

**Board of Selectmen  
October 22, 2012**

**Present:** Kenneth S. Paul, Chairperson; Peter M. Kasprzyk; Richard C. Edwards; Teresa A. Williams, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary.

Mr. Paul called the posted meeting to order at 6 p.m. The Board reviewed requests for the 2013 budget with department heads as indicated below.

**Assessing – Cindy Bickford; Arlene Fogg; Relf Fogg**

Ms. Bickford reviewed the various lines. In New Property Assessment (01-4152-1-312) she stated there will be no change in Rod Wood's contract. She added that the \$7,000 for a statistical update was not used in 2012.

It may be necessary to adjust the Training line (01-4152-1-330), which could be as high as \$620. LGC has indicated to a number of associations that they may begin to charge for usage of their facilities and services. Ms. Williams explained that the Town pays dues to NHMA, of which Legal Services is a part. NHMA is located in the LGC building, but the two are separate organizations.

Discussion returned to the New Property Assessment line. Ms. Bickford explained the 5-year measure and list cycle. Mr. Edwards wondered whether the current abatement application issues relate to this line and whether we will require more money next year because of those issues. Ms. Bickford stated that if the Town were to go out to bid for these services, the bids would likely be high because of the number of abatement applications filed in 2012. Mr. Kasprzyk questioned why the contracted assessor does not have to provide his own legal services. Ms. Bickford noted that all abatement applications are reviewed and approved/denied by the Board of Assessors. Mr. Kasprzyk stated that most professionals must carry liability insurance. This is a professional contracted by the Town and should share some responsibility. After much discussion, it was suggested that the property owners challenge the decision of the Board of Assessors. Since the Board of Assessors makes decisions based upon input from the contracted assessor, it would be up to that Board to seek relief directly from the contracted assessor.

Mr. Fogg was advised that any cost to advertise for RFP's for contracted assessing services would come from the Board of Assessors expense line (01-4152-1-810). Mr. Kasprzyk noted that if Ms. Bickford determines the Training line must be increased, it can be done at either the Budget Committee review or at Deliberative Session.

Ms. Bickford advised that the Software/Programming line (01-4152-1-342) should be reduced to \$4035, as she has just received revised estimated numbers from Avitar. There is no change to the Tax Maps line (01-4252-1-390) as Cartographics is not increasing their contract costs.

The department saw increased expenditures in the Assessor's Supplies line (01-4152-1-620) due to the number of abatement applications. Next year that office will send out mailings for current use and exemptions/credits, as 2013 is a recertification year.

There was no change to the Mileage line (01-4152-1-635) or the Assessor's Expenses line (01-4152-1-810). It was then noted that the 2012 Tax Maps line has been over-expended. Ms. Bickford will discuss this with the Finance Clerk.

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Ms. Bickford advised that she has been approached by one taxpayer regarding the possibility of having the tax cards available on line. The cost would be \$1 per card, per year. The Town has over 5000 parcels. The pros and cons of this service were discussed.

**General Assistance – Arlene Fogg**

Ms. Fogg confirmed her hope that some money paid out in assistance will come back to the Town; however, it is not realistic to expect that it will happen. Mr. Kasprzyk suggested that the Town purchase the appropriate liability policy, then ask the taxpayers if they are in favor of the workfare program. Mr. Edwards agreed. Ms. Fogg advised that DHS may have another individual qualified to do clerical work at the Transfer Station. Discussion followed as to whether any training sessions through LGC might be advisable. This will be discussed in more detail at a later date.

Ms. Fogg referred to the increased revenue in 2012 compared to 2011. Mr. Paul noted that 40% of the 2012 appropriation for General Assistance (01-4442-1-690) is unexpended to date and questioned why Ms. Fogg is seeking an increase in that line for 2013. It was noted that we could see increased expenditures with winter approaching. Much discussion followed relating to transient housing. The bottom line: \$48,041.

**Land Use – John Blackwood and Paul Winckler**

It was noted that in 2011 the expenditure for Professional Services (01-4191-1-310) was quite high. Those expenditures included use of encumbered funds, covered by unexpended funds from other lines in the budget.

Mr. Edwards noted that Land Use has not used much of the \$20,000 appropriated for 2012 in the Professional Services line (only \$1000). Mr. Winckler stated that they expect to utilize a portion of those funds in the upcoming months. Ms. Williams stated that CIP work should have been done in the spring, rather than in the fall, so that the plan could be presented to the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee to utilize the information while compiling the budget. She further stated that we do not need to pay the consultant to do that work right now; rather, the Land Use Clerk is able to accomplish what needs to be done.

Mr. Kasprzyk noted that both the Conservation Commission and Heritage Commission made a pledge to the taxpayers to finish their portions of the Master Plan. The Heritage Commission “found” other money and is nearly finished with their section. The Conservation Commission has not started and needs to get busy. Mr. Edwards noted that the Conservation Chair approached the Planning Board regarding funding of a \$19,000 Natural Resources Inventory. Ms. Williams explained that the NRI is mandated, but not as a chapter of the Master Plan. She believes this cost should be included in the Conservation budget. Their chapter of the Master Plan should be covered by the Land Use budget. Ms. Williams also stated that the NRI would help with the Master Plan, but it is not all we need. The consultant should be working on the Conservation Commission’s portion of the Master Plan. Mr. Edwards stated that there is sufficient funding available for that, and we should reduce this line to \$15,000. New total: \$46,841.

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Mr. Blackwood referred to the bridge on North Wakefield Road. He noted that the State has approved a 40-ton weight limit. Ms. Williams pointed out that the Town has the right to post the bridge at a lower weight limit. The Board met with Amanda Bevard last November, at which time Ms. Bevard agreed to request a waiver from the Board when needed. However, she has never done this. Ms. Williams explained that the State modified bridge ratings in 1982, but allowed municipalities leeway, since making many changes could create a hardship. The State still allows the Town to list the bridge at 40 tons, or less if the Town is aware of structural issues. Mr. Blackwood will advise Ms. Bevard to come in for a waiver.

### **Parks & Rec – Wayne Robinson**

Mr. Robinson explained the increase in the Salaries line (01-4520-1-110). He is seeking additional hours for the Program Director; however, this would result in it being a full-time position. After discussion, it was agreed Mr. Robinson will reconsider the number of hours to be budgeted for the Program Director and office help. The Commission has discussed the possibility of reducing the fee schedule for participation in sports. The 2012 Park Caretaker line (01-4520-1-590) is over-expended, and Mr. Robinson will determine the cause of that.

Mr. Robinson has proposed a \$15,000 increase in the Playgrounds/Athletic Fields line (01-4520-1-730) to include fencing for Turntable Park, field repairs and soccer goals. Mr. Robinson will have a breakdown of costs for the Budget Committee presentation. Mr. Paul referred to the CRF for Field Maintenance. Ms. Williams stated the balance is only \$745. However, it would be more appropriate to seek funds for this CRF, and remove that sum from the line in the regular Parks & Rec budget. Line 01-4520-1-730 was reduced to \$7000. The new total: \$130,965 (with the Salary line to be adjusted).

### **Town Hall Annex**

Mr. Robinson explained that the increase in Repairs/Maintenance (01-4194-3-430) reflects minor renovations that will be necessary when the Food Pantry moves to its new location. He has no written estimates yet. Total budget: \$20,500.

### **Town Hall – Teresa Williams**

The Repairs/Maintenance line (01-4194-1-430) does not include the cost of the necessary concrete pad for the propane tanks (cost estimated at around \$4000). Does the Board want to appropriate those funds in this line or in the CRF? This will be revisited. Ms. Williams has asked Arthur Capello to obtain estimates to address the mold issue in the back stairway (near the General Assistance office). We may also need funds to address the missing shingles on the tower.

### **GWRC – Teresa Williams**

The GWRC is requesting another \$2500 to replace clapboards. They expect to request to encumber the \$2500 unexpended from the 2012 budget and do all the clapboard work in 2013. Discussion followed regarding an outside agency request vs. maintenance of a Town building. The GWRC does provide Ms. Williams with quarterly financial reports.

**Personnel Benefits – Teresa Williams**

Ms. Williams stated that the payroll Liability line (01-4155-1-190) was overexpended due to a number of long-time employees retiring. Discussion followed to the Longevity line (01-4155-1-191). Mr. Kasprzyk would like to amend the Personnel Policy to reflect that the Longevity Plan replaces the increases for those employees who have maxed-out at their pay level. Ms. Williams noted that the pay scale may change from year-to-year. This will be revisited.

**Legal Expenses – Town Counsel – Teresa Williams**

No increase is proposed at this time; however, this number could be adjusted, if necessary, later in the budget cycle.

Discussion followed regarding the Town's web site. If we were to change to Virtual Town Hall, the first year would be more expensive, but we would pay less each year thereafter. Ms. Williams will obtain a firm price for the Board's consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Toni Bodah, Secretary

Approval of Minutes:

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Kenneth S. Paul, Chairperson

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Peter M. Kasprzyk

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Richard C. Edwards