

Canaan Budget Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 21, 2013
Canaan Fire Station, Canaan, NH

Attendees: Budget Committee members: Dave Barney, John Bergeron, Ellie Davis, Al Posnanski, Martha Pusey, Denis Salvail, Sadie Wells; Town Administrator Michael Samson; recorded by Roger Lohr. 2 Public attendees, Select Board members Dave McAlister and Bob Regan. Not attending: Scott Borthwick, Patty Duszynski, William Crowther

Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Ellie Davis called the meeting of the Canaan Budget Committee to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Proposed 2014 Budget Review

Town Administrator Michael Samson discussed the proposed Canaan town budget and reviewed the significant changes since the last Budget Committee meeting. The Select Board approved a tight budget about \$18,000 less than last year. Health insurance is slightly down. Unemployment compensation decreased by \$8,000, which is less than last year and below the original budget projection. Property and liability insurance increased about \$500 and the emergency management line item increased due to the dispatch service cost of \$53,666. The election expenses will be slightly higher if a second election is needed.

The highway equipment will cover a fire truck \$40,000, police cruiser \$24,000 and highway truck for \$90,000 and these will involve the capital reserve. The "welfare" costs are lower than budgeted but there are other line items that are higher and unspent to even this out.

Town Administrator Michael Samson reported that if the water/sewer has excess that it can be transferred to the capital reserve and that FEMA has pre-awarded money to the town of Canaan, which will have to be justified when it is spent. If the full amount of the FEMA award is not spent, then the balance of those funds would have to be reimbursed to FEMA.

There will be a new full time position at the transfer station with some offsets in other departments such as recreation and government buildings. It is expected that there will be a new hire for this position by January 1st and the transfer station employees will then include one full time, one part time, and one volunteer. The proposed increase in recorder fees to \$95 per meeting for the Canaan Budget Committee was mentioned by Chair Davis.

3. Proposed 2014 Default Budget

Town Administrator Michael Samson explained that if the voters reject the proposed Canaan budget then the town will use a default budget that would cover obligations required by law or contract. These obligations include increases for elections, personnel

and administration, and insurance such as unemployment, FICA, health insurance and workmen's compensation. Additional obligations include property and liability insurance and the police department employee cost of living adjustment, which is contracted.

The proposed budget of \$3,212,000 would be defaulted to \$3,128,000, which at about \$80,000 is a small difference in the taxes to be paid by individual taxpayers.

The town revenue budget will be reviewed at the next Budget Committee meeting. Mr. Samson stated that the town is in good shape going into 2015 because of the expected budget surplus and the FEMA award but there may be a reckoning for capital equipment in 2015.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Dave Barney made a motion which was seconded by Al Posnanski to approve the Canaan Budget Committee meeting minutes of October 3, 2013 as submitted and amended. The motion passed with 6 in favor and one abstention (John Bergeron). The changes include spelling of "Reitsma" on the attendee roster; spelling of the word "capital" two times in the second paragraph; and in the third paragraph deleting part of the first sentence about the Transfer Station after the word "only."

5. Other

Town Administrator Michael Samson stated that property sales held by the town went well and some of the disbursements were made to the property heirs. He spoke about some property being gifted to the town and consequential cleaning plans. Furthermore, Samson spoke about the Canaan Hall rentals, which are going well about a couple of times per week for activities such as a memorial service, wedding, craft fair, and public meetings. Elections could be held in the hall as it seats 300 people and there is ample parking. Wifi has been set up but is not available to the public in the hall yet. More rentals of Canaan Hall are scheduled.

In a discussion about equipment repairs, Mr. Samson reported that all of the large equipment required \$3-5,000 of work and two of the police cruisers are currently out of commission in the shop. This increase of repairs is probably due to inappropriate maintenance in the past. One committee member felt that it was preferable to spend \$5,000 to repair the large equipment compared to spending \$150,000 to purchase new equipment.

There was a question about getting information about the warrant article social agency requests earlier. Mr. Samson said he is not in control of when these agencies send their warrant article requests to the town but there is a deadline. He shared some background about agencies such as Advanced Transit and West Behavioral Health.

6. Next Meeting

It was decided that the scheduled December 19 Budget Committee meeting will be cancelled if the committee could finish work on the revenue and warrant articles at the December 5th meeting where the committee will vote on the budget and warrant articles.

Chair Davis asked Budget Committee members to let her know if they will be unable to attend the December 5th meeting. The Budget Committee will vote on the petitioned warrant articles if there are any on January 14 and holds a public hearing on January 15.

7. Adjournment

Dennis Salvail made a motion which was seconded by Dave Barney to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 PM.

The next meeting of the Canaan Budget Committee is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2013 at 7:00 PM at the Canaan Fire Station.