

Budget/Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 7, 2003

Attendance: Rolf Olsen, Chairman Budget/Finance Committee; Jane Jordan; Ralph Bartholomew; Bob Jones; Coleen Laprise; Stephanie Bubier; Wayne Holmquist; Ernest Allen; Ada Brown, Chairman Board of Selectmen; Betty McDermott; Charles Leavitt; Christine McClellan; Elizabeth Cummings, Finance Director; Brenda Stevenson, School Committee Chairman; Kevin Woodbrey; Jerry Keane; Tammy Acker; Frank Dexter; Frank McDermott; Sandra Caldwell, Superintendent; Norma Richard, Raymond Elementary Principal; Charles Miller, Jordan-Small Principal; Meg Waters, Special Ed Director; and Don Willard, Town Manager.

1. Call to order. Rolf Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm at the Town Office.
2. Consideration of recommendations for the 2003-2004 School and Town budgets.

DISCUSSION: Mrs. Jordan asked what would happen to Raymond if the schools didn't support this federal and state program. Mrs. Caldwell replied that this program began in 1996 but we've only begun this year. She said that it had to be done. The eighth graders must have results for math and literacy and the seventh graders results in math, literacy, social studies, science and physical education. She said that they needed tracking over time for student achievement data which will be compared to set standards. Also their curriculum must be in line with what is needed to prepare our students to be competitive. Mr. Olsen asked if there were any difference in standards required in our receiving high schools? Is there one scenario overall? Mrs. Caldwell said there is a statewide alignment. Mr. Olsen questioned whether the middle school principal wasn't supposed to have prepared a curriculum which would have prepared our students sufficiently. Mr. McDermott replied that he had prepared a curriculum for up to the sixth grade which he was responsible for. He added that possibly they shouldn't have brought back our sixth grade a year earlier than planned. Mr. Holmquist asked about the \$47,000 for telephones. He asked how many cell phones they are paying for. Mrs. Caldwell said that they had cut the telephone budget in half. The cell phones are held by the bus drivers, and Meg Waters. Ms. Richard said that the phones in the classrooms are for local calls only. Mr. Holmquist remarked that the Public Utilities Commission ruled that schools have free calls to any school where a town has students enrolled. He said that other towns use this benefit. Mr. Holmquist also asked about the auditors report and whether there was anything else suggested besides the part time accounts payable clerk. Mrs. Caldwell noted that there was a \$155,000 shortfall because of summer employee salaries. She said that because of the cash management form of accounting it was not noted that there was this shortfall over the last two years. She also said there was a shortfall from the State of \$25,000. Mrs. Caldwell explained that she had put a spending freeze on in November 2002 so that they can catch up. Mr. Leavitt asked if they had applied for a waiver under Chapter 125? He said that Maine Municipal Association and others are looking into trying to repeal this plan. Mrs. Caldwell replied that they were going to complete six years of work in one year 2003-2004. Mrs. Stevenson said that all schools are looking to complete this work.

There was discussion of what the actual budget increase was. Mrs. Stephenson said that the operating budget was 7.1% which included salaries, benefits, maintenance of the plant, curriculum, and professional enhancement. Mr. Olsen asked what of the 12.7% increase would be attributed to Chapter 125. He felt that if this record keeping was going to be ongoing then someone should tell the State "no" until they can give us funding for it. Mrs. Caldwell said that Budget line 255 was for Improvement of Instruction for \$60,400. There was discussion of the Superintendent's budget and how the data management position works. There was discussion about the percentage increases for both budgets town and school.

Mr. Bartholomew noted that several programs for both the town and school were pushing this increase. He questioned whether the town can afford to support these budgets. Mr. Willard noted that the estimated mil rate will be in the median for mil rates in the area. He also thought that some of the changes in the town budget would be a one time effort. Mr. McDermott felt this budget process was backward. He suggested that the Budget Committee meet with the school and town to discuss needs for each prior to the budget formation so that there is more understanding of the budgets.

MOTION: Stephanie Bubier motioned to recommend \$71,111 for Health.

Article 2. There was discussion as to whether they should take the articles in blocks.

MOTION WITHDRAWN: Mrs. Bubier withdrew her motion.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Leavitt asked if the school subsidy referenced the \$21,000 additional money coming from the state. Mrs. Caldwell answered no because it was not for certain that they would get that money. Mrs. Stevenson said that if any additional money came from the state that it would be deducted from the approved budget.

MOTION: Ernest Allen motioned to recommend the amount requested on Articles 2 through 21. Seconded by Wayne Holmquist.

AMENDED MOTION: Mr. Allen amended his motion to recommend Articles 2 through 19. Seconded by Wayne Holmquist.

VOTE: Carried.

MOTION: Stephanie Bubier motioned to recommend Article 20. Seconded by Coleen Laprise.

VOTE: Carried.

MOTION: Wayne Holmquist motioned to add to Article 21 "any other funds provided by any other entity." Seconded by Coleen Laprise.

VOTE: Carried.

MOTION: Wayne Holmquist motioned to recommend Article 21 as amended. Seconded by Coleen Laprise.

VOTE: Carried.

RECESS: Mr. Olsen recessed the meeting at 8:08 pm.

RE-OPEN: Mr. Olsen re-opened the meeting at 8:15 pm.

DISCUSSION: Mrs. Cummings reviewed the changes made to the Town budget since the initial budget.

Administration \$454,170 now \$433,330 decrease

Insurance Benefit \$366,362 now \$368,038 increase

Technology \$123,949 now \$121,509 decrease

Community Dev. \$ 44,000 now \$ 39,200 decrease

Dispatch \$148,131 now \$147,266 decrease

Animal Control \$ 7,260 now \$ 5,960 decrease

Public Works \$431,906 now \$422,185 decrease

Parks \$ 16,431 now \$ 15,051 decrease

Unclassified \$ 51,487 now \$ 45,968 decrease

CIP \$886,492 now \$796,492 decrease

Total \$3,643,702 now \$3,508,513 decrease

The biggest cuts were in Public Works where their building fund was cut the total of \$50,000, and the Town Office reserve was cut from \$50,000 to \$10,000, and Salary increases were cut from \$40,000 to \$15,000. Mr. Willard added that with the loss of Poland's using our Dispatch Office we will be losing that revenue. Mrs. Cummings reported that she has been told that medical benefits will increase between 15% and 22% and she has a 17% increase in this budget. The State Revenue Sharing is not known at this time.

Mr. Holmquist asked if this \$20,000 for the Open Space Reserve adds to last year's? Mrs. Cummings replied there is presently \$20,000 in that account. Mr. Willard explained that this item is to have money saved to purchase land for Raymond's use mostly for conservation or recreation purposes. Mr. Holmquist had concern that whatever land the town took over would deduct from taxable land for the town. Mr. Desjardins said that this reserve account would be used as seed money for grant applications such as the Land of Maine's Future Board. Mrs. McClellan noted that the Comprehensive Plan encourages this type of land acquisition, and she felt that the new Comp Plan would continue that philosophy. Mr. Olsen questioned the usage of these funds. He felt that since the town would need a town meeting vote to spend from this reserve account, why not just go to a town meeting to ask for the money outright without holding it in an account. Mr. Desjardins asked if there should be a limit to what the town will hold in this reserve account. Mr. Olsen said there is a question of what is the correct amount. Mr. Willard said an option is to take this money out of surplus instead of putting in on the tax base.

Ralph Bartholomew asked about the plans for dispatch. Mr. Willard said the plan is to move dispatch to the Public Safety Building by May 15, 2003. By January 2004 we probably will be merged with Naples in Naples dispatch and Raymond's dispatch will lose one or two employees. In the future Raymond may merge with Cumberland County when they either enlarge their present facility or possibly move to our Public Safety Building. He said that our equipment will be kept as backup. Again our Public Safety building may be used for dispatch or Cumberland County Police offices. This budget shows a proactive response to our expectations.

MOTION: Christine McClellan motioned to approve the latest budget as it stands. Seconded by Betty McDermott.

VOTE: 3 in favor (McClellan, McDermott, Brown) 2 opposed (Leavitt, Desjardins)

MOTION: Betty McDermott motioned to recommend Articles 22 through 30. Seconded by Christine McClellan.

VOTE: 3 in favor (McClellan, McDermott, Brown) 2 opposed (Leavitt, Desjardins)

MOTION: Betty McDermott motioned to recommend Articles 48, 52, and 53. Seconded by Christine McClellan.

VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Allen asked why two of the Selectmen didn't recommend some of the articles. Mr. Desjardins replied that he had disagreed with the second vote taken on a Monday after their workshop on the previous Friday. He had opposition to the Technology position but not the part-time CEO or staff wages. Mr. Leavitt said that he concurred but said that if he had known that the committees would be so generous he would have been more generous with his decisions. Mr. Olsen noted that the undesignated fund balance was about \$1,000,000. Mr. Willard said that revenues are still appearing to be good. There was discussion about the revaluation schedule.

MOTION: Stephanie Bubier motioned to approve the budget as presented dated April 1, 2003. Seconded by Jane Jordan.

VOTE: Carried.

MOTION: Wayne Holmquist motioned to recommend Articles 22 through 30. Seconded by Stephanie Bubier.

VOTE: Carried.

MOTION: Stephanie Bubier motioned to recommend Articles 31 through 53. Seconded by Bob Jones.

VOTE: Carried.

3. Adjourn. Rolf Olsen adjourned the meeting at 9:13 pm.

Louise H. Lester
Town Clerk