

Canaan Budget Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 2015
Canaan Fire Station, Canaan, NH

Attendees: Budget Committee members: Scott Borthwick, Ellie Davis, Al Posnanski, Martha Pusey, Denis Salvail, Philip Smith Jr., Sadie Wells;
Budget Committee members not in attendance: William Crowther, Patty Duszynski, John Bergeron.

Public attendees: Sam Frank, Bob Scott, Bill Bellion, Bayne Stone, Cindy Neily, Denise Rectsma, Amy Thurber, Tim McQuaid.

Canaan Town Administer Mike Samson; recorded by Roger Lohr.

Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Ellie Davis called the meeting of the Canaan Budget Committee to order at 7:00 PM

2. Committee Discussion

Town Administrator Mike Samson distributed the 2015 Budget vs Actual/2016 Proposed Budget for town expenses.

A. Canaan Police Chief Sam Frank referenced the police department budget with increases to salaries and benefits and equipment. The larger equipment items like vehicles will be in the capital budget and the smaller items in the general budget include taser gun upgrades and computer equipment for the cruisers. He anticipates the budget will decrease in the following year. The police department personnel includes six full time and two part time officers. There are five police cruisers. There is a need to hire additional part time officers.

Town administrator Mike Samson commented that the police department expenses have been well managed. It was also stated that the large increase in salaries was due to including health benefits in the salary figures. The committee asked about resident perspectives of the Canaan Police and the chief felt there were no problems with this in Canaan. He also gave a breakdown of arrests including mostly alcohol and drug related arrests.

Chief Frank also spoke about the emergency management issues related to the dispatch costs, which is done in Hanover and based on the number of calls and the percentage of calls among other users of the dispatch service. Mike Samson mentioned the emergency operation center.

B. Fire Department

Chief Bill Bellion reviewed the fire department budget citing the decrease in the line items due to equipment that was acquired last year. The number of fire department calls is similar to last year. Painting or minor renovation work to the fire department building

was also discussed as a project that could be covered by the government building account.

C. Highway Department

Bob Scott reviewed the highway department budget referencing the salary increases. The increase in supplies is for plow blades and there is also an increase in the cost of salt and gravel. The committee asked about the high amount of budget that has not been spent this year and this is because the high expense winter months are yet to come. Crushing the gravel was also discussed as well as the challenge of silt in the sand pits. Mike Samson said there is a need to find a new location for the sand pit.

D. Mechanic

Bayne Stone stated that New Hampshire had changed the inspection requirement to September, which doubled those costs and caused increases. There are major budget increases to the repair parts, supplies, petroleum products, and tools. Some of these increases are the result of running the department for a year and a better understanding of the annual needs. The petroleum products costs resulted from tank leaks and the increase in tools are mostly a one time expense to upgrade the diagnostic computers. Mike Samson explained the part time account line.

E. Trust Funds

Cindy Neily stated that there was an additional \$50 needed and it was requested that she submit such needs within the budget process. She also said that a line item may be needed for attorney fees.

F. Tax Rate

Town Administrator Mike Samson said that there will be an 8.4% increase in the town tax rate this year which is 16% higher than what was paid in June. This reflects that exemptions were doubled for disabled people and the appraisal for Fairpoint, which was decreased by 50 percent. Mr. Samson also commented about the taxes related to the school budget and he talked about town revenue estimations and the number of houses for sale in Canaan.

G. Library

Amy Thurber distributed a document of library-related statistics and reviewed highlights of the document. She discussed the reciprocal agreements other towns' libraries. She explained that the education support line was offset with a gift that will be used to attend a conference. The salary increase includes the benefits and a salary upgrade related to the educational resume of an assistant position.

The committee discussed the library contributions and how they are handled. The Friends of the Library organization also contributes benefits at no cost to taxpayers. Sales in the library for books, note cards and such should be accounted in the town revenues. There is a NH RSA related to the revenue raised with the copying machine.

3. Other Discussion

Town Administrator Mike Samson said that the rest of the operating budget has now been covered by the Budget Committee and that the next meeting the group will review the CIP and be prepared to vote if the final health insurance premium numbers are received by mid-November. The next Budget Committee meeting is set for November 19 and the December meeting was tentatively cancelled if the committee can vote on the proposed budget in November. The Committee will meet on January 13 and 14 for the public hearing and the warrant articles.

Approval of the September Budget Committee meeting minutes was tabled.

4. Adjournment

All Posnanski made a motion which was seconded by Denis Salvail to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.