

**TOWN OF CANAAN
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
October 15, 2009
Canaan Fire Station
Approved Copy**

Members present: Chair David McAlister; Eleanor Davis; Dave Barney; John Bergeron; Denis Salvail; Nathan Deleault; Al Posnanski; Russell Lester; Craig Lawler; and Selectman Scott Borthwick. Also present were Michael Capone, Larry Brabant; Bob Scott; Chief Sam Frank; Chief Bill Bellion; John Hennessey; and Shirley Packard.

David McAlister called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. and took attendance.

The Budget Committee reviewed the following proposed department budgets for 2010:

Mechanic

Larry Brabant summarized that this proposed budget is level funded for next year.

There was general discussion that the loader tires were recently replaced and that there are predictions that tire prices are expected to increase for next year.

It was noted that the town garage provides a full service for all of the municipal departments.

Highway

Bob Scott summarized the following details regarding his proposed budget: a 3% in the salary line item; funds for paving Roberts Road and possibly the southern part of Goose Pond Road; the brush mowing line item was increased by \$1,000 since it was under-budgeted for this year; and the FT salaries line item is adjusted to include hours for the part time employee who will be shared with the cemetery department.

Dave Barney expressed concerns regarding phosphorus use on Goose Pond, as well as, mowing concerns. Dave Barney also made note of culverts and grading needed on Goose Pond Road.

John Bergeron commented that silt from the roadway is accumulating in the stream along Fernwood Farms Road. There was general discussion regarding repair of the culvert on Corno Road.

There was also general discussion of a possible land swap opportunity with Cardigan Mountain School in order to make improvements to the roadway, culverts, and the school entrance.

There was general discussion regarding reconfiguration of the Roberts Road and Canaan Street intersection. It was suggested that ideas for road projects be submitted to Bob

Scott. Michael Capone summarized that Bob Scott will soon have access to a new computer program that will assist in the scheduling of road projects.

Police

Chief Frank noted that he has revised his budget figures from what was previously distributed to committee members and provided these revised budget figures during his budget presentation.

It was explained that there has been an agreement to hire two 20 hour part-time personnel due to the significant number of open cases at this time. Chief Frank clarified that there is no obligation of paying back the training costs for part-time personnel.

Chief Frank summarized that the sergeant position is receiving a comparable salary to the chief position despite the differences in responsibility levels.

Chief Frank explained that he has include funds to purchase a new cruiser in the equipment line item since Selectmen Lewis has offered to support his budget if he submits a total budget of below \$490,000 including the cruiser cost. A four year lease with an annual payment of \$6506.15 is available plus an opportunity for a \$1,000 trade on the 2005 Crown Victoria. Chief Frank explained that \$23,440 in cash would purchase the cruiser outright but that he would prefer an annual lease payment in order to start a four year replacement cycle. There was general discussion whether a capital reserve fund should be used to purchase vehicles or whether purchasing with cash from the operating budget is better.

Russell Lester arrived at 7:52 P.M.

Chief Frank offered the following budget details: \$5,000 has been budgeted for cameras; the union salary increases are 6.5% for next year; and outside duty responsibilities are being limited to public requests for fingerprinting and various reports.

There was general discussion that the outside detail creates revenue that supplements the operating budget, as well as, the funds receiving from school for the School Resource Officer.

Ambulance

It was noted that the ambulance service is within the first year of a three year contract and that the cost for the service is pro-rated and based on the population size.

Fire Department

Chief Bellion summarized that there has been 150 calls so far this year, which is a slightly lower number compared to past years at this time. However, a few of the calls have been lengthy so the salary line item will most likely be over-expended during the fourth quarter.

Chief Bellion explained that the cost for a new fire engine has increased to \$250,000 so consideration should be given to supplementing or adding to the capital reserve fund.

Dave Barney asked whether there are plans to install a dry fire hydrant in Goose Pond. Chief Bellion responded that it is too late in the year to complete an installation now.

Denis Salvail asked why the Fire Department is not billing for calls as is done by DARTT, ambulances, wreckers, and towns for clean up costs. Chief Bellion responded that emergency response is a town service and that the fire department does not have a mechanism, policy, or statutory authority to either bill or receive payments. It was suggested that the Board of Selectmen consider a town ordinance in order to help deter repeat offenders for chimney fires, for example.

Emergency Management

It was noted that the stipend listed in the proposed budget is for two people and that the actual dispatch figure is not known at this time.

John Bergeron informed committee members that the CIP Committee has been reconstituted with one member from each group: Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee, plus a community member from Canaan. Steve Ward has volunteered to chair the committee

John Bergeron nominated and David McAlister seconded that Dave Barney serve as the Budget Committee representative. Dave Barney accepted and there were no objections stated at this time.

There was a general explanation of the purpose and advantages of having a Capital Improvement Plan.

Russell Lester commented that there is a need to limit the number of police cruisers or else the rotation cycle will need to be increased since the residents can not afford the cost. There was general discussion whether a fixed four year replacement cycle is needed. Scott Borthwick noted that a maintenance log has been established for the town's vehicles and that no repair jobs justify the need for any new vehicles at this time. It was noted that the town has a full time mechanic in order to keep the vehicles in good working order so that the vehicles will last longer. Russell Lester commented that he supports the use of capital reserve funds since these funds earn interest. David McAlister commented that not every police vehicle needs to be replaced every fourth year since the vehicles are not equally used.

Michael Capone summarized that the CIP has approximately \$186,000 listed for replacement of highway vehicles and that a baseline evaluation should be completed on all the town's vehicles.

Approval of Minutes:

Committee members reviewed draft copies of the September 17th and October 1st minutes.

MOTION by Russell Lester and seconded by David McAlister to accept the September 19, 2009 minutes, with corrections.

Michael Capone corrected Michael Paine's name on pages one and two.

Dave Barney corrected the name of Goose Pond Lake Association on page two.

VOTE: 9 YES 0 NO 1 ABSTAIN [Eleanor Davis]

MOTION by Denis Salvail and seconded by David McAlister to accept the October 1, 2009 minutes, as presented.

No corrections were suggested at this time.

VOTE: 6 YES 0 NO 4 ABSTAIN [Davis, Nathan, Russell, Scott]

Chairmen's Report:

David McAlister informed committee members about Local Government Center's 68th annual conference titled "Rising to the Challenge" on November 18th through 20th if any committee member is interested in attending.

Selectmen's Report:

Scott Borthwick summarized that a used 2005 Sterling 6-wheel truck was purchased with 22,000 miles for \$64,000 from the Town of Woodstock to replace the Freightliner.

Scott Borthwick noted that the school district has scheduled their Deliberative Session on the same day as the town's Deliberative Session on January 30th.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled on October 29th to review the Board of Selectmen's proposed 2010 budget.

Public Comment:

Shirley Packard asked whether anyone knows whether the school teachers' ratified a contract today. No one knew.

MOTION by John Bergeron and seconded by Dave Barney to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 P.M.

VOTE: Unanimous in the affirmative