



BUDGET COMMITTEE
Town of Hollis
Seven Monument Square
Hollis, New Hampshire 03049
Tel. 465-2209 FAX 465-3701

Minutes of December 10, 2012

Meeting was held in the Community Room, Hollis Town Hall. The Budget Committee was called to order by Tom Gehan at 7:05 PM.

Members present: Tom Gehan, Mike Harris, Peter Band, Tom Jambard, Frank Whittemore

Also present: Deb Padykula - Finance Director, Troy Brown – Town Administrator, David Petry – Chairman, Board of Selectmen, Dawn Desaulniers – I/T Director, Jeff Babel – DPW Director, Frank Cadwell - Selectman

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Review of Agenda

Review / Acceptance of Minutes:

Mike H. moved to accept the minutes of 11/13/12. Tom J. seconded. All voted in favor. Minutes were accepted as amended.

Reports:

Town – Deb P. stated that the budget looks good at this point. A few lines will have surpluses. Peter B. stated that Jeff B. has been authorized to purchase an item needed for hot-patch paving. Tom J. objected strongly, stating that it was a foolish waste of money and really should have been studied. He felt that the DPW already has an excessive amount of equipment that isn't being used.

Peter B. stated that the proposed budget as it currently stands is only \$10K off the guidance number. He asked Jeff B. to explain the increase in cost for the Souhegan Regional Landfill District. Jeff B. stated that it is because the recycling market has declined, so revenue from recyclables has dropped.

Mike H. asked how much will be left over from this year's budget. Deb P. stated that there is approximately \$150K in surpluses at present. Peter B. stated that it is partially due to very low snow removal costs for the year. Part of the excess will pay for the new DPW equipment mentioned previously (\$15K). Another portion (\$65K) may be earmarked for a new Communications console. David P. stated that the remainder will go into the General Fund.

Mike H. suggested that the BudCom take a position on the two proposed purchases, since they were not approved at town meeting. Tom J. asked about the status of the PD repeaters. Peter B. stated that they are waiting for final approval from the FCC.

Venu Rao, representing the Hollis Energy Committee, discussed an opportunity to obtain funding for a select list of energy saving projects for both the town and schools. Grant money is available through the Projects for Performance program, which could reimburse up to 50% of the total project cost. A small group will meet on the 14th to prioritize the list of potential projects, and to submit an application to the queue.

Venu will report back to the BudCom when more information is available.

Budget Committee Minutes December 10, 2012

Public Input: No members of the public were present.

Town budget: Deb P. presented a Powerpoint of the draft warrant articles. Each was discussed in some detail. Two options for renovation of Town Hall were discussed, one which covers just the siding and windows, the other to cover renovation of the entire building. There were a total of 14 warrant articles. Deb P. compared the proposed 2013 budget against the approved 2012 budget, and highlighted the significant differences.

Some concern was expressed over the considerable increase in expenditure reflected in the warrant articles. Several options for reducing the costs were presented, all of which involved delaying expenditures in one way or another. Mike H. recommended that the BudCom prepare feedback for the Selectmen on each warrant article at tonight's meeting. Tom G. proposed that they review each item, starting with the Operating Budget. The consensus was that they expect the town budget to meet guidance.

Discussion of the town hall renovation proposals centered around breakdown of the costs. Since detailed estimates were not available at this meeting, David P. offered to provide a complete breakdown of the cost estimates for the BudCom members before the next budget review. Mike H. felt that with more fine-tuned numbers available, some savings might be evident. Much of the discussion concerned the relative merits of a complete renovation versus a piecemeal method. Frank C. stated that regular maintenance cannot be ignored, and that the cost of a full renovation would be prohibitive at this time. Mike H. mentioned that the town's debt service will be declining over the next few years, and next year might be a good time to put the complete renovation project before the voters.

Mike H. offered his support of the Communications console replacement using surplus funds from the 2012 budget.

There was little support for either of the proposed paving projects, nor for the accounting software. Tom G. asked for more cost/benefit information in support of new software before expressing his opinion.

Peter B. stated that if nothing is done this year to renovate Town Hall, it will be an absolute must for next year. Frank W. suggested that if the town is going to borrow money, they ought to do it this year. Interest rates will only go up from here. Several scenarios were compared by adding and removing warrant article dollar amounts from the spreadsheet to see the effect on the bottom line. Mike H. advised the Selectmen to keep the increase in the tax rate to no more than two to three percent by juggling the warrant articles and fine-tuning the amounts.

Next meeting:

Wednesday Dec. 12: 1st review of School Budget

Tuesday Jan. 8: 2nd review of Town budget

Motion to adjourn was made by Mike H. Peter B. seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Kowalski, Tax Collector