

07/09/2008 - Budget Committee Minutes

Hopkinton Budget Committee

Town Hall

July 09, 2008

Present: Karen Irwin, Chair; Cameron Ford; Tom O'Donnell, HVP Representative; David Lancaster; Danny Coen; Kim Fuller, Alternate School Board Representative; and Marion Paxton. Patrice Gerseny arrived at 6:40 pm and Tom Congoran, Selectmen Representative arrived at 7:15 pm.

Absent: Bob Carpenter, CVP Representative.

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm, by Chairperson Irwin.

Agenda Item 1 - Review of Minutes Prior Meeting: Minutes of the June 12, 2008 meeting were reviewed and amended. The motion to approve was made by Patrice Gerseny, seconded by Danny Coen. The motion was passed unanimously by all members present at that meeting with Kim Fuller and Cameron Ford abstaining.

Agenda Item 4 - Review of School, Town and Precinct Monthly Financials:

SCHOOL: Kim Fuller distributed the April and May School Financials. The detailed report for June will be sent after the final audit. Karen Irwin requested that the food service income be broken out from other revenue.

Kim reported that the Repair and Maintenance Trust Fund balance is low. Recent projects funded (or to be funded) include HMS Gym Floor \$31,257; MSS Carpet and Asbestos Removal and Tile Project \$31,650; HMHS Audi Air Compressor Replacement \$6,518 (public hearing to be held July 15 at 6:30 pm); HMHS Gym Floor Annual Refinishing \$3,680. There was no allocation to the Repair and Maintenance Trust Fund in 2007-2008 or 2008-2009.

For the Repair and Maintenance Trust Fund, the School Committee holds a public hearing (required by RSA) before expending monies. David Lancaster noted that the selectmen are not required to hold public hearing before expending funds and suggested that Christine Hamm might be approached to propose a law requiring selectmen to hold public hearings prior to expending monies..

There was brief discussion of the school Repair and Maintenance Trust Fund projects. In the future, there will be more floor work necessary at MSS in the gym and classrooms which have asbestos tile floors. Danny Coen wants the HMHS Gym Floor Refinishing included in the yearly operating budget since it is an annual expense.

The School District is looking into ways to implement the energy audit for increased energy savings. Presently, the Superintendent's office and schools are operating on a 4 day, 10 hours/day schedule and are closed on Friday. The State Department of Education has control over the school year schedule and has denied a request for fewer, longer days during the school year. Purchase of heating oil and diesel fuel are being negotiated with a purchasing consortium.

Contract Negotiations have begun. Kim Fuller and Peter Yunich are the School Committee members of the team. Negotiations with the 3 unions could take longer than 3 months. Nothing more can be reported while negotiations are in progress.

TOWN: Tom Congoran presented the town budget summary.

The selectmen want to minimize change in expenses from year to year. They are considering options to cut costs. One bid for private ambulance service has been received, and will be reviewed. Highway department trucks are being scheduled on a 4 day week. Town buildings and multiple site use are being reviewed. The selectmen are considering consolidating town functions into the town hall and moving the tax collector's office here. Options for using or liquidating the Bates Library building, present tax collector's office, are being researched. The selectmen are looking for ways to change the underlying structure of how the town operates.

The selectmen are hoping to meet with School Board members in the near future to discuss areas of mutual concern and increased cooperation between the two groups.

The TAN has been paid off. Interest paid was approximately \$1600.

Danny Coen asked how the town qualifies individuals for public assistance. Is there a written policy? Tom Congoran stated that presently the Human Services Director Marilyn Bresaw is responsible for this. She will be invited to a meeting of the board of selectmen to explain the guidelines. The budget committee will be informed of the date of the meeting.

Pay-As-You Throw garbage disposal at the transfer station is being reviewed. Beginning August 1, a private collector will be offering recyclables pickup. The Municipal Solid Waste Facility Director, Steve Clough, has indicated that about 85% of households in town hire refuse pickup. The Landfill Committee will be hearing a presentation on Pay-As-You Throw at the July 10 meeting.

Patrice Gerseny again requested that we receive an accounting of the TOTAL outstanding taxes in arrears, including tax liens. This information does not need to be broken down by tax lot information.

TOWN PRECINCTS: There are no new reports from either Hopkinton Village or Contoocook Village Precinct.

Agenda Item 2 – Budget Committee Financial Target: There was extended discussion of this item. Karen Irwin stated that a target should be set for this year, as was done 3 years ago. Several committee members felt there should be no budget increase, with a few suggesting that a budget decrease be requested. There was some discussion regarding the Zero Based budget format. The committee did not reach consensus on setting a target, or what the target might be. Marion Paxton requested a Zero Based budget presentation to better understand this process. Karen Irwin and Tom Congoran will try to find a speaker to explain how this works.

Agenda Item 3 – Election of Assistant Chairman: Marion Paxton nominated David Lancaster who declined. David Lancaster nominated Patrice Gerseny. Cameron Ford seconded the nomination. Tom O'Donnell moved that nominations be closed. David Lancaster seconded the motion. All voted in favor, nominations were closed, and Patrice Gerseny was elected Assistant Chairman by the committee.

David Lancaster requested that Item 6 (Public Concerns of Comments) and Item 7 (Other Information and Issues) be switched on future agendas.

Agenda Item 7 – Other Information and Issues: The financial report of the town was reviewed further. Cash flow for the month ending June 30, 2008 was: Deposits - \$6,011,004.66; Expenditures – \$2,116,658.88; Balance - \$5,318,210.34.

Tom O'Donnell and Patrice Gerseny submitted the final report of the Town of Hopkinton Budget Committee Funds Subcommittee. The Budget Committee reviewed this report and its recommendations.

There was a brief discussion of the ongoing status of Columbia Hall. An inspection has been done and the selectmen are considering several options for the future of the building.

Agenda Item 6 - Public Concerns or Comments: None.

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on Wednesday, August 13, 2008 at 6:30 pm.

The budget committee adjourned at 9:00 pm. The motion was made by Kim Fuller, seconded by Patrice Gerseny and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marion Paxton

Acting Secretary