

Present: Dorianne Almann, Bruce Bellville, Michael Carrier, Joe Conroy, Morris Klein, Lewis Major, James MacDonell, Selectmen's Rep Bill Nebelski, and Peter Zavorotny. School Board Rep Tina McCosker did not attend.

Mr. Zavorotny called the committee to order at 6:30pm.

He told the committee there were minutes from meeting 655 to approve. As there were no comments or edits, Mr. Nebelski made a motion to approve the minutes. He was seconded by Mr. Carrier and the motion carried.

Mr. Zavorotny read the letter he wrote and mailed to Paul Bornkessel; Mr. Bornkessel can no longer serve as a member at large of the Budget Committee as he had four consecutive unexcused absences from appropriately posted meetings. Mr. Zavorotny gave Ms. Almann a copy of the letter for the record.

Discussion of budgets began.

Mr. Zavorotny reminded the committee they had tentatively approved **Executive (4130.10)** budget of \$168,501. Did anyone have problems or questions? Was the committee to go ahead with it?

**Election, Registration & Vital Statistic (4140.10)** of \$57,324. Mr. Klein noted that telephone "had gone up a lot." TA Jill Collins said, "State funded internet is not town funded." Can the state be sued for removing funding? TA Collins replied that several towns had banded together, contributed funds, and sued the state. The plaintiffs lost.

Mr. Klein asked why costs were up. Mr. Zavorotny replied the increase is due to it being an election year.

Hearing no other questions, Mr. Zavorotny drew the committee's attention to **Financial Administration (4150.10)** in the amount of \$154,051. He reminded the committee they had tentatively approved 4150.10. Were there any questions?

Mr. Klein asked about the armored car request for \$5,000. TA Collins replied that a possible change is being explored. Mr. Nebelski asked why Training/Seminars had gone from \$330 last year (actual) to \$1,370 (approved) next year. Mr. MacDonell explained that he as tax collector needed training and would be taking classes throughout the year; there's a class in April and conference in the summer.

With questions and comments at an end, Mr. Zavorotny began discussion of **Revaluation of Property (4152.10)** at \$40,000. He observed there "had been talk of reducing the budget" but this hadn't happened. TA Collins replied that an abatement process is taking place. New England Telephone is in court. Mr. MacDonell spoke up, saying some of the increases are contractual and thus unavoidable.

**Legal Expenses (4153.10)** at \$38,700 was next. As there were no questions, the committee looked at **Planning & Zoning (4191.10)** at \$100,101.

As no points were raised by anyone, Mr. Zavorotny began discussion on **General Government Buildings (4194.10)** at \$74,722.

Mr. Klein asked TA Collins if the town prepays oil. Yes, she replied. The price/gallon the town paid was very good—“\$1 something.” The town received quotes from six or seven suppliers, awarding Discount Oil the contract. This was the first time the company bid. The town and school go in together which helps the town get a good price for oil. The elementary school takes a tanker’s worth of oil.

With discussion ended on 4194.10, Mr. Zavorotny drew attention to **Cemeteries & Parks (4195.10)** at \$35,195. As there were no comments, the committee looked at **Cemeteries & Parks (4195.20)** at \$18,446 before moving to **Cemeteries & Parks (4195.40)**, Prentis at \$1,650.

Without discussion on 4195, the committee considered **Insurance (4196.10)** at \$36,276.

The committee next looked at **Police Department (4210.10)** at \$1,102,022.

TA Collins noted that the trunk line goes directly to Dispatch. When the new police station was built, it turned out the town had been getting service on that line for free which explained why Telephone was \$9,138 (actual last year) and \$17,045 (next year).

Mr. Klein asked about Office Supplies (\$6,619 actual last year; \$13,800 next year). TA Collins replied that software and Nixel were in this line; Mr. Klein replied he felt these shouldn’t be under Office Supplies.

Mr. Klein noted Animal Control went up. TA Collins replied that the town has an “aggressive ACO.” Mr. Major spoke up saying he was uncomfortable with the increases associated with 4210.80 (Animal Control).

Mr. Zavorotny voiced concern about the Overtime. As the police department is “fully staffed now”, he wondered why overtime was \$38,774 (actual last year) and is budgeted at \$49,127 next year. He asked TA Collins to invite the police chief to the next budget committee meeting.

Focus turned to **Ambulance (4215.10)** at \$135,558. As Mr. Klein said, “There’s not much we can do about the budget,” so discussion began on **Fire Department (4220.10)** at \$202,396.

TA Collins noted the department had made some changes to the budget. The salary was cut to \$67,000. Headcount is down to one Assistant Chief, the vehicle allowance was cut, training was cut to \$5,000 as the Police Department will assume responsibility for training, and maintenance was cut to \$24,000.

She told the committee that she had gone back two years, looking at vehicle maintenance costs and found the costs did not justify the town hiring a mechanic.

Mr. Zavorotny noted the Fire Department has several EMTs; he wanted to know if they can be trained through the Police Department. TA Collins noted that full background checks must be done. Those police officers responding to emergency calls who are at home will be required to wear

professional dress, as per the Police Chief. Mr. Bellville said the bottom line in terms of emergency calls is response time. Ms. Almann asked when the town's new response system to emergency calls will be introduced. February/March timeframe, Mr. MacDonell replied, when the paperwork is completed.

Messrs. Major and Bellville asked about the amount of money for EMTs, wanting to know if the additional package for the Police Department EMT's had been determined. TA Collins replied that the Police Chief is putting together the budget. The First Responder budget will be 4211 and the money placed in a separate account. She remarked that the program will need items such as manuals and dummies; Mr. MacDonell noted there will be startup costs. CPR and First Aide training are now currently available through the Police Department.

Mr. Zavorotny reminded the committee that the Selectmen had approved the Fire Department (4220.10) budget at \$202,396 and asked what budget committee members wished to do.

Mr. Conroy made a motion to approve the budget and was seconded by Mr. MacDonell. The motion carried.

**Building Inspection (4240.10)** at \$40,592 was next considered. Hearing few comments, Mr. Zavorotny brought up the budget for **Emergency Management (4290.10)** at \$43,219. The department's purchase of three automated signs is one reason the budget is up. TA Collins spoke up, saying the town will still get money for the next few years from Vermont Yankee.

With discussion at an end, Mr. MacDonell made a motion to approve the budget. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy and the motion carried.

**Highway Department Administration (4311.10)** at \$622,515 was next considered.

Hearing no questions or comments, Mr. Zavorotny began discussion of **Street Lighting (4316.30)** at \$26,500. He asked why the halogen lights at the old police department building and lights inside the building were on. TA Collins remarked that the building needs to be winterized.

**Solid Waste Collection (4323.10)** at \$243,659 was looked at next. Mr. Zavorotny reminded everyone that the budget had been approved.

**Transfer Station (4324.10)** at \$68,529, **Health Officer (4411.10)** at \$1,077, **Welfare Administration (4441.10)** at \$17,097, and **Welfare Direct Assistance (4442.10)** at \$50,000 were considered. TA Collins noted that a warrant article to take \$10,000 from undesignated funds to add to 4442.10 is expected.

**Culture & Recreation (4550.20)** at \$47,072 was discussed next. The Library met with Selectmen as a computer had to be replaced. The town buys computers through Dell's government plan, TA Collins said.

Mr. Zavorotny asked if 4550.20 can be tentatively approved. Mr. MacDonell made a motion to do so and was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The motion passed with Mr. Major abstaining.

There was no discussion of **Patriotic Purposes (4583.10)** at \$1,850. Mr. MacDonell made a motion to tentatively approve \$4583.10, was seconded by Mr. Conroy, and the motion carried.

Discussion moved to **Summer Program (4589.40)** at \$61,345. In answer to a question by Mr. Klein, TA Collins said a week is being added (nine to 10 weeks) along with an hour in the morning and in the afternoon. As a result, the cost will increase from \$150/student to \$175/student. Mr. Zavorotny asked as to the salary rate. TA Collins had totals, but not rates readily available. **Municipal Pool (4589.20)** is \$49,044. Mr. Zavorotny observed the budget includes two awnings.

**Community Events (4589.70)** at \$28,305 generated no comments.

When focus moved to **Community Center (4589.90)** at \$56,410 Mr. Klein asked if everyone using the building gets charged. Yes, TA Collins replied. Non-profits are exempt.

**Conservation (4611.20)** at \$500 generated no discussion.

Neither did **Economic Development (4651.10)** at \$1,694.

**Debt Service – Principal (4711.20)** at \$93,382 and **Debt Service – Interest (4721.20)** at \$43,744 generated lamenting over interest rate (4.5%) the town is being charged.

Mr. MacDonell made a motion to tentatively approve **Debt Service – Principal (4711.20)** and **Debt Service – Interest (4721.20)**. He was seconded by Mr. Major and the motion carried.

**Water Distribution & Treatment (4331.10)** at \$476,573 was next discussed. TA Collins informed the committee that there will be a warrant for replacing water meters. The project will cost \$18,000. The Department of Environmental Services has already approved the project.

Mr. Klein asked about overtime and if it was incurred due to something breaking. TA Collins said yes. In addition, the meters are read daily.

Mr. Nebelski made a motion to tentatively approve 4331.10. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The motion carried.

As there was no discussion on **Wastewater Treatment Plant (4326.10)** at \$352,081, Mr. Major made a motion to tentatively approve the budget. He was seconded by Mr. Nebelski. The motion carried.

TA Collins asked the committee when they wished to have the police chief come in. Mr. Zavorotny asked that he be invited to the Dec. 16 meeting at 6:30pm. Mr. Nebelski reminded everyone he would not make the meeting.

Mr. MacDonell asked when the school budget is expected. Mr. Zavorotny replied that he did not get the opportunity to call the business manager, although as a new teachers contract is under discussion, he was of the opinion the school's budget is incomplete.

Mr. Zavorotny brought up the fact the Budget Committee currently has nine at large members and a selectman and school representative. He asked the committee to think about what, if anything, they wished to do about the number of members. Mr. Klein wondered if there was a high school senior who might be interested. TA Collins remarked that the only requirement is that the student be registered to vote.

With no more business to discuss, Mr. Conroy made a motion to adjourn. He was seconded by Mr. MacDonell. The meeting ended at 7:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorianne Almann  
Secretary