

Hope Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2010

Members Present: Dana Daniels, Jean Ettlinger, John Jensen, Jill Lang, Lewis Merrifield, Bill Pearse

Absent: Nancy Dowling, Terry Miller, Vera Rand

Others Present: Jon Duke, Town Administrator

School Committee: Rick Bresnahan, Doug Merrill

Selectmen: Barbara Bentley, Mike Ames, Kathleen Hastings

Tim Higbee

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

The minutes to the January 27, 2010 meeting were approved as presented.

Rick Bresnahan gave a brief overview of the Hope Elementary and CSD school budgets. The funding from the state is down this year. As a result, the school has already made some adjustments. We will need to budget for the noncompliance penalty this year as it will not be forgiving again. In the very early stages of budgeting, it looks like the school will need an additional \$68K from the town. The CSD budget is anticipated to come in flat but may look for additional funds.

Jon Duke provided a brief overview of the proposed Town budget. Revenue sources other than taxes will at best be flat if not decreased. The Fire Station bond payment and a full year of operating expenses will be new this year. The Committee asked that a YTD budget variance report be provided at the next meeting along with the how many delinquent taxpayers and the dollar amount delinquent on the first tax payment.

At the request of the Selectmen, Tim Higbee did a self-assessment of Town Hall for ADA compliance. HP Cummings, contractor, was asked to provide a budget for correcting important access and maintenance issues. It was noted that to hire someone to do all items proposed would be less expensive than doing them piecemeal and that it was important to contract for engineering/design expertise to sign off on the ADA compliance items. To not address ADA issues puts the town at risk for liability suits or having to comply within 60 days.

Jon explained to the Committee the resolution adopted by the selectmen that undesignated funds that exceed 15% of the tax commitment be used for capital improvements or to decrease the mil rate. Jon suggested the excess funds (projected at \$166K) could be used for the improvements to the Town Hall.

The budget books are scheduled to be ready for pickup on Friday, February 26.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 10, 2010, at 7:00 PM unless budget books are delayed.

The School Committee is proposing to meet with the Budget Committee on Wednesday, March 24.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ettlinger, Secretary