

Approved

Town of Grantham Board of Selectmen – Budget Work Session Minutes November 18, 2015

The budget work session started at 8:35am on Wednesday, November 18, 2015. The meeting was held in the Grantham Town Building, Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room at 300 Route 10 South, Grantham, NH.

Present: Chairman Warren Kimball; Selectman Sheridan Brown; Selectman Constance Jones; Town Administrator Melissa White; and others

2016-17 Budget

Highway Administration:

The requested budget is \$7,000 more than the current budget; or an increase of about 3% with majority of the increase being for equipment maintenance and repairs.

Salaries will be determined at a later date.

Highway Maintenance:

The requested budget is \$11,000 more than the current budget; or an increase of about 7.5%. The paving line was increased by \$10,000 due to the likely fluctuation in fuel prices. Road Agent Hastings provided the Board with an updated five-year paving plan and said in this budget he plans to pave the north end of Olde Farms Road along with 2000 feet of New Aldrich Road. The road maintenance line was increased to allow for more culvert changes and road fabric to be added to the dirt roads. Hastings said this line has not been increased in several years and since the culvert inventory was done he has been working on replacing the worst ones. In addition, road fabric costs about \$400 per roll which will only cover 300 feet of a road.

Equipment:

Hastings informed that his 2007 Backhoe will need to be replaced soon. It currently has 5,600 hours on it and has had increased problems, especially with the electrical in it. Hastings said that the salt accelerates the deterioration of his equipment. He will have to watch the hours closely on it this winter because once it hits 6,000 hours, the trade in value will decrease by \$10,000 - \$15,000.

Hastings provided the Board with a quote for a 2015 John Deere 310SL Backhoe. Selectman Brown asked if a quote from CAT had been obtained. Hastings said he is waiting for that one to come in; that the CAT products are usually more expensive.

Selectman Kimball thanked Hastings for all his hard work and said he has done a fabulous job.

Selectman Brown also thanked Hastings for a job well done, especially with maintaining Dunbar Hill Road in the winter.

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Conservation:

The requested budget decreased by \$1,000 or 18.5% overall. Conservation Chair Richard Hocker gave a progress report on the bridge being built at Brookside Park and stated the \$4,000 in the budget would be used to improve the parking lot.

Hocker requested monies be added to the Land Preservation Capital Reserve Fund since the balance is at \$69,000. He said there are some key parcels the Commission is interested in like the 388 acre parcel owned by Mr. Ruger off Dunbar Hill Road for \$900,000; 225 acre parcel owned by Mr. Gualt on Miller Pond Road for \$1,100,000 which is a major wildlife corridor; and 695 acres owned by Tara Romano off Dunbar Hill Road.

Selectmen Brown asked if the Commission was still considering a land preservation bond. Hocker said yes, probably not until the 2017-2018 timeframe.

Energy:

Energy Committee members Paula Bresnick, Don Fitzpatrick and Jenna Chenevert gave a brief overview of the work they have done on the energy audits for the Town Hall, Fire Station and Transfer Station as well as the review of the street lights. Representatives from Ligh Tec, Inc., Meghan Hoyer, President and Peter Mikolajczuk, Sales, were also present to explain the energy projects.

Mr. Mikolajczuk gave an overview of the street light project that would entail replacing the existing fixtures with LED fixtures. Estimated cost is \$10,612 - \$14,454 depending on the vendor. GE and Holophane are high quality fixtures. The estimates do not include the cost for bucket trucks or flaggers. Mikolajczuk also said there are fixtures that offer bi-level dimming which would save more money in electric costs. Mikolajczuk explained that bi-level dimming helps with light pollution and can be set to illuminate at 50% and when a vehicle approaches it comes up to 100% for a certain amount of time.

Selectman Brown asked how long bi-level dimming has been available. Ms. Hoyer said five years and explained they have improved their extended warranty to 10 years; some sensors for 12 years.

Mikolajczuk said the distribution of light can be tailored to what is most beneficial to the area being illuminated.

Energy Audit of the Town Hall, Fire Station & Transfer Station:

Ms. Hoyer explained that for all three facilities the lighting was proposed to be replaced with LED bulbs. Total project cost is \$41,845 with a 50% rebate from Eversource with an average payback time of 4.8 years. Hoyer explained how the rebate program worked and said our project would have to meet the benefit cost test that Eversource would conduct, to ensure it is a cost effective project for them to invest in.

Hoyer reviewed the summary of the planned energy efficiency measures for each building. Although dependent on the number of hours of use, the following is a breakdown on energy savings annually:

- Fire Station – currently using 15,041kWh; saving would be 6,360kWh
- Town Hall – currently using 66,280kWh; savings would be 25,123kWh
- Transfer Station – currently using 13,366 kWh; savings would be 1,630kWh

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Selectman Brown asked if the rebate would be affected by using a third party electric supplier. Hoye said no.

P. Bresnick asked if we can apply now to get in the queue. Hoye said yes, that she recommends applying as soon as possible. Administrator White asked if we could apply now even though we haven't had town meeting approval yet. Hoye said Eversource allocates the money based on the applications and if the project didn't pass town meeting vote, then Eversource would release the funds to the next people in the queue.

Selectman Brown asked if there are people in the queue that will rollover to the next cycle in 2016. Hoye said yes.

The Energy Committee requested a budget of \$1,000 to be used to attend conferences and workshops as well as to buy supplies to hand out to residents. They plan to hold informational sessions for residents in the near future.

J. Chenevert asked if there are any other projects the Board wanted them to look at. Chairman Kimball felt exploring solar for town buildings would be a worthwhile endeavor.

Dunbar Free Library:

Trustee Jenik requested salary increases be the same as what other town employees are getting. Operating expenses have increased by \$75 or .14%. Jenik said they were able to keep their operating expenses at a minimum, mostly due to the more efficient heating and cooling systems.

Capital Reserve Fund – Jenik explained the siding on the north side of the building will need to be replaced in two years. Although no official estimates have been obtained yet, Jenik thought \$15,000 was a good ballpark figure to start with and asked for support of \$5,000 in this proposed budget for that purpose.

Selectman Jones stated she was approached by Lorie McClory about the process of allowing Croydon residents to use the library if they (Croydon) paid DFL a fixed fee. Jones stated that she didn't feel it was a matter the Selectmen would decide on; that it would be a decision of the Library Trustees. Jenik agreed and said other smaller town's raise and appropriate monies for payment to the library of a neighboring town so their residents have the ability to utilize a library.

Administrative:

Overall increase of \$1,900 or .93%. Selectman Brown asked about the computer services line and who we use for IT services. White explained Mike Bodeur is hired to handle everything; basically on call as the need arises. Brown suggested having him come in check the server and computers for vulnerabilities that are known problems.

Supervisors of the Checklist:

Increase of \$2,900 or 64% due to staffing needs for the three elections in this budget cycle.

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Accounting:

No increase.

Assessing:

Increase of \$1,000 or 2.3% for assessing & online tax map software and tax map updates.

Legal:

No increase.

Planning:

Decrease of \$13,900 or 63.9% due to the Master Plan update being complete.

Zoning:

A total increase of \$75.

Buildings:

Increase of \$3,000 or 3%.

The Board commented on the excellent work that Groundskeeper Carey does.

Police Department:

Chief Madore said he was requesting a 2% salary increase for the Secretary, Sergeant and himself along with a 5.2% increase for the Patrol Officers. Madore stated that recently Officer Soucy had applied to Nashua which neighbors his hometown because the starting pay is \$52,000 so he conducted a wage survey to see how Grantham compared to other towns. He explained that he used the Town of Tamworth's wage study from 2014 as a guide and included some other smaller towns close to Grantham. Not all towns provided data for all our positions and some towns did not have a secretarial position within their police department. Of the 29 towns we requested data from, 28 responded. The breakdown of where Grantham ranked is as follows:

- Chief – 14th of 28
- Sergeant – 14th of 28
- Senior Patrolman – 8th of 11
- Certified Patrolman – 22nd of 26
- Secretary – 4th of 12

Madore reviewed the 2014 Tamworth study and how Grantham's median household income was \$87,245 along with other statistics.

Madore said he would like to increase the salary of his two Patrol Officers by \$1.00 per hour to be more competitive with surrounding towns.

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Selectman Jones asked about the salaries for the part-time officers and asked if they were competitive enough especially since Officer Julian is not only the Springfield Police Chief but also a Field Training Officer and helps us significantly. Madore said he would look at the part-time salaries again.

Selectman Brown asked if Grantham's benefits were competitive compared to towns of similar size. Administrator White said yes, that years ago that was what kept our employees long-term but wages, specifically within the Police Department, haven't been competitive for several years now. Brown commented that the Tamworth study showed that most towns pay about 90% of the health insurance premium which is where Grantham is at.

Madore addressed the rest of his budget stating the second half of the dispatch increase is included in this budget. Newport now charges a per capita rate for their dispatch services.

Administrator White stated the overtime line hadn't been adjusted and asked if it should have been given salaries are increasing. White said she noticed the overtime hours have been increasing and asked if caseloads have increased. Madore said that an Officer is paid overtime when working on holidays. White asked how many holidays are staffed and how many shifts are filled on those holidays. Madore said he would have to get that information.

White asked about the radios. Madore said his radios are fine but a digital repeater may need to be purchased in the near future. The reason for this is the narrow-banding of the FCC. In 2013 they had 25 hertz but the FCC reduced it to 12.5 which had resulted in communication problems. Those issues were fixed by purchasing another repeater. In 2018, the FCC will narrowband again down to 6.5 hertz which will reduce the ability to broadcast even further. In addition, it affects the volume through the radio. Because of this, Madore requested a Capital Reserve Fund be set up for this.

Selectman Jones asked if we needed to stay with Newport for dispatch services or if our equipment is such that it requires us to stay with them. Madore said we are not required to stay with Newport; that he hasn't had any problems with them. He stated that since they are in the same county it makes it easy to conduct police business. Jones said she envisions that there could be a significant increase from Newport and just wanted to be sure we had the option to go elsewhere if needed.

Madore said he would not be seeking a cruiser replacement until the 2017-2018 budget.

Madore stated that he felt he had presented a very reasonable budget and stated that this budget is, overall, 5.2% higher than the budget he started with when he became the Chief in 2008. The Board thanked Madore.

Approved

Transfer Station Administration:

Overall increase of \$500 or .36%. Chairman Kimball asked how the equipment was doing. Supervisor Scott said everything is running good; that the next replacement would be the Roll-off Truck. Scott said it currently had about 80,000 miles and that he puts about 9,000 miles per year on it. Kimball felt we could get another 10 years with the truck and requested Scott keep an eye on it. Scott said that as long as we can keep the miles low on it, he doesn't see any reason at this point, why it couldn't last.

The compactor is in good shape; has about 300 hours on it. Scott said he will continue with preventative maintenance.

Transfer Station – Disposal:

There is an overall increase of \$11,000 or 5.61% due to holding a Household Hazardous Waste Day in the summer of 2016.

Selectman Brown stated that NH Department of Environmental Services has a Hazardous Waste grant; that applications are due by February 1, 2016. White said she would work with Scott and apply for it. Brown said there is an educational component to it but is easily fulfilled.

Scott stated there has been a significant increase in tire disposal, mostly because of the two auto repair garages in town. Scott said that since September he has disposed of over 1,200 tires with 90% of them coming from the auto repair garages. Scott didn't feel that commercial garages should be allowed to dispose of the tires for free especially since they charge upwards of \$5.00 per tire to their customer.

There was further discussion about how to implement a regulation like this and what the enforcement mechanism would be. No decisions were made.

Chairman Kimball thanked Scott for all his efforts and good work.

Health Officer:

New budget of \$1,700 to pay a small stipend per month to the Health Officer along with monies for training and travel if needed.

Activities:

There is an overall increase of \$7,050 or 25% due to the added 250th Anniversary Celebration. Activities Director Jamielynn Garland discussed her concerns about her role in planning the 250th celebration especially since she has not had much response from the community. Garland said that a regular Old Home Day event takes a significant amount of time to plan and organize, estimating over 140 hours to put the event together. Garland said with this added celebration to be held in June 2017, it will be a huge burden in addition to the regular activities her position requires.

Administrator White stated she thought the purpose of establishing the committee for the 250th celebration and have Garland be a part of it, was to utilize Garland's established connections with vendors etc., not to put the whole planning and organizing onto her.

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Selectman Brown felt participation would improve; that he felt there would be a core group of residents that would take ownership of the event. Brown stated that he and his wife, Deb would volunteer to be on the committee.

Chairman Kimball said he didn't want Garland to plan the whole event; that she would kick it off and then delegate and be a resource to the committee.

Brown suggested looking into establishing a trust fund so donations could be solicited. He also felt a webpage should be created.

FAST Squad:

The overall budget has an increase of \$10,424 or 14.6% with most of the increase in ambulance service. Administrator White stated that earlier in the year New London Ambulance Service was going to increase their fees to \$68,000 and because of that the switch to Lebanon Fire Department was made for \$325 per call. Calls for ambulance service vary but on average we have about 150. Chief Fountain said more of our FAST Squad members are responding to calls now because Lebanon Fire Department treats them as part of the team.

Fire Department:

The overall budget has an increase of \$336 or .27%. Monies are included to repair the dry hydrants.

Capital Projects:

Chief Foundation said the vehicles are all good; that there is no change in the replacement schedule given to the CIP committee last year.

Fountain provided estimates for repairs of the building:

- Lighting (interior & exterior) - \$16,292
- Insulating the roof - \$10,250
- Heating upgrades – waiting on quotes
- Repaving parking lot - \$100,000
- Replace doors and windows - \$12,000
- Sprinklers – waiting on quotes
- Exterior wood siding & trim – waiting on quotes
- Painting of the interior – waiting on quotes

The Board of Selectmen will determine what capital projects will be included in the budget at the next work session; time and date to be determined.

The meeting ended at 4:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa M. White

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Town Administrator