

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

Mr. Zavorotny called the meeting to order at 6:31pm, noted the committee had minutes to accept, and asked for a motion. A motion to accept the minutes of meeting 640 as written was made by Mr. MacDonell, seconded by Mr. Bellville, and it passed with Mr. Klein abstaining.

Mr. Zavorotny shared a document with the committee he called a scorecard; it had nine columns:

1. Department
2. Account number of the department
3. The 2014-2015 budget (the current budget)
4. The current budget through November 2014
5. Current budget estimated for the rest of the fiscal year. This figure, Mr. Zavorotny said, "is full of pitfalls" as it's estimated for the remainder of the fiscal year.
6. 2015-2016 budget (the one being developed)
7. Dollar difference between the current budget and the one being developed
8. Percentage change of the 2015-2016 budget compared to the current budget
9. Notation as to whether the budget had been discussed by the selectmen or has yet to be discussed by the selectmen. A date in the column indicates the budget had been tentatively approved by the Budget Committee.

Mr. Zavorotny asked the committee if they were ready to discuss those budgets that had been reviewed by the selectmen. He noted the Executive budget of \$169,888 was an increase of \$1,801 from last year. "It's typical salary increasing, housekeeping stuff, nothing big." He asked Mr. MacDonell about copiers.

Mr. MacDonell replied that TA Jill Collins had spoken to him. The plan is to remove one (Kathryn Lynch's) and add two new copiers (one upstairs for TA Collins and one in the main office). The cost for doing this is not reflected in the budget, according to Mr. MacDonell, as nothing related to the copiers is official.

Mr. Major made a motion to tentatively approve the Executive budget. He was seconded by Mr. MacDonell.

Mr. Bellville spoke up, saying he was concerned about the totals of many of the budgets as they are high. Ms. Morel said the selectmen had tabled Financial Administration (a 19.8% increase over this year's budget).

Mr. Hartnett asked as we talk about budgets, what have we done as a town to help ourselves? Grants are ending and sources of funding are drying up. "We've got to create revenue streams,

we've got to sit down as a town." He said that last year the school returned \$300,000 and the town about \$200,000. Mr. Hartnett thinks that getting financial counsel would be advantageous. The town could buy a front end loader and paid it off in two years with interest income. Was this a good idea? Can Hinsdale create a revenue stream as Peterborough is doing with its solar project? (Peterborough is building the largest solar array in the state (944 kW DC). The project is being funded by a \$1.22 million PUC grant; the remaining \$1.4 million is coming from a long-term power-purchase agreement. The array (expected to be completed in the spring of 2015, will power the town's new waste water treatment plant and help offset energy costs for other municipal buildings. Through the project, Peterborough expects to save roughly \$250,000 to \$500,000 over the next 20 years.)

Is there something we can do to create something similar? "We as leaders need to look at a creating a revenue stream," Mr. Hartnett said.

Mr. MacDonell spoke up, saying there may be constraints from a statutory standpoint when it comes to the town investing its money. Mr. Hartnett pointed out the municipalities do invest. Mr. Zavorotny said that "we have only one thing we can do and that is to leave money in the bank unless the townspeople tell us to do something else."

Mr. Bellville said, "The biggest thing we have going for us is Rt. 119" in terms of development possibilities. "The biggest obstacle for bringing businesses in town is lack of water." He wanted to know if the Water Department had discussed getting water to 119. Mr. Klein replied that the Planning Board did discuss this; work on Monument Road took precedence.

Mr. Zavorotny pointed out that income is separate from expense. He said investing town money needs to be voted on by the people. Mr. Bellville said that money is in several different accounts, making investing challenging. Mr. Hartnett replied that Peterborough now has solar panels on its landfill and looks to save \$200,000 on the electric bill between the school and town. Mr. Zavorotny wondered if the town of Peterborough operates the way Hinsdale does. Mr. Hartnett said, "We can't be nay-sayers. We have to think outside the box." Mr. Bellville pointed out the town is losing \$11 million with revaluation of Vernon Dam. Wal-Mart is depreciating. The total grand list dropped. Some people lost on the recent re-evaluation of property in town. Double-wides dropped in value while stick built homes increased. "Where does the money come from," Mr. Bellville asked?

Mr. Bellville asked what the town's tax rate will be. Ms. Morel replied that it's still not been set.

Mr. Klein asked if a motion can be made to keep the budget flat. Mr. Bellville said that

he would be OK with a "minimal increase." Mr. Klein said he'd like to amend his motion to keep the budget the same as last year with a maximum one percent increase. He was seconded by Mr. Bellville.

Mr. MacDonell spoke up saying he thought "this is unreasonable."

Ms. Almann said she hasn't seen any raise at work. Mr. Conroy said the budgets can't keep to a one percent increase if the state mandates increases, for example, in insurance. He said the police department approached Wal-Mart about "footing the bill" for another officer. Mr. Bellville said the town has been fortunate with the dam in the past.

"Nothing will save us in the future." Programs are expanding.

Mr. Major said the committee should tell the departments where to cut. Ms. Morel noted that the salary study the town is undertaking is still ongoing. Mr. Bellville said it was his understanding that the two percent salary increase proposed for town employees came from the study.

Mr. Zavorotny said it seemed unreasonable not to tell the departments where to cut. Ms. Almann spoke up saying that where to cut should be the manager's decision. The committee should tell the department heads they need to cut their budgets and let them decide where and how to do this. Mr. Zavorotny noted that the "vast majority is salaries."

With a motion on the table to keep the budgets flat with a maximum one percent increase, the committee voted on the motion. The motion passed with Messrs. Hartnett, MacDonell, and Major voting no. Mr. Zavorotny said "Joan can carry this message back to the selectmen."

Mr. Bellville said \$200,000 needs to be found. Ms. Morel said doing so will keep things flat. She said she didn't know when the selectmen will get through the remaining budgets. "They'll need extra meetings to figure things out."

Mr. Major suggested the committee move on to other budgets. Mr. MacDonell suggested looking at Legal.

Mr. Hartnett made a motion to tentatively approve **Legal** (\$38,500), was seconded by Mr. MacDonell, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Zavorotny noted that Ms. Lynch is getting a new desk and this is included in the **Planning & Zoning** budget of \$97,504. The budget is a 2.9% increase over this year's budget. Mr. Bellville pointed out "that budget heads up year after year." Mr. Hartnett made a motion to tentatively approve Planning & Zoning's budget and was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The motion carried with Mr. Bellville voting no.

Mr. Major made a motion to approve the budgets the committee discussed on 11.19.2014. He was seconded by Mr. Hartnett. The motion carried with Mr. Bellville voting no.

**Insurance** is up \$3,314. There is no choice but to pay for insurance. Mr. MacDonell made a motion to tentatively approve the Insurance budget of \$32,914. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Zavorotny said the committee would by-pass **Police** with its budget of \$1,091,864 and this budget has yet to be discussed by the selectmen. The Police department is looking to hire two new people, an eighth officer and an Animal Control Officer. While the salary of the ACO is included in the budget, that for the new officer is not, according to Ms. Morel. The Resource Officer's salary is \$51,000. According to Ms. Morel, the salaries for eight police officers, one dispatcher, and the ACO are in the Police department budget. Mr. Major thinks making a warrant article for the additional police officer is appropriate.

The **Ambulance** budget is \$128,891, an increase of 2.2% over last year. Mr. Major made a motion to tentatively approve the Ambulance budget. He was seconded by Mr. MacDonell. The motion carried unanimously.

In terms of the **Fire** budget, Ms. Morel said that \$10,000 can be knocked off." Mr. Zavorotny said the committee would pass on discussing the budget.

The Building Inspector's budget (\$43,810) is up 20.5% (\$7,465). The building inspector needs a new computer. Supplies are included in this amount, too. Mr. MacDonell suggested the town lease the needed computer. Mr. Hartnett said there's a \$5,000 increase in salary. Ms. Morel said the number is based on a 30 hour work week; Mr. MacDonell said the building inspector "is getting more realistic with his hours." Mr. Bellville said that the actual budget last year was \$32,350 not the \$32,000 on Mr. Zavorotny's scorecard. Mr. Zavorotny suggested holding off on this budget until it's determined whether the computer will be leased or not.

Mr. Major made a motion to tentatively approve the **Emergency Management** budget of \$22,433, a decrease of 13%. Mr. Conroy seconded the motion. When it was pointed out that the selectmen had yet to discuss this department's budget, both Messrs. Major and Conroy withdrew the motion and the second, respectively.

Mr. Bellville made a motion to tentatively approve the **Highway & Streets** budget of \$622,319 (a decrease of \$45). He was seconded by Mr. MacDonell and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Conroy made a motion to tentatively accept the **Transfer Station** budget of \$67,249 and was seconded by Mr. MacDonell. The motion passed with Mr. Bellville voting no.

In terms of **Health**, the selectmen discussed the Health Office budget, but not the Health Agencies' budget; the Health budget is up 3.9%. The committee did not discuss this budget.

The budget for **Debt Services** remains the same.

Mr. Zavorotny told the committee that the Monday, December 22, 6:30pm meeting with the selectmen is a posted meeting. The committee will discuss the 1% increase and generating revenue streams with the selectmen. Mr. Hartnett said he will bring up the matter of "getting someone who can give municipal financial advice." Mr. Bellville brought up the \$500,000 fish farm project in Keene as an example of a municipal project that generates revenue.

With discussion ended, Mr. Zavorotny asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Conroy made such a motion, was seconded by Mr. Bellville, and the meeting adjourned at 7:36pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorianne Almann  
Secretary