the Highway budget by \$6,000 for seasonal employees and the Highway and Streets budget by \$5,000 for the equipment line. Tom Congoran explained that last year Hermie had to cut a lot in his budget. David recommended a decrease of in Buildings and Grounds budget of \$5,000 for building repairs and \$8,000 for fencing, sod and field maintenance paid for last year. David also recommended a decrease in the \$17,500 for summer day camp. Taxpayers are subsidizing this expense. A reduction of \$400 for patriotic purposes and \$825 for conservation camp, again the question of whether we should be

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Subsidizing camp. Danny Coen a reduction of \$10,000 for overtime in the transfer station budget. Additionally the Library budget proposal would be eliminate the \$6,275 for the reference librarian to make the position full time. Chairman Irwin recommended eliminating the \$25,000 amount going to the maintenance of Town Facilities fund.

The final budget committee recommended for public hearing the following budget that was lower than the selectman's proposal: Executive for Conferences reduction in the amount of \$1,000, \$2,500 for contingency and \$3,000 for selectman expenses. A recommended reduction of the Highway budget by \$6,000 for seasonal employees and \$5,000 for the equipment line in Highway and Streets. The Budget Committee recommended a reduction in the recreation department budget of \$17,500 for summer day camp counselors as it was not paying for itself, \$400 for patriotic purposes and \$825 for conservation camp. Additionally the Library would be reduced by \$6,275 for the reference librarian. The final recommendation was the elimination of the \$25,000 amount going to the maintenance of Town Facilities fund or a total reduction of \$72,500. David Lancaster made a motion to present the adjusted Town Budget at public hearing and Danny Coen seconded the motion. The budget committee members voted affirmatively with Tom Congoran voting against the motion.

Diane Lachance thanked the budget committee for their work.

The budget committee adjourned at 10:29 p.m. The motion made by Danny Coen and seconded by Patrice Gerseny.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Irwin
Chairman