

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 23, 2012**

Present: Bayard Tracy, Chairman; Steve Laskowski, Susan Newcomer, Richard Kalich, Dan Cotter, Cliff Emery, Elaine Levlocke, Selectboard Representative; Jeff Morse, Frank Underwood, Chesterfield Fire & Rescue Precinct; John Koopmann (arrived at 7:08 PM) Marty Mahoney, School Board Representative (arrived at 7:35 PM)

Absent: Mike Wiggin, Spofford Fire Precinct

Rich Kalich moved to discuss September 18th minutes. The motion was seconded by Steve.

Susan was not present at the last meeting, but she was not able to follow the discussion adequately from the minutes. A discussion about the amount of content necessary ensued.

Susan moved to table discussion of the September 18th until the next meeting when the minutes can be re-written and redistributed.

Status Reports – Rich wanted to clarify that he does not want the overall tax rate to increase to give employees higher raises. He had several suggestions; reduce staff, reduce or eliminate programs or services, find new sources of funds, use savings, or receive assistance from the School budget. The Town budget has expended 76% of its budget as of October 20th. There should be significant savings for the remainder of the year due to salaries and benefits for 2 Police Officers who have resigned. Rich asked about refinancing bonds to obtain a better rate. The new Town Office Building's bond rate is 4.25%. The Spofford Fire District should be consulted about their rate for the new Station.

Marty reported that the School had a \$271,000 unencumbered balance 1 month into their fiscal year. 279 Students were projected in K-8. There are only 277 enrolled. The High School is up by 2 or 3 students. Special Ed OOD is up by 2 students. There are only 18 aides on staff which is 3 less than budgeted. There is a teacher on sabbatical, but that individual is paid in accordance to the collective bargaining agreement. Only 1 student is enrolled in the Surry Charter School this year.

Bayard requested a status update from Chesterfield Fire & Rescue Precinct at the next meeting. Elaine requested the minutes be updated on the website for the Precinct.

Town- Elaine went over the individual budgets for the Town that have been accepted by the Selectboard. Debt Service is down 5% because of decreasing Principal and Interest. Zoning Board is level funded. The 1.1% COLA for the Secretary is absorbed in other departments. It is contingent upon the number of applicants that come before the Board. Bayard questioned why the town was considering COLA raises for part-time employees.

Forest Fires is level funded. The Fire Warden will be asked about repairs to the brush truck.

Conservation Commission is down 2.7%. Cliff Emery stated that there is a group concerned that over \$13,000 was expended from the Conservation Fund a couple of years ago. The Conservation Fund is controlled by the Conservation Commission under RSA36A Section II. It was agreed that if the Budget Committee has specific questions, the Conservation Commission can be asked to come before the Budget Committee. At this point, the Committee can only comment on \$3,650 in the budget.

Executive budget is down 3.5% due to the cost of the Supervisors of the Checklist holding 1 election in 2013 instead of 4 in 2012. The last installment for assessing software has been paid for in 2012. The rooms & meal revenue is distributed in December. The Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) from Camp Spofford will be significantly increasing this year. There will also be a charge for trailers parked on site. Financial Administration is up .6%. Code Enforcement is down 7.2%. The Code Enforcement officer has reduced hours because of the reduced volume of building permits. Elections, Regs & Vital Stats down 6.9% because of only 1 election scheduled in 2013.

Highway is up 2.3%. Uniforms are up 21.1% because of the contract. The Committee asked about the calculation on the Chloride 25 Ton X 400 is only \$10,000. There are 3 employees receiving merit raises and COLA. Merit raises are steps only for the first 5 years of employment. The Highway Department is scheduled to purchase a new truck this year. Cliff stated that the Police have put off purchasing a new cruiser for the last 2 years. There is a proposal to increase the contribution to the equipment replacement CRF by \$24,000 because the contribution was reduced by that amount in 2009. Cliff stated that the contribution might be reduced because the Highway Dept purchased an item that saved a similar amount of money. The Committee asked about sand because the budget is \$14.50 per yard this year. It was only \$10.50 per yard last year. There are 6 employees at the Highway Garage. They have 5 Dump Trucks and a payloader and a grader. There is more equipment than personnel. The budget for resurfacing is \$245,824.00. The document for the warrant articles was an estimate.

Solid Waste is down 2.8%. Cliff stated that this budget would decrease by 18% if one full-time employee were reduced to part-time. Elaine stated that the voters had spoken at Town Meeting. They voted to keep the full-time position. Cliff talked about the proposal for the new recycling program. The proposal for paper includes 2 dumpsters, a bailer in the dumpster, skid steer to move the bail to trailer truck storage, then the skid steer to move bales out of trailer truck to the vendor transportation. The proposal for cardboard involves throwing cardboard over the railing, bailer squishes into bales, skid steer takes it to a 2nd tractor truck storage trailer. This new program involves 8 hours for cardboard, 1 hour for bailing, 1 hour moving bales, 1 hour recycling. There is 11 hours per week for paper and 11 hours per week for cardboard. That is 22 hours for paper & cardboard. Elaine stated that the Selectboard had approved the proposal to move the budget to the Committee. The Transfer Station has \$45,000 in capital reserves already. Steve commented that prior to the Transfer Station fire the Department stored paper & cardboard. When the building was rebuilt there was a movement away from storing paper & cardboard. Currently, the transfer station is paying out \$4,960 to have paper and cardboard trucked out. The Committee was concerned as these recyclables are

worth revenue. Steve stated that he would not be comfortable voting on this proposal as it stands. Susan requested an outside consultant look at the feasibility of this proposal. The proposal seems inefficient because the same material is handled/moved numerous times.

Planning Board is down 2.7%.

Other – Bayard again questioned the budgeted COLA raise for part-time employees. . In his opinion, a part-time employee is paid an hourly rate. Susan stated that eventually you can't hire anyone as the wage is too small. A part-time employee is eligible for 25 hours of vacation if they work over 1,000 hours per year and 20 hours per week. Dan stated that considering them separately complicates the process.

Rick stated there will be a "contribution holiday" as a result of LGC reviewing their level of reserves. As a result, insurance premiums are anticipated to be reduced in the amounts of \$25,000 for Workman's Comp, \$7,000 for Property-Liability and Health insurance is \$9,000.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine
Secretary