

Present: Dorianne Almann, Bruce Bellville, Joe Conroy, John Hartnett, James MacDonell, Lewis Major, Tina McCosker, Peter Zavorotny. Absent: Michael Carrier. Excused: Morris Klein, Selectmen's Rep Jay Ebbighausen.

Mr. Zavorotny called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. Mr. MacDonell noted a correction to the minutes of Meeting 638. Zavorotny asked if anyone else had additional corrections to the minutes before asking for a motion to approve the minutes from Meeting 638 as revised. Mr. MacDonell made the motion, was seconded by Mr. Bellville, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Zavorotny said they'd begin the meeting by talking about schedules for budget development put together by the town and school board. On November 26 the town anticipates having tentatively approved budgets ready for the committee. On December 8 and 15 the selectmen and department heads expect to meet with the committee. Mr. Zavorotny asked the committee about the level of detail members want when they meet with town and school personnel. Mr. Bellville replied that the committee will not have looked at building and equipment costs. Mr. Zavorotny said these are articles.

Mr. Hartnett spoke up saying the committee doesn't spend that much time on the school, implying he'd like to see that changed this budget cycle.

Mr. Zavorotny said that December 8 and 15 sound good for meetings. Money articles may appear after those dates, he said, but petition articles always come later in the budget process. Mr. MacDonell said the town will have numbers on December 18.

In terms of the school, Ms. McCosker wants to keep to the December 10 date as this is the date to which the budget committee agreed.

On January 7, the committee sits down with the school board.

Mr. Zavorotny remarked that with the town the committee "gets the whole package" in terms of detail. Mr. MacDonell remarked that "the more input, the better."

Mr. Zavorotny talked about the detail that drives the budget. Mr. MacDonell said the detail is the worksheets. Referencing the worksheets, Mr. Hartnett said that "a lot of stuff is routine, but when looking at big ticket items, we should see the backup." He used the school's technology budget as an example. The tech budget was \$14,000; \$120,000 was spent. Mr. Zavorotny agreed that detail on unusual expenses with the budget is a good idea.

Ms. McCosker said that she thinks the way things now stand, the committee will get all the school budget's work sheets.

Mr. Hartnett wondered if the school roof should have been an article and not addressed within the school's budget. If it had been, would that ensure that it would have been done by now? He wondered about the blue car with the government plates he's seen at the school--whose car is it? Ms. McCosker said she didn't know. She read in the superintendent's report that a driver ed car was purchased following the superintendent's retirement.

"Now there are two driver ed cars and one instructor."

Mr. Zavorotny said he "wants to get special items as warrant articles, but we don't have the statutory right to tell" the school board to do so. Mr. Hartnett replied, "But, we do have the statutory right to look out for the peoples' money."

Mr. Major said that in the past there was a policy if, say, the Police Department wanted another officer this request was put forward as a warrant article. Mr. Zavorotny said that the last he heard the chief was interviewing for an eighth officer. Mr. MacDonell said that the salary for this officer is coming from the part timers and certification money.

There was some discussion among the committee members on the need for another officer. Mr. Conroy asked if we really need another officer? Case loads are increasing, Mr. MacDonell said. "If we call in the chief," he said, " he'd show us the details." Mr. Zavorotny said special details were done by full-time officers who loved this job. The town no longer has the services of a detective. Mr. Conroy asked, "How can we hire a police officer to do a detective's job?" We can't, said Ms. Almann. She pointed out that detectives are higher in rank than police officers and police officers lack the qualifications of a detective; therefore, an officer can't be expected to perform the duties of a detective. Mr. Major said it irritates him to see the brand new car sitting at the school. He feels the oldest car should be up there. Mr. MacDonell said he's seen the chief driving the Expedition (the department's oldest vehicle). He went on to say Wal-Mart's numbers were horrible referring to theft. Mr. Bellville said there's been an increase in car accidents.

Mr. Hartnett asked if the committee had gotten income figures from the Town Administrator. Mr. Zavorotny replied that he'd asked Ms. Collins for the figures, but hadn't gotten them. He'll ask again. The auditors are in town and Ms. Collins has been busy with them. Ms. Almann pointed out that people on salary often work longer than an eight hour day, so she feels the data from Ms. Collins should be forthcoming. Mr. Hartnett said it was important to get the revenue figures from Ms. Collins so we have idea what the town will be able to spend.

Mr. Bellville said the town needs to keep an eye on the dam abatement. Mr. Zavorotny said there will be some abatements but as yet they are unknowns. Mr. Bellville said that "even a small piece of the dam is a huge amount" in terms of an abatement. Mr. Zavorotny said he was sure the town had acted on what the attorneys told them to do in terms of setting money aside to meet the shortfall the dam abatement will cause. Mr. Conroy said the town was sure to lose money; Mr. Bellville pointed out the Bellows Falls

saw a significant financial hit over the abatement granted the dam in their town. Mr. Bellville said it's \$6,000,000 and its been three years, going on the fourth.

Ms. McCosker said the school board will meet with the budget committee on December 10. Mr. Zavorotny asked if the committee wanted to meet in November. Mr. Hartnett said he wants the committee to meet next month; Ms. Almann agreed: Ms. Collins should have the revenue numbers by then for the committee.

Mr. Zavorotny said the committee will meet November 19, 6:30pm, to discuss income items and debt retirement.

Hearing no more business to discuss, Mr. Zavorotny asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Conroy made such a motion and was seconded by Mr. MacDonell. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting ended at 7:14pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorianne Almann
Secretary