

**TOWN OF CANAAN
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
October 1, 2009
Canaan Fire Station
Approved Copy**

Members present: Chair David McAlister; Eleanor Davis; Dave Barney; Craig Lawler; Denis Salvail; John Bergeron; and Al Posnanski. Also present were Michael Capone, Amy Thurber, Cindy Neily, Beth Wolf, Glenn Carey, and Nelson Therriault.

David McAlister called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M. and took attendance.

The Budget Committee reviewed the following department budgets for 2010:

Building Inspection

Michael Capone summarized that this proposed budget is level funded for next year. It was noted that the Building Inspector has been told to submit mileage reimbursement but that he never has in the past since he often completes town business while using his own truck to complete his own work related business.

Welfare

Nelson Therriault summarized the increase in the number of assistance requests and the amount of assistance provided this year compared to last year with three challenging heating months ahead. It was noted that the expenditures listed in the miscellaneous line item were for two burial requests. Nelson Therriault explained that there have been significant cuts in assistance at the state level and that many individuals are being placed on waiting lists for services. Nelson Therriault added that the Board of Selectmen has set a maximum expenditure allowance of \$250 and that any request exceeding \$250 for an extraordinary need requires prior approval by the Board of Selectmen. Michael Capone summarized that he has estimated a need for a \$20,000 transfer to the welfare budget in order to cover expenditures for the next three months.

Al Posnanski asked whether the claims for assistance are ever investigated before funds are provided. Nelson Therriault responded that the applicant is required to fill out a financial statement but that he does not always verify the information. Nelson Therriault summarized that most of the applicants are on disability or have been laid off or are earning the minimum wage. Most of the applicants also lack health insurance, or are sick, or have had a recent operation.

Recreation

Michael Capone summarized that the supporting documentation provides some explanation but that the budget figures are subject to change since the committee has new members. Michael Capone added that he is organizing and facilitating the committee meetings since the Director no longer wants to chair the committee. Additional funds will most likely be needed in the maintenance and repair line item. Michael Capone added that the Director position will possibly revert to a volunteer position. Michael

Capone summarized that funds for program supplies and equipment may be needed in order to initiate new programming.

Michael Capone clarified that the mowing expenditures are included in the building and grounds line item and that the previous part time salary was for the field hockey camp and arts and crafts program.

Michael Capone offered to find out where the state water testing fees at Canaan Street Lake are accounted for.

Al Posnanski asked what revenues are being collected for the recreation budget from Old Home Days or Williams Field. Eleanor Davis responded that only revenues from the summer programs are being collected. Michael Capone summarized that there has been some initial discussion of charging a user fee for Williams Field to help defray the cost for the field lights and water.

Michael Capone clarified that the bath house expenses are included in this budget and that the fuel line item is for the tractor used to mow Williams Field.

Michael Capone confirmed that the soda machines have been turned off and that the Pepsi contract has been canceled.

Eleanor Davis asked where the \$7,000 from the Williams Field Trust Fund is accounted for and how the funds can be used. Michael Capone responded that the funds can only be used for the field and not for playground equipment or replacement.

Eleanor Davis requested an accounting of what lights are being billed to the recreation budget.

Library

Library staff members distributed handouts summarizing their proposed budget and statistics regarding library usage. The national trend is that there has been an enormous increase in circulation and computer usage due to the downturn in the economy and the increase in unemployment.

Al Posnanski asked how book purchases are determined. Amy Thurber explained that she uses various printed sources and book reviews for recommendations and that single copies are purchased. Also purchased are replacements for missing books and books in poor condition. Approximately 400 to 500 books are purchased annually and many books are donated by the public.

Michael Capone noted that there has been some discussion about consolidating the cleaning services for all of the town's buildings.

Eleanor Davis asked how much revenue is raised from the book fairs, the yard sale, and the photocopier. It was explained that photocopier revenues are placed in an existing

photocopier replacement and supply fund and that funds raised by the Friends of the Library book sale are used at their discretion. The second used book sale this year generated \$535.

Beth Wolf summarized that the same salaries and benefit figures for this year were used for next year's budgeting since they were not sure whether salary increases would be offered or what the town's options will be regarding insurance and benefit changes. Michael Capone explained that there may be possible benefit plan changes depending on how the rates change for next year. Michael Capone added that the cost of the retirement contribution is increasing for the town, as well as, for the school district.

There was general discussion of possibly separating the salary, benefits, FICA/Medicare, and retirement line items from the rest of the proposed budget for the library.

Cindy Neily explained that the library staff voluntarily reduced their budget, as the Board of Selectmen had requested of every department. There was general discussion that the library's proposed budget for 2010 does not match the budget figures that were provided in the budget worksheet. Michael Capone offered to find out why and suggested that committee members rely on the library personnel's figures for now.

Transfer Station

Glenn Carey summarized that his proposed budget is level funded from last year but that he has better defined the budget categories for greater transparency. Glenn Carey added that the electricity line item will most likely need to be adjusted.

John Bergeron suggested that the public should be better educated that several businesses accept the disposal of electronics at no charge and that the transfer station fees can be avoided. Glenn Carey responded that the public prefers the convenience of one site for all of their disposal needs. The fees are set by the Board of Selectmen. There was general discussion that enforcement of the disposal fees is difficult since many residents choose to dump their items illegally in order to avoid the disposal fees.

Conservation

It was explained that this line item is used for accounting purposes regarding transfers.

Michael Capone acknowledged pending negotiations and possible litigation regarding a breach in a conservation easement agreement.

Water and Sewer

Michael Capone summarized that he will be working with the personnel in order to better refine the budget figures provided at this time.

Michael Capone clarified that there can be no increase in expansion or in the number of water or sewer hookups until the groundwater discharge permit study is completed.

Michael Capone clarified that the well project funds do not impact the water or sewer budgets.

Patriotic

This budget was not discussed at this time.

Debt Service

Michael Capone referenced page thirty-eight of the 2008 Town Report regarding the outstanding debt service.

There was general discussion of possibly reducing the interest on tax anticipated notes line item since funds have not been borrowed since Michael Capone has been employed by the town.

John Bergeron suggested mailing the tax bills quarterly in order to improve the town's cash flow.

Capital Outlay Improvements Other than Buildings

There was general note that this budget could be applied to roads or a landfill.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes will be available for review and approval at the next meeting.

Chairmen's Report

Dave McAlister summarized the upcoming meeting schedule. It was noted that the Public Hearing is tentatively scheduled for January 14th with a January 19th backup date. The next meeting is scheduled on October 15th.

It was suggested by the minute taker that there would be a mutual advantage to implementing abbreviated or a condensed version of meeting minutes compared to what has been previous provided. Eleanor Davis commented that the town has previously benefited from a detailed set of minutes. There was general consensus to try the abbreviated suggestion in order to see what the difference would be.

Selectmen's Report

There was no selectmen's report provided at this time.

MOTION by Dave Barney and seconded by Denis Salvail to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 P.M.

VOTE: Unanimous in the affirmative