

Canaan Budget Committee Meeting  
Thursday, September 15, 2016  
Canaan Fire Station, Canaan, NH

Attendees: Budget Committee members: John Bergeron, William Crowther, Ellie Davis, Patty Duszynski, Al Posnanski, Martha Pusey, Philip Smith Jr., Sadie Wells;  
Budget Committee members not in attendance: Denis Salvail,  
Public attendees: Vicky McAlister, Nelson Therriault, Phil Carter, Joe Frazier, Bill Wilson, Sam Frank.  
Canaan Town Administer Mike Samson; recorded by Roger Lohr.

Final Minutes

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Ellie Davis called the meeting of the Canaan Budget Committee to order at 7:00 PM and took attendance. She announced that Al Posnanski is now the Select Board representative on the Budget Committee.

2. Committee Discussion

Town Administrator Mike Samson distributed the Canaan Budget document that included the 2016 Approved Budget, Year to Date Expended, 2016 Encumbrance and Balance, line item budget variances, and the proposed 2017 Budget for town expenses.

A. Nelson Therriault reviewed the welfare section of the budget. There were 50 cases this year for assistance (rent, electric, fuel) and more people who need help. The cost of aid for heat ranged from \$650-1,200 per household. Food assistance is not included in the welfare budget as it is offered by the food banks in the region. The Welfare Budget totals \$58,600.

B. Town Administrator Mike Samson stated that there was a 3% increase in wages/benefits for Canaan employees, which includes 2% for cost of living and a 1% increase in salary. Payroll has been juggled in some departments with changes in part time and other staffing in the data processing, cemetery, and executive support. The fire chief has been underpaid and he will retire within a few years so there was an attempt to bring that salary up to be more comparable to fire chiefs in other similarly sized towns.

C. Town Clerk and Elections - Vicky McAlister reviewed the town clerk and election sections of the proposed Canaan budget for 2017. There is only one election next year, which will save funds. The town clerk budget is \$87,902 and the election budget is \$4,650.

D. Cemetery

Phil Carter reviewed the cemetery section of the budget. There will be salary increases and the overtime will be reimbursed using the trust fund for property maintenance. There is now a full time person and a part time person working in the cemetery department. The Committee discussed burial prices,

the purchase of a small truck, and the outside contracted services used for weekends. The cemetery budget is \$41,738.

E. Treasurer

Joe Frazier reviewed his four budget line items and spoke about the town funds. The Treasurer budget is \$6,654.

F. Planning Board

John Bergeron reviewed the planning board section of the budget, which is the same as the previous year's budget. The building permit revenue is up 40% in revenue.

G. Building Inspector and Health

Bill Wilson spoke about the Building Inspector and Health budget items. The building inspection and health sections will be the same as the previous year's budget with salary increases. There will be increased inspection enforcement in coming years and more health violations on rental housing and businesses (currently 5-6 per year).

H. Budget Committee

The committee reviewed the budget committee expenses for 2017 and it was stated that since there will be fewer meetings, that the minutes taker has been paid more per meeting. There may not be tax rate information in time for the November Budget Committee meeting and if that is the case, that meeting will be postponed.

I. Budget Overview

Town Administrator Mike Samson stated that the tax rate will increase by 1% but the rate will be 8.5% lower than 2008. Mr. Samson met with department heads in June and asked for wish lists. The department heads showed restraint but raised the issue of wage comparability. Wages in the proposed budget are up 3% to try and be more comparable with wages in other small towns. Insurance was increased by 9% and health insurance was increased by 10% but more accurate premiums will not be known until the end of the year. Dispatch service and criminal prosecution service are expected to have large increases.

The revenue is expected to increase by \$125,000 and taking that into account will require that the amount to be raised by the town is \$28,000 and that will result in a higher tax rate between a 1-1.3% increase.

Some significant variances include decreases in fuel costs, police equipment, salt purchase, and highway contracted services. There are increases in mechanic software, signs, culverts, the audit, repairs and maintenance for vehicles, solid waste due to falling recycled material prices, recreation contracted services, retirement and other areas.



J. Police Department

Sam Frank stated that fuel and equipment budget accounts are down but a new server is needed after damage from a storm. The overtime involves court time. The town of Canaan had 375 arrests last year, which was one of the highest in the Upper Valley. There is a high conviction rate and a \$49,000 prosecutor budget projection for next year. There were 50 felonies last year and 30 of them went through the court process while the balance of the cases involved a plea. There are currently 6 full time officers and one part time officer and the part time secretary. The chief would like additional part time officers to fill staffing needs.

3. Adjournment

John Bergeron made a motion which was seconded by Bill Crowther to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.