

**TOWN OF CANAAN
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
September 17, 2009
Canaan Fire Station
Draft Copy**

Members present: Chair David McAlister; Dave Barney; Craig Lawler; Russell Lester; Denis Salvail; John Bergeron; Nathan Deleault; Al Posnanski; and Selectman Scott Borthwick. Also present was Michael Capone, Shirley Packard; Phil Carter; Roberta Berner and Kate Keating of the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council; Van Chesnut of Advance Transit; Charlie Paine; Margaret O'Neil of WISE; and a representative of Visiting Nurses Alliance.

David McAlister called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and took attendance.

The Budget Committee started a review of department head's proposed budgets for 2010 as follows:

Planning Board

Michael Capone summarized that the Planning Board's budget is level funded at \$1,403 for next year.

There was general discussion that postage costs are expected to increase for the Planning Board budget next year. Michael Capone noted that postage allocation to the various department budgets is done quarterly.

Michael Capone clarified that the training expenses are accounted for in the miscellaneous line item.

Al Posnanski asked how much revenue is collected regarding the Planning Board fees to offset the town's costs. Michael Capone responded that application fees cover the expenses for abutter notices and that approximately \$1,300 was collected between January and August of 2008. Therefore, the department does help to pay for itself.

Cemeteries

Phil Carter summarized that the cemetery budget has been reduced by approximately twenty-five percent for next year. The mowing schedule has been cut to two days per week. Phil Carter noted that the new riding lawn mower is being taken to the repair shop for a checkup.

Insurances

Michael Capone summarized that this budget is level funded until further notice is received from the municipal association regarding any rate increases.

Regional Associations

Michael Capone summarized the following budget requests have been received: Advance Transit - \$7,600; Grafton County Senior Citizens Council - \$8,000; WISE - \$2,100; ACORN - \$500; Visiting Nurses Alliance - \$13,835; CASA – \$500; Tri Cap - \$3,760; and \$2,000 for each lake association; for a total of \$40,295. Michael Capone noted that a request has not been received from the Mascoma Valley Health Initiative and that West Central Services will be submitting a request as a warrant article.

Nathan Deleault and David McAlister commented that they prefer that the Regional Associations submit their requests through a warrant article so that the public can directly vote to either support or not support these services.

Representatives from the following regional associations were present to summarize the services that they provide and the number of Canaan residents receiving their services, as summarized in their request documents to the town: Grafton County Senior Citizens Council; Visiting Nurses Association; WISE; and Advance Transit.

There was general discussion that the Senior Center pays for heat, electricity, and propane but that the town provides and maintains the building at no cost to the Senior Center. It was noted that the Lions Club contributes \$500 annually to the Senior Center towards the utility costs.

Dave Barney suggested that committee members support the request for Grafton County Senior Citizens Council since he volunteers at the Senior Center once a week and witnesses the interaction and the assistance that is truly needed by Canaan residents.

Michael Capone explained that the voter approved appropriations to the regional associations are distributed at the end of the fiscal year in order to improve the town's position regarding cash flow and, therefore, reducing the town's need to borrow funds. Russell Lester added that the town's payment to the school district increased this year and that a payment schedule was negotiated so that the town did not need to borrow funds.

Al Posnanski asked who determines if an individual is eligible for services with the Visiting Nurses Association. The representative responded that anyone can call for a service assessment but that a physician needs to verify the need for the service.

Charlie Paine of the Canaan Lake Association and Dave Barney of the Goose Pond Association summarized the benefits of the milfoil prevention programs on the town's water assets and property values. Dave Barney noted that the monitoring program had two milfoil findings on boats this year.

Michael Capone noted that the deadline for petition warrant articles is January 12th.

General Government

Michael Capone summarized that the postage has been increased due to the postage rate increase. Michael Capone noted again that the postage allocation to the various departments is only done quarterly so the departments' actual expenditures will be adjusted at a later time. There was general discussion regarding the various mailing options available to the town.

Michael Capone noted that the cell phone contracts are being reviewed so the proposed budget allocation may change.

There was general discussion whether additional consideration should be given to adding one dollar to the training and education line item.

Michael Capone explained that the gasoline and diesel expenditures were reallocated last year to the various department budgets so that this line item is no longer needed.

Government Buildings

A pricing adjustment to the heating oil and gas line items was noted.

Michael Capone explained that the proposed expenditure amount on the repairs and maintenance line item is based on Tom Guillette's list of outstanding projects at this time. Michael Capone added that he is working to better define the expenses for state inspections regarding fire extinguishers, the library elevator, and alarm systems, as well as, the preventative maintenance costs for furnaces and the exhaust system at the fire station.

There was general discussion that there may be a need to adjust Tom Guillette's salary if his job responsibilities have increased. Michael Capone explained that a formal review of the job description is underway.

Bridge Inspection

Michael Capone explained that this budget is only used for accounting purposes whenever reserve funds are expended for bridges, such as the River Road bridge.

Street Lighting

Michael Capone summarized that the Board of Selectmen has requested him to engage in conversation with National Grid regarding the 125 street lights that the town is currently being billed for. Perhaps there are street lights that can be removed or at least replaced with a more efficient light system in order to reduce operational expenses and the amount of unnecessary lighting.

Russell Lester noted that there are federal funds available to help improve lighting efficiency.

Michael Capone explained the details regarding the electricity billing and the various costs charged depending on which lighting fixtures exist.

Health

Michael Capone summarized that the health budget is level funded from last year.

Cultural

Michael Capone summarized that the cultural budget is also level funded from last year.

Approval of Minutes

Board members reviewed draft copies of the minutes dated September 3, 2009.

MOTION by David McAlister and seconded by Russell Lester to approve the draft copy of minutes dated September 3, 2009, as presented.

No vote was taken on this motion.

Michael Capone corrected that “state audits” should be revised to “federal audits” on page three.

Scott Borthwick corrected that “State of NH” should be revised to “Town of Canaan” on page three.

Michael Capone corrected that “eighteen” should be revised to “twelve” on page six.

Dave Barney corrected the misspelling of “counsel” on page five.

Scott Borthwick corrected “GNK” to “G&K” on page seven.

MOTION by David McAlister and seconded by Dave Barney to approve the draft copy of minutes dated September 3, 2009, as corrected.

VOTE: Unanimous in the affirmative

Chairmen’s Report

David McAlister noted that board members should have received a fall budget review schedule. Review of the Selectmen’s proposed budget will be on September 29th.

Selectmen’s Report

There was no selectmen’s report provided at this time.

Other Business

There was no other business covered at this time.

MOTION by Dave Barney and seconded by Craig Lawler to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 P.M.

VOTE: Unanimous in the affirmative