

Town of Raymond
401 Webbs Mills Road
Raymond, Maine 04071
207-655-4742

Budget/Finance Committee and Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 30, 2004

Selectmen present: Betty McDermott, Chairman; Mark Gendron; Mike Reynolds, and Christine McClellan.

Selectmen absent: Ada Brown

Budget/Finance Committee present: Rolf Olsen, Chairman; Ralph Bartholomew; Suzie Brockelbank; Jean Carter; Coleen Laprise; Dennis Cole; David Rowe; and Frank McDermott.

Budget/Finance Committee member absent: Louise Murray

Staff present: Don Willard, Town Manager; Elizabeth Cummings, Finance Director; Nathan White, Public Works Director; and Denis Morse, Fire Chief.

1. Call to order. Rolf Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm at the Town Office.

2. Approval of Budget schedule, process and philosophy.

Mr. Olsen reiterated the agenda for the evening and said that the School Committee would be meeting with them on December 15th at one of the schools. Mrs. Laprise said that she couldn't meet that night. Mr. Olsen said he would ask the School Committee about an alternate evening. Mr. Olsen asked about changes to the schedule. He noted that the actual meeting dates are those which say "the committee reviews". The other dates are for submissions etc. There was discussion that February 22nd is during vacation week of February 21st through 25th. Mr. Olsen said that the public hearing date is a place holder date and can be rescheduled. It was decided to hold the February 22nd meeting on February 28th. The February 24th meeting will be deleted and will be rescheduled at a later time.

Mr. Olsen asked where everyone felt the budget should go indicated by what they are hearing from the residents. There was discussion about the tax program Governor Baldacci was planning. Mr. Bartholomew asked if any knowledge was found in reviewing what would happen if the Palesky tax cap had passed. Mr. Willard said that no alternative budget was formed but said that a potential meeting was discussed to make plans if the tax cap had passed. Raymond's vote was about 50-50. Mr. Willard reported that the present proposed budget increase was in the 5% range. Mr. Willard felt that revamping our waste budget would save money but lessen our service. The regional dispatch idea could come back; however, many people feel that they want to keep their fire/rescue dispatch in Raymond. Mr. McDermott felt that Raymond's taxpayers expect their services to be lessened with a lower budget, but that

Raymond's spending is carefully scrutinized and budgeted for. Mr. Rowe felt that the voters in November who voted for the tax cap just want to see their tax bill lowered and didn't really look at what it would do to their services. Mr. Gendron said his experience was that people didn't relate the lowering of their taxes with a lessening of services. They felt that the services would still be there. Mr. Willard noted that P&K, Raymond's snow plowing contractor, was not happy about their contract which has a cpi increase because of the increase in fuel costs. However, they will provide the service per the contract. Mr. Gendron felt they should create a budget with the services as they exist, and if the taxpayers want it lowered, then they have to tell the Selectmen and Budget/Finance Committee where they will allow the loss of service. Mr. Reynolds asked what new revenues could be expected with the new building in Raymond and excise tax. Mr. Willard said that they haven't discussed this with Jack Cooper, Code Enforcement Officer, but excise tax continues to be strong. There was discussion about new housing and the cost to the town of serving that housing. Mr. McDermott noted that with the new houses in the last five years, the school population hasn't seemed to be growing with it. He thought that some facts about this were formulated. He felt that some of our problem in Maine is that the young adults are leaving Maine to get jobs. The elderly can't support the town as many might think. Mrs. Brockelbank noted that John Rand has put some numbers together which will be published in the next *Roadrunner*. Mr. Reynolds said that Norma Richard, Raymond Elementary School principal, said that they are down half a teacher a grade and the population of the K-5 school is down and that the 5-8 is higher. Mr. McDermott thought the increase was 1% or less over the last 10 years. Mrs. Carter noted that she has read that the entire state has a lowering child population. Mr. Gendron noted that the state's population is going down which means there will be less federal money available to us. Mrs. Carter said that the whole town and school budget has to be studied, especially the communications budget which includes the digital studio and the *Roadrunner* to be sure it's a necessary expense. Mr. Reynolds asked if we don't know what the school budget will get from the state, can we discuss what the town budget will do to get to a certain percentage if the school needs to have a 10% increase. Mr. Bartholomew felt that the budgets should be studied independently. Mr. Gendron noted that the fuel bills alone would drive the budget up. Mr. Olsen said the people can understand that and will pay it even though they won't like it. Mr. Willard noted that the digital video program and a road improvement program for Rt. 121 would put the budget over. He didn't think that \$58,000 for the digital broadcasting would ever look like an absolute necessity. Mrs. Cummings reported that the auditor wanted \$1.7 mil in undesignated surplus, and we're now at \$1.4 mil, which includes the \$200,000 to be taken for the 2004-2005 budget. Mr. Olsen asked if the auditor was looking at just the town or whether he's including the school's surplus. Mrs. Cummings said he looked at the entire budget, and he suggested \$1.7 mil undesignated surplus for the entire town budget. Mr. McDermott asked that Mr. Willard request a letter from Smith & Assoc to clarify this question as to whether the school's surplus is included or not. Mr. Bartholomew asked if we've ever been close to needing a tax anticipation note. Mrs. Cummings replied that we're in good shape but in August before the new tax receipts come in it can get close. She added that it had been years since Raymond needed a tax anticipation note. Mr. Reynolds said that he was surprised that we're as far away from the auditors suggested amount as we are, and if we have to make up that much money than he would have no problem withdrawing the digital broadcasting project from the budget. Mr. Willard said that we're not in that much of a problem and that

probably the \$58,000 won't put Raymond in a bind. Mr. McDermott said that Raymond has the ability to have a survey on our website which could be utilized for this type of information gathering. He noted that Mr. Woodbrey has been instrumental in getting this attribute at no great cost to the town, and it's there to be used.

Mr. White explained that the Rural Road Imitative program for Rt. 121 was like the Rt. 85 project which is a one third matching fund. MDOT doesn't know if this program will be available until next spring because of funding. However, if we don't have the matching funds available, we won't be able to apply. He asked that it be put in the budget. He explained that it would be two phase like the Rt. 85 project was. Phase 1 would be from Main Street to Tower Road and then Phase 2 from Tower Road to the Casco line. It will cost Raymond about \$150,000 which will be similar to the job done on Rt. 85, a medium level rebuild. Mr. White felt that the Rt. 121 traffic is higher than Rt. 85 and this work is needed. Mr. Olsen asked about the timing of this funding. Mr. White said it would be for one year. There was discussion about using part of the bond money to spread the payments over a longer time. Mr. Willard said that was possible so that we could apply and then raise the money in the next couple of years. Mr. White didn't want to inhibit the road building for which this bond money was originally scheduled. Mr. Olsen agreed and felt the money could be paid back over time to be used for its original program. The meeting tended to agree with this scenario. Mr. Willard added that Raymond has a good track record with the state including the Rt. 302 grant/project.

Mr. McDermott felt that the Selectmen needed to tell the Budget/Finance Committee what they need instead of starting with a percentage to aim for. At that time, the B/F Committee can make some cuts if necessary. Mr. Willard said in formulating the budget the department heads would keep the cpi number in mind.

Mr. Olsen asked how the undesignated accounts will be handled. Mr. Willard said a meeting would be held to talk with those applying for funds. A questionnaire would be sent them for general information. Mr. Olsen asked that we find out how many people in Raymond they serve. Mrs. Cummings reviewed the list of agencies from last year.

Chief Morse said that the bonds are ending this year and the budget will be a flat amount. There will be some night dispatching from another site to save money. Mr. McDermott asked where we were with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department. Mr. Willard said the officers want to come here, but the decision is now with the County Commissioners and the Sheriff. Mr. Willard felt that at some time in the next few years Raymond would require a contract deputy because of the number of traffic accidents in Raymond.

Mrs. McDermott congratulated Mr. Willard and Mr. White on their cost saving programs and the amount of money they have saved Raymond with things like having the town office painted by prisoners from Windham Correctional. She noted the amount of work that Kevin Woodbrey has done and the attributes gained because of his service. Mr. Olsen felt this should be promoted in the town report and *Roadrunner*. Mrs. Cummings noted a fuel oil program

which is saving the town a lot of money. Mr. White felt that the next contract with P&K would reflect the loss they will incur in the next two years on the present contract.

Mr. Willard said that the windows in the old part of the town office need to be replaced. They have been repaired as much as possible. Mr. Reynolds asked how much heat is lost and wouldn't that saving be worth the price of the replacement windows. Mr. McDermott said that they should be in the budget and discussed from there. Mr. Gendron felt it should be dealt with through the budget instead of waiting until it's an emergency replacement and not budgeted. Mr. Olsen felt it should be included in the CIP account. He felt there were other items as well. Mrs. McClellan felt that a new town office should be added to the CIP as well. Mr. Willard felt that the Budget Committee should see the Power Point presentation that Josh Stevens prepared concerning the condition of the town office. Chief Morse felt there should be funds for repairs to the town office just to keep it going. Mr. Willard added that the future should have a building for Public Works as well.

3. Adjourn.

Rolf Olsen adjourned the meeting at 8:31 pm.

Louise H. Lester
Town Clerk