

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
BUDGET MEETING
MINUTES
Monday, January 9, 2017**

Board Members Present: Mary Gavin, Luke Pettengill, Kevin Blakeman.

Staff Attending: Deb Jones, Finance Manager; Margy Becker, Selectmen's Asst.

Visitors: Keith Lyman, Sr.

The Chair convened the meeting at 6:30pm.

1. **Minutes:**

Luke Pettengill made the motion to approve the minutes of December 10th (Saturday) and December 12th, 2016 budget meetings without changes. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the minutes of December 19th, 2016 without changes. Luke Pettengill seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2. **Warrants:**

Check and payroll warrants were approved.

3. **Selectboard Meeting Schedule:**

Mary Gavin will be absent from the regular meeting on February 16th. Discussions with Wayne Davis (VTrans) concerning the Exit 2 Park'n Ride Scoping Report and discussions with Everett Hammond pertaining to the paving CIP will be warned for the 16th. Other business items will include approval of the final budget, preview of the Town Meeting Warning, and approval of the Selectmen's report for the Town Report – in addition to any other business required for that evening.

It was agreed the next discussion on the Rikert Property will be held Monday, February 6, 2017. All Board members are to be in attendance (with weather cooperating).

Margy Becker explained that nominating petitions for Town Officer vacancies are due to the Town Clerk on Monday, January 30th. It was agreed the Selectboard will approve and sign the Town Meeting Warning in a special meeting on Wednesday, February 1st, 2017 at 6:30pm.

4. **FY16 Independent Audit Reports:**

Luke Pettengill made the motion to accept the audit report and financial statements for FY16. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried.

5. **FY18 Budget Discussions:**

It was agreed the Fund Balance of the general fund and highway fund will be maintained at 20%, per recommendations of the 2015 Financial Advisory Committee.

Revenue line items were reviewed. Deb Jones noted Royalton PD has been bringing in more revenues from law enforcement/traffic fines. Selectmen did not agree to increase this revenue projection of \$5,000. No other revenue source was adjusted.

Deb Jones noted that the Town's employer contribution to the Vermont Municipal Retirement Fund may increase for July 1. The % increase is unknown at this time.

Budgeted expense for IT and Website Support was reduced from \$4,500 to \$2,500.

General legal services was reduced from \$5,000 to \$3,000. The proposed legal budget for the Planning Commission was left at \$2,000. However, it was agreed that the voters are to be asked at Town Meeting to establish a new reserve fund for legal expenses. The second article to be voted on will be to fund the reserve fund. Kevin Blakeman expressed opposition to a legal fund devoted specifically to fight the NewVista project.

Motion by Luke Pettengill that the voters be asked to establish a reserve fund for general legal expenses. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion carried.

Motion by Luke Pettengill that the voters be asked to fund the legal expense reserve fund with \$1,000 in FY18. Mary Gavin. Motion carried.

The budget for repairs & maintenance to Historic Town Hall was left at \$1,000, due to projected repointing of the foundation and repairs to entrance railings.

The mowing expense for town buildings is budgeted at \$2,600, due to expiration of a 3-year agreement with Pine Hill Cemetery Association. The Association had been mowing town grounds in return for purchase of a tractor by the Town. No adjustment to this line was made.

Telephone expenses will be budgeted at \$3,300. Mary Gavin suggested the Town research digital telephone with voice-over-internet (VOIP). There is an upfront cost, she said, but then the service is free.

The Listers proposed budget was reviewed. It was noted Lister Wage budget includes an increase pay rate to the Head Lister to \$15.00/hr. The Selectmen expressed support for the Listers' plans to begin a multi-year undertaking to produce digital tax maps. The Listers propose to utilize reappraisal funds to fund the work. In effort to keep costs low, Listers hope to partner with Royalton Listers and additional expertise for in-house training. The goal is for the Board of Listers to maintain the new digital parcel maps. Purchase of the necessary computer equipment is planned as a current fiscal year general fund expense.

The Public Safety budget was reviewed. The proposed \$45,000 line item for Royalton Police Department was discussed. Deb Jones noted this would provide for approximately 14 hours/week of police services at Royalton's proposed FY18 rate. Mary Gavin spoke in favor of contracting elsewhere for police services while the Town of Royalton became more comfortable with the level of funding needed for policing. She suggested the Town could always ask to contract with the Town of Royalton again in the future. She cited the sizable increases in rates experienced over the past three years, and proposed wage increases for police personnel, as unsustainable for the Town of Sharon. Kevin Blakeman argued proposed wage increases for FY18 were needed because police wages have been too low. He spoke in favor of retaining a contract with Royalton PD. No final action concerning the Royalton contract was taken. The Board agreed to reduce the line expense to \$42,500 – as midpoint between Mary Gavin's recommendation of \$40,000 and Kevin Blakeman's recommendation of leaving the budget at \$45,000.

The proposed budget for Pine Hill Cemetery Association was reduced from \$5,500 to \$5,250. The proposed budget for Pine Hill Cemetery fuel expense was reduced to \$400 to \$600.

The budget for Baxter Library heating fuel was reduced from \$2,000 to \$1,500. Transfers to reserve fund will include the proposed 1% increase in the amount of the transfer to the Library. Thus the budgeted appropriation will increase from \$16,800 to \$16,968.

No adjustments were made to the proposed highway budget of \$237,950. The 2010 Western Star tandem truck is scheduled to be replaced in FY18. There is a budgeted \$190,000 expense in the highway equipment fund.

The need to make improvements to the garage floor drain system was discussed. Selectmen agreed to rely upon the existing balance in the building reserve fund, should repairs occur.

Selectmen briefly reviewed the proposed budget for repairs and maintenance of the Old School House. Deb Jones agreed to publish the balance sheet and revenue/expenditure report for the Old School House Fund in the Town Report. A proposed budget will not be published.

No adjustments were made to a proposed Recreation Department budget of \$8,630.

6. **Paving Capital Improvement Plan:**

Motion by Luke Pettengill to approve the proposed Agreement for Services in the amount of \$4,800 with Hammond Engineering for preparation of a paving CIP. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. **Pre-Town Meeting (Candidate's Night):**

Selectmen agreed to host a candidate's night on Monday, February 27, 2017 at 7:00pm. Margy Becker will confirm availability of the Music Room at Sharon Elementary School. It was agreed a "facilitator" of discussions and question-answer sessions will be provided.

8. Rte. 132 Solar Proposal – Norwich Technologies:

Margy Becker reported on a PSB staff member replied to her inquiry and reports that a pre-hearing conference is to be scheduled. The Town should be contacted by the Clerk of the PSB in the near future.

9. Adjournment: Motion by Mary Gavin to adjourn at 8:45pm. Luke Pettengill seconded. The motion carried.

Submitted by,
Margy Becker, Selectboard Assistant

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