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BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
OCTOBER 20, 2016

Members Present: Carl Hagstrom, Martin Nolan, Natasha Michelson, Kathleen Stark, Ben Thomas, and Selectmen's Representative, Nancy Carney

Members Absent: Virginia Doerpholz and Win Wright

Carl Hagstrom convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Hagstrom thanked everyone for coming back and welcomed new member Kathleen Stark.

Committee members received all of the department budgets that had been submitted to date and organized them into their budget books.

Mr. Hagstrom made a motion to nominate Win Wright as Vice-Chair. Natasha Michelson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hagstrom made a motion to appoint Martin Nolan to serve on the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) Committee. Ben Thomas seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Michelson made a motion to nominate Mr. Hagstrom as Chair. Mr. Nolan seconded. Mr. Hagstrom abstained. The motion was approved.

Committee members reviewed the schedule and reviewed year-to-date expenditures.

Committee members agreed expenditures to-date looked good. Debbie Favreau reported that as of December should be at 25% of budget. Ms. Favreau shared that insurance was over due to the insurance change and the need to pay for 1 ½ years of premiums out of this year's budget. This year's (2017) insurance costs would be less. Ms. Favreau explained what happened that necessitated the change in insurance companies. Ms. Favreau shared the town now uses Primex.

Mr. Nolan noted that direct assistance was down a considerable amount. Ms. Favreau shared that she doesn't know why. Mr. Hagstrom thought that a mild winter and dry summer could have affected the need for assistance. Mr. Nolan asked what this does for the Welfare Office. Ms. Favreau shared that we haven't had any appointments for several months and explained that Mary Drew was no longer our Welfare Officer. Mr. Nolan asked who was doing that and Ms. Favreau shared that she was currently handling any need for assistance. Mary Drew offered to assist Ms. Favreau if needed.

Committee members reviewed Land Use and Library budgets for next week's appointments.

Land Use budget:

Mr. Hagstrom stated it was a pretty impressive budget.

Ms. Favreau shared that she had received the new insurance rates and budgets would need to be revised. The Selectmen would review the insurance rates at their meeting on Monday.

Mr. Hagstrom asked if there were any questions. Ms. Michelson stated that not much had changed. Ms. Carney stated that ZBA met very infrequently but this year they met sometimes 3-4 times per month due to the cell phone tower and other issues. Ms. Carney noted there wasn't an increase in the Land Use budget.

Library Budget:

Mr. Nolan asked if the legal issue was done. Ms. Carney and Ms. Favreau stated that it was. Ms. Michelson asked about the notes regarding compensation for Ms. Thomas. Noted change in December 2018 to Step 4 and asked if that wouldn't be reflected in 2016. Mr. Thomas stated it should be next year. Ms. Favreau shared it probably meant that a step increase wouldn't be asked for this year.

Ms. Favreau questioned Line 360 – Custodial Services at 0. Ms. Carney shared they have as a part-time employee. Ms. Favreau wasn't sure what the \$885.78 expensed on the same line item was.

Ms. Michelson asked Mr. Nolan how the number on Line 411 – Heat and Oil looked. Mr. Nolan reported the cost was going up but not drastically. Mr. Nolan noted the increase of \$2,000 over last year and thought that a \$1,000 increase (25%) would be a good increase. Mr. Nolan stated there wasn't a way to really guarantee the number.

Kathleen Stark asked if they pre-buy oil. Ms. Favreau shared that the town used to but hasn't for the past few years. Mr. Nolan discussed the cost of fuel and pricing throughout the year. Mr. Nolan noted that propane was a better buy.

Mr. Hagstrom noted there were only 2 items with questions. Mr. Hagstrom asked about next week's budget review and if they would have the Highway and Transfer Station budgets. Ms. Favreau stated she hoped to have them.

Ms. Stark asked to speak regarding something that had been of concern to her since the Committee's last meeting in June. Ms. Stark shared that at the June meeting her campaigning methods were questioned, with one member accusing her of acting unethically. Ms. Stark explained that she used bullet voting as her campaign strategy and before using this method she had spoken with the Town Clerk regarding the ethics of this method. Ms. Stark shared that Heidi Wood, Town Clerk, said it was totally acceptable and ethical. Ms. Wood checked with the Town Moderator. Ms. Stark noted that Ms. Wood shared the ballot stated "vote for not more than two" for a two seat position that was contested. Ms. Wood shared that voters could vote for one, or two, or none, or they could vote for Donald Duck if they chose to.

Ms. Stark wanted to clarify that it wasn't underhanded, unethical and she wasn't going through the back door. Ms. Stark stated it was a smart strategy and noted the other two candidates weren't outside campaigning during the almost 7 hours that she was outside.

Ms. Stark thanked Committee members for listening.

Mr. Hagstrom asked that we mail Mrs. Doerpholz her packet.

Mr. Hagstrom thanked everyone for coming out.

There being no further business, Mr. Hagstrom adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Submitted by,

Sheryl White
Secretary