

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 14, 2013**

Present: Bayard Tracy, Frank Underwood, Chesterfield Fire & Rescue Precinct; Cliff Emery, Jon McKeon, Selectboard Representative; Steve Buckley, Spofford Fire Precinct; Dan Cotter, Charlie Perry, Rich Kalich, John Koopmann; Steve Laskowski, and Marty Mahoney, School Board Representative.

Minutes – Dan Cotter moved the minutes of February 5th as presented. The motion was seconded by Rich Kalich and passed unanimously.

Will Vogeley was present to ask about the reduction of \$30,000 removed from the purchase of the Fire Truck since there is over \$400,000 available in the CRF there would be no effect on the tax rate? Steve stated it was recommended by Elaine to reduce the amount to an amount agreed by a prior agreement (CIP). The Committee was not in favor of the 25% increase to taxes. The Fire Precinct Representative did not speak up that the Precinct would be unable to buy the truck for \$145,000. Bayard stated that he was not aware that the 25% increase was due to an expenditure taken from someplace else last year. The \$60,000 contribution to the Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund was not recommended by the Budget Committee either. It was approved by the Precinct. Will wanted his questions to be on record with the Committee as the last meeting was informal. Bayard stated that the Committee would be meeting with departments next year.

Jon McKeon swore in Bayard Tracy, Rich Kalich and Charlie Perry

Cliff moved to nominate Bayard as Chair. The motion was seconded by John. Steve moved to nominate the incumbent slate. The motion was seconded by Rich and passed unanimously. Bayard was voted Chair and John Koopmann as Vice-Chair.

School Meeting – Bayard reported that there were 27 residents present to vote on 62% of the budget. The heavy turn-out is on contract years. Charlie spent a day with Sharyn D'Eon, Principal. He stated that it was a wonderful experience. Rich checked the NECAP scores for Keene. Chesterfield was higher than Keene in most instances especially 7th & 8th Grades were statistically significant. Ruth Van Houten was concerned about the special needs students meeting the standards of regular instruction.

There are 287 K-8. There are 35 8th Graders graduating and 25 to date enrolled for Kindergarten next year. 262 students were budgeted. It is estimated there will be 277 total enrolled next fall. There were 2 teachers not issued contracts. Due to 2 special needs kindergarteners registered next year, the School Board has voted to have 2 kindergarten classrooms next year. The teacher on sabbatical last year has decided not to return so one of the teachers has been reissued a contract. The teacher on sabbatical will need to repay the salary and benefits. The \$60,000 wiring project has been submitted for bid. The Board would like to tear down the portables by fall.

This is the 4th year that Keene Food Service has been in charge of the lunch program for a fee of \$6,000. There is one full-time person and 2 part-time people. 54% of the cost is salaries and food. The Town subsidizes the program for about \$15,000. There will be a 5-cent increase to lunch next year. The government subsidizes a cost of \$2.86. The more people enrolled in reduced lunch program the better off the program is. The problem is getting everyone who qualifies to fill out the paperwork.

The Chesterfield Public School Foundation has about \$172,000 in their portfolio. Marty is their representative on the School Board. They are trying to increase the membership to 10 and 2 have resigned. Marty reported that the Financial Report shows \$20,000 increase to unencumbered funds primarily due to a pre-school placement and a SPED HS tuition. The Board believes it is less vulnerable this year to state cuts. There could be some reductions in catastrophic aid. Three students from Chesterfield have been accepted to St Paul's to study Artificial Intelligence, Music Theory and Molecular Biology.

Town Meeting – Committee reduced \$10,000 from the Transfer Station was put back at Town Meeting. The truck for the Highway Department was put back. The truck that was purchased was a bigger truck than scheduled a few years back. The replacement schedule showed 25,000 GVW to be replaced. The proposal was to purchase a 35,000 GVW; the fund was underfunded. The Longevity pay also passed. The Town tax rate increased by 5.3%.

Spofford Fire Precinct – Bayard was present. The meeting went as scheduled. Steve Buckley reported that he receives lots of calls from the insurance companies about how far away the house is from the station and how much water is carried.

Chesterfield Fire & Rescue Precinct - \$145,000 was approved by the Budget Committee for the fire truck. The public present at the meeting was in favor of \$175,000 or more. Frank stated that he did not bring the Heavy Equipment Replacement Schedule that shows the body on the rescue and another truck needs to be replaced next year. Frank stated that there are 2012's available with low miles under the more than \$300,000 value given for a new truck. No amount has been spent for the purchase of a new truck. Bayard asked Frank to present the Heavy Equipment CRF at the next meeting.

The Town did not control the tax rate in Bayard Tracy's mind. The School did. The compounded growth rate of taxes is 6% over the past 7 years and 8.5% for the past 10. What can the Committee do to help the Town control expenditures? The Committee did defer to the Selectboard to solve the problem with the Police Department. Rich presented language stating "shall not insert an additional amount or line item that was not discussed at the hearing 25 days prior to the meeting". The people recommended an increase to an already existing line item. Dan reported that he had filed a protest with the Attorney General's Office. A paper ballot should have been allowed and was not. Will Vogeley stated that this conversation happened 40 years ago with the teacher's contracts. The teachers unionized. If the Town employees form a union costs will be higher. There are employees that have worked 10 to 15 years without a raise. It was noted that meetings can be filmed, taped, etc.

Dan stated that the Committee could approve a budget 10% less than what the Committee wants it to be. The function of the Committee is to set budget and be sure the funds are spent in the way they were intended. Steve stated that the issues with compensation were created by the Committee not wanting to spend an extra penny. Jon stated that the Committee and the Selectboard have worked well together for 7 to 8 years. He hopes that this one incident won't zero out all the work done in that time. Information may not be forwarded properly from the representative to the Committees.

Marty stated that the School Board takes the annual letter as guidance. If the Board and the Committee are unable to come to an agreement then it is taken to the voters. It is the purview of the Board to maintain the integrity of the program. Marty stated that the irony in the situation is that the longevity program was passed for employees that don't feel they are being adequately compensated. It won't benefit the people we were hoping to keep they are leaving anyway. Rich was concerned about the 6-8% compounded increase to the growth rate. Jon stated that 0% percent does not cut down on the cost of roads that need to be maintained, or plowing for snowstorms or the cost of sand/salt.

The conclusion to the meeting there have been a couple of members with ideas to discuss. Member to forward other thoughts to Bayard. Please do not use "reply all" when corresponding due to public meeting laws. It is valuable to voice an opinion to more than just one representative to the committee.

The next meeting will be on a Wednesday in June with the Board of Selectmen. Steve moved to adjourn at 8:55 PM. The motion was seconded by Dan and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine
Secretary