

## **Town of Hopkinton**

### **Budget Committee Meeting Minutes - APPROVED**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2015**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Town Hall**

#### **Call to Order:**

Chairwoman Janet Krzyzaniak called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Attendees: Janet Krzyzaniak, Don Houston, Ken Traum, Richard Horner, Amy Bogart, Virginia Haines, Deborah Norris, Richard Houston and Bill Chapin, Jr., School Board representative. Also present: Suzanne Beauchesne taking minutes.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Since Committee members had not had a chance to review the minutes, approval of the October 14, 2015 meeting minutes was postponed to the December meeting.

#### **Presentation of financials for the BOS, School Board, and CVP:**

##### **Financials – Town:**

Mr. Traum went through the town's budget expense and revenue summaries through October 31, 2015. The YTD percentage of revenue received is at 83.34%. Expenses are slightly under budget at 81.65% including the sewer fund. IT services (Account 4135) are running higher than estimated primarily due to the purchase of a server for the Clerk's office. Account 4195, Cemeteries, is running high but the Cemetery Trust Funds will reimburse the General Operating Fund to balance it out. The Emergency Management (Account 4290) line will even out once grant funds are received.

Mr. Traum thanked everyone who has taken time to attend budget meetings. The Board of Selectmen managed to limit the budget increase to three percent from last year's budget.

##### **Financials – School Board:**

Bill Chapin, Jr. provided the School District's 2015 budget through September 30, 2015. Rather than go through the budget line by line, Mr. Chapin took time to respond to questions

asked at the previous meeting. Mr. Chapin confirmed that the pizza fundraiser is a neutral account in that funds are expensed for the purchase of pizza and reflected as revenue when sold. Also, the Health Trust account (R1990) budgeted at \$118,554 goes to retirees and decreases as the year progresses. On Don Houston's request for a spreadsheet estimating the tax rate over a 10-year period, Mr. Chapin stated that might better be discussed at a School Board meeting. Chairwoman Krzyzaniak recalled a working group was to brainstorm ways to increase business tax revenue and this work has not yet been completed. Mr. Chapin said the best time to take up such a review is in the summer and from the School Board's perspective, "they don't want to be penned in". Don Houston said such a document would be a beginning point to get people to understand the budget and the process. Mr. Houston also stated that the town can only buy so much open space and that the fixed costs associated with bonds will be going away. Chairwoman Krzyzaniak said taking the operating costs and adding three percent could be a starting point. Mr. Chapin said open space has its pros and cons and with the assessed value having dropped, it would be difficult to predict a tax rate. Mr. Chapin and the School Board will continue to poke at the issue.

On Mr. Houston's request for a curriculum for each grade level, Mr. Chapin said getting the information is more complicated than it seems. School Superintendent Steve Chamberlain will attend the next Budget Committee meeting to provide the information requested.

Mr. Chapin reported that five students are taking advantage of the extended learning opportunity through New England College. Ken Traum asked how the Federal government determines the district's Special Education needs. Mr. Chapin stated that funds are earmarked for every service given to a student. The same process is used with food service. Don Houston stated that last year this same discussion took place and the cost of one student is as high as \$150,000. Mr. Chapin said that the question always arises as to whether it is less expensive to keep a child in the district or not.

Chairwoman Krzyzaniak mentioned that the budget meeting presentation is scheduled for January 13<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Chapin said that the School Board's Business Administrator, Michelle, is tough with department heads and loyal to taxpayers. Michelle has been dealing with software changes but very detailed budget information was made available for anyone wishing more detail. Richard Horner said the summary Mr. Chapin provided was "perfect". Don Houston asked what the maximum amount of bonding might be for the facilities project. Mr. Chapin said options will be presented in the future.

### **Financials – Contoocook Village Precinct:**

Don Houston did not have a written budget report for the period January through October 2015 but the tank upgrade by Linda Kimball's is now waiting for electrical hook-up and all work will be completed within two or three weeks.

### **Discussion/Ideas on How to Proceed with 2016 Budget:**

Chairwoman Krzyzaniak asked if anyone had any ideas on how to proceed. Richard Horner stated that the process last year “went as well as expected” and he is in favor of continuing the process as is. All Board members seemed to be in favor.

### **Written Report for the 2016 Town Report:**

Richard Horner volunteered to write up the Budget Committee report to be included in the 2016 Town Report. Chairwoman Krzyzaniak thanked Mr. Horner for his willingness to help.

### **Public Comments:**

Mrs. Horner and Jodie Russell were in attendance. Jodie Russell asked if there was a point where it is cheaper to send a Special Needs student out of district rather than having them remain in the district. There was brief discussion on the matter.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 2, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. – the Town budget will be presented.**

### **Adjourn:**

Ken Traum motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m. Seconded by Don Houston. Motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Beauchesne