

Advisory Budget Committee Minutes  
Tuesday December 8, 2009

**PRESENT:** Committee Members: Scott Simano, Howard Hatch, Dick McDanolds, Barbara Dutile, Eleanor Ingbretson, Dick Fabrizio, Larry Corey, Peter Conrad, Bruce Simonds and Wayne Fortier; Selectboard members: Rick Ladd and Lynn Wheeler; Town Manager Glenn English; Administrative Assistant Jo Lacaillade; Chief Cecil Smith; and Robert Fillion.

**ABSENT:** Mike Conrad

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Scott stated that he might miss some of the meetings this year because of his daughter's basketball schedule and thought that perhaps they might want to have someone else chair the committee. Larry Corey said that is commendable that he does that and nominated Scott Simano for chairman; the motion was seconded by Dick McDanolds. There was discussion about appointing a vice chair and Wayne Fortier nominated Howard Hatch which was seconded by Scott Simano; Howard declined. Howard Hatch nominated Dick Fabrizio who also declined. Howard Hatch made a motion that motions cease; seconded by Larry Corey and carried unanimously. The motion on the table for Scott Simano to chair the committee carried unanimously. It was stated that if Scott needed to miss any meetings he would just ask someone to fill in for him.

There was a brief discussion regarding any deadline that the advisory budget committee has and the Town Manager said that there is plenty of time. Lynn Wheeler said there is an Armory Advisory Committee going on and some of the same members are on that as the budget committee and they are trying to hold one meeting a week themselves. The following dates were set for the Advisory Budget Committee:

- Monday, December 14, 2009 (Police Dept.)
- Wednesday, December 23, 2009 (Highway Dept.)
- Monday, December 28, 2009 (Welfare, Alumni Hall, Animal Control)
- Wednesday, January 6, 2010 (Recreation, Library)

All meetings will start at 7pm.

TM English said that he had only received 2 requests from the Haverhill Corner Library for an increase and the North Haverhill Library for level funding. He budgeted all libraries at the same amount as last year.

There was a discussion about when the books are closed for year 2009. AA Lacaillade explained that by government accounting standards the accounts remain open until all services and supplies that are subject to 2009 have been received. That will not all have happened until well into 2010. The figures reflected in the Town Report are not always the actual for the year if other things come in after the report has gone to print.

Scott Simano said that he doesn't have any new rules of procedure this year and asked if anyone else did; he reminded everyone to keep their language under control. TM English asked if they could have recorded votes; many times there may not be a clear picture of the vote because only a few vote either nay or yeah and the rest are silent. He felt that they all should vote. Larry Corey and Howard Hatch agreed, it is not clear when a person does not vote either way, how the actual vote went and if a majority of the committee voted. Scott said that if nobody votes no he will consider it a unanimous vote in favor; if someone feels strongly against it they need to state so on record. There was more discussion. If at any time a vote is taken and it is not clear how the votes are split, the chairman will ask for further clarification of the vote. Scott reviewed the conflict of interest issue.

TM English ran through the changes in the budget this year as documented on his cover sheet. There

are some changes being made to the employee health insurance plan that will keep the costs basically neutral for the 2010 year; the welfare budget is up; retirement rates are up; and there is some money in the budget for very basic operation of the Woodsville Armory. He is sure that number will change as the discussions on the uses for that building take place. There is also a line item for paving the business park road in an 80/20 grant. He reviewed the total budget as it compares to 2009 and the impact on taxes as it stands currently and overview of the revenues. There was a brief review of how the Woodsville Road money is calculated. Peter Conrad asked about the Capital Reserve Fund that was established for improvements in the business park. That was established after the 2009 Town Meeting and there have not been any sales since that time for the proceeds to go to that fund.

Wayne Fortier said that there are a lot of Town buildings, some belong to the school district and some belong to the Town but there is no individual assigned to looking after maintenance of all of them. TM English said that by default he is in charge of the Town buildings and the school is over theirs. Wayne felt that an agreement should be entered into that would hire an individual responsible for overseeing all the buildings combined; that would make sense. Howard Hatch said that he had brought this up at a Selectboard meeting recently and felt they could incorporate these duties and more into the new building code enforcement officer job duties. There was more discussion on this issue.

Howard Hatch addressed the wage schedule that the committee was given tonight. The Town Manager put in a 2% increase for employees. He felt the Town could be sending a message to the School District and County by not giving a raise; maybe the others would follow suit somewhere down the road. TM English said that all of the other entities have union protection; the Town employees do not. Scott Simano said that he feels comfortable with employees being asked to pay more for their health insurance, knowing that they are getting a wage adjustment; he wouldn't feel as comfortable doing that without a wage adjustment. Peter Conrad said that it is not uncommon for an employer to alter a benefit like the health insurance and pay the employee more to help offset that change, at least in the first year. TM English explained the wellness program that the LGC health trust runs that employees will net lower costs to the insurer which may translate to lower premiums. Bruce Simonds and Larry Corey said the health savings accounts that have been established at Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank have been hugely successful. The Town is hoping to establish those in July. Barb Dutile wanted it clarified that the County is not all union. TM English said his point was that these are all public employees and to ask the Town employees to take the first hit is discriminatory.

The committee requested detailed information for the police department maintenance/repairs; professional services and equipment lines for next Monday's meeting. It was also requested that the committee receive more information regarding the impact that the changes to the health insurance plan will make on employees.

Wayne Fortier asked that the committee be supplied with the email list of all of the members.

Larry Corey made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Barb Dutile and carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Minutes transcribed by Jo Lacaillade.