

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 8, 2013**

Present: Bayard Tracy, Chairman; Steve Laskowski, John Koopmann, Charlie Perry, Mike Wiggin, Spofford Fire Precinct; Jeff Morse, Cliff Emery, Marty Mahoney, School Board Representative; Dan Cotter, Elaine Levlocke, Selectboard Representative; Frank Underwood, Chesterfield Fire Precinct Representative.

Attendees: Rick Carrier, Ruth Van Houten, Wayne Guyette, Dave Thomas, Chief Fairbanks, Lt. Chickering and Officer White.

Absent: Rich Kalich

Bayard called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

1). *Susan moved to consider December 11, 2012 minutes. The motion was seconded by John.*

Elaine moved to approve December 11 minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Dan and passed unanimously.

2). Town – The Budget Status report was given by Mrs. Levlocke. 94% of the 2012 town budget was expended through 12/31/2012 or \$181,348 under budget. Significant items addressed were:

- Personnel Administration expense is under budget by \$20,441 primarily due to the resignation of 2 police officers the last quarter.
- Reimbursable Detail expenses were under-expended by \$13,440 due to less demand.
- Solid Waste Disposal expenses were \$31,481 due to less municipal solid waste and recyclables being trucked.
- The Planning Board was over budget by 8% or \$1,116 because more than \$4,000 for Technical Assistance.
- The Highway Department is only \$48,154 under expended due to snow in the last 3 weeks. Bart predicted over \$75,000 at the last meeting.

3). School Board – The 2013-2014 Budget was reviewed by the School Administration last month. Last year, the total approved budget was \$8,203,931. The Budget has not been voted on by the School Board. Marty provided highlights of next year's budget status:

- The administration 2013-2014 budget, as of last month, is \$7,786,383 or down 5.09%.
- Estimated transfers are \$270,000, making the realistic number down 1.45%.
- There is a possible significant decrease to adequacy aid from the State of approximately \$300,000 plus which will significantly change the bottom line.

- The School Board is looking at a number of cost reducing measures including decreasing staffing,
 - There is not a significant decrease in enrollment predicted for next year.
- Marty will present a mid-year review at the next meeting.

4). 2013 Spofford Fire District was presented by Mr. Wiggin, Mr. Thomas & Mr. Thomas–

- The most significant increase to the 2013 budget is payroll by 11%. The firefighters earned \$9.37 per hour in 2012. The reason for the increase is to primarily provide additional stipends for officers. Chief earned \$4,000 stipend this year plus a credit for calls. He received around \$6,000.
- Contracted Services is up \$1000 or 40% for lawn maintenance and landscaping.
- Worker's Comp is up \$150 or 12% due to claims.
- Rescue Supplies is up \$500 or 25%.
- Mutual Aid is up \$1377 or 5.8%.
The total operating budget is up \$2630 or 1.2% including Mutual Aid
- Large Equipment CRF has been analyzed this year using 1.5% interest for the fund and costs of equipment.
 - Mike reported that the boat has never been a cost to taxpayers. The Precinct has put off replacing the boat to 2015.
 - The trucks used to be made out of steel. They are now made from plastic and fiberglass. The longevity of the trucks is unknown. Mike reported that it is possible to replace parts of the truck in separate years.
- Warrant Articles include
 - \$33,100 contribution Heavy Equipment CRF,
 - \$12,500 contribution to Small Equipment CRF,
 - \$1,000 to Fire Pond Expendable Trust, \$2,750 for a computer and Fire Hose out of Small Equipment CRF and
 - \$13,000 for the purchase of 2 Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). The Precinct has been unable to obtain SCBA's through a grant. There is the fear that the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) will stop the departments from using older equipment.

5). Police – Chief Fairbanks discussed the proposed longevity pay increase to counter the loss of additional police staff

- After 5 steps there is never another opportunity for a raise.
- The staff is down 40%.
- The COLA keeps staff from losing money, but it is not considered a raise.
- Bonus program is gone, which was applied for after 5 step increases.
- The proposal for longevity is for 9% more after 20 years.
- Kevin White has been here for 17 years, he would be eligible for 6% under the proposed plan. Lt Chickering will go over 10 years next year. During the first 5 years there is a raise of 19%.
- According to Chief Fairbanks, instituting this longevity pay program would add 2.55% to the 2013 budget, assuming the proposal is voted on at Town Meeting (41 weeks remaining in the year).

- The former Bonus Plan was discussed. Items mentioned were: The Bonus Plan was a pool of money that was applied for. There were certain questions that needed to be answered, did you save the Town Money, did you meet your goals, etc. A point value was assigned to the questions and the bonus amounted to ¾ to 1 weeks pay for most of the staff. The bonus plan did not inflate salaries annually. It was \$10,000 for all Town Employees. It's the Chief's belief that the system needs to be the same for all employees. Rates can be different. Lester stated that he was trying to be proactive.
- The State Police & Hinsdale have an 8 step program. The officer at step 2 is making \$19.14 per hour. His pay would increase to \$20.29 under Duane's proposal. The officer at Step 4, currently making \$20.40, would be \$21.79 on the new scale. Officer White, currently making \$20.90, would be \$22.60 on the new scale. Lieutenant Chickering, making \$24.51, would be \$26.40 on the new scale. The maximum change is \$1.50 per hour. Overall the budget would increase to \$26,714 up 6.90%.
- Other Issues regarding the Police Department's compensation:
 - It would take 7 Full-Time Officers to staff the PD 24/7 365 days per year. Currently the Chief is on call 5 to 6 nights per week. The new Chief may not live in Town.
- Dan stated that he was adamantly opposed to longevity pay. For example, there is a fixed cost to mowing the lawn and that cost may not change in 20 years. The Select board will be meeting tomorrow to discuss the issue.
- Bayard thanked Chief Fairbanks and Lt. Checkering for their presentation and stated that while he believed the budget committee is sympathetic to this issue, that the recommendation of the Police Department's compensation must come from the Selectboard. It is first their responsibility as the managing authority of the Police Department's budget to make the recommendation to the Budget Committee.

6). Chesterfield Fire & Rescue Precinct's budget was reviewed by Mr. Underwood:

- He reported that the boiler needed a major repair. Some of the Air Paks used by the department are dated 1986 and 1987. CF&R also had a workman's comp claim last year.
- Ruth stated that there would be regular meetings with Kelly Ayotte for both departments.
- The department had priced out a new fire truck at \$375,000. The Commissioners have asked them to find a used one for \$175,000.
- The Chief received \$4,600 last year. His stipend is \$3,000.
- Bayard pointed out that in 2010 the Precinct spent \$82,358. The budget request for 2013 is over \$105,000 (Net of Mutual Aid payment); the mutual aid payment passed to the department by the county in 2012 is \$20,000 of that.
- Elaine urged the 2 departments to continue to work together to make costs the same.

- Frank stated that the call report is 224 calls. Rescue calls are 112. If both departments are paged for the same calls, Spofford should have the same numbers.

7). Other – The Transfer Station recycling proposal was discussed. Elaine suggested that the discussion be tabled until next meeting as more information will become available then. The Committee had asked questions about the Cemetery Budget, as a result the Cemetery Commission has level-funded their budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine
Secretary