

**Budget Committee**  
**August 30, 2016**

**Present:** Jerry O'Connor, Chairperson; Priscilla Colbath; Dave Mankus; Lisa Kimball; Bonnie Cyr; Connie Twombly; Denny Miller and Howie Knight.

Also present were: Teresa A. Williams, Town Administrator; Lino Avellani; Norma Joy; Earl Sussman, Superintendent; and Nathan Castle, Financial Manager. Relf Fogg and Steve Brown joined the session in progress.

At 6:30 p.m., Mr. O'Connor called the posted meeting to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Budget Committee Vacancy** – Mr. O'Connor referred to the vacancy on the Budget Committee, which Lino Avellani has expressed an interest to fill. **Ms. Colbath moved to appoint Lino Avellani to serve as a member of the Budget Committee until the March 2017 election. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.** Mr. Avellani will visit the Town Clerk to be sworn in.

**2. SAU Search Committees** – The Wakefield School Board and the Transition Team are asking that a member of the Budget Committee be appointed to serve on the search committee for a superintendent (expected to meet in January and February 2017), as well as the search committee for a financial manager (expected to meet in March 2017). **Ms. Colbath moved to appoint Howie Knight to the search committee for a superintendent. Ms. Twombly seconded the motion, which passed 7-0-1.**

**Ms. Colbath moved to appoint Lisa Kimball to the search committee for a financial manager. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 7-0-1.**

**3. Review of School EOY Figures** – Mr. Sussman and Mr. Castle are available to answer questions. The revised estimated surplus from the 2015/2016 budget is \$302,637. The adopted budget was reduced (via "Amendments") by approximately \$129,000 to adjust for gross appropriations. Ms. Kimball noted that this budget has been managed perfectly.

Ms. Colbath referred to the unexpended funds in the Public Tuition line being a result of the actual number of tuitioned students decreasing by 10. Ms. Cyr stated that such a decrease can occur for a variety of reasons. Mr. Miller indicated that this decrease has been a trend over the past 15 years, noting that we consistently have 5-10 fewer students in high school than anticipated. This results in our continually coming in under budget in this area. Mr. Mankus wonders how many of the 10 students went to alternative school. Ms. Cyr advised that information is not readily available; however, it might be obtainable from the SAU. Mr. Miller stated that we could do a better job with this part of the budget if we had more information. Ms. Kimball added that as a community we should determine why Wakefield students are not finding success at Spaulding High School. Various possible scenarios were discussed as to why the number of Wakefield students attending Spaulding High School is dropping. Ms. Cyr stated that contact will be made with the guidance departments at Paul School and Spaulding to see how to track the reasons for students leaving the system.

Mr. Fogg indicated he is hearing that the student population has diminished each year for 10-15 years. He asked whether the budget has decreased and, if not, why not. Mr. O'Connor noted that a School Board representative is at the table, and there is no public comment section on the agenda.

Mr. Knight referred to the issue of health insurance. Ms. Cyr stated that the School Board has looked at School Care, but it needs to check with other providers, such as Harvard Pilgrim, etc.

Mr. O'Connor noted that the parking lot project is complete. It is much safer and looks beautiful. All agreed. Mr. Sussman spoke well of Joe Williams' efforts as Clerk of the Works for this project. The cost of the project, according to Mr. Fogg, was \$194,000.

Mr. Avellani asked whether the health insurance plan is approved via the union. Ms. Cyr answered in the affirmative. She added that there are 2 unions involved (teachers and paraprofessionals), although only 1 plan is offered. Mr. Avellani asked whether there is any plan by which individuals could obtain their own insurance (either privately or through a union), with the district then paying those individuals a stipend. Ms. Cyr indicated that is currently not an option, but it could be investigated.

**4. Town YTD Figures** – Ms. Williams suggested establishing the meeting schedule for the upcoming budget season. Mr. O'Connor suggested conducting both the Town and School Deliberative Sessions on the same day, perhaps a Saturday. All present believed this to be a great idea. Dino Scala has volunteered to act as School District Moderator, and Barbara Schnurbush has volunteered to act as School District Clerk. Perhaps Parks & Rec could offer babysitting services so that parents of younger children could more easily attend. Ms. Cyr suggested conducting a raffle to be drawn at the *end* of the day. The following dates were established to review the proposed 2017 municipal budget: Saturday, October 29 from noon to 4p.m.; Tuesday, November 1 from 6:30p.m. to 9p.m.; and Thursday, November 3 from 6:30p.m. to 9p.m.

Mr. Miller referred to building permit revenues being less than ½ the total anticipated, although we are 2/3 of the way through the year. Ms. Williams advised that all revenues are posted and that revenues for this line appear to have been over-estimated.

Mr. Knight was advised that the Town generally receives the Room & Meals distribution closer to year-end.

Mr. Miller referred to the recent change in the collection of scrap metal at the Transfer Station and asked whether the Town will lose revenue. Ms. Williams stressed that the Town will not lose revenue and will now be in accordance with regulations for storing this material.

Mr. Mankus noted that Motor Vehicle Permit Fees are down. Ms. Williams stressed that these fees are actually up, if one considers that we still have 4 months to go. She anticipates increasing this line to \$850,000 (from \$700,000) when she completes the MS-4.

Mr. O'Connor referred to the income from Brookfield. Ms. Williams advised that Brookfield is billed quarterly.

Mr. Miller asked whether the line for Sale of Town Owned Property reflects the recent auction. Ms. Williams confirmed this to be the case.

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Mr. Miller referred to the \$3000 spent for a Hazard Mitigation Plan, for which funds were not appropriated. Ms. Williams advised the Town is required to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan every 5 years. The Town is ultimately reimbursed for this expenditure through a grant. [The term "Grant" will be added to each description as appropriate.]

Mr. Miller referred to the current expenditures from the Highway Road Construction capital reserve fund exceeding the amount budgeted for 2016. Ms. Williams explained that the fund actually includes unexpended funds from previous years, in addition to the 2016 appropriation.

Mr. Knight referred to the money added to the budget for shoreland compliance and questioned where those funds are located. Ms. Williams explained that line 01-42401-120 is for Part Time Inspectors— both for buildings (24 hours per week) and for shoreland (10 hours per week). The Shoreland Compliance Officer was just hired last week. Discussion followed regarding an ongoing issue in East Wakefield. Ms. Williams stated, and Mr. Avellani confirmed, that the State of NH is actively working on this issue. Many opinions were shared regarding enforcement.

Ms. Colbath referred to the line for Parks & Rec Facility Repair having been overspent and asked what repairs were done to the building. Ms. Williams stated that this line includes a number of facilities, including the Town-owned beaches. Part of these expenditures was for tree removal at one such beach.

Ms. Colbath referred to the line for Transfer Station Office Expenses being \$1000 over budget. Ms. Williams stated that our auditors required the facility to utilize numbered receipts, a large amount of which needed to be purchased.

Mr. Miller stated that overall the budget looks good. He added that the State wants the Town to carry an adequate reserve. He personally believes the Town has a significant unassigned fund balance, some of which he hopes will be used to offset the tax rate. Ms. Williams advised that the Board consistently utilizes some of the unassigned fund balance to offset the tax rate.

Ms. Williams confirmed to Mr. Avellani that the unassigned fund balance includes the Town's tax liability. She also confirmed to him that health insurance is a separate line item rather than being included in each salary line.

Ms. Williams noted that our property liability insurance line is under expended due to this being a transition year from a fiscal year to a calendar year with our new carrier. She is currently preparing bid specs for work on the second floor of the public safety building. Mr. Miller noted that it is important to get the water line installed before winter.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Toni Bodah, Acting Secretary