

**TOWN OF CANAAN
CANAAN SELECTMEN MEETING
March 27, 2007
Canaan Fire Station**

Selectmen present: Robert Reagan, Kristina Burnett, and Jay Waldner. Also present were Dana Hadley, Nelson Therriault, Cindy Neily, Amy Thurber, Vicky McAlister, David McAlister, David Heath, Glenn Carey, Larry Brabant, Dale Morse, Sam Frank, Denis Salvail, Phillip Salvail, Al Posnanski, Eleanor Davis, Shirley Packard, Patrick Jameson, Joe Cote and the minute taker Christi Berube.

Selectmen Robert Reagan called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcement:

Dana Hadley announced the appointment of Dale Morse as Road Agent until the March, 2008 election.

Election:

MOTION by Jay Waldner and seconded by Kristina Burnett to elect Robert Reagan as the Board of Selectmen Chair.

VOTE: 2 YES 0 NO 1 ABSTAIN (Robert Reagan)

Appointments: Review of Suggestions for 2007 Default Budget with Department Heads

Copies of a proposal were distributed for a 2007 default budget of \$3,257,415. Dana Hadley commended the department heads for a “spirit of cooperation” while identifying budget cuts. Dana Hadley explained that the salary schedule has been maintained with three months of the current salary rates and nine months of the raised salary rates. Dana Hadley summarized that efforts have been made to maintain services that the community needs and to postpone new projects. Dana Hadley clarified that the default budget does not include expenses for water and sewer.

Dana Hadley and department heads summarized the following budget cuts made in order to reduce the defeated budget figure to the default budget figure:

- The headstone repair project was postponed
 - \$7000 was removed from the cemetery and recreation budgets for a new lawn mower
 - The road reconstruction line item was cut by \$50,000
 - \$5,000 was cut from the Police Department outside duty line item
 - \$5,000 was cut from the overtime salaries line item for police officers
 - \$7,000 was cut from the Selectmen’s budget for printing and miscellaneous
 - The election line item was reduced to reflect the costs for one election
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- \$40,000 was cut from the buildings maintenance line item

- \$5,000 was cut from the cemetery budget for tree work
- \$5,000 was cut from the Grafton County Senior Citizen line item since the Town of Canaan provides a building and has spent several thousand dollars in building repairs
- Contributions to Goose Pond Lake Association and Canaan Lake Association were cut
- Cuts were made in the general government office equipment
- Advertising will be limited to one newspaper this year
- \$20,000 was cut from the contracted ambulance line item
- Cuts were made in the fire department equipment line item
- \$1,000 was cut from the dry hydrant line item
- \$1,000 was cut from the emergency management line item
- \$20,000 was cut from the highway salaries line item
- The grounds keeping/ rubbish line item for recreation was zeroed since David Heath's staff has agreed to provide rubbish removal service this year.

Dana Hadley noted that the new compactor has already been purchased for \$26,000 from the capital items line item. Glenn Carey clarified that the electrical hookup of the compactor will cost approximately \$1,000.

Vicky McAlister noted that the election advertising line item can be reduced to \$250 since this line item is only used for advertising costs from the Supervisors of the Checklist.

Vicky McAlister explained that the Town Clerk budget needs to include the costs for the Interware Fees but that these funds are offset by revenues.

Kristen Burnett asked whether the revised budgeted costs for health insurance will cover the actual costs. Dana Hadley responded yes. Dana Hadley noted that he also adjusted the budgeted costs for life insurance.

Eleanor Davis asked whether the newly appointed Road Agent will be earning the same salary as the last Road Agent. Dana Hadley responded yes. Dana Hadley added that the funds for the truck driver/laborer position have been left in the budget.

Eleanor Davis asked what the proposed salary increases were. Dana Hadley responded that non-union personnel were given a 3.8% increase with a maximum 1.2% merit increase. Dana Hadley clarified that stipend positions did not receive increases.

Al Posnanski asked whether there are services that generate revenue for the town. Dana Hadley responded yes but this is not reflected in these budget figures but do impact the tax rate.

Larry Brabant encouraged the Board of Selectmen to reconsider the need for a new police cruiser and a new six wheel truck for this year since deferring the purchases will only create a greater hardship the following year. There was general discussion regarding available options with cash purchases and lease purchases. Robert Reagan commented that the trade-in values and the cost for outfitting a new police cruiser could help with the decision making process. Sam Frank informed board members that he could forfeit the request for an updated camera system, which would lower the cost for a new police cruiser to \$30,000.

There was general discussion regarding the bidding process and state bids for town vehicles. Larry Brabant commented that a few thousand dollars in savings is not worth mixing the brands of vehicles owned by the town.

Denis Salvail commented that many warrant articles passed last year have not been executed yet. Denis Salvail asked why the transition of a vehicle to the Fire Department can not be postponed to a better time.

There was general discussion that a police cruiser was ordered last fall and is ready for pickup now. Larry Brabant explained that there will be a waiting period if a decision to purchase a police cruiser is delayed until after May due to the State bidding process.

Eleanor Davis commented that the Department of Revenue recommends that capital items should never be part of the operating budget. Eleanor Davis suggested that the operating budget may have been defeated since voters would like to vote on capital items separately. There was general discussion and opposing views expressed regarding the budgeting for replacement items.

Vicky McAlister asked whether there would be any grant funds available to the town. Dana Hadley responded that grant funds are hard to find since most grant funds are mainly available for enhancing or establishing programs.

A member of the audience asked whether the town could sell some property in order to finance the budget. Dana Hadley responded that he is intending to have a few properties auctioned but that the revenues from these properties could not be used for this purpose as the total that the Town may spend is the total of the voted appropriation.

Eleanor Davis commented that ACORN did not send a representative to the budget committee to present their request for funds. There was general consensus to remove the \$300 budgeted for the ACORN line item.

Jay Waldner noted that grant funds for the Lake Host Program from the state is expected to be reduced this year.

There was general discussion whether chloride for the roads is necessary. Larry Brabant and David McAlister explained that the chloride helps stiffen and hold the roads together, in addition to providing dust control.

Nelson Therriault summarized that the welfare budget was level funded from last year but that he is concerned with not having enough budgeted for rent assistance. There was general discussion that the Town of Canaan is required to provide rent assistance for residents in need.

Dana Hadley summarized that the contribution to the library last year was \$102,000 and that a request has been made for the Library Trustees to maintain last year's salary rates. Cindy Neily explained that the Library Trustees have always provided the same rate of increase to the library staff as is provided to town employees. Cindy Neily added that the actual library budget is \$126,000 and that this budget is already short \$3,500 due to a redirection of funds to the capital campaign from a

private foundation. There was general discussion regarding the uncertainty with the current server. Kristina Burnett asked whether the salary increases could be provided and the server replacement be postponed. Cindy Neily responded that the Library Trustees will be meeting on the 3rd Monday of April to review the budget. Cindy Neily added that the Library Trustees also have concerns with the rising insurance costs.

Dana Hadley expressed that this summary discussion is a review of the budgets cuts that have been proposed and accepted by the department heads. Dana Hadley requested input and suggestions from the Board of Selectmen and to obtain final approval.

New Business: Selectmen Liaisons to Town Committees

There was general discussion and consensus that board members are willing to maintain the same committee liaisons as last year. Robert Reagan volunteered to participate on the Water Source Protection Committee. Dana Hadley will continue to represent the Board of Selectmen on the Transfer Station Committee.

Other Business:

Dale Morse asked why the signage costs for new developments are included in his budget. There was general discussion and consensus that signs for private streets should be included in the development budget but that the maintenance crew needs to post them for consistency. It was suggested that Dale Morris should keep track of the cost so that a line item can be added to the development budget next year.

Jay Waldner requested status of the open position in the highway department. Dana Hadley responded that a truck driver/laborer position has been advertised and that interviews should start soon. Louis Jacobs has been promoted to a heavy equipment operator. Jay Waldner suggested that not filling the position for this year would create a substantial budget savings in regards to the default budget and the need for a six wheel truck. There was general discussion that the highway department is already short one employee and that a department with fewer employees could create a greater need

overtime pay. Vicky McAlister noted that it is difficult to gain back a position once a position has been left unfilled. Jay Waldner expressed that the voters should not expect the same level of service if the operating budget was defeated.

There was general discussion regarding the new policy for purchase orders. Dana Hadley clarified that department heads need to submit three bids for any item over \$1,000, except for the Mechanic Budget who is required to submit three bids for any item over \$2,500.

Dana Hadley requested signatures on a purchase order from the Board of Selectmen regarding a new York rake for the Highway Department. Dana Hadley thanked Larry Brabant for negotiating the price.

Dana Hadley requested signatures on a revised purchase order from the Board of Selectmen regarding heated mirrors for the fire engine. Dana Hadley explained that the last purchase order did not include the labor costs.

There was general discussion whether the Town Office should charge one dollar per page for faxes. Denis Salvail suggested that town employees should direct individuals to the Evans store since they provide fax service there.

Dana Hadley distributed a current use application to the Board of Selectmen.

Kristina Burnett distributed copies of a letter that she received from K. Ruvolo regarding recommendations for gravel and road repair. Kristina Burnett also distributed a copy of her response and asked that Dale Morse receive a copy of the letter.

Kristina Burnett informed the Board of Selectmen that her husband, Jim Burnett, has offered to provide a forest management plan of the Transfer Station Lot at no charge to the Town of Canaan.

MOTION by Jay Waldner and seconded by Robert Reagan to gratefully accept Mr. Burnett's offer to provide a forest management plan at no charge to the Town of Canaan.

VOTE: 2 YES 0 NO 1 RECUSED (Kristina Burnett)

Denis Salvail asked how many properties are owned by the town due to unpaid taxes. Dana Hadley responded that he does not recall the total number but that four properties will be auctioned as soon as the legal work is completed. These properties are located on Chiefs Drive, Canaan Street, Switch Road, and US Route 4.

MOTION by Jay Waldner and seconded by Kristina Burnett to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 P.M.

VOTE: Unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christi Berube, Minute Taker

Minutes Accepted by the Board of Selectmen on April 3, 2007