

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WORK SESSION
March 18, 2010
MINUTES**

Call to Order:

5:30pm

Chairman of the Board, Stephen R. Barry convened the Work Session for the purpose of discussing the 2010 Default Budget and how to appropriately fund the lines within the various departmental budgets.

Roll Call:

Present: Stephen R. Barry, Chairman; R. Andrew Robertson, Vice Chairman; John Reagan, Alan E. O'Neal and William Perron, Selectmen

Also Present: Cynthia E. Heon, Town Administrator

Chairman Barry advised Board members Selectman O'Neal prepared spreadsheets outlining areas where adjustments could be made to account for the approximate \$14,000 difference between the proposed Selectmen's Budget and the Default Budget totaling \$3,397,725.

Selectman O'Neal explained the color coding; green to indicate decreases to match the Selectmen's Budget and the pink to indicate increases to match the Selectmen's Budget. The red indicates areas where cuts, or changes, were made to add up to the approximate \$14,000. Most of the line items lined up with the Default Budget.

Selectman O'Neal described some changes such as pulling the Tasers from the Police Department Budget and another \$600 for toner that appeared to have been missed previously. The third employee at the Transfer Station was removed. In all, 44 lines decreased and 50 lines increased. Because there wasn't a line in the prior year's budget for contingencies, funding in Government Buildings, G. B. White Building and Town Hall was moved to the respective Maintenance and Repair Lines. Once that was accomplished, there was a small amount left which was moved to the Town Administration Contingency Line.

To Selectman O'Neal, Selectman Hooker's spreadsheet was a good beginning as it encompassed many thoughts and ideas. Police is an area where Selectman Hooker's thoughts differed from Selectman O'Neals. Selectman O'Neal favored funding the payroll lines rather than under-funding them because if the payroll lines increased during next year's preparation of the Default Budget it would be difficult for the Selectmen to explain.

The last two columns on the far right, of the spreadsheet, are areas where the Board may want to consider reserving some funds due to the costs associated with the recent storm events. Things that could be put on hold were noted such as the traffic counter, roadside mowing and the Reservation Road project totaling approximately \$285,000.

Chairman Barry mentioned considering some of the overlay projects rather than the larger project. Selectman O'Neal spoke with Alex Cote, Highway Agent, on Monday and mentioned Reservation Road, Nottingham Road, Meetinghouse Hill Road and Candia Road. Mr. Cote's opinion is that Reservation Road should be done and other things placed on hold. If that were the case and the next Police Officer was not hired, there would be a savings of close to \$125,000.

Vice Chairman Robertson preferred not to wait on roadside mowing.

Board members asked Selectman Reagan what was happening at the legislative level concerning the rise in retirement costs. Selectmen Reagan answered the costs would not affect this year but 2011.

FEMA Funds are now a reality but 25 % early on will not be accounted for with 12.5% ultimately the responsibility of the Town. It was noted that the last check took 20 months to arrive and that the funds should not be counted on for the immediate future. The Selectmen will want to know what damage, if any, was caused by the last rainstorm and whether or not the engineer has looked at the Cole Road Bridge.

Vice Chairman Robertson wanted to be sure Department Heads would know what the Board's intentions are as they go into this budget year. If someone has a convincing case, the Board can listen and if the money is available, the project could be done. Vice Chairman Robertson thought the presentation was a great blueprint to begin work with.

As Chairman Barry does not believe the Chief is close to filling the vacancy, each week that goes by means a savings.

Selectman O'Neal said asphalt prices are going down and that is another bonus because paving and not hiring the Officer would reserve enough funding. The Board would want to identify what might not happen in the bid packages that go out within the next few weeks.

Chairman Barry commended former Selectmen Hooker for starting the groundwork for this budget Work Session as it has been most helpful. Selectman O'Neal agreed.

Selectman O'Neal identified the Overtime Line, for the Highway Department, as possibly being an issue. The Salt, Sand and Contractor Lines look to be in good shape. The Board requested Mr. Cote attend the next meeting.

The first priority at the next meeting will be to set the budget for 2010 and sign the MS-2 and forward the form to the State. The second priority would be to choose projects that should be placed on hold.

5:45pm The Work Session ended.