

IHAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 21, 2008
AMENDED

Budget Committee Members Present:

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
Richard Nichols, Selectman Representative
Rusty Bridle, School Board Representative
Pat Collins
Victor DeMarco
Maury Friedman
Eileen Latimer
Jack Lessard
Michael Pierce
Norman Silberdick
Larry Stuker
Peter Traynor

Excused

Dick Hansen

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee.

Approval of Minutes – September 16, 2008

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. DeMarco, to approve the Minutes of September 16, 2008 as amended.

Vote: 12 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention (Friedman). Motion passed.

Chairman Woolsey introduced Amanda Reynolds Cooper, the new Librarian at the Lane Memorial Library. Michael Schwotzer, Town Finance Officer, was also present.

Ms. Cooper said all budget figures have been presented to the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Cooper discussed a 5-year review of personnel. She said some figures have changed and health care costs have come down. Health care is 2.19% down from the 2008 budget.

Part time wages will be increased 5.10%. This is because there was a real shortage of staff during the summer. Sick leave is down 20%. They are trying to be conservative, but are taking a gamble. Health insurance is down due to two individuals who have elected to not take the health benefit. Life Insurance, Social Security, Medicare and NH retirement are lines not in the Library's control.

Mr. DeMarco asked if this wasn't the one budget where an overage in money at the end of the year was not turned back to the Town. Mr. Schwotzer replied that any overage in money can be spent as the Library sees fit.

Ms. Cooper discussed the actual and adjusted operating budget. She said the Library's operating budget has really taken a hit in the last five years. She said the request for Education is down 11.29% this year. There is a large increase for Maintenance. What had been budgeted in the past was unrealistic. The increase will help to maintain monthly maintenance. Supplies are down 2.17%. Utilities are up 29.54% and include gas, electrical, phone and water.

Mr. Traynor asked if supplies were purchased in bulk. Ms. Cooper replied that they were.

Ms. Cooper said the increases in Adult Services, Children's Services and Reference Services will only get these services to an acceptable level. She said \$22,000 was cut from the Library's budget last year. Technical Services is down due to building computers rather than leasing them.

Mr. Silberdick asked for a summary of the various services. Ms. Cooper said Adult Services includes fiction, audio, movies and adult programs. Children's Services is toddler through teen with novels and story hour. Reference Services is non-fiction and the reference department.

Mr. Silberdick asked how the effectiveness of these services was measured. Ms. Cooper said they compile monthly reports and have statistics for attendance.

Mr. Silberdick asked if there was an active program to receive books by donation. Ms. Cooper said they receive books daily without an active program. Mr. Traynor asked if it would be beneficial if the Library were to have book sales for extra copies of books. Ms. Cooper said they already do that.

Ms. Cooper discussed the Book Budget. She said they have 30% less money for books which have gone up approximately 10% and this reduces their ability to buy new authors. They have already cut 23 periodicals. The young adult books have become very popular, but this budget suffers because of theft.

Ms. Cooper said that over the past five years, the number of patron visits was at its peak in 2003 when the Library had the highest budget.

Ms. Cooper said there will not be a warrant article for the HVAC this year. There will be more investigation on this project.

Mr. Stuker asked how much the Library received in financial contributions. Ms. Cooper said she could not speak to that. Mr. DeMarco said he would like to see what the contributions and revenue were. Chairman Woolsey requested Ms. Cooper to provide documentation of library gifts and revenues for 2008.

Mr. Stuker asked how Ms. Cooper would rate the Library. She said that not a lot has been done in the last 25 years. The building is beautiful, but lighting, temperature control, and carpeting need addressing.

Mr. Stuker asked Ms. Cooper how she sees the Library in five years in relation to the internet. Ms. Cooper said they presently have 12 public computers in use almost constantly. They have also been talking about private meeting room space.

Mr. Stuker asked Ms. Cooper how she would compare this library to libraries in other towns of similar size. Ms. Cooper said she thinks this is a great library and above the caliber of a lot of town libraries.

Mr. Lessard said he thinks it is one of the best libraries in the state.

Chairman Woolsey said the big challenge for the Library is the high water table.

Ms. Latimer said she would like to see a long range plan going out six years or more. That way improvements could be made one at a time and not create such a large expense in one year. Ms. Latimer said she would also like to see the donations that have been made. She asked about the money received from people using the photocopier. Ms. Cooper said that money goes back to the photocopier company.

Mr. Collins said he thinks the Library is fantastic and thanked Ms. Cooper for her excellent budget and presentation.

Chairman Woolsey thanked Ms. Cooper for her presentation.

School Research Report

Mr. Pierce said he had some question about the \$327,269 that was used to address maintenance projects. This amount is higher than the \$233,000 approved by the school board. Mr. Pierce said he would like to know what projects were addressed. Mr. Pierce said he was also concerned with the Special Education Expendable Trust.

Mr. Pierce said that the cost per student has almost doubled since 1999 and enrollment has gone down. He said he felt this issue should be looked at. Mr. Pierce said the schools also are not doing well on certain required testing. Mr. Stuker said he felt a lot of the statistics are misleading due to a lot of federal mandates, etc. which are unfunded. Mr. Stuker said he did not feel this was an accurate comparison of data. Chairman Woolsey said that since 1999 there has been a big shift in sociological events, different lifestyles, etc. More children are coded as Special Needs today.

Mr. Collins said Hampton has had problems with children coming into the schools on a transient basis and this affects the school's scores on the tests. This creates a terrible problem for the teachers.

Mr. Silberdick said that when the sub-committee met with the school administration, they were not delving into quality, but were looking at line items. He said he believes the schools are watching every nickel.

Mr. Bridle said he felt the schools were doing very well. Ms. Latimer said her interpretation is that the schools have done very well. When you look at the entire picture, you will see a well planned system.

Chairman Woolsey said looking at it only from cost per pupil is patently unfair.

Mr. Friedman said the Committee should ask the School Board to come back and explain these issues. If not, the Committee has not discharged its responsibility.

Mr. DeMarco said it was his understanding that his job on this Committee is to look at the budget, get explanations from the Town Manager who has requested the proper amounts of money. It is not the Committee's job to dictate to the schools or the departments.

Selectman's Report

Mr. Nichols said the Board of Selectmen approved an operating budget of \$25,856,785. This is 4% over 2008. They are hoping that the retirement issue will be resolved by the

legislature. The tax rate will be at \$16.33 per \$1,000 evaluation. This is a 4.1% increase to the average taxpayer. The Board of Selectmen has begun discussion on warrant articles and are working to keep the dollar amount and number of articles down.

Mr. DeMarco asked about the \$30,000 for the fire station. Mr. Nichols said the \$475,000 was intended to be the total architectural and engineering costs for a complete design. The \$30,000 is intended to provide engineering and architectural resources to come up with a conceptual plan, square footage and cost estimates. This is basically a start.

Chairman Woolsey said the Board of Selectmen are stalling. This is a public safety issue.

Mr. Nichols said a determination will be made at the deliberative session as to whether the \$30,000 should be in a warrant article or in the budget. Mr. Nichols said he felt the money should be in a warrant article.

Chairman Woolsey discussed *Town & City*. She said the September issue contains the Legislative Bulletin which is of great value. She urged the members to contact the LGC and subscribe to the magazine.

Chairman Woolsey discussed the question of the charities. She said in the old days, a charity petitioned and then was inserted into the budget. Some people have complained about this. Then the charities were put into Health & Human Services and each was on the warrant. Then they were lumped into one article. Chairman Woolsey said she had a problem with the Board of Selectmen inserting a special money article for private charities.

Chairman Woolsey said the next meeting will be Thursday, October 30th. It will be the Committee's first work session on the 2009 budget. On the agenda will be the Town Clerk's office and General Government.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Lessard **moved**, seconded by Mr. Friedman, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman

