

Budget Saturday

January 29, 2005

Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee Members, Staff Support and Department Heads.

Dore' made opening remarks and turned the meeting over to the Town Manager. The Town Manager outlined the decisions that have been made regarding A and B budgets. They have in the past taken little from the Big Four; they are the biggest end of our Public Service. The B budget is FY05's budget minus 236K. They will be suggesting fewer public hours for the public under the B Budget. Don outlined the Big Four Only reductions. In the Memorial Library they will have to cut 4.5 FTE's which results in closing the Library at times. He also outlined the suggestions for the Non- Big Four Departments. They discussed Elimination of all staff support as well as other cuts that would have to be taken to make up the money if we did not cut the Big Four.

The departments that were not going to have major cuts were present to talk about their departments and affects on how they do business. Peter asked about Legal Fees. He asked Mark Hald about his budget. Peter asked about the purchase of electricity with other towns. He is looking into contracts as we now are at default rate. He hopes to get more involved and go in cooperatively with other communities to get the best price. He will be looking into it more when the Public Safety Facility is wrapped up.

Peter asked about the employee added to his budget last year, He did not fill it but he employed several Account Temps to fill the void until we hire the approved position.

Peter asked Garry about Fees and Expenses for this department. He outlined they are having a problem with their revolving account. He feels the fund balance will have decrease and feels that next year he will have a problem and would have to have a layoff.

Steve outlined the Munis status. They will need to verify reports but feels we are on line at this time. They have cross trained so that they have a fall back if needed.

Trey thanked the staff and asked Steve about his staffing in the Finance Department and his plans for next year.

Trey asked about IT budget and how much is for licensing, he replied 50%. He asked about the Veterans benefits.

The Finance Committee asked about the possibility of on line billing and when they were going to look in to it. Herman asked about the Free Cash, and what may be available to us this year, John and Dore' said 0. Bob Evans asked about electricity buying, and other thanks that came up under reengineering and savings that can be made and asked they the look into this.

Nancy McShea suggested the reduction of life guards this summer and Peter was concerned with safety. The figure does not cut the life guards. She feels that they will not endanger. Acton Day is reduced and asked if they will be in an Acton Day. She has approached the activities at these functions that, if we get donations we do what can be done for the amount of donations. .

Walter asked that they reach out to those who may need financial help to attend the beach.

Roland will have to cut his secretary if the B Budget fails.

Planning will not be able to support the new committees

Bruce Stamski discussed his department. Bob Johnson asked what his feelings were about closing the transfer station except for two days a week.

Peter thanked Bruce and Dave for their work on Life after NESWC. Peter asked about large stockpiles. Bruce was asked to explain the employee loss in the B Budget. It will hinder the abilities of the Department with him and another engineer and secretary.

Herman asked about the Fund Balances and the Status, John thought 3.8 million at end of this year. Landfill Capping may come out of these Balances.

Fire Department –Chief Craig outlined the affects on his operation and services with the proposed cuts. He spoke also about response times. Walter asked him what station would be closed. He felt the station in West Acton would be closed.

John Ryder asked about the privatization of the ambulance. Bob Evans suggested having the private handle the 2A area.

Health – Doug went over his proposed cuts. Peter asked for clarification on those cuts. He felt he could take in and additional \$35,000 in fees. There has been no increase since 1996. Trey spoke about Clerical support. And if he could raise fees to support the Clerical position. He asked about the sewer system duties that could be impacted. Doug said in terms of the sewers it should have no impact on them. Peter asked about the elimination of one day Hazardous Waste Day.

Herman asked about potential B budget carried in their budget. He said no.

Police – Dore' asked questions about staffing. Frank said they are down 4-6 officers currently. They currently have 31 officers. Peter asked about the clerical position is not eliminated. He said it is a very critical position and needs the second clerk. Peter asked about B budget purchase on two cruisers. He asked about the high mileage and assumes we don't pass override and how we will be able to make it up in future years. Chief said it is up to the economy.

Trey asked about the B Budget not passing what bothers him. Training and they are the last people come to 24 hours per day.

Jon Chintz asked about the Cops Grants and the effect on the conditions relating to the risks we take. It was noted that if we don't get the waiver we can discontinue the program and return the money. It was noted that the School was to make up the funds. Jon asked about overall police coverage or presence. What can the citizen expect with these cuts? They will what they will do to maintain the Sgt. and three patrolmen. Herman said he does not support B budget for Police and fire and we need to find the money to keep these department staffed. He said we need to find \$950,000 if the B Budget is voted, we cannot put this community in jeopardy. Dore' felt it is necessary to go into the Big Four. It is the Selectmen's feeling that we cannot continue to protect the Big Four.

Library – Marcia read a prepared overview of the effects on the Library services if the Override Fails.

Bob asked about meeting rooms. And joint use of building. It was asked about the opening of Boxborough's Library,

Assessing – Steve Barrett outlined the potential effects of a B Budget. Dore' asked how much money would be needed to support the Elderly aspects of filing of Exemptions and outreach and follow up, One thing they are trying to have them use the Tax Deferrals.

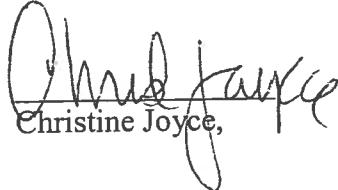
Council on Aging – Jean Fleming outlined her budget. There will be no cuts in the Van service. She recommends that \$12,500 be taken from staffing hours, supplies and services. Cut two hours from each of the three pt. employees, \$5,842. Cut six full weeks from program 1,345 and non personnel \$700 for equip \$200 for professional Development.

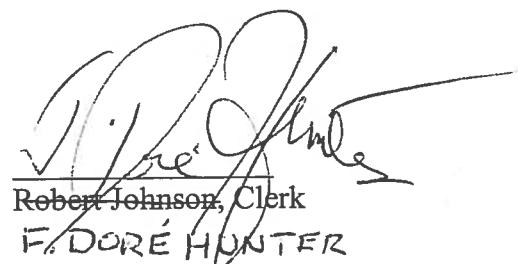
Don will recommend that we apply the 350 towards vehicles.

Peter wanted a recommendation on fees with budgetary impacts.

Jon asked if they could walk us through an exercise on the unemployment how much, how long. \$520 per week for 6 weeks.

Bob Evans asked about Middlesex Retirement. They did well and don't have to make up any moneys.


Christine Joyce,


Robert Johnson, Clerk
F. DORÉ HUNTER