

• March 28, 2005

Special Meeting

Chairman Michael Jackson called the special meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to receive the Board of Selectmen's proposed 2005-06 General Fund and Capital budgets.

Present: Board Members: Jack Field, Michael Jackson, Mark Lyon and Rex Swain

Alternates: Liddy Adams, John Allen

Selectmen: Richard Sears, Harry Wyant

Guests: Valerie Friedman

Press: E.L. Lefferts, Litchfield County Times

Alternates Liddy Adams and John Allen were seated in the absence of regular Board members Jack Boyer and Craig Schoon.

Shepaug River Agreement: An informational meeting on the Shepaug River Agreement will be held on April 12 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Hall in conjunction with the Town of Roxbury. Michael will check with Attorney William Bright regarding the date for a town meeting to follow.

2005-06 Budget: First Selectman Sears presented the initial 2005-06 General Fund proposal in the amount of \$3,467,456 and the Capital budget in the net amount of \$973,005. The Selectmen are considering a general 3% increase in employee wages in the various departments; however, consideration is also being given to increasing part-time clerks to 6% in appreciation for their efforts. Two new staff positions are also being considered: A clerk for the Housing Diversity Study Committee for twelve meetings/year at a cost of \$570 (under 001) and a half-time Building and Property manager at a cost of \$26,000 for salary, plus mileage and expenses (under 048). This position was strongly recommended by the Building and Property Committee, who has been monitoring the town buildings and properties on a volunteer basis. It was felt this position is sorely needed and would include some maintenance and repair work, thus alleviating the need to hire private contractors for smaller jobs. Dick commended the town employees for their efforts and felt the Selectmen have supported them in their salary, benefit package and good equipment. Total salary increase is approximately 5.5%, including the two new positions. Increases in heating fuel, diesel fuel and gasoline play a major part in much of the increase in the budget; however, a savings in electric costs is anticipated because of a recent CL&P audit of town buildings, as well as a savings in phone costs. A copy of the draft budget is attached to these minutes.

Budget summary. The General Fund increases from \$3,311,789 to \$3,467,456 - 4.7%. Current Education net is 6.86%, due, in part, to an increase in the Town's student ratio from 43.66% to 44.52%.

Additions include:

001: Selectmen: Housing Diversity Committee clerk. Also, proposed to join Council of Small Towns.

006: Building: Anticipated net expense against revenue will be reviewed. Difficult to determine due to unknown construction values. Fee is based on percentage of construction value, which building inspector lowered in previous years.

- 008: Elections: While workers will receive 3% increase, total budget is lower due to number of elections and referenda anticipated.
- 011, 012, 013, 014: Planning, Zoning, ZBA and Wetlands: Reorganization of personnel duties in land use area. Land Use Coordinator will now add Wetlands secretarial duties to her Planning and Zoning secretarial duties, while her zoning enforcement duties will be covered by the Wetlands Enforcement Officer. It was suggested legal fees might be negotiated for a lower hourly rate in these areas.
- 015: Historic District Commission: Added costs for digital inventory of properties.
- 016: Conservation Commission: Moving into GIS system. Work almost done in completing assessor's maps into geological survey. Added mapping consultant and reduced updating maps and legal fees. Question raised if this information is available elsewhere.
- 019: Liability and Property Insurance: Final year of three-year contract. Effectiveness of consultant review for prior year was noted.
- 020: Accident & Health Insurance: Increase anticipated at 10%. Actual costs currently not available but will be reviewed in detail once information is available.
- 025: Fire Department: Increase in utilities and vehicle and equipment maintenance.
- 026: Police: Police force had been increased in prior year from two to three full-time positions in anticipation of future retirement of one officer. Once retirement occurs, the need for three officers in the future will be discussed.
- 027: Emergency Management: Increase in E911 - Litchfield County Dispatch costs to \$10.88/capita.
- 029: LWA: Reduction in repairs & equipment.
- 030: EMT Awards: Fees for fire company/EMT's consultants will be reviewed.
- 031, 032 Highways: Increase in fuel costs, contracted services, culvert costs, sand, salt and plow blades. Check with auditor to determine if catch basins and culverts are considered capital or annual maintenance items. An anticipated FEMA grant is expected to offset winter storm costs of approximately \$36,000. Whether this will be received by fiscal year end is unknown.
- 035: Transfer Station: Tipping fee increased from \$62 to \$65.50/ton and 2700 to 2,830 tons, based on recent experience. Hauling increased from \$14.40 to \$15.20/ton. New line item for consultant to provide schedule for all monitoring requirements for all town sites, i.e. transfer station, town garages, beach sites.
- 036: Recycling: Hauling increased from \$195/ton to \$215/ton @ 95 tons. Comparison of income and expense costs for demolition will be done.
- 037: Paramedic Services: \$5.50 to \$5.57/capita based on population of 3,697.
- 038: Health Department : Town is currently contracted with New Milford for health services. Proposed budget remains same. State is pressuring towns to join health districts. While a higher reimbursement rate would be available from the State, it would be more costly. Current situation is working well.
- 041: Parks & Recreation: Increases included:
- Selectmen approved eighteen hours/week of twenty-one requested for Director.

- Lifeguards line shows larger increase than actual due to current year's inadequate budget.
- New pavilion will require custodial care from April through October. Commission sponsors many programs that do not require funding from taxes. Some Finance members felt \$90,000 is not much to spend on recreation in comparison to a \$3.5+ million total budget.

Michael noted points well made. Assure that programs and parks are run in a sensible and efficient way.

042: Senior Center: Increase costs in newsletter as sponsorship is not as available as in the past to defray costs.

048: Annual Repairs: Includes new part-time Building and Property manager and mileage.

052: Social Services: Programs include Susan B. Anthony and Meals on Wheels - worthwhile assistance to town residents.

Capital: The capital budget were discussed.

Road Program: \$430,000. \$100,000 of Town Aid Road Funds will be used to offset costs, reducing this part of the budget to \$330,000. Selectmen's policy is to use Town Aid grant funds equating to approximate amount received annually for this purpose. Fund balance in this account will be used as needed for unanticipated projects as required.

Vehicles & Equipment: \$385,080. \$15,075 in grant funds available. Includes two highway trucks, plows, mower, second half of fire vehicle replacement, fire company hose, radios and police radios.

Building and Property: Includes funding for land acquisition for open space and housing, town hall generator, beach area architecture, firehouse roof and wall, and office reorganization in town hall. The elevator project will be completed this summer and the Bryan Hall trustees may be willing to assist with costs for needed upgrades and reorganization in offices. It was suggested it might be best to talk to an outside consultant for a fresh view.

Total Capital budget submitted at \$973,005. Jack Field suggested a total of \$750,000 in capital items had been anticipated. The Board noted there is approximately \$200,000 of new initiatives included that had not been anticipated last year.

Town Aid Road Funds: The Selectmen anticipate receiving \$97,960 from the State for the 2005-06 fiscal year. Approximately \$100,000 will be used to offset the Capital Road budget. Remaining funds will be used, if necessary, for unanticipated General Maintenance road costs.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Gollow, Secretary