

## BUDGET SESSION January 8, 2000



**Present:** Herman Kabakoff, Dore' Hunter, Peter Ashton, Trey Shupert, Town Manager and Assistant, Town Accountant Summers and members of the Finance Committee

Herman briefly gave an overview of the meeting's expectations.

The Board will meet with the Fincom in executive session at 6:45 P.M. before the beginning of January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Don gave an overview of the process used to come to the final budget presentation to the Board. Both operational and capital represents less than a 3/4 of a percent increase. No new personnel requested in this budget.

**ACCOUNTING/MIS:** Tess was happy to show a decrease in her budget. They do however have a heavy workload. The schools are now on the system. The five-year computer plan is over and that is why it is not shown. Next year will include upgrades in software, trying to avoid hardware purchases.

Dore' asked about GUI . She said Pentamation has a user group web based product coming on line. Dore' wanted a memo about GUI status.

**ASSESSORS:** Brian presented his budget. Herman asked about State mandated programs. Process every three years and full every 7 years. To cut the funds for these tasks would mean we would not be in compliance with State guidelines.

**BUILDING COMMISSIONER:** No increase in budget. The revolving fund continues to be successful. Peter asked about the zoning changes that are proposed and if passed will they require additional help in his office. He may not have the staff to handle it; he has not had a chance to look at the changes and will be working with the Town Manager to determine effects. There may be a need if these zoning changes pass they will need two more people and at least \$100,000 to support the articles as proposed. Trey asked what would happen if we recodified the zoning bylaw in a manner, which would be easier to read. Garry said if it is recodified he doubted it would help the average citizen and probably would help the attorneys he interfaces with.

**TOWN CLERK:** Trey asked about the cost increase from changing polling places. Next election will be held at four different places.

**COA:** They receive donations and grants to run many of the programs they offer at no cost to the taxpayers. Peter asked about the budget for the copier. Peter asked what specific computer equipment upgrade she was looking for. It will be hardware for the current two computers.

**COLLECTOR** : John gave an overview of the department. Herman asked about training included in the budget. He has had staff ask for training and will provide a memo with the requests. Trey asked about the GASB (Government Accounting Standards Board) amount and was assured it is a one-time expenditure. Dore' suggested that the chart John had prepared should be in the warrant in a more simplified form. John Prendiville thanked Don and John for their help over the past 12 months.

**ENGINEERING**: David gave an overview of the projects and staff level of his department. Herman asked about equipment servicing. That is money to maintain traffic signals. He felt that we needed to have this for traffic light repair.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**: Chief Craig outlined his requests for equipment and vehicles. Peter wanted more justification on the purchase of computers. Dore' asked about the current system and asked if it were a record keeping item and not a dispatching tool. Dore' wanted additional backup to find out how much was operation/administration. Herman asked for justification for vehicles. The Chiefs car is a 92 and has 100,000 miles which affects the down time and reliability of the vehicle. Herman was surprised with that capital requests having to do with updated or more sophisticated safety equipment were not included. Chief Craig said they have already upgraded many of the items used and have been upgrading safety equipment continuously. He spoke about the regional purchase of a Thermal Camera. Herman wanted a memo about fire safety situation in Acton. Herman wanted an Agenda item about Water District policy regarding sprinkler systems and the large user fee associated. Chief Craig said the fees were a deterrent to installation of sprinklers. Concern about the computer costs were expressed by the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen.

**NURSING SERVICE**: Meerily gave an overview of the Nursing Service costs and requirements.

**HEALTH DEPT**: Doug outlined his budget position explanations and other explanation regarding advertising. Herman asked about equipment repairs. Like Engineering they have expensive equipment which could fail. Dore' asked about sewer issues. Peter asked about line 5410 reflection of HazMat. They looked at this and these were items not applicable to HazMat. John Prendiville asked why we have a public health nursing service and why we don't let it go the private. Doug said that studies have been done and the folks of Acton feel that they get better service from the Acton Visiting Nurses.

**HIGHWAY**: Dave outlined his budget and the reduction of Chapter 90 funds this year. NESWC fees are reflected in the disposal of trash. He would like to better reflect his costs for sidewalks and culverts in the budget next year. He wanted to replace his car and forklift (1973) and also he is requesting a new generator with a higher than 110 volts for doing culvert work to run the pumps. He is also asking for trash trailer replacement. Peter asked about Chapter 90 funds. He is hoping they may increase. Herman asked about the possible reduction in paving due to the sewer project. He is busy obtaining the information from the Health Dept.

**HR/VETERANS**: Advertising represents a reallocation of that budget. They have increased positions openings that require help wanted ads. No change in Veteran's he has joined Veteran's group to get better information about services. Herman asked about the level of funding in the Veteran's Budget. Charlie said the State increases

benefits that Vets can receive and that 75% of our expenditure is reimbursed, however, that reimbursement is usually several years coming.

**LIBRARY:** Wanda explained her budget and its needs as well as items that drive that budget. Trey asked how much support the library receives from volunteers and outside groups. How much does it save the library? Wanda said the friends pick up cookies and videos and equipment like an adding machine at the end of the year, these are worth a couple of thousand dollars and the Foundation gives \$18,000 for the extended hours. Dore' was thinking that maybe we could put the hours funded by the Foundation back in the budget and would like to see the money used for other items needed. He thinks we should go back to full funding of library hours. Trey didn't think they should wait. Herman wanted to see it discussed at the next meeting. Dore' also wanted Foundation representation present. John felt that everyone that gets full funding should be included in the discussion.

**MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES:** Dean explained his budget. Peter asked about fuel costs. Dean will answer in memo form. Peter asked about the phone system for Police Station. The existing is 15 years old and the switch limits the number of phones as well as obtaining voice mail. They don't make the current phones anymore. The phone would be portable to new building. Dore' did not think we wanted to have telephone failures at the police station. He also noted the fire depts. needs. Town Hall parking lot lighting, Dore' was asking why we needed more lighting. Dean felt we needed it and it would take care of the situation with regard to safety at night. Dean said we were to upgrade the lights when the building was revamped. Dore' wanted more information on the lights. Dore' wanted to know what we were doing about the Woodbury House. He felt that the manager could share this report and future use if any. Don said the preferred solution was over \$300,000. Don will get this out to the Board. They discussed the bucket truck. It was asked if we were backing off because of reengineering what would have been proposed. Herman said the Board would vote the items in early February.

**NATURAL RESOURCES:** Tom gave an overview of his department. Trey asked about the emergency boxes, radio lines etc. at NARA. Tom said that they are currently installing the call boxes. With regard to watering at NARA, the Water District will not hook them up. He feels outside watering will probably cease in Acton. He explained the one time cost of not using Town Water. He was asked for a report about Beavers. He also was asked about the bill that appeared regarding the construction work at the Bathhouse, it was noted that it was keyed improperly. Herman asked why things were not included like the gates etc. Tom said they decided we could do some of the stuff for less money and received things like the septic work from Mr. Redman as donations saved the town money. John felt that we were probably at \$2.6 for actual and inkind services. Herman asked about the sea gulls and geese. Tom said they are there because of the food source at the neighboring pig farm. They wanted a combined use of buses for trips scheduled by COA, Community Ed and our Recreation to make sure we get the best price.

**POLICE :** Frank outlined the improvements he has made. He is currently using seniors taking part in the senior tax program for filing. He said it was obvious that they needed a larger station. He went through the items in his budget. Weapons are 12 years old, which will be addressed. Herman asked about the use of one for practice and one for every day. Both Trey and others noted that they did not want anyone firing their guns. Herman asked about the Expedition request. Dore' felt it was an appropriate vehicle for

this use. Bob Evans noted that he would spend the \$6,000 to dispose of and melt down the guns. They urged him to have the guns melted down. The Repeater is 15 years old and if it goes down we are in trouble.

Herman asked about the supplies and Frank said he was low and would look at reallocating next year.

**WEST ACTON CITIZENS LIBRARY:** She is primarily level funded.

**PLANNING:** He noted that he wanted to have more staff each year and he again submitted it this year. He spoke about the Assabet Rail Trail. The State is moving slow and suggested we move forward in order to be eligible for funding because we need local funding in place. Grant writers will be looking for funding once they find a suitable person. Don noted he was in the process of obtaining someone interested. Don said this would be a job by job contract.

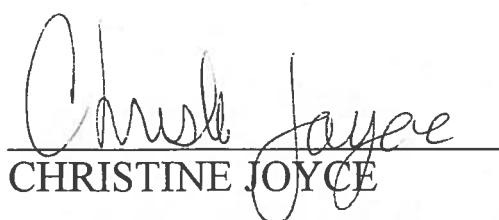
**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** John Prendiville recommends the Reserve fund be funded to 25 k vs. 35k for FY01 and the Finance Committee has voted it at that level. They have a capital request of \$1,500 for PC, inkjet printer to be located in Town Hall. What has been offered to them is not fast enough. He feels that the Fincom should have a place to go and work on the computer. This would allow them to use it for fin com work instead of using their own supplies. Dore' agreed they should put it in a place for access for the Fin Com and Board of Selectmen, however, he suggested the PC have installed a card to use our printer. Don wanted to be on record as being against the reduction in the reserve fund. But we should all go into it with eyes open. They used \$25,000 5 years ago for the School chimney.

**TOWN MANAGER:** He went over the budget and noted that clerical overtime and substitution was not entered. Legal is going up due to contract negotiations. Y2K has gone out of the budget for this year. Bob Evans asked about the Carlisle Road Land. Don has spoken with Trust for Public Lands and they are working toward collection of funds to purchase this property.

  
CLERK

---

DATE

  
CHRISTINE JOYCE