

Hill Budget Committee

Public Hearing
Town Budget
February 7, 2008

Members Present: Nancy Chaddock (Chairman), John Lynch (Vice Chair), Shaun Bresnahan (Secretary), Steve Farris (Selectmen), Shelly Henry (School Board), Rhonda Bucklin, Bob Dupuis, Joseph Mahoney, Paul Meyerhoefer, Paula McDonough, Vickie Plant, George Robie and Gary David.

At 7:00 PM Nancy Chaddock called the public hearing to order and made some opening remarks regarding how the hearing was going to proceed. Started with a review of the proposed expenditures for 2008.

Line 4130 – New equipment item is the purchase of a new copier, which will be split with town clerk. New copier will have a 1 yr. warranty; maintenance is for old copier, which will be retained.

Line 4140 – Town clerk is using new software to electronically deposit check's, reducing the number of trips to the bank. Town clerk is proposing a 5% raise (2% merit and 3% COL) and increasing hours by 3 to a total of 35 hrs/week.

Line 4150 –

Line 4152 – Jump in assessing is to update current use files. Many files are incomplete, estimated to take 40 hrs and when done all current use files will be State compliant. John Chandler asked if we have current property tax maps, Steve Farris says we do and they are in the Selectmen's office. Brief discussion on yearly assessing fee and what the town is getting and what work will be completed at the end of year 5.

Line 4153 – Selectmen would like to split the cost of a grant writer with Bristol. The feeling is this position would pay for itself.

Line 4155 –

Nancy brought up the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that was put together by a committee of various boards and citizens with the help of Lake Region Planning (LRPC). This is a long term planning document to help budget capital improvements for the town. The Planning Board has scheduled a public hearing, after the hearing they will decide whether to formally adopt the CIP.

Line 4194 – Currently all town building's are getting heating oil under the schools contract, which has a locked in price of \$2.19. Under Maintenance the selectmen have proposed \$16,000; 8,500 for cleaning and misc' projects and \$7,500.00 to paint eh town hall and shed. They would like to hire a temporary employee for the summer to do this. A professional painter estimated the town hall would cost \$16,000 alone. Paul Meyerhoefer asked about the \$9,300 that was spent in 2007? Were the new ballast put in. Steve F. said Yes and besides the cleaning he wasn't sure.

2/14/2008

Line 4165 –

Line 4196 –

Line 4210 – Nancy told the audience that the Hill Police Chief has proposed creating a fulltime chief with more hours. This would take effect on July 1, 2008 if budget passes. Steve Farris told the audience that they have received many complaints that there are never any police around when needed. The Selectmen asked the Chief to prepare this budget. The Chief is proposing he would work 40 hrs. + 40 hrs. of call; deputies would work 24 hrs. and split 104 additional hrs of call with the Chief to provide 24/7 coverage. Nancy told the audience about the sub-committee to look at contracting police service and that Bob Dupuis would summarize the committee's findings and he did.

There was much discussion about whether Hill needed full-time coverage; many felt that this was an unrealistic budget. This is an important and big step for Hill and it should be well prepared and considered. Would we need 2 cruisers? Joe Mahoney who is a police officer for Andover said that most Dept. with a fulltime officer have 2 cruiser to insure one is always in service. Benefits and retirement are big issues that could have long-term expenses for Hill. Audience would like to see something like handled as a warrant article item. Bob Dupuis also mentions State RSA gives a lot of protection to police chiefs; it is hard to remove one without very good cause. According to the National Police Chiefs Association there should be 1 officer for every 500 residents, Hill therefore would require 2 ¼. Talking with the Chiefs from Bristol & Franklin you need 5 officers to provide 24/7 coverage. Many feel that what Chief Sullivan has proposed isn't realistic.

Line 4215 - Bristol hasn't provided a cost for ambulance service for 2008 yet.

Line 4220 – Fire Dept. maintenance is to improve efficiency to the station. Licensing to cover the cost of (5) firefighters to obtain their CDL license. They have taken the training this would be for the State's licensing. Much discussion around whether the Town should pay this expense. Still replacing protective clothing. Chief Desrochers informed the audience he did apply for a Assistance to Firefighters Grant for a new tanker and we were denied. There were 143 Grant Applications from NH, 34 were approved and only 4 were for trucks. Steve asked if a professional grant writer would have made the difference, Matt said no. Hill has already received (2) vehicles through this grant, it is very unlikely we would get a third. Discussion continued regarding CDL licensing.

Line 4290 –

Line 4310 – Highway Dept would like to replace the (3) bay doors on the garage with insulated aluminum doors. Current doors are rotting and don't keep the cold out. Proposing a 3% raise, a new line item for training (\$200). Audience asked why professional services was over budget by \$35,888? This was to cover the emergency repairs to roads after the flooding in April. This expense was reimbursed by FEMA and shows up on the revenues.

Line 4324 – For the first time in 2007 the amount of trash hauled from Hill decreased, this is due to recycling effort. There is a proposed 3% pay raise for dump attendants.

Line 4332 – Audience asked about the amount appropriated in 2007, the answer yes, this includes the \$800,000 appropriation for repairs to water system. Water commissioners are still working on getting grants to fund work.

2/14/2008

Line 4415 –
Line 4440 –
Line 4520 –
Line 4550 – Wages reflect a 3% pay raise for librarian and 3 more hours of work.
Line 4583 –
Line 4619 –
Line 4723 –
Line 4900 –

At 9:07 PM John Lynch asked for a brief recess to stretch our legs. At 9:17 the hearing resumes. Discussion turns to the proposed warrant articles.

Article 1 - Vote on proposed operating budget.

Article 2 – Proposed purchase of a new fire tanker. Shaun B. asked Steve why there wasn't wording in article on capping payments at no more the \$25,000 as talked about. DRA won't allow wording of that nature. Steve F. told the audience that the yearly increase is out pacing the amount of money puts away every year. George asked Chief Desrochers if the increase is because of stainless steel? No it has to do with the new diesel engine requirements. This truck has gone out to bid, bids will be opened at 9:00 AM on Saturday 2/9. They will be evaluated and a decision made so that there will be an accurate cost in warrant article. The bids are contingent on this item passing town meeting. Steve F. informs the audience they will not exceed annual bond payments of \$25,000, which is what has been putting a way for this purpose. This would have a net effect of not raising taxes. They would consider a long-term bond to further reduce cost. Discussion turned to mutual aide and whether Hill really needs this piece of equipment.

Jerry Desrochers comments that Article 2 needs to be the first article by law because it is a bond item.

Article 3 – Audience comments that the amount in this article doesn't match what is on page 8 of the budget. That is because you need to add Articles 3,7 & 10 to get the total on page 8 of the proposed budget.

Article 4 & 5 have to do with the replacing of High Bridge on Borough Rd. Total cost is estimated to be \$1,100,000,; Hill and Bristol need to have \$110,000 each to cover 20% of the cost, State will cover the remaining amount. Steve F. said the bids are going out and should be opened by town meeting and we should know whether enough money has been appropriated, if all of the money isn't appropriated by each town this project will not move forward in 2008.

Article 6 – This is an annual item.

Article 7 – This sum represents the 2007 Highway Block Grant, this is an accounting item. Gary David ask's Steve F. if he can provide the committee with the unreserved balance fund ask requested, Yes as of 11/7/07 when the tax rate was set it was \$315,000.

Article 8 – This is the old tanker truck, currently it isn't in service.

2/14/2008

Article 9 – This could be for 1 or 2 dry hydrants. Steve F. was asked were the money came for the dry hydrant that was installed on Murray Hill Road? It came from left over FEMA money. A resident was putting in a pond and asked the town if they wanted to install the hydrant, needed to be done with the construction of pond so time was of the essence.

Article 10 – John Lynch gave description of what the road committee did and their findings. The \$20,000 that was appropriated for the committees work wasn't needed and it was felt that road improvements would be very expensive so this money should go towards this cost.

Article 11 – This is to split the cost of a Grant writer with the Bristol. Desiree Mahurin asked if the \$40,000 was just for salary or was it for grant expenses too? Steve F. wasn't sure, it was believed this would cover all cost's. Who will be responsible for upfront costs. Again this should be part of the \$40,000.

Article 12 – Fire station is small and more room is needed. The furnace is 45 yrs. old and roof needs replacing. There are no showers in the station. John L. shares a sketch of the proposed layout of expansion of fire station.

Articles 13 & 14 were submitted by petition. Steve F. informs the committee that the Selectmen support these and would have been willing to submit them.

At 10:35 a motion to recess this hearing until Monday 2/11/08 at 7:00 PM when we will discuss the revenues then adjourn to a public meeting so the committee can makes it's recommendations. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Shaun Bresnahan
Secretary