

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING & MEETING
November 26, 2013
MINUTES**

Call to Order:

6:00 pm Chairman Kevin Verville called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Verville asked all to rise and pledge allegiance to the Flag.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Roll Call:

Present: Kevin Verville, Chairman; Harriet Cady, David Carbone, Don Daley, Carol Levesque, Fred McGarry, Jeff Shute and Bill von Hassel, Members; Maryann Clark, School Board Rep; Steve Barry, Select Board Rep

Absent: Jim Spillane, Vice Chair

Also Present: Leslie Boswak, Town Administrator; Jan Foisy, Town Finance Director

Approval of Minutes – October 29, 2013

Motion: D. Daley moves the minutes as written

Second: F. McGarry

Discussion: D. Carbone asked that the Roll Call on page 1 be corrected to reflect his attendance.

Vote to approve the minutes as amended: Yea 9, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries (M. Clark absent for this vote)

Discussion and Review 2014 Town Budget

Municipal Budget Committee - \$859

Motion: D. Daley moves to approve

Second: Selectman Barry

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Revaluation of Property - \$84,566

Motion: D. Daley moves to approve

Second: B. von Hassel

Discussion: B. von Hassel asked for an explanation as to why the Appraiser line shows a proposed increase of \$30,000. Selectman Barry answered that this is due to two cases the Town is currently involved in with abatement requests from the utility companies. One case, with Fairpoint, is expected to cost \$5,000 to defend. Another is a case where multiple towns are involved versus the NH Electrical Co-Op and the estimated cost to defend this case is \$25,000. B. von Hassel asked what was at stake in terms of revenue with these two cases. S. Barry was not sure of an exact figure. He explained that the Utilities typically request tax abatements every year. These annual requests cost the Town some \$8,000 in assessment fees. The properties in question are the largest tax payers in Deerfield with property assessed at more than \$1 million, and the taxes represent a significant sum. L. Boswak added that 12 towns are involved in the suit with NH Electrical Co-Op. That case will be tried in the State's Superior Court system. The suit with Fairpoint includes some 50 communities. H. Cady asked if the \$25,000 estimate was for appraisal work only, or does it include legal costs? F. McGarry referenced the backup materials where the \$25,000 estimate refers to "preparation of a court ready report, preparation for trial, and testimony at trial." B. von Hassel asked if the Select Board had considered putting some of this expense in the Legal Budget. Selectman Barry spoke that because it is specific to appraisals they felt it should remain here, and noted that the Legal budget is proposed with no year over year increase.

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Legal - \$23,572

Motion: Selectman Barry

Second: M. Clark

Discussion: D. Daley asked if the Town anticipates increased legal expenses related to the planned active opposition to the Northern Pass Project, Selectman Barry answered that there are none he is aware of at this time.

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Personnel Administration - \$74,333

Motion: Selectman Barry

Second: F. McGarry

Discussion: Selectman Barry spoke that this figure is based on the number of employees and the FICA/Medicare deductions dictated by the State. H. Cady referenced the line for Performance Pay and asked if that was new. Selectman Barry answered that it was included in the 2013 budget, but has not yet been spent. He believes it will be awarded this year, it is for an employee who has gone far above and beyond their job description, awarding is at the discretion of the Select Board and a decision is made based on recommendations from employees, it can be awarded in one payment to one individual or broken up as multiple smaller amounts to multiple employees.

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Town Hall - \$32,665

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: J. Shute

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Cemeteries - \$16,452

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: F. McGarry

Discussion: C. Levesque noted that Morrison Cemetery seems to be maintained better than Old Center Cemetery and asked what is the reason for that. Selectman Barry answered that there are a number of Trust Funds, it may be that there is more money designated for Morrison, that the Cemetery is larger and more visible, or that there is a different Contractor. The Select Board has discussed the concern with the frequency of mowing and inconsistent maintenance that has been done at the various cemeteries and have communicated the desire for improvement to the Cemetery Commission. H. Cady agreed with C. Levesque regarding the maintenance issues and feels an amount should be added to this budget to fund annual upkeep projects.

Motion: H. Cady moves to add \$10,000 to the Cemetery Budget

Second: C. Levesque

Discussion: Chairman Verville noted that it would be up to the Select Board to work out a scope of work and enter into contracts for any maintenance work to be done. Selectman Barry felt that budgeting more money at this point would be premature. He informed the Committee that the current Cemetery Commission Chair is looking to retire after some 20 years of service. He would prefer there to first be a reformed Commission to identify problems, solicit bids and direct work before increasing the budget. B. von Hassel concurred, noting that he would like to see a more formal scope of work, he suggested this would be an item further discussed at the Committee's Work Session.

Motion: B. von Hassel moves to table the vote on adding \$10,000 to the Cemetery Budget

Second: J. Shute

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Motion: Chairman Verville moves to table the vote on the proposed 2014 Cemetery Budget

Second: J. Shute

Discussion: Selectman Barry indicated the Select Board will not be able to look at the Commission this year.

Vote: 9 yea, 1 nay, 0 abstained – Motion Carries

Advertising/Regional Association - \$3,752

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: M. Clark

Discussion: Selectman Barry informed the Committee that this line represents NH Municipal Association Dues and is based on the Town's population. H. Cady asked what the per capita rate is, Selectman Barry was not sure, but will

find out. D. Daley spoke that included in the NH Municipal Assoc. membership is access to the Local Government Center's (LGC) legal department. Last year the Select Board restricted Committee members from accessing the legal council on their own, for that reason at this point he would oppose the item. Selectman Barry noted that Committee members can access the legal services through the Chair of the Committee. D. Daley provided a history of the work he did last year as Chair of the MBC with the LGC to put together a policy for engaging legal counsel by members. Notably the LGC can terminate communication with a Member should they feel that it has become cumbersome. The policy was approved at the April MBC Meeting. He would ask that the Select Board reconsider their restriction based on the policy developed. Selectman Barry agreed to bring it before the Select Board for consideration.

Motion: H. Cady moves to table the discussion

Second: D. Daley

Vote: 5 yea, 4 nay, 0 abstained – Motion Carries (M. Clark was absent for this vote)

Ambulance - \$10,000

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: H. Cady

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Animal Control - \$11,168

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: M. Clark

Discussion: Chairman Verville spoke to the professional and friendly service that Animal Control provides to the Citizens of Deerfield. H. Cady noted that they do not seem to expend the part time employee line as budgeted, Selectman Barry confirmed no, they have not yet spent that full line. H. Cady would like to see the part time employee line reduced

Vote: 9 yea, 1 nay, 0 abstained – Motion Carries

Patriotic Purposes (Memorial Day) - \$300

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: M. Clark

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Heritage Commission - \$600

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: M. Clark

Discussion: H. Cady commended the Heritage Commission for the job they are doing.

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Forestry Commission - \$6

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: M. Clark

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Tax Anticipation Note - \$1

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to approve

Second: M. Clark

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Old Business

D. Daley asked Selectman Barry if there was anything the Committee should take note of as they are reviewing the Budget. Selectman Barry answered that this is a continuation of "business as usual", there is nothing new, though there will be some Warrant Articles proposed. Chairman Verville asked when the MBC might expect to receive the Warrant Articles for review to which Selectman Barry answered that the Select Board has not yet reviewed them, but will be doing so ASAP. D. Daley asked if the Safety Complex proposal would be put forward this year and Selectman Barry answered no, not this year as numbers were not available in time.

New Business

M. Clark indicated that there is a concern with the MBC meetings scheduled for January 9th and January 16th. The Thursday meetings create a conflict for the SAU Officials. As those meetings have traditionally been held on a Tuesday she would ask that the Committee change the dates to Tuesday, January 7th and Tuesday, January 14th.

Motion: M. Clark moves changing the January 9th meeting to January 7th

Second: Selectman Barry

All in Favor – Motion Carries

Motion: M. Clark moves changing the January 16th meeting to January 14th

Second: Selectman Barry

Discussion: D. Daley noted that January 14th is also the last day to submit petition Warrant Articles. Should a Warrant Article with a dollar amount be submitted that day it would be up to the Town and School to turn the material around for a same day discussion and vote by the MBC. The Committee agreed that situation would be unlikely, but should it arise they could schedule a later meeting at that time.

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

H. Cady may not be available for a January 14th meeting.

Citizens Comments None

Adjourn:

Motion: Selectman Barry moves to adjourn the meeting of November 26, 2013

Second: J. Shute

All in Favor – Motion Carries – Meeting Adjourned @ 7:00p

The Minutes were Recorded, Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katie Libby.
Pending Approval by the Municipal Budget Committee