

**Hopkinton Budget Committee
Town Hall
December 30, 2009
Final Minutes**

Present: Patrice Gerseny – Chair, Danny Coen, Cameron Ford. David Lancaster, George Langwasser – Selectmen, David Luneau – School Board

Absent: Marion Paxton, Karen Irwin, Tom O'Donnell – Hopkinton Village Precinct, Bob Carpenter – Contoocook Village Precinct

The meeting began at 6:35 pm.

Resignation

Chair Gerseny acknowledged the resignation on Marion Paxton. Danny Coen reviewed the NH Local Government Agency law references to this matter. After some discussion, David Lancaster made a motion to not to replace Marion Paxton since the Committee is well int the budget process. David Luneau seconded. A vote was taken.

Yes – 6 No – 0

Motion passed. Effective immediately the Budget Committee is 9 members.

Minutes of 12-16-09

The minutes were reviewed. Cameron Ford made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. David Luneau seconded. A vote was taken.

Yes – 6 No – 0

Motion passed.

Town responses to Budget Committee questions

George Langwasser, Selectman presenting, assisted by Neal Cass, Town Administrator.

Town responses to Committee questions were passed out.

1. Computer hardware/software applications: The amounts were previously paid out of the Capital Reserve. The 2010 Budget portions out the amounts to the various departments. It was also requested to clarify whether the line is for maintenance or contracts.
2. Fire Dept.:
 - Clarification of the Fire Dept. Budget lines with an explanation from DRA [Department of Revenue Administration] saying they are concerned with changing the lines on the MS7 without following NH laws, not the lines that appear in the detail.
 - Fire Chief position/title:
Danny Coen reviewed previous town report narratives where voters were opposed to the town having a full time Fire Chief and Selectmen meetings concerning a FT Fire Chief. He wants to make sure the current Acting Fire Chief 'doesn't get thrown under the bus' at the annual Town meeting.
David Luneau commented on the 2 parts of the Fire Dept. budget a) the budget is level and b) the current organization of the department which is different than it was at the past Town Meetings.

Neal Cass, Town Administrator, advised the Selectmen were considering a Warrant Article for the Fire Chief position and leaving the funding as part of the operating budget.

Danny Coen suggested leaving the funding in the budget and create a Warrant Article to change the Deputy Fire Chief/Building Inspector to FT Fire Chief and eliminate the Deputy position altogether.

David Lancaster suggested creating a Warrant Article for the Fire Chief position with the necessary funding attached. If the voters vote 'No' on the Warrant Article then a resident can propose to add the necessary funds back into the operating budget.

3. Community Center expense: The money was used at Columbia Hall for removal of an old oil tank.

Cameron Ford left at 8 pm.

4. Police Dept. – Police Chief position

Mr. Langwasser advised the position should be filled in or around Feb. 1. The current PT Chief will remain as an advisor until around Apr. 1. There will be a PT Chief and an Acting Chief for a period of time.

Chair Gerseny mentioned that the committee had been previously been told this would happen on Jun. 30/July 1.

Committee members questioned adding an administrative position paid at Chief pay as well as having an Acting Chief as of the Feb. 1 date.

The current budget being presented is based on the change occurring on June 30/July 1 and supports a reduction in the Police Dept. for a period of 6 months.

Mr. Langwasser advised that this is not 'a fait accompli'.

Chair Gerseny stated she would like to have the additional/replacement patrolman to be included in the operating budget rather than as a Warrant Article.

5. Highway Dept.: Neal Cass spoke with Herme Blanchette, Highway Dept., and reported that Herme is comfortable with his budget. He is doing 50% of what should be done for road maintenance. Herme is concerned about the Capital Reserve for his department and Fire Dept.

Precinct Presentation

None

Public Comment

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Clark
Secretary