

Meeting of the
Candia Budget Committee
December 17, 2014
Smyth Library Meeting Room, Candia, NH
Minutes of the SB2 Public Session

Present: Chairman Matthew Broadhead, Vice-Chairman Allyn Chivers, Rebecca Cronk, Mark Laliberte, Andrea Peach, Kevin Coughlin, Selectman's Rep. Carleton Robie School Board Rep. Emily Roster

Excused: Paul LeBlond

Also Present: Building Inspector Dave Murray, Selectman Dave Depuy, Selectman Dick Snow, Fire Chief Dean Young, Gary York, Peter O'Neil, Carla Penfield

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Chivers called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

New Business

Public Input on Proposed 2015 Town Budget

Vice Chairman Chivers opened the meeting for discussion from the public.

Building Inspector Dave Murray brought up the raise in the Building Inspector salary for 2015 and asked the board if we had any questions regarding the letter he prepared for the board. Gary York asked for some background of the situation. Vice Chairman Chivers indicated the budget received from Selectman Board was an increase in wage for Building Inspector to change position to a 35 hour per week full time position. Through discussion and additional input from Selectman Amanda Soares, the Budget Committee did not feel it was warranted having a full time building inspector. The Budget Committee reduced the line from \$46,902 to \$32,300, which included the current wages for three days of employment per week and the 2.5% cost of living raise received by all town employees. Building Inspector Murray read the letter and a copy is attached.

Selectman David Depuy indicated that the building inspector is stretched thin with the multiple responsibilities he has. He further stated that he feels that Building Inspector Murray has the town's interests at heart. The responsibilities of the building inspector are not just working on inspections, but also code enforcement for everyone's safety.

Fire Chief Dean Young indicated years ago the chief was responsible for boiler inspections, but that it was turned over to the building inspector due to the demand and limited availability of the fire chief at the time. As a carpenter, he feels that Building Inspector Murray is a good resource, but is not always available. Fire Chief Young indicated that he doesn't feel that Building Inspector Murray would request this unless he felt it was needed to do a good job for Candia.

Peter O'Neil, owner of Carl's Septic, stated that he puts in a large number of systems within Candia. In fact, he had a unit ready that could not be finished because Building Inspector Murray wasn't available for the inspection. Mr. O'Neil stressed the increased availability of the building inspector would allow him to save time for his customers.

Gary York, former selectman, requested what the tax impact would be to the town with the increase in wages. Vice Chairman Chivers indicated that we could not only look at the increase in the wages, as there is additional money that needs to be budgeted for the insurance and retirement. Becky Cronk indicated that would be approximately an additional \$16,000, bringing the total impact to the town to \$31,000. Gary York asked what Bill Hallock was making for his salary; Building Inspector Murray indicated that in 2006 the salary alone was \$55,135.

Gary York, further went on to detail the reasons why Candia moved to hire a full time building inspector in the past, including complaints from citizens due to improper and deficient inspections and utilization of contractors that were not always consistent. He indicated that the value and protection for the citizens and proper work done by the building inspector are worth the additional costs. Mr. York is in support of the full time building inspector.

Kevin Coughlin asked for clarification on improper or deficient inspections. Mr. York indicated that in 2002 he had missed components of building inspection completed by the 2 part time building inspectors at the time that ended up costing him additional time and money to rectify.

Kevin Coughlin also asked the Building Inspector what education he has to qualify him as the building inspector. Building Inspector Murray indicated that he has worked in the field for 30 years and is also certified through the International Code Council and the National Fire Protection Association.

Selectman Dick Snow preceded his question with the statement that he was asking his question as a public citizen and not as a selectman. Selectman Snow asked what the anticipated budget would give the citizens for a tax rate, with the understanding that we were only viewing the operating budget and no warrant articles at this time. Vice Chairman Chivers indicated that the town's operating budget has a 3.5% increase over last years budget which would have minimal impact. Vice Chairman Chivers also indicated that this was not the largest component of our tax rate, with the school budget near \$8 million dollars. Selectman Snow went on to question how the town charged a \$4.09 tax rate to citizens last year, when his estimated numbers for next year were much higher. Vice Chairman Chivers and Selectman Robie indicated there is revenue and income considered when tax rate is established. Selectman Snow asked when the board would be presenting that information. Vice Chairman Chivers indicated that the board receives a report but does not control the revenue and therefore the board only reviews the operating budget. Selectman Snow indicated that the concept of the budget process in RS32:A is "gross budget" and consider all appropriations and all revenue. He further indicated that he expects to see the anticipated revenues in detail from Budget Committee, questioning how the Budget Committee would decide what the tax rate would be without viewing the anticipated revenue. Vice Chairman Chivers reminded Selectman Snow that the Board of Selectman determine the tax rate, while the Budget Committee approves the budget expenditures and review the current revenue to previous year revenue. Selectman Snow went on to state that the tax rate is what he is concerned

with as a citizen and he doesn't believe that the Budget Committee is doing their job according to the statutes.

Carla Penfield asked the committee if there were any further questions regarding the Old Library budget even though the committee made no changes to the budget. Becky Cronk indicated that the questions regarding the budget were addressed at the Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectman.

Vice Chairman Chivers closed the public hearing comment section of the meeting.

Selectman Robie indicated that the Board of Selectman did not budget for the insurance of the Building Inspector at full time hours. Selectman Robie indicated that the board would find the funds within the budget if the Building Inspector chose to select the insurance.

Vice Chairman Chivers brought up the employee insurance premiums. The total premiums for the employees and the town came to slightly over \$82,000. Employees have a different percentage based upon the plan they select, i.e. individual, individual plus family. On average, employees pay 15% of the insurance premium. In addition, the town pays up to \$750 per person for deductible or copays. At present, there are 13 people covered (employees and family dependents). When looking at the town's out of pocket expense for each employee, 13 people at \$750 each comes to \$9,750 in addition to the \$82,000 in premiums. Furthermore, there is a buy-out for those town employees that do not select the town insurance. Five employees selected this option and it totals \$20,000. At present, the town is expecting to spend \$112,000 of the budgeted \$116,000, allowing for some additional funds available.

Chairman Broadhead arrived at 7:40 pm.

Andrea Peach indicted that the testimonials of the town members were compelling for the need of a full time building inspector. School Board Representative Emily Roster stated that she didn't consider the other smaller projects that people complete that require his attention in addition to new construction. Mark Laliberte indicated that the testimonies were good to hear, but he was disappointed that Building Inspector Murray did not provide further documentation on the time necessary for the inspections he completes. Selectman Robie indicated that Building Inspector Murray is stretch thin enough that he has to prioritize the jobs that he receives. Andrea Peach brought up that it was unacceptable for the building inspector to be unavailable during an emergency situation. Emily Roster indicated that our town doesn't offer a lot of services, but offering safety and security of a full time building inspector would do a lot for the citizens. The Board members continued with further discussion before proceeding to a vote on recommended budget.

Finalize Recommendations on Town Budget

Motion by Mark Laliberte to recommend the town budget of \$2,513,587.00. Second by Emily Roster. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Chairman Broadhead to increase the Building Inspector wage line by \$14,602 to a total of \$46,902, thereby bring the recommended town budget to \$2, 528,189.00. Second by Andrea Peach. Six (6) in favor, two (2) opposed, motion carried.

Adjourn

Lacking further business, Chairman Broadhead made motion to recess this meeting to a supplemental public hearing on the town operating budget and warrant articles to be held on January 14, 2014 at 7:30 pm. Second by Andrea Peach. All in favor, motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Recorded by Rebecca Cronk