

**TOWN OF CANAAN
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
October 6, 2011
Canaan Fire Station
Final Copy**

Members present: Chair Eleanor Davis; David McAlister; Dave Barney; Al Posnanski; John Bergeron; Denis Salvail, Bill Crowther, Karen Wolk, Martha Pusey; and Scott Borthwick. Also present was Town Administrator Mike Samson, Bob Scott, Larry Brabant, Chief Bill Bellion, and Chief Sam Frank.

Eleanor Davis called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and took attendance.

Review and Presentation of Proposed Department Budgets for 2012

Highway Department Budget

There was general explanation and consensus to reallocate \$5,000 in funds from the winter sand line item to the culvert and chloride line items but that the budget total of \$283,500 would remain the same.

It was noted that all of the line items with hourly paid salaries have been adjusted to reflect the fifty-two pay week schedule instead of last year's fifty-three week schedule.

Mike Samson commented that the utilities and fuel line items are based on actual bills from past years.

Mike Samson commented that highlighted figures are figures that were changed since last week's committee review and that bold-faced figures are line items that are still being considered for revision.

Bob Scott clarified that the budget increases are mainly due to price increases and not due to an increased number of projects.

Mike Samson clarified that the contracted services line item has adequate funds to cover street clean-up, including culvert cleaning, but that the town does not provide street sweeping.

There was general discussion that the retrieval of gravel and sand behind the transfer station does pose some wear and tear concerns on the town's equipment but that the town's equipment is no longer trucking these materials, which were previously being purchased. Mike Samson commented that significant time and effort has been taken to develop a comprehensive capital improvement program for committee review at a future meeting.

Mechanic Budget

There was general review of the budget increases and encumbrance monies for routine and unexpected repairs and supplies. Mike Samson explained that the overall operating budget does include some contingent funds for unexpected emergency needs and that some intended purchases could be deferred until the second half of the year if funds are ever needed in an emergency.

Fire Department Budget

Bill Bellion summarized that the frequency in calls for fires, motor vehicle accidents, and search and rescues has caused a significant shortage this year in funds for salaries. Bill Bellion summarized the standard items that are typically included in each of the budget line items. Mike Samson commented that the routine replacement of needed equipment has been factored into the capital improvement program, which will be reviewed by this committee at a later time. Bill Bellion summarized some of the rationale used to identify equipment needs so that the department is able to provide adequate service within their service area of Canaan, Orange, and Dorchester. Bill Bellion explained the process of how turnout equipment is provided to the volunteer firefighters.

Emergency Management Budget

Mike Samson explained that the cost for dispatch service is partly based on the number of calls but that the initial negotiation is the larger factor. Mike Samson summarized that the county has offered dispatch services for all of the towns but that most towns prefer the individual service contracts that they establish for their towns.

Police Department Budget

Sam Frank summarized that the proposed budget is essentially the same budget as last year except for increases that he has no control over. Sam Frank noted that the negotiations have not been concluded for the union contract yet. Sam Frank explained that the increase in the equipment line item is for two replacement laptops for police cruisers. Sam Frank clarified that the department currently has five full time officers for six full time positions and five part time officers for eight part time positions. There was general explanation of the training, testing, and hiring process for police officers and the cost to the town.

Mike Samson commended Sam Frank for managing more part time positions in order to cut the overtime costs and help cut the overall operating budget of the town. Mike Samson also justified the increased expense in the software support line item in order to help decrease the amount of time utilized for paperwork and, therefore, the overall salary costs.

There was general discussion regarding the ongoing need to replace and rotate vehicles within the police department and the intended plan to help fund new police vehicle purchases in the future.

Ambulance Budget

Mike Samson summarized that funds have already been raised by the ambulance service to add another ambulance to their fleet. Mike Samson also summarized a proposal to possibly expand the police department building in Canaan by eighteen hundred feet for the ambulance service utilizing grant funds and no funds from the town. An estimated cost provided for this addition was \$265,000. Mike Samson explained that providing the space for the ambulance service to expand their program would enable them to offer a five year contract to the town for \$55,000 per year. It was explained that a second ambulance would enable the ambulance service to increase their revenue. Contingencies included with the proposal include that the ambulance service would not increase the building's operating cost to the town. There was general discussion whether a warrant article would need to be presented to the voters to approve a multi-year contract. Committee members expressed concerns regarding any obligations or restrictions that the acceptance of grant funds might impose on the town.

Cultural and Patriotic Budgets

It was noted that the funds in the cultural budget are used towards the Old Home Days celebration. There was general consensus to leave one dollar in the patriotic budget.

Eleanor Davis asked what the \$680 expenditure is in the capital outlay line item. Mike Samson offered to find out and report back.

Eleanor Davis commented that she had requested a budget proposal for the health budget. Mike Samson responded that the health budget is essentially level funded from last year except for the two percent increase in salary.

Mike Samson confirmed that including one dollar in the conservation budget would be sufficient.

Other Business

Scott Borthwick commented that enough funds have been successfully raised to replace the playground equipment next summer.

Mike Samson clarified that the town's new website is www.canaannh.org and that the old address will automatically redirect users to the new address.

Next Meeting

Eleanor Davis noted that the next scheduled committee meeting is October 20th at 7 P.M. at the fire station.

MOTION by Bill Crowther and seconded by David McAlister to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 P.M.

VOTE: Unanimous in the affirmative