

Board of Selectmen

BUDGET WORKSHOP

MARCH 20, 2007

Present: Scotty Adamsons, Susan Bransfield, Brian Flood and Sharon Gibala
Absent: John Anderson, Mark Finkelstein and Kathleen Richards

The budget workshop was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

Brownstone Quorum

Jeanne Dilworth, past President of the Brownstone Quorum, stated that the Brownstone Quorum has requested a reallocation of funds for three major projects.

1) Construction of the pavilion to house the brownstone arch. A State grant for \$25,000 has been received and \$35,000 needs to be raised.

2) The third annual Brownstone Festival has been scheduled for September 15, 2007 and there will be a few additional activities added to last year's schedule.

3) Ongoing development of the Riverfront Park. A grant was received from the Rockfall Foundation to do an industrial archeological study of the property. The goal for the spring is to begin developing the "Heritage Plaza" (the area envisioned to be the amphitheater). The Brownstone Quorum will be advertising for people to help clear the area.

Mrs. Bransfield asked if additional money is being requested for the brownstone arch. Mrs. Dilworth stated that any additional contribution towards this project will be up to the Board of Selectmen.

Economic Development Commission

Deanna Rhodes stated that the Economic Development Commission budget includes \$1,500 for the brownstone arch restoration along with the \$2,000 for the Brownstone Quorum. Quarryside Downtown has disbanded and there was a reallocation of those funds. The allocation for the Memorial Day was increased.

Mrs. Gibala asked about the grants consultant. Ms. Rhodes stated that Chris Edge currently has a one-year agreement to work with the town and has been a wonderful resource for the town. Mrs. Bransfield stated that if there is interest in hiring a person to apply for additional grants, the funding will have to come out of the amount for the consultant. She will talk to Fred Knous to obtain additional information.

Ms. Rhodes stated that there is \$2,500 in the budget for quarry project improvements that are required by the lease.

Conservation Commission

\$100 was requested for signage along the reservoir trail once the approval for the project is received.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Ms. Rhodes stated that the Board Clerk money was erroneously deleted and \$600 needs to be added back in. The new item, Court Transcriptions, provides transcripts to the court when decisions made by the board are appealed. Mrs. Gibala asked if this type of cost is covered in the Town Counsel budget. Ms. Rhodes stated that the tapes are transcribed by a private entity and the Zoning Board of Appeals is billed for the service.

Planning & Zoning Commission

Board Clerk fees dropped from \$3,400 to \$3,000. New additions are Court Transcriptions and Plan Consultant. \$2,000 was included for the CT River Assembly. Funding has not been in the budget for this for the past three years and the town owes \$500 per year for past fees.

Mr. Adamsons questioned the effectiveness of the CT River Assembly. Jeanne Dilworth stated that the organization was originally established because there was no protection for the Connecticut River. The CT River Assembly established requirements and the towns have adopted them. There have been recent discussions as to whether the CT River Assembly has met its function. One town has opted out; all other towns have remained members. Portland's Conservation Commission, Inland/Wetlands Commission and Planning & Zoning Commission have written letters in support of the CT River Assembly.

Ms. Rhodes stated that there is a large increase in this budget due to staffing changes, and additional funding for the planning consultant is needed.

Mrs. Gibala asked if the consultant working on the zoning regulations is on budget. Ms. Rhodes stated that this project is fully funded. Thus far, approximately \$24,000 of the allocated \$42,000 has been spent. The consultant has said that the project is on track and he does not anticipate going over the allocated amount.

Planning Department

\$5,000 is requested for Plan Consultant to update parcel maps and to help with reviewing applications before they are sent to Planning & Zoning.

Zoning Enforcement

There is a reduction in the budget for Regular Payroll.

Ms. Rhodes stated that the Planning Departments supports the budget for the Technology Department for GIS. She read a statement regarding Dave Kuzminski's request for funding relating to improving the town's GIS capability. The Level A mapping for aquifer protection is also supported.

Ms. Rhodes stated that she would like to have \$20,000 available for grant match funds in order to pursue grants.

Positive feedback has been received from Midstate for putting in an access road to the Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park that will bypass the industrial area.

A public hearing was held regarding the parking of vehicles on Main Street. If the ordinance passes, Ms. Rhodes would like to have money available to help homeowners with the installation of driveways and re-establish the green areas along the roadways

Land Acquisition Fund - \$20,000 for the purchase of properties.

Mrs. Bransfield stated that the items described were not put into the budget for this year.

Building Department

Lincoln White reported that there is an increase in contractual services and utilities.

The Enforcement Officer expenditure is now in the Building Department.

Mr. White spoke in favor of GIS for the town. He stated that the State has a lot of integrative mapping through their web site that can integrate with GIS.

Deanna Rhodes stated that the town is currently paying someone to offload information that can be used to help the Public Works Department.

Registrar of Voters

Sandra Boisselle and Pauline Neumann reviewed the budget. An increase in salary was requested due to the time spent on the new voting system.

Mrs. Neumann stated that new voting machines have been mandated by the Federal Government for Federal elections. The machines will be provided by the State and the town will be responsible for purchasing a "chip". Paper ballots will be provided for the first five uses. Mrs. Boisselle did not think that the town would incur any expenses the first year.

Mr. Adamsons felt that it would be better to use the new system for all elections in order to reduce the confusion of using different types of machines.

Fire Marshal

Mrs. Bransfield reviewed the Fire Marshal budget. Additional stipends were requested but were not put into the budget.

There is an overall 5% increase to the budget. Personnel expenditures are up slightly and there is an increase in conference and dues.

The total requested was \$30,000. The proposed budget is \$24,100.

Mrs. Gibala questioned why line 5500 Fire Prevention Week is under utilities. Mr. Buden stated that there are inconsistencies throughout the budget. When the software is changed, there will be a clean-up of the general ledger.

Mrs. Gibala commented that it would be useful to have information showing the discrepancy between the amounts requested and what is actually reflected in the budget. Mrs. Bransfield stated that this information is included in the narrative but would not be put into the budget.

Mrs. Bransfield stated that the last budget workshop will be held on April 4th and the budget needs to be adopted by April 11th. The pay plan is approved after the budget and the Board of Selectmen will determine whether to increase, decrease or keep it as is. Mr. Adamsons stated that it would be helpful to have the pay plans for the last three years to see the trend.

Motion was made by Sharon Gibala and seconded by Scott Adamsons to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Darna
Recording Clerk