

Budget/Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen
2004-2005 Town Budget Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 23, 2004

Attendance: Rolf Olsen, Chairman Budget/Finance Committee; Wayne Holmquist; Suzanne Brockelbank; David Rowe; Jane Jordan; Louise Murray; Ralph Bartholomew; Ada Brown, Selectmen Chairman; Dana Desjardins, Selectman; Christine McClellan, Selectman; Charles Leavitt, Selectman; Betty McDermott, Selectman; Elizabeth Cummings, Finance Director; Nathan White, Road Commissioner; Denis Morse, Fire Chief; Kevin Woodbrey, Technology Director; Laurie Forbes, Technology Committee Chairman; John Rand, Conservation Commission; and Don Willard, Town Manager.

1. Call to order. Rolf Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm at the Town Office. He noted that this meeting would be for discussion only and no votes would be taken.
2. Discussion of the 2004-2005 Town Budget.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Willard opened by saying that the message sent at the last town meeting caused the formation of this budget to be at the 6% level. He felt that the town fiscal responsibilities must be met with a unity of purpose for the town and the school to keep the budget tight. Because the town desperately needs road improvements and public safety kept up to date, it was felt that the capital for roads and the purchase of fire/rescue vehicles could be bonded for a ten year bond which would make it more affordable by the town and also take advantage of the low interest rates currently offered. A bond for \$1 mil would allow for \$950,000 for a three year program for road improvements and \$50,000 toward a Rescue 2 replacement ambulance and a pumper/tanker. He continued that the first work on the roads would be an engineering survey on our road inventory and to establish a priority list. Mr. White added that currently he is reacting to complaints rather than an organized road improvement program. He felt that some of the roads which need work have not received it because the residents on those roads don't complain, but those roads should be improved so that they don't totally decay.

Mrs. Cummings informed the committees that the two items in the town budget which have been continued from last year's plan are the adjustment to some of the town employees' salaries which is in its second year of a three year program to bring them up to area salary levels. The second item is family benefits which are available to those full time employees who request it. Mr. Willard also noted that the tax reform question yet to be decided on the state level greatly influence the town's budget and financing.

Mr. Holmquist asked if this expenditure on the roads would bring them up to date. Mr. Willard replied no but that it would be a good start. Mr. Rowe asked if this was just a "band aid" fix. Mr. Willard felt that after this initial expenditure the town could continue the program year by year.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Willard announced that the Public Works Director position will be shifted to salaried instead of hourly. This is the format for these positions in this area. It was felt that with his current crew he would be able to keep his hours stable with more administrative work and less actual hands on chores. Mr. Olsen had concern that Mr. White would be working hours for which he wouldn't be compensated. Mr. White said he was planning a work week of 55 hours and felt this could be accomplished with his present crew. Mr. Willard added that the public works department turn over has stopped and everyone was satisfied and working well together. Mr. Bartholomew asked if this change for the director would require staff increases. Mr. White replied no that the crew worked well as a team and that they were satisfied with their pay being the same across the board. Mr. Bartholomew asked what impact the bond money would have on the crew. Mr. Willard replied that the bond will pay for a three year plan with engineering coming first. Mr. White added that the bond will help Raymond catch up on big problems and that the crew would do regular maintenance. Mr. Bartholomew asked if the engineering study would be by our parameters. Mr. Willard replied yes that there will be an inventory survey done and then a prioritizing of the work needed. It would be similar to what Windham has done. Mr. White said that one estimate for the study was \$10,000. He felt that having the study done outside the department would be more economical and not biased. Mr. Olsen noted that doing a bond now would lock in low interest rates. Mr. Holmquist asked what the cost would be over the interest. Mrs. Cummings replied less than \$2,000 for the bond counsel. Mr. Willard added that the town can invest the unexpended funds while the town is holding it. Mr. Desjardins asked who the engineers might be. Mr. Willard answered that Raymond has used Sebago Technics, and Gorrill-Palmer for individual projects in the past but would be open for considering others. Mr. White reported that the Cape Road improvements cost \$6,500 for engineering from Sebago Technics. He preferred to use outside sources so that priorities are indicated by them, and he would have the decision as to scheduling. Mr. Bartholomew felt that doing it this way will expedite work which needs to be done. Mr. Bartholomew asked if the town now had a comparable number of Public Works employees in relation to what other area towns have. Mr. Willard said no, that other towns of our size might have as many as 15 employees but said that because of our snow removal contract with P&K we didn't need as many people. Mr. Leavitt asked about the increase in account #0200. Mr. White explained that in the past Public Works uniforms were supplied by the school and the town reciprocated with parking lot plowing. This year the town will have uniforms in its budget and the school will have plowing in theirs. Mr. Willard explained that this would make the budget more accurate. He added that Public Works was using the old District 1 garage for office space, storage, and workshop.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Willard reported that there was a 3% increase. Mrs. Cummings asked that \$2,786 be added to the budget to allow more hours for the Code Enforcement Office secretary. It appears with the work necessary she will need more hours. This increase will allow her to work up to 24 hours. However, if it isn't warranted, she won't work the full 24 hours per week. At that level her salary will be \$16,711 with no benefits offered. Mr. Willard announced that one dispatcher was leaving and that position would be filled by part-time employees. He added that they are still looking to do something with regionalization if possible. Mr. Holmquist asked if anyone had looked into postage on the internet. Mrs. Cummings replied no. Mr. Woodbrey was asked to look into it. Mr. Leavitt asked about the assistant CEO position saying that he had concern about a 20% increase in that account in one year. He felt the town would be open to criticism in allowing "employee creep". Mr. Willard said that Jack Cooper felt it was warranted because Paul White was doing environmental work which Mr. Cooper had not had time to do. Mr. White is also covering

for Mr. Cooper when he is not available and also attending the Planning Board meetings while Mr. Cooper attends the Appeals Board meetings. Mr. Leavitt was concerned with increasing Mr. White from 16 hours to 24 hours. He expressed concern that the taxpayers will see this as a way to have him full time next year. He felt there should be a plan of a longer period of time describing where the office will be in i.e. 5 years. Mr. Willard expressed concern as well but felt it was the result of the cuts last year and not allowing more hours from the start. Mrs. Cummings said that the revenues from the CEO office were going up because they increased some of the fees, and they are doing more work. It was also noted that Mr. Cooper would be retiring in a few years and wanted to have someone trained to replace him at that time. Mr. Willard indicated at the time that Mr. Cooper retires the CEO office will most likely not go back to one person. John Rand said that the Conservation Commission is very happy with Mr. White's contribution. Mr. Willard announced that the Planning Board is planning for ordinance work because of things they have found in our ordinance which need work as well as new ordinances coming because of our new Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Lester reported that the Town Report would cost about the same but it was hoped that we wouldn't have to print as many this year. It will be discussed that the Report not be mailed to residents direct but have a postcard sent announcing that it was ready to be picked up at certain places. This will save on postage. Mr. Leavitt wanted meeting notices to be advertised more so that people know what's going on. He suggested an Information Officer be responsible for this duty. Mr. Woodbrey said that all events are on our website. It was noted that the school budget will include the cost of publishing the Roadrunner. Mr. Woodbrey added that the cost of the technology to put it together would be borne by the town as well.

ASSESSING

Mr. Willard explained that Amanda Simpson became a certified assessor last summer and will be paid for 32 hours of work per week. He noted that her expertise as a planner has and will be used in the future as well. He continued that when Raymond does a revaluation, her expertise will be needed at that time.

TOWN OFFICE

Mr. Olsen asked about the price of heating oil. Mrs. Cummings said that she was participating in a group purchase which was better than the GPCOG price. The price of propane was also discussed and Mrs. Cummings said she would look into why the town is paying so much per gallon.

INSURANCE

Mrs. Cummings reported that all costs are up. She expected to see a 10% increase for health insurance and 5% for dental. Mr. Holmquist asked if the town self insures for anything. Mrs. Cummings replied no everything is through Maine Municipal Association. It was asked if employees had to pay anything toward their insurance. Mrs. Cummings replied that employees who have family insurance pay 15% of the cost. Mr. Leavitt noted that we were fortunate to still be insured by Maine School Management which was reasonable and a good plan.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Cummings said that there is an increase because of more demand this year. She noted that Donna Lovely has been very discerning about our GA responsibilities.

TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Mr. Woodbrey reported that the town has 25 active PC's with 2 replacement PC's a year. The position is flat funded with no benefits except vacation time. He noted that the school will be budgeting for publishing the Roadrunner with expectations that they will receive help in that endeavor from the town. He said that he spends about 15 to 20% of his time for the schools. Mr. Leavitt had a question about the charge off for equipment in each department instead of putting it all under the Technology Department. He felt that it would better reflect the cost for technology per department. Mr. Woodbrey said that he had put it all under Technology so that the town would know what we were using i.e. replacements. Any new equipment would be shown under the specific department purchasing the equipment. Mr. Leavitt indicated that by putting all pertaining equipment under a specific department would reduce the bottom line for the Technology Department. Mr. Woodbrey said that he could arrange his budget any way the Selectmen wanted it. Mr. Holmquist said he preferred it as a combined expense under the Technology Department so that he can see exactly what is being spent in that category. Mr. Olsen said he could see benefit in both presentations but felt that if it was disbursed throughout the budget, the taxpayers might see it as trying to hide this equipment and expertise expense. Mrs. Forbes noted that questions can be answered because the information is there no matter how it is presented. Mr. Desjardins asked why the cable modem is so expensive. Mr. Woodbrey said it is no more expensive than other means of accessing the web. He indicated that Fairpoint NE will be giving him an estimate of expense using their DSL connection. He didn't expect to see much change because our server is working for about 10 other entities other than the town and school i.e. library.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Olsen asked if all the ordinances needed work. Mrs. Cummings replied that \$13,500 was for Robert Faunce, town planner, to revise the ordinance where the Planning Board found problems. Mr. Holmquist asked if this included legal review. Mrs. Cummings answered no that she expected the legal cost would come from the Administration legal account. Mr. Olsen felt that a dedicated legal amount should be included. He had concern that the Administration legal account might not cover both uses. Mr. Leavitt felt that this amount would be for the known problems in the ordinance and doesn't necessarily include ordinance work to compliment the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Holmquist questioned the \$20,000 for open space. Mr. Rand said that he would like to put the fund back on track from last year where only \$5,000 was raised. There is now \$25,000 in the account and felt that this was imperative since it appears that the Comprehensive Plan won't encourage the saving of open space through zoning. He said this would be needed for matching funds in order to purchase land to be preserved – no parcel is presently being sought. He said that having this money readily available will make application(s) more easily developed. He suggested that current development is leaving less land available. Mr. Holmquist was in favor of having a specific plan before money is raised for the purpose of purchasing a parcel for land preservation. Mr. Rand said that he would be at town meeting to speak for this expenditure. He added that the Conservation Commission is working on an inventory of parcels to be watched.

Mr. Rand explained that the Raymond Lakes Protection Program received about \$18,000 from donations for the milfoil program and \$6,400 from the DEP & IF&W milfoil sticker program. He said he was asking the same amount as last year from the town of \$9,000.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Morse reported that because his Deputy Chief Chris Champagne will be leaving as of April 1st, the money from his salary and other resources will enable the town to have the position of day duty person/EMA/assistant chief filled by one person full-time daytime.

He is also raising standby stipend to \$3.00 per hour from \$1.00 because of the problem in getting paramedics to cover hours. There is a \$500 increase in gasoline for the boat to use as a patrol on Sebago around the end of the Cape near Frye Island. This boat will be manned by volunteers with no enforcement capability but as a deterrent by their presence. Mr. Olsen asked about other requests from town areas i.e. inland. He also wanted to know what our liability would be. Chief Morse explained that there was an experienced boatman who will work with the volunteers. Mr. Willard said that he could bring in some of the volunteers for discussion at another meeting.

The testing of the truck water pumps has been out sourced which has lead to finding small things to repair which has allowed the trucks to experience less expensive repairs than might have been. He noted that turnout gear and equipment/repair has been reduced from last year. He indicated that salaries have been raised 4% with another 2% expected in the next budget, the third year will be flat. He also noted that Kathy McAuslan's stipend has been increased to be able to keep her in Raymond. He felt that the Dispatch office should stay in Raymond but said that Gray is considering doing our night time dispatching for Raymond and Frye Island in return for our fire/rescue coverage of Brown and Gore Road. He indicated that both Gray and Windham are being very cooperative with discussion about regional coordination of services. Chief Morse reported that rescue billing revenues are about \$118,000 plus another \$14,000 for dispatch. He said that they turned back about \$50,000 for unpaid rescue bills. He continued that the new owner of the billing service was interested in trying to recover these funds which the previous owner was not. He explained that most of these unrecovered funds are from out of staters who don't pay the amount remaining after their insurance pays its share. Chief Morse also stated that a \$34,000 grant was obtained for an educational trailer and personnel for our school education program.

ANIMAL CONTROL

Mrs. Lester reported that this year an increase of fines for unlicensed dogs will help with the expenses of the Animal Control Department.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Willard reported that a new housing development will pay for the Portland Water District waterline to extend from Route 302 up Route 85 for about a quarter of a mile. This improvement will allow for two new fire hydrants which will aid Raymond's fire protection.

SOLID WASTE

It was decided that the costs were reasonable but the amounts always increasing. Mr. Willard said that the Recycling Committee is looking into ways to increase recycling to reduce the amount of trash.

CEMETERIES

Mrs. McDermott said that the Committee was working to improve the cemeteries. Mrs. Lester asked when the new expansion to the North Raymond Cemetery would be available for sale. Mrs. McDermott replied that it had not been surveyed as yet and that amount of money was not in this budget.

PARKS

Mr. Desjardins asked Mrs. Cummings to allow the Soccer Committee to pay for their portapotties directly. Mrs. Cummings agreed and would subtract that amount from this budget.

UNCLASSIFIEDS

There was discussion of qualifications and having their needs presented to the boards. Senior Meals was questioned as to how many Raymond residents actually use it. Also the new requests were surveyed, and it was felt that individuals seem to contribute to the Red Cross, Child Health Services were for counties outside Cumberland, and that Public Broadcasting in the past has not submitted a bill after town meeting from which Mrs. Cummings could forward their money. Mrs. McDermott and Mr. Holmquist encouraged the members to support Raymond-Casco Historical Society because Raymond has never given them money before, and they need to catalogue their historical collection so that people can experience it and the Society will know what they have.

CIP

Mr. Willard reported that the contract for the revaluation had been signed. Mr. Desjardins questioned the \$62,640 for Public Works. Mrs. Cummings said it was for a used dump truck, the last payment on a 2004 pickup and the last payment on the ton & ½ truck. Mr. Desjardins questioned whether it would be more cost effective to continue to hire a big hauler instead of owning one in order to avoid maintenance expenses. Mrs. Cummings replied that she understood that by Public Works having its own hauler it would have direct access to it and would use it more than having to hire one. Mr. Desjardins also had concern about the inability of Public Works to house their equipment. He felt that they should have a new garage for storage before they got more equipment to take care of.

TIF

Mr. Woodbrey indicated that there should be a policy developed for gaining revenues from the GIS products. He also noted that technical services are used by the GIS system.

There was discussion about the relevance of the LRDC. It was determined that with the new administration the town should stand by them for one more year to see what they will do. Mr. Willard said that he would try again to have the director attend a Selectmen's meeting for discussion about the LRDC's intention toward Raymond. He continued that recently the GBLRCC had been instrumental in gaining help in creating a committee to keep the Route 302 corridor maintained. He felt that Mr. McClellan, GBLRCC Director, has been and would be very interested in Raymond.

REVENUES

Mrs. Cummings reported that excise tax collection was up 12% from last year and hoped that trend would continue. There was discussion about the amount of Undesignated Surplus to use this year. It was felt that the \$200,000 was the limit that could be used this year in order to keep the level where the town auditors would like to see it. Mrs. Cummings informed them that the auditors would like the fund to be between \$1,600,000 and \$2,500,000. Mr. Olsen said he would like to see it around \$1,500,000. He added that the effect of having to pay the school summer salaries would make a huge difference. He felt that Raymond should continue to pay them as they have for the last 20 years or until the state says we have to make the change.

DRAFT MILL RATE

Mr. Leavitt reported Mrs. Cummings very draft mill rate of a \$1.63 increase over last year included the draft school budget. He also wanted to congratulate Mr. Willard and Mrs. Cummings on the detail and ease of use of this draft budget. He also felt that the town personnel's creativity in managing the town's expenses this year was a plus.

Mr. Willard said that the town would do what it could to prepare the budget for town meeting and that everyone should be united in what the town meeting warrant will present.

NEXT MEETING: The next Budget/Finance Meeting will be March 15, 2004 at the Town Office at 7:00 pm to discuss the School Budget.

The next Budget Committee meeting on the budget will be Monday, March 22, 2004.

ADJOURNMENT: Rolf Olsen adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:30 pm.

Louise H. Lester
Town Clerk