

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN
BUDGET MEETING #2
Minutes of December 8, 2016**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell (6:30 p.m.), Vice Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Nathan Freeman, and Matthew Gadbois (absent). Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz and Chris Bradley.

Vice Chair Goslant called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m. It was noted that Finance Director Laurie Baroffio was unable to attend tonight due to a family emergency and Chair Maxwell will be slightly delayed by another meeting.

- II. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled):** None.

III. **BUDGET WORK SESSION**

At the initial budget (12/06/16), Manager Schulz and Ms. Baroffio provided the Select Board with a general overview of the first draft of the proposed 2017/2018 municipal budget. It was decided at that meeting that the budget sessions would begin with the less complicated departmental budget while preparing questions for the various department heads who will attend future meetings to explain their budget requests, etc. In addition, a tentative schedule will be created for when the various department budgets will be discussed. The budgets under discussion tonight will be:

Manager Expenditures. Manager Schulz will like to postpone any detailed discussion of this department's revenues until Ms. Baroffio is present. He noted that a couple years ago there was a substantial one-time payment to this account from FEMA for the Fairground Road Bridge Replacement Project.

Chair Maxwell arrived at this time.

As for the proposed FY 2017/2018 budget, Manager Schulz said this department projects a 4.2% increase, which was largely due to a 7% increase in health insurance costs.

Manager Capital Improvement Plan. Chris Bradley noted that there was only \$8 in the Manager Search account. Since Manager Schulz's initial three-year contract expires in July 2017, he was surprised that more money was not set aside. Chair Maxwell said that whether or not there would be a renewal of the current contract is a personnel issue to be discussed at a later time. He did agree that it would be good to have some funds on hand should an unexpected situation arise and make a job search necessary. Selectman Goslant also thought that there were more funds in this account. Chair Maxwell would like to look further in this as it is always best to plan for the worst. He would like Ms. Baroffio to confirm the actual balance for this account as well as the reason this is a CIP account in the first place.

There followed a discussion of the management proposal to transfer the remaining \$10,000 from the completed streetlight replacement project to the Highway Department CIP account for the repair/replacement of the Elm Street retaining wall. Chair Maxwell would like additional information, such as the actual cost of the proposed project, before proceeding with this. Selectman Goslant had thought these funds could be used to improve crosswalk lighting, etc.

Town Clerk/Treasurer Expenditures. Manager Schulz said this budget projected a 4.9% increase that was mainly due to slight increases in wages, benefits, health insurance, etc. from the previous fiscal year. The Town Clerk/Treasurer is an elected official and non-union employee but her annual pay increases are based on the approved COLA in the union contract.

Town Clerk/Treasurer Capital Improvement Plan. Chair Maxwell noted there is a \$19,000 balance in the account for the Town Clerk's vault. Manager Schulz said addressing problems with the vault is a work in process with various options, both big and small. Town Clerk Kim Pedley is satisfied with the amount of funding being set aside for this purpose. Chair Maxwell would like to see a written plan for this. He would like to know how this project will be done, how much it will eventually cost, etc.

Board of Civil Authority Expenditures. Manager Schulz said there is a 32.8% decrease in this budget from the previous year mainly because there will not be any federal or statewide elections during FY 2017/2018. The voting machine only will need to be programmed for Town Meeting Day 2018.

Municipal Building Expenditures. Manager Schulz said a 5.7% budget reduction is projected mainly due to lower heating fuel costs. There also will be an attempt to lower the current cost of janitorial services by going out to bid for less expensive alternatives. Chair Maxwell suggested that perhaps management should determine whether bringing this service in-house would be cost-effective.

Municipal Building Capital Improvement Plan. Manager Schulz noted that there were large existing balances in the furnace replacement (\$16,000) and building improvements (\$80,000) accounts. Chair Maxwell said that the bulk of the building improvements amount came from pre-merger Village of Northfield assets, such as the sale of the Elm Street building that used to house the Police Department. He would like to see concrete plans for replacing the furnace, the various needed interior building improvements, etc. Selectman Goslant said that the Municipal Building has been in poor condition for several years. Nothing was done for some time because there was uncertainty over whether the building would be retained or sold. Now that selling the building is very unlikely, Selectman Goslant would like some improvements done. The building is not an adequate facility for employees, visitors, etc. Perhaps the Select Board's Town Buildings & Energy Committee could create a proposal. Selectman Freeman also would like Ms. Baroffio to provide some background regarding the "Village Clock" account.

Pool Expenditures. Manager Schulz said he tried to keep this budget fairly stable but there will be a 3.5% increase mainly due to next year's rise in the minimum wage, which will mean lifeguard pay will go up slightly. Chair Maxwell said many Northfield residents consider the municipal pool a major asset to our community life. However, the revenue stream of pool fees (annual, daily, and family passes) is about \$12,000 per year and he wondered if that could be increased. Manager Schulz said he and the pool director try to set the fee schedule in keeping with the amounts charged by neighboring communities. Selectman Freeman doesn't feel the municipal pool should be considered a major revenue source. He also fears that raising the pool fees might keep some lower-income families from using it. Chair Maxwell believes there may be other ways of generating more revenue from the municipal pool without affecting current users.

Pool Capital Improvement Plan. Chair Maxwell noted there is \$18,771 currently in the account for painting/repainting the pool, which is scheduled for FY 2023/2024 with an additional \$6,000 added each year until then. He asked if the \$60,000 estimate for this project is accurate. Selectman Goslant confirmed this was the most accurate figure at this time but since the project will be put out to bid, the actual price is uncertain.

Pool Capital Equipment Plan. Chair Maxwell said the replacement of the pool filter was scheduled for 2024 and the estimated cost was \$80,000 to \$100,000. He would like more background information on this estimate and whether enough funding will be set aside beforehand.

As the other budgets will be accompanied by reports from the department heads, it was decided to delay any discussion of them.

Budget Meeting Schedule. Chair Maxwell noted the Select Board previously had agreed to hold budget meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays the next two weeks, take a week's break due to the Christmas holiday, and then resume with meetings the first two weeks in January 2017. The meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. with the exception of the two (12/13/16 and 01/10/17) preceding regular Select Board meetings that will start at 5:30 p.m. Chair Maxwell now wanted to assign specific department budgets to each meeting. In the interest of efficiency, Selectman Freeman would like to see budget narratives from the department heads before they make their presentations. The tentative schedule determined was:

December 13:	Accounting and Listers
December 15:	Fire and Ambulance
December 20:	Highway, Grounds/Parks/Facilities, and Cemetery
December 22:	Library/Historical Society Building and Recreation Committee
January 3:	Human Services and Planning/Zoning
January 5:	Police

The last two scheduled budget meetings (01/10/17 and 01/12/17) were reserved for budget summation, number crunching, etc.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled). There was none.

V. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Schulz

Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of January 10, 2017.