

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

SPECIAL MEETING

December 20, 2010

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman Brett Sanderson Bruce Schmidt
Doug Ficken

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

John Neal

STAFF:

Frank Heald

1. Call to Order

- A. Chairman Howard Barton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Frank Heald said that the Christmas Show at Town Hall on Saturday night was great and said that Ralph Pace and the members of FOLA (Friends of the Ludlow Auditorium) should be commended for their work.
- C. Howard Barton agreed and said that it was great.

2. FY 2012 Budget Workshop

- A. Howard Barton said he would like to start the budget on page 1.
- B. Bruce Schmidt noted that the Cemetery commission had brought the budget down.
- C. AMBULANCE
 - 1. Howard Barton asked about the revenue line regarding Cavendish and Plymouth.
 - 2. Frank Heald said that it is based on \$6.00 per capita.
 - 3. Howard Barton suggested that they explore a yearly percentage increase.
 - 4. Frank Heald said that it has been steady for the last couple of years.
 - 5. Bruce Schmidt noted that there is an increase in the Health Insurance percentage.
 - 6. Frank Heald said that, overall, there will be a \$50,000 decrease in costs from last year.
 - 7. Bruce Schmidt asked what impact the new Obama Health Insurance program will have on this. He said it allows coverage of children up to age 26, there is no longer a lifetime cap and there is an enhancement of wellness programs. He asked if the new law includes a provision such that if a couple are each employed by different employers that provide Health Insurance, then each person must take the health care plan provided by their own employer.
 - 8. Doug Ficken asked which parent's employer would cover the children.
 - 9. Frank Heald said that he had not heard of that provision.
 - 10. Bruce Schmidt said it might be something that the town should consider.
 - 11. Frank Heald said that part of the town policy is to pay employees who opt out of our insurance coverage.
 - 12. Howard Barton said that the numbers for radios sticks out - \$6,000, but they only spent half of that last year.
 - 13. Frank Heald said that they applied for grants.
 - 14. Howard Barton noted that Training is listed as \$10,000, but the actual was only \$5,400.
 - 15. Frank Heald said that what does not get spent during the year, falls to the bottom line. He added that last year \$59,000 fell to the bottom line.
 - 16. Howard Barton said that they are doing well recouping their costs.
 - 17. Frank Heald said that generally, they pay for themselves.
- D. ADMINISTRATION
 - 1. Bruce Schmidt noted that the actual revenues for Delinquent Tax Interest and Delinquent Tax Penalties were \$47,122 and \$77,501 respectively.
 - 2. Howard Barton asked what the split is between town and village.
 - 3. Frank Heald said that split is 60% town, 30% village and 10% water commissioners.
- E. APPROPRIATIONS
 - 1. Howard Barton said that at the last meeting, Frank Heald said that Educational Operations includes crossing guard, treasurer and garbage disposal. He noted that these costs are also included in the Elementary School budget.
 - 2. Doug Ficken said the school reimburses the town.
 - 3. Howard Barton asked why the increase?

4. Frank Heald said escalating costs, based on historical averages.
5. Howard Barton said that he has not really had a chance to study the after school report
6. Doug Ficken said that he is still unclear about the \$18,000 costs for Ludlow versus the \$4,000 for Mount Holly. He would like to see it broken out.
7. Howard Barton said that Ludlow should pay its share for its students and Mount Holly should pay its share for its students.
8. Doug Ficken said that this would be discussed at the next school board meeting.
9. Frank Heald said that it looks like the costs are \$65,300 for Ludlow and \$41,000 for Mount Holly.
10. Doug Ficken said that the program is now year round and the services are going to children who really need them. It is a good program.
11. Howard Barton said that the in-kind comes from Ludlow.
12. Frank Heald asked that board members to go through the documents provided by the program. He added that it helps the children who really need it.
13. Howard Barton said that it the part of the job of the Select Board to review the budget and make sure that others are also paying what they need to pay.

F. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

1. Frank Heald advised that the tried to show the Buildings and Grounds and Community Center budgets on one page. They are estimating the Community Center costs and that Buildings and Grounds is pretty firm. He showed the items that were moved from B&G to Community Center on this draft and the next draft would be clean. He is making assumptions about the income and they are pretty much on the \$80,000 estimated.
2. Howard Barton said that the fees being charged for the locals for the weight room might be too high. He understands that they are not trying to really undercut Jackson Gore or the Castle.
3. Bruce Schmidt said the fees are about \$25 per month.
4. Frank Heald said they are \$300 per year and the biggest issue is that the building must be staffed when the weight room is open.
5. Bruce Schmidt asked if the cell phone is needed.
6. Frank Heald said that the one being used is assigned to B&G and not being used by them, so it is used at the Community Center.
7. Bruce Schmidt said that it is an issue of control of the use of the phone.
8. Frank Heald said that Eugene is also part of Kevin's B&G crew. There is an advantage to being able to contact him. He is not assigned to the weight room. His shift is 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. There is another person there during the rest of the time. Eugene can move when someone else is there. There is only one phone there.

G. CAPITAL

1. Frank Heald said that last year was heavy because of the Highway truck, the Armory and the Dorsey Bridge. They have put the highway pick-up back in this year and they need to replace a bus.
2. Howard Barton asked if there have been a lot of breakdowns.
3. Frank Heald said they have been doing more maintenance now, so there are not as many breakdowns.
4. Bruce Schmidt asked if they would be getting a big bus or a smaller bus?
5. Frank Heald said that a 20+ passenger is too small and the difference in price between a 50 passenger and a 70 passenger is negligible. They need a chairlift for handicapped people. They tried to run a single bus for athletic events and are trying to get the Athletic Director to schedule 2 events together.
6. Bruce Schmidt said that it drives him crazy when he sees only a few kids in a big bus going to an event. He asked if a lift is really needed for all buses.
7. Frank Heald said every grade has one or more disabled children.
8. Doug Ficken said that he also has noticed small numbers of children going to events in a big bus. He suggested putting a minimum number of occupants for a trip.
9. Frank Heald said that when the town took over the buses, it took over the expenses and what the school pays does not cover the costs. However, the costs are spread over the whole tax base. The cost of running the bus is the same no matter how many students are on the bus.
10. Howard Barton asked if the state had taken the costs of transportation out of the penalty.
11. Frank Heald said that putting transportation back into the school budgets would definitely throw you into penalty. He said that 10.3% of the grand list is available for school tax. You would be funding \$200,000-\$240,000 with \$15,000,000. The tax base on the town side is \$1,500,000,000.
12. Bruce Schmidt asked why they need a pick up truck.
13. Frank Heald said that had a utility pick up for a while. It is impractical to use the 550 to chase parts. Ron Tarbell uses his personal truck and we pay his mileage. They need a pick up with plow and sander and could chase parts with it. The less we use the 550, the longer it will last.

14. Bruce Schmidt said that if the board has to justify this at town meeting, they could say that it would be used to help plow and sand in tighter spots.
15. Howard Barton said if purchased, we would then have one more vehicle with plow and sander, than drivers available.
16. Frank Heald said that it is good to have a utility vehicle and back up sander and plow, especially if one breaks down.
17. Howard Barton said that Kevin has a sander on his and goes everywhere.
18. Brett Sanderson said that Kevin needs a 1-ton dump truck. He is constantly picking up trash and leaves.
19. Bruce Schmidt said that would be too big for tight spots. He added that he likes the flexibility for tight spots.
20. Howard Barton asked how long a truck with plow and sander lasts.
21. Brett Sanderson said they need to keep the bed clean and could use a spray-on liner.
22. Frank Heald said they have also included a fire station furnace under Capital. They really need to upgrade the one that's there. It is a job that could be done in one weekend. There are also two culverts listed; one by Ghia Farm on West Hill and the other big one further up on Trailside. The state is doing a hydrology study and we may be able to get 90/10 funds through the Structures program.
23. Bruce Schmidt asked about the scale for the Transfer Station.
24. Frank Heald said that was included in this year's budget and would be done in the spring.

H. FIRE DEPARTMENT

1. Howard Barton asked about the new insurances line.
2. Frank Heald said that was state mandated for firefighters.
3. Bruce Schmidt said that they put in an increase for fuel oil even though they would be upgrading the furnace to a more energy efficient one.
4. Howard Barton commented about the Utilities line for the fire department and highway department.
5. Brett Sanderson said the town is burning waste oil at the garage. He added that they need to upgrade the lighting in the Fire Department. He said that the compressor is running and the trucks are plugged in at the Fire department. He added that the buses are plugged in at the town garage.
6. Doug Ficken noted that the Highway department has listed \$300 for computers for a couple of years and has not used it.
7. Frank Heald said it is there for maintenance.
8. Bruce Schmidt noted that the Fire Department has included \$12,000 for protective gear and only used \$2,000. He asked how often they replace it.
9. Brett Sanderson said that \$2,000 would have been one suit.
10. Bruce Schmidt said they should either use the \$12,000 or put in what they actually think they will use.
11. Howard Barton said they probably buy new outfits every couple of years.
12. Bruce Schmidt noted that they have put in \$7,000 for Repairs/Maintenance and only used \$1,200.
13. Frank Heald said he would look back 3-4 years to see what the numbers show over time.
14. Bruce Schmidt said look back 5 years. He said they did lower some items, but we should still go back and look to see what they have used. We need to be cautious.
15. Howard Barton said if the department needs equipment or repairs, they should put the numbers in for it. But, if they are just putting in the same numbers because that is what they have always put in, they need to check them and maybe change them.
16. Brett Sanderson said they should go back and check the numbers for protective gear. Over the last few years, they have spent more on re-certification and have upgraded the maintenance on the vehicles.

I. HIGHWAY.

1. Brett Sanderson noted that the numbers are pretty close to what they have been and there is not much change.

J. POLICE

1. Bruce Schmidt asked Frank Heald if he had adjusted the OT.
2. Frank Heald said no as it would affect ability to provide 24/7 service. There are a couple of part time employees available now and if they are not available, then we need to use OT. We arrived at these numbers using the long hauls. There have been changes in the state for computer services.
3. Bruce Schmidt asked about Vehicle maintenance and asked the age of the vehicles.
4. Frank Heald said that the one being replaced is 4 years old.
5. Bruce Schmidt asked why the budget is so high. They budget for things that may or may not occur.

6. Frank Heald said that each department tries to give you the best budget they can. If there is a surplus, you give it back to the taxpayers. If they go over, you ask why. It is impossible to get to absolute \$0.00 in a global sense.
 7. Bruce Schmidt said that if we could save \$1,000 on each department's budget, then it would really add up. We need to know the history behind the numbers and the use.
 8. Howard Barton said that when they put in numbers for this budget and they did not come close to using that amount last year, it looks like they are just putting the same numbers in every year. We really need to see the history and not just the actual for one year.
 9. Bruce Schmidt said that people have to vote on the budget and he does not think that budgeting by the "if we don't use it, it will go back to the taxpayers next year" is the way to budget. He would rather budget closer. He said they need to see history to be able to do that. He wants to know how it will affect the people this year. He would rather lower the tax rate now. He asked what a good contingency number for Police Vehicle Maintenance would really be?
 10. Frank Heald said that had thought about that. This brings the numbers forward based on past years. Some numbers are over and others are under. He looks to balance the budget overall.
 11. Bruce Schmidt said that we generally replace the police vehicles every 4 years, so what is included in this line.
 12. Frank Heald said tires, oil changes. Some of it we do in the garage.
- K. RECREATION
1. Frank Heald said that he moved some of the staff costs for activities into the payroll line and some of the summer labor also.
 2. Howard Barton noted that Coaches and Instructors is up.
 3. Frank Heald said the costs came from team sports. He also moved some of the costs for Youth Activities and Adult Activities.
 4. Bruce Schmidt suggested bringing Howie Paul to discuss this budget.
 5. Frank Heald said there was a packet from Howie Paul.
 6. Bruce Schmidt asked where the costs on the Referees line were put in the past budgets.
 7. Frank Heald said Team Sports or Youth activities.
 8. Howard Barton said that we have to pay coaches for the sports programs and as parent, we pay fees. Where does the money come from to pay the coaches.
 9. Doug Ficken said that non-resident participants pay higher fees.
 10. Howard Barton said that it looks like Ludlow is picking up the brunt of costs for these programs.

3. Adjourn

- A. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Brett Sanderson to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman

Brett Sanderson

Doug Ficken

Bruce Schmidt

John Neal