

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
APRIL 14, 2006
“APPROVED” MEETING MINUTES

Present: George F. Dillon, Jr., Chair; John L. Saball, Vice Chair; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk; Mihran Keoseian, Member; Jean E. Kitchen, Administrative Officer; Maria Casey, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Town Accountant Valerie Jenkins; Finance Committee Chairman Steve Webber.

The meeting began at 7:30 a.m.

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) met for the purposes of reviewing and balancing the Draft FY07 Budget (copy enclosed herein).

Mr. Saball provided an update regarding the Board of Assessors' (BOA) Budget. He reported that the Assessors are level funding their budget, however, taking money from expenses consulting and applying to wages for one individual (Kathy Miller) to work an additional 17 hours and another individual (Becky Scribner) to work an additional 1 hour.

Mr. Saball met with the Board of Assessors regarding their budget. The discussion was focused on the need for additional administrative hours. The reasons and justifications were that the State is putting more demands on the requirements. They need to either meet those demands or submit a report that indicates why they cannot meet them.

Mr. Saball confirmed that the BOA did consider reallocation of resources, and this is their only choice. He added that even though technology has advanced with Assessing, the demands on the office are to provide ever-increasing data and additional reports to the State.

Mr. Webber concurred and added that this change is a philosophical one because they have purchased the software for Vision and are going to be doing the work in-house. Without those added hours, Mr. Webber does not see them meeting their objectives.

Mr. Dillon stated that if the BOS agrees with this change which will increase the health insurance benefits (via a line item transfer within the budget), the BOS needs to inform the BOA that they'd like the BOA to set hard goals and objectives.

Mr. Keoseian stated that he could support this reluctantly with the agreement of hard goals being set and met.

Mr. Webber added that the Town was given a grant for Stormwater management, for example, and part of the grant is that the Office has additional data to be provided to Cartographics.

Mr. Nordblom concurred with Mr. Keoseian. Mr. Nordblom inquired about who manages the office?

Mr. Dillon replied the Assistant Assessor and added that the two Office Assistants are now under the supervision of the Board of Selectmen due to the Union.

Mr. Dillon concurred and added that the BOS will send a memo to the BOA indicating the need for strong goals and the reason why. Mr. Keoseian concurred and added that he'd like the goals to have a target date and goals be measurable.

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the line item transfer in the amount of \$17,232 from Line Item 1102 – Expenses to Line Item 1101 Wages(within the BOA Budget). Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Unanimous vote.

Mr. Dillon updated the BOS regarding stipend positions relative to the Emergency Management Agency Director's request of an increase in stipend. Mr. Dillon noted that the Personnel Board did not have knowledge, review or approve this increase. Additionally, the stipend positions were supported by the Personnel Board for a 2.5% COLA increase.

Mr. Cunningham added that he felt the EMA Director's request is warranted especially in light of all the Federal and State Mandates as a result of 9/11. He fully supports a request being sent to the Personnel Board to review and make recommendations on all the stipend positions for the Fall Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Dillon added that in the instance of EMA Director, who does a fantastic job, when the EMA Director retires, his position should be folded into the Fire Department budget and responsibilities at no extra cost to the Town.

Mr. Saball moved to not support \$17,545 for the young adult librarian. Seconded by Mr. Keoseian. Unanimous vote. The BOS was all in concurrence that with the amount of staff at the Library, reallocation of resources would support this endeavor.

Mr. Dillon gave an update regarding the Hydrant Fees. He stated that last year a 33% reduction was done at the last minute. As a result, the BOS set up a second committee to come up a method of funding the hydrant fees and to review reduction in hydrant fees. There was no agreeable resolution. Both Groton Water and West Groton Water requested a raise to meet the previous year prior to the 33% reduction. Each met with Finance Committee and agreed to a reduction of 10% of the latter fee. The Finance Committee wanted to reduce the funding to level fund to last year's. Mr. Dillon continued that he spoke to Mr. Newell, West Groton Water District, and he agreed to reduce the fees to the 10% reduction. The Finance Committee, at their last meeting, level funded the hydrant fees at FY05 level. Mr. Dillon also spoke with the GWD Superintendent, and he had agreed with the 10% reduction, however, he had to check with his Commissioners.

Mr. Cunningham added that Jean (Kitchen) and Jay (Prager) were part of the second committee that reviewed the hydrant fees, and the formula (from Maine) is antiquated and does not make sense. He was not in favor for an increased request.

Mr. Webber added that the reason the Finance Committee lowered it further was because there was still a deficit and Jay Prager made an excellent case for the reduction.

Mr. Cunningham moved that no change be made to Line Items 2040 – West Groton Water District and Line Item 2041 Groton Water Department for a total of Groton Water Fire Protection in the amount of \$80,025. Seconded by Mr. Nordblom. Four in favor with one opposed (Saball).

Mr. Saball felt that it should be level funded to last year's amount.

Mr. Nordblom motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Keoseian. Unanimous vote.

Approved: _____
Robert W. Nordblom, Clerk

Respectfully submitted,
Maria Casey
Administrative Assistant

Date Approved: May 8, 2006

Enclosure – FY2007 Budget Summary dated April 14, 2006