

May 2, 2013

Budget Hearing

Present:

Members: A. J. DuBois, Craig Schoon, Jack Boyer,

Alternates: Ted Bent, Liddy Adams

Selectmen: Mark Lyon, Tony Bedini, Richard Carey

Guests: Peter Tagley Liddy Adams and Ted Bent were seated for the Budget Hearing. Liddy Adams served as Chair for the Hearing. The Budget Hearing was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

General Fund Budget Proposal:

Mark Lyon noted the General Fund budget for the 2013-2014 fiscal year was proposed at \$4,228,752, an increase of .5%. A proposed 2% wage increase was included. He noted the Selectmen had been able to maintain health insurance at a flat rate due to a change in the Plan and decreasing the deductible.

Public Safety:

Mark reported Public Safety is the largest increase in the budget, with increases in the Fire Marshal, Fire Company and Police budget requests. He noted the Fire Marshal's is a catch-up more than anything else, and Fire Marshal Tom Osborne has made great strides with keeping up with the increased number of required inspections. Hours have been increased to complete the necessary work to comply with State regulations.

Highways:

Peter Tagley requested review of the the Highway area line items. He did not feel the additional appropriation of \$600,000 proposed for road repair seemed enough to take care of Highway expenses. It was explained that over the past two years the First Selectman and Highway Director have provided a long-range plan to address the Highway needs. A re-do of the entire town roads was originally estimated at \$5,000,000. Last year, through discussions between the Boards of Selectmen and Finance, it had been agreed to endorse a long-range plan of \$600,000 per year over a 5-year period for Highway Department expenses. Much discussion had revolved around whether to bond the expenses or to pay expenses on a cash basis. It was agreed that the proposed \$600,000/year would be voted on each year over the five-years anticipated. During the past year, \$294,000 of these funds had been spent on replacing trucks due to the fire in the town garage. The use of these funds had been approved at a town meeting. A used roller will be purchased for \$15,545 and the body of a small dump truck that had been received from the Town of Bolton after the fire will be refurbished. Proposed roads for rehab are: Baldwin Hill Road, Hinckley Road, New Preston Hill, the New Preston Firehouse parking area, Calhoun Street, Findley Road and Fenn Hill Road. The long-range plan will continue into its second year through 2014/15. Peter felt the Town does a good job on the roads.

Probate:

Nicholas Solley questioned why Probate costs have increased from \$4,448 to \$6,549. Mark noted the costs are based on the grand lists of the member towns in the Probate District in accordance

with State mandate. Additional expenses had been requested for shelving that is required in the Probate Office vault.

Car Tax:

Peter Tagley questioned the Governor's proposal regarding the removal of car tax receipts from the towns and given directly to the State. Mark noted the effect on the Town, if any, would be shown on the revenue side of the budget; however, he felt it does not look as if the Governor's proposal will be approved by the legislature.

Region #12 School Budget:

Washington's percentage of the Regional School District budget will decrease from 45.21% to 44.48% due to a decline in student population. This budget will be voted on separately from the Town's at a Referendum scheduled for May 7, 2013.

2013-2014 Proposed Capital Fund Budget:

First Selectman Mark Lyon presented the initial Capital Fund budget at \$1,246,000. He requested an additional \$3,500 be added to the Computer Upgrade line item as a new server had been purchased the previous year and a number of computer upgrades are required that are compatible with the new system. This was agreeable to the Board and the proposed Capital request for the 2013-14 fiscal year was amended from \$1,246,000 to \$1,249,500.

ASAP:

With regard to the ASAP program, Mark noted the original request for \$5,000 that had been removed from the budget had been replaced in this line item for \$2,500. This amount was based on the amount the Town donates to regional youth sports programs. Rachel D. of ASAP represented Joann Torti, Director of ASAP. She thanked the Selectmen for the fund replacement of \$2,500; however, she also noted they still wish to request the \$5,000 be returned to the budget again.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. The Town Meeting to vote on the proposed budget is scheduled for May 16th at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gollow, Selectmen's Assistant