

**Budget Committee
November 4, 2013**

Present: Nancy Spencer Smith, Chairperson; Ron Canney; Craig Farley; Carlene Stewart; Asha Kenney; Dave Mankus; Priscilla Colbath; Bruce Rich; Ken Paul, Selectmen's Rep; Teresa A. Williams, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary.

Ms. Smith called the posted meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Department and/or committee representatives were present as indicated below.

Public Safety - Public Safety Building

Mr. Paul advised that the cleaning bid for this building came in \$2000 higher than listed in the budget, although the Selectmen have not yet awarded that bid. This bid process may also affect similar maintenance lines for Town Hall and the Annex. **Mr. Mankus moved to increase the Public Safety Building maintenance line by \$2000. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 9-1.**

Mr. Mankus moved to approve the \$67,285 appropriation for the Public Safety Building. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.

Public Health - Animal Control

Mr. Rich moved to approve the \$23,511 appropriation for Animal Control, as recommended by the Selectmen. Ms. Stewart seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.

Public Safety - Police Department - Chief Fifield

Chief Fifield referred to the increase in the line for full-time salaries. Last year the voters approved the hiring of an additional officer. The 2013 budget covered that position for 9 months, while the 2014 budget reflects a full year of that new position. The number of part-time officers was reduced by 3, and the part-time salary line reflects that decrease.

The overtime line was increased so that officers would be allowed to earn overtime within a 2-week pay period even if earned time had been used. Chief Fifield spoke to the need to keep pay rates at a level that will ensure retention of trained personnel. Several lines have increased as a result of the cost of materials/equipment increasing.

Mr. Canney asked about the turnover rate for officers. The Chief noted that officers tend to start off in small towns in hopes of moving up to a larger town. Many officers will move along if they can earn a better rate elsewhere; however, Wakefield has had a number of officers stay for long periods. **Mr. Mankus moved to approve the \$708,652 appropriation for the Police Department as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.**

Public Safety - Emergency Management

Mr. Paul noted that we used to appropriate \$1000 - \$2000 each year for this purpose. A number of years ago a capital reserve fund was established, which currently has a balance around \$7200. A small appropriation is kept in the operating budget in order to cover minor expenditures. **Ms. Colbath moved to approve the \$250 appropriation for Emergency Management, as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Mankus seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.**

General Government - Cemeteries

There was discussion regarding the lines for miscellaneous maintenance and miscellaneous expense. Mr. Twombly noted that some work listed in the 2014 budget may be accomplished with 2013 funds. Additionally, purchase of the next phase of software is listed in the description; however, the cost is not included in the appropriation. It was ultimately recommended that the miscellaneous maintenance line be left at \$4500, and the miscellaneous expense line be increased to \$2300, for a total appropriation of \$37,800. **Ms. Colbath moved to approve the \$37,800 appropriation for Cemeteries. Mr. Mankus seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.**

General Government - Assessing

In response to a question from Ms. Smith, Ms. Bickford advised that the current contracted assessor is Rod Wood & Associates out of Limerick. [Note: RB Wood & Assoc is actually located in Alfred.] Mr. Mankus referred to the \$6000 listed for tax maps. He noted that a number of cemeteries and historical sites are not identified on the tax maps. Mr. Mankus wondered how much it would cost to have those sites, approximately 20-30, listed on the tax maps. He believes GPS coordinates are available. Ms. Bickford will check with CAI regarding the estimated cost. Mr. Mankus hopes CAI would be willing to do this at no cost to the Town.

Ms. Stewart asked when the contract for assessing would go out to bid. Ms. Bickford advised the contract was put out to bid this past year, with 5 proposals received. RB Wood's proposal was the lowest, considering all areas. All proposals are available for review in the Assessing Office. Ms. Stewart asked whether there was any consideration to keeping this work in house. Ms. Bickford advised that several years ago the Board of Assessors had considered use of a tri-town assessor; however, that route was not followed. Mr. Canney noted that other towns do it. Ms. Bickford is aware of only 1 situation where this occurs. She believes that one town actually recognizes the individual as an employee, while the other towns consider that individual as a contractor. Ms. Bickford referred to the difficulty in tracking time spent for each town.

Previous to this most recent request for proposals, the Board of Assessors sought proposals 5 years ago. The current contract is for a 3-year period at a set rate.

Discussion followed regarding the difference in duties between an assessor and an assessing technician. Ms. Bickford noted that an assessor must be certified, which requires successful completion of a number of courses. In response to Mr. Canney, Ms. Bickford advised that RB Wood has an employee to do the actual field work involved. Mr. Canney asked what other towns Mr. Wood works in. Ms. Bickford is not certain of the specific towns, but believes he works in at least 5 other towns.

Mr. Mankus moved to approve the \$111,806 appropriation for Assessing, as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 7-2-1.

Public Safety - General Fire

Ms. Smith asked what the gear extractor purchased by the Sanbornville Fire Association is. Mr. Paul advised this is basically an industrial washing machine for cleaning clothing after a fire. This was a donation and was not purchased by the Town. The Sanbornville Fire Association and East Wakefield Volunteers have provided much support for this department. Mr. Mankus asked about the phone lines. Ms. Williams advised this is part of the same deal with Time Warner Cable for all Town buildings. **Mr. Mankus moved to approve the \$165,960 appropriation for General Fire as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Fogg seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.**

Public Safety - Ambulance

Ms. Smith referred to the current expenditures from the supply line. Ms. Williams provided up to date information, which indicates that this line is actually over-expended at this point. **Mr. Fogg moved to approve the \$190,841 appropriation for Ambulance as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Canney seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.**

Public Safety - East Wakefield Fire

Ms. Smith noted that the electric and heating costs are significantly higher at the East Wakefield Station than at the Union Station. Mr. Paul noted that the Union Station is a smaller building and has less space being used. **Mr. Fogg moved to approve the \$4688 appropriation for EW Fire as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Mankus seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.**

Public Safety - Union Station

Ms. Stewart moved to approve the \$3860 appropriation for the Union Station as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Rich seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.

Public Safety - Forest Fires

Mr. Fogg moved to approve the \$2001 appropriation for Forest Fires as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Mankus seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.

Ms. Williams noted that she has received the NHMA invoice for annual dues, which is \$303 higher than anticipated, and \$303 higher than previously approved by the Budget Committee. **Mr. Mankus moved to reconsider this appropriation. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion.** Mr. Fogg questioned whether the additional \$303 could be found elsewhere within the budget over the course of the year. Mr. Paul stated that is a possibility; however, there is not much room in this budget, and he would recommend increasing the line. **Ms. Colbath moved to approve the Executive Due Expenses line at \$5328. Mr. Mankus seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.**

Mr. Mankus moved to approve the appropriation for General Government - Executive at \$114,347. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.

The next meeting on the municipal budget is November 6. December 9 has been suggested as a date for the Budget Committee to meet to have a final review of this budget. Everyone should check their calendars and let Ms. Smith know if this will be convenient.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Toni Bodah, Secretary