

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 6, 2011
MINUTES**

Call to Order:

6:00 pm Chairman Don Daley called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:

Chairman Daley asked all to rise and pledge allegiance to the flag

Roll Call:

Present:

Don Daley, Chairman; James Spillane, Vice Chair; Harriet Cady, Kevin Chalbeck, Fred McGarry, Liz Murphy, and Dick Pitman Committee Members; Steve Barry, Selectman; Maryann Clark, School Board Representative; J. Foisy, Finance Director

Absent: Tom Dillon & Kevin Verville

Approval of Minutes: November 29, 2011

Motion: Selectman Barry made a motion to approve the minutes as written

Second: K. Chalbeck

Discussion: Corrections – under “School Board Update” line 1, it was Tom Dillon not Dick Pitman who asked for clarification. And under the “School Update” section of the 2012 Town Budget review, line 2 it was Kevin Verville, not Kevin Chalbeck who asked for further information. Finally under “New Business”, paragraph 2, line 7, it was Tom Dillon, not Dick Pitman who mentioned the Committee can go online to “Meet Your Officers”.

All in favor of approving the minutes as amended - Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Old Business

Chairman Daley has provided to the Committee the complete printing of the email policy. Additionally, answers to the questions about the Fire Chief weekly working hours were provided to the Committee by Town Administrator L. Boswak.

2012 Town Budget Review

Vice Chair Spillane suggested that the Committee begin with a review of some of the lesser department budgets, specifically those less than \$7,000. Chairman Daley agreed, adding that he would like to review the Highway Department this evening as the Highway Agent is present and cannot attend on Saturday. Selectman Barry updated the committee that the Advertising and Regional Associations proposed budget has been raised by \$30 to \$3,271 as the LGC dues have increased.

Highway Department (\$793,693):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: M. Clark

Discussion: Highway Agent Alex Cote thanked the Committee for reviewing this evening and pointed out that the biggest change to the budget over last year is in the hot topping line. He explained that the total number spent in 2011 was close to the amount budgeted for 2012, but that this year the Town was fortunate enough to receive Bonds, impact fees, and specifically fees from the Cotton Woods Development to help offset the costs. Vice Chair Spillane asked if the Cotton Woods take over funds had been put into a Trust for ongoing maintenance. A. Cote indicated that the Town had been involved in a legal battle over those funds and that he believes there is little left in that line.

K. Chalbeck commented regarding the paving of Brown Road, suggesting that the Committee consider pulling that portion of the budget out and present as a Warrant Article in order to bring the overall budget closer in line with default.

Selectman Barry informed the group that the option had been discussed by the Board of Selectman, but that because the section of road is a recurring problem and a significant safety issue, the Board felt it belonged in the budget. Additionally they chose to focus on presenting a budget with numbers representing true needs, rather than be concerned with how in

line it falls with the default. Alex Cote requested that if Committee chooses to remove Brown Road paving from the Department's budget that they not put it in as a Warrant Article. He indicated that he will budget the \$36,000 elsewhere in 2013 and would rather see the Nottingham Road Paving and Chipper approved as Warrant items. Vice Chair Spillane asked how much traffic there was on Brown Road? Alex Cote responded that it's not the volume of the traffic that is the issue, but rather the condition of the Road from a safety perspective. That section of road has been lost to wash out four or five times and is an ongoing maintenance problem in the winter for the school bus.

H. Cady asked for further information on the \$114.50/month Verizon contract, there seems to be price variances between the Departments. Alex Cote answered that one of the devices has more options, in example he has the ability to receive emails on the road. H. Cady asked why the Department needed two Blackberry devices. Alex Cote said that there is not two, only one email enabled device, his, and it is a Verizon Cassio, the other three in the department are basic Verizon phones without texting capabilities.

H. Cady asked why the contractors received varying rates – aren't they providing the same service? Alex Cote answered that no, the vehicles are different, they have different ratings, some have wings, some have 6 wheels versus 8 or 10. H. Cady pointed out that there had been recommendations to the Highway Department as a result of the Energy Audit and it does not look like they are acting on them. Alex Cote confirmed, they had gotten three prices on the cost of making the upgrades recommended by the audit and he felt they were high. Noted that the Department uses waste oil to heat the building and he has chosen not to raise his budget at this time. H. Cady noted that \$25,000 was budgeted last year to pre-buy salt, is there any left over from that purchase? Mr. Cote answered no and that they are looking to repeat this year, pre-buying 200 tons of salt each from two vendors. There is currently \$26,000 in this year's budget available for that purchase. H. Cady clarified that the \$26,000 is in addition to the \$44,000 requested for 2012? Alex confirmed, yes. Vice Chair Spillane asked where the salt was stored and what would happen if the Town did not use the full 400 tons pre-bought? Alex answered that it is stored with the vendors and distributed under a blanket order. The pricing is set in June. If they did not use the full 400 tons they would be reimbursed, but that 400 tons of salt represents approximately ½ a winter supply.

D. Pitman asked what was spent last year on renting a Chipper. Alex Cote answered that they had pulled a 4 year summary and are currently spending around \$14/year for rentals. That number is not a true representation of need as there were issues with availability. Vice Chair Spillane asked what the true cost to the Town was for Chipper use aside from any FEMA reimbursement funds received. Alex Cote answered around \$45,000 for the 4 years. Vice Chair Spillane asked what the life expectancy for the unit was. Alex answered 20 years.

Vote: Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Executive Budget (\$7,301):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: D. Pitman

Discussion: H. Cady indicated that she would like to remove the \$1 line items, specifically the one for Merit Raises. Vice Chair Spillane commented that his understanding was that the \$1 is used as a place holder to hold the line open so that if during the year funds become available they can be allocated to that space. H. Cady understands the intent, but believes that there is no need to hold it open. Feels that there was a problem in the past where Town Citizens felt they had voted down raises on a Warrant Article and then found that the funds were given any way through an open line like this. Selectman Barry disagreed, stating that had not happened, that what H. Cady is referring to was a wage scale adjustment and did not involve the Merit Line. He does not believe the Merit line has been used in four or five years as there have been no available funds. L. Murphy asked what the standard was, if reviews are done annually. J. Foisey answered yes, that reviews are done in July. Any decision made to award a Merit increase as a result of those reviews would be effective January 1 of the following year. Chairman Daley expressed a concern that if there is no merit line and an employee received an excellent review that it would result in the inability of the Town to award a Merit raise. Vice Chair Spillane agreed that he sees no reason to keep the line open, but pointed out that in the grand scheme of things we are talking about \$8 for this department, or around \$30 for the entire Town Budget. H. Cady acknowledged that it's not a lot of money, but feels that it is about presenting a budget to the Town that is honest and straight forward.

Vote: Yea: 8, Nay: 1, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Town Administration (\$180,634):

Discussion tabled until Saturday when Department Representative will be available.

Elections/Supervisor of the Checklist (\$6,325):

Motion: H. Cady moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: D. Pitman

Discussion: None

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Municipal Budget Committee (\$960):

Chairman Daley reminded the Committee that the MBC budget had been approved as proposed at the 10/25 meeting

Zoning Board (\$3,037):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: L. Murphy

Discussion: Vice Chair Spillane pointed out that there have been two years of legal notice expenditures being \$316.21 and the Department continues to budget that line at \$500 – are we seeing a trend? Selectman Barry commented that you just don't know. H. Cady asked for figures in the number of hearings held. Selectman Barry will request that information from the Zoning Board.

Vote: Yea: 8, Nay: 1, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Advertising Review Association (\$3,271):

Motion: L. Murphy moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Vice Chair Spillane

Discussion: Selectman Barry informed the Committee that the number is based on an estimated population of 4,339, which is a 2% increase year over year.

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Ambulance (\$9,500):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: F. McGarry

Discussion: K. Chalbeck asked if the Department Representative had heard anything about the fiscal health of Raymond Ambulance, citing the recent bankruptcy of Rockingham. Mark Tibbetts answered that as far as he has heard everything is fine. H. Cady asked how many calls and how many transports the company has provided under the current contract. Mr. Tibbetts answered that as of this morning there had been 315 calls and he believes around 260 transports year to date. Vice Chair Spillane asked what would happen to the contract, and the funds paid, should the company go out of business. Alex Cote expressed that he believes if the company were to go under that you would only see a name change, using as an example that Rockingham had been acquired by AMR and there was no interruption to service.

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Legal (\$20,000):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: M. Clark

Discussion: Selectman Barry noted that last year the department budget was \$14,000 and current YTD expenditures are around \$29,000. Vice Chair Spillane asked how much of that figure was due to the legal issues with the Police Union. Selectman Barry answered that he can get that figure, noted that one single lawsuit he is aware of cost the town \$7,800.

Vote: Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Abstained: 1 – Motion Carries

Water Holes/Forest Fires (\$7,199):

Motion: Vice Chair Spillane moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Selectman Barry

Discussion: H. Cady mentioned that the Board of Selectman had asked that the Highway Department cut brush around the Parks and Rec fields this week and wondered if the line for Water Hole maintenance should be moved under the Highway Department? Mark Tibbetts indicated that the holes are mowed every 2 weeks during the summer. Selectman Barry commented that the Selectman's decision was specific to clearing the brush on the leech field. K. Chalbeck pointed out that it had been budgeted in 2011 to do the dry hydrant on Church Street and he sees it again in this year's plans. Has that maintenance been completed? Mark Tibbetts informed the Committee that they have done prep work for the Chatter

Brook and Church Street Dry Hydrants and that those projects are slated to be completed in the spring. J. Spillane noted that the \$7,199 figure keeps getting presented, but that it has not been fully used – does the department really intend to spend \$7,199? Mark Tibbetts answered yes.

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Highway Safety (\$1,103):

Motion: D. Pitman moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Selectman Barry

Discussion: H. Cady noted the \$600 budgeted for bike helmets and Halloween bags and asked how many the department gives out, how are children made aware of this service? Selectman Barry indicated that he could find out. H. Cady asked what the equipment line represented. Vice Chair Spillane commented that he remembers last year that line being used for the purchase of a “Slow Down” sign. K. Chalbeck noted that last year the department equipment line was for a computer for the traffic counter.

Motion Withdrawn – Discussion tabled until Saturday when Department Head will be present to supply additional info

Emergency Management (\$6,317):

Motion: D. Pitman moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Selectman Barry

Discussion: K. Chalbeck pointed out that last year’s budget included \$1,200 for a Milton Cat Annual Service Agreement and that this year the figure is at \$669. Asked what the reason for the reduction is? Alex Cote indicated that he believes last year’s figure was for a two year contract and that this would be for a single year. Regarding the Generator, Selectman Barry informed the Committee that the equipment is a Town Generator that is housed at the School. In the instance that the School is being used as a shelter, the Town pays for its diesel fuel out of this Emergency Management line item. M. Clark noted that the agreements were signed by Kevin Barry acting in the capacity of Co-Chair of the Emergency Management Department and not as a representative of the School Board. H. Cady raised the issue of budgeted prices of the Verizon Wireless contracts. Feels that in some cases one individual is carrying two or three cell phones, is this appropriate? Selectman Barry said that the price differences depend on the services included, for example the Emergency Management devices need to include Broad Band Internet service in the case that the Town is down. K. Chalbeck pointed out that in 2011 the Department budgeted \$825 for the purchase of a computer and has another \$900 budgeted this year. Is this a second computer? If so, why is this necessary?

Motion Withdrawn – Discussion tabled until Saturday when Department Representative will be available.

Patriotic Purposes (\$250):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Vice Chair Spillane

Discussion: None

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Heritage Commission (\$600):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: L. Murphy

Discussion: H. Cady noted that this is a Department that is able to roll over funds from year to year - the August 2011 balance is listed as \$2,695.85 – what is the intent for those funds. Chairman Daley suggested tabling discussion until Saturday when a representative from the Heritage Commission could be present.

Motion Withdrawn – Discussion Tabled Until Saturday

Conservation Commission (\$2,077):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Maryann Clark

Discussion: H. Cady asked who the dues were paid to. Selectman Barry indicated that they had not been paid out to anyone yet this year.

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Forestry Commission, Tax Anticipation, and Debt Service (\$6.00, \$1.00, and \$2.00 respectively):

Motion: Vice Chair Spillane moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Selectman Barry

Discussion: H. Cady asked what the debt to the State was. J. Foisy explained that the line is kept open as a flow through space for dog fees, vital fees. By setting up this separate fund for the auditors it removes the need to pre-allocate funds.

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Planning Board (\$41,526):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Vice Chair Spillane

Discussion: Vice Chair Spillane asked if the contract decrease over last year was attributed to the Master Plan done in 2011. F. McGarry answered no, that the decrease was due to a reduction in hours by the Planner as they opted not to participate in the CIP program. H. Cady asked if they expected to use the meetings and seminars line. F. McGarry confirmed yes, that there is a new member of the Board who has attended several seminars. Vice Chair Spillane asked what the Consultant line represents. F. McGarry explained that the Planning Board has used that for consulting of offsite improvements, impact fees, in the past a consultant was hired to address the work force housing items.

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Town Meeting (\$14,156):

Motion: Selectman Barry moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Vice Chair Spillane

Discussion: None

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Cemeteries (\$16,452):

Motion: D. Pitman moved to approve the budget as proposed

Second: Selectman Barry

Discussion: Vice Chair Spillane commented that the previous year's expenditures have consistently come in around \$10,000 and yet the Department is still budgeting \$16,000 – thought it could perhaps be brought in tighter? Selectman Barry commented that the costs in the past have been favorably offset by Trust Funds, but investments recently have not been great.

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries

Revaluation of Property (\$53,167):

Motion: H. Cady made a motion to approve the budget as proposed

Second: F. McGarry

Discussion: Selectman Barry informed the committee that a revaluation was done in 2011, none is necessary this year resulting in the decrease. K. Chalbeck asked why the assessing clerk hourly rate had been reduced from \$18/hr to \$15/hr. Selectman Barry answered that the individual serving as the PT Clerk had moved into a new position in the Front Office and their replacement was brought on at the lower pay rate. H. Cady asked what the line for Registry Recordings represented. J. Foisy answered that when the Board of Selectman sign deeds or easements that there is a charge for recording those. H. Cady expressed the opinion that revenue for those activities should be allocated to the specific department rather than to the overall Town Administration budget.

Vote: Yea: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 - Motion Carries

New Business: None

Citizens' Comments: None

Adjournment

7:25pm

Motion: D. Pitman made a motion to adjourn

Second: L. Murphy

All in favor – Motion Carries

The Minutes were Recorded, Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katie Libby.
Pending Approval by the Municipal Budget Committee