

MINUTES

TOWN OF LUDLOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN

SPECIAL MEETING

December 19, 2011

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman Brett Sanderson Bruce Schmidt

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Doug Ficken John Neal

STAFF:

Frank Heald

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ralph Pace Bruce Schmidt

1. **Call to Order**

- A. Chairman Howard Barton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. John Neal and Doug Ficken absent.

2. **FY 2013 Budget Workshop**

A. **AMBULANCE**

- i. Frank Heald said the Ambulance budget is proprietary and there is no real change.
- ii. Howard Barton noted that the Ambulance Service does support itself.
- iii. Frank Heald said that the revenue appears to outstrip expenses after depreciation.
- iv. Bruce Schmidt asked if the board had decided to maintain the same fees for other towns and there have been no recent increases in those fees.
- v. Brett Sanderson said the fees are cheap for the services the other towns get.
- vi. Howard Barton said the town pays for the building.
- vii. Frank Heald said the ambulance service does not pay for occupancy, only utilities. The legacy of the Enterprise Fund lives on because the town has taken the cost of the building over 10 years and what is not spent in one year goes into the ambulance service fund. He did agree that the board should consider a small increase in the fees to other towns. He said he would look into it.

B. **CEMETERY**

- i. Frank Heald said the draft of the cemetery budget is for information only.
- ii. Brett Sanderson said the cemetery crew got a lot done this year.

C. **ADMINISTRATION**

- i. Frank Heald said the little bit extra in salaries are for Diane Knight. We got her out of the union and may give her an increase. He said the \$67,500 is for both women, with close to a 3% increase. He will confirm that.
- ii. Howard Barton noted that the Administration increase is about 1.8%.
- iii. Frank Heald said that since the last budget workshop, he went back and noted that he had underestimated the revenue. He corrected that.
- iv. Bruce Schmidt said they will need to find the money someplace else in the budget.
- v. Frank Heald said that there are fairly aggressive numbers in the Treasure's budget based on taxpayers not paying taxes on time.
- vi. Ralph Pace said that regarding the Ludlow 250 donation, they owe the town \$500.
- vii. Frank Heald said that would be in this year's budget.

D. **APPROPRIATIONS**

- i. Frank Heald said that all of the letters are in the packets. He said that the jury is still out on the library fuel costs. They put in a new, more energy efficient furnace and he does not know what the effect will be on fuel usage. He added that the Museum also put in a new furnace. He said that by the time the board finalizes the budget, they may have some idea of fuel usage.

- ii. Howard Barton said if the board leaves the money in the budget, and less fuel is used, it still won't go back down. He asked if both buildings were using energy saving programs such as setback thermostats.
- iii. Frank Heald said the museum works hard at it and the library is harder because there are people in all parts of the building.
- iv. Howard Barton noted that Windsor County Youth Services has increased their request from \$400 to \$600. He asked if that was for flood repairs.
- v. Frank Heald said it was not specific to the flood.
- vi. Bruce Schmidt suggested leaving it at \$400 because they just received tax abatement. Have them come to the floor and tell the voters why they are asking for more money.
- vii. Howard Barton said they are not using the Ludlow facility and are at 2 locations in Proctorsville.
- viii. Bruce Schmidt said put this one aside to the end.
- ix. Howard Barton said that the total appropriations number is a lot of money.
- x. Bruce Schmidt said that's an up or down vote from the people. The voters decide.
- xi. Howard Barton asked if the Vermont Coalition of Municipalities is still alive.
- xii. Frank Heald said yes. We are saving \$250 this year because they are not collecting dues. The organization has some money and John Neal is our representative to it. Frank Heald said that he also goes to meetings. The message regarding education funding and sending towns is still not heard by the legislators.

E. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

- i. Howard Barton said that the projected 7.4% increase is high.
- ii. Frank Heald said part of that is in labor and allocating time/costs between highway and the community center.
- iii. Howard Barton asked about fuel oil.
- iv. Frank Heald said that is town hall, Dorsey Park and West Hill. They need to keep Dorsey and West Hill from freezing. He added that there is a wastewater pump station at West Hill.
- v. Bruce Schmidt asked what would happen to the pump station if they removed the building at West Hill.
- vi. Frank Heald said they have not considered it.
- vii. Bruce Schmidt noted that they estimated \$1000 for Equipment, but only used \$370.
- viii. Howard Barton asked about uniform costs and asked if they were using the same company as the Electric department. He said the Electric department saved a lot of money by switching to the new company and the uniforms are a much better quality.
- ix. Frank Heald said he will check and get back to them. He added that Diane Knight recently went to a payroll meeting and a representative from the IRS was there. It was explained that if uniforms are provided and people wear them home, they are taxable. If they leave them at their workplace, then they are not taxable. This is new to the other municipalities and none of the towns are doing anything, yet. He said that we are going to further explore it. The same goes for cell phones. He added, for the record that he owns and pays for his cell phone.

F. COMMUNITY CENTER

- i. Frank Heald said that the town needs to push for programs and events that pay fees.
- ii. Bruce Schmidt asked if it is necessary for that employee to have a cell phone. The costs are higher than Kevin McPherson's.
- iii. Howard Barton said they could provide a pager and have him call in on the radio.
- iv. Frank Heald said Kevin McPherson has his own phone.
- v. Brett Sanderson asked what the \$360 is for.
- vi. Frank Heald said he does not know if Kevin McPherson bills the town back.
- vii. Howard Barton said the uniform cost for one person is high.
- viii. Frank Heald said he would check on it.
- ix. Bruce Schmidt asked if the Utilities/Services number covers the Recreation Department and where does the B&G assistant fit in. Do they need a cell phone and internet for him?
- x. Frank Heald said the phone and internet is for the purposes of the Community Center and people can plug into it. Utilities went down because we bought fuel from the military that we had not planned on buying. That line item was over budget because of it.
- xi. Bruce Schmidt asked if we are keeping records of the kitchen costs. It would be good for the schools to know what the costs are that the town is paying.
- xii. Frank Heald said there is an article that will go on the floor for \$5,000 to create a Community Center Repair fund. We keep track of the kitchen maintenance costs. He said that he thinks that it is a far better eating situation for the students.
- xiii. Bruce Schmidt said he has heard that the food is not as good, the kids are saying that it is crowded and they are running out of food and the kitchen is not big enough.
- xiv. Howard Barton said that he has heard that the pizza is either undercooked or burnt.
- xv. Bruce Schmidt said the kids do not feel like they are being heard.

- xvi. Frank Heald said the number of people in the cafeteria at one time is a management issue.
- xvii. Bruce Schmidt said it is not as seamless as you would think.

G. CAPITAL

- i. Frank Heald said that we recommend replacing the 550 and B&G pickup in FY2013. The 550 is 7 years old and the B&G pickup 5 years old with about 50,000 miles. Kevin McPherson takes good care of the equipment.
- ii. Howard Barton asked about the line item for a mower.
- iii. Frank Heald said that is a small tractor mower, like a John Deere for about \$11,000. It will have a mower deck and snow blower on it. The pickup and 550 will be funded. They are also discussing whether to rebuild or purchase new transfer station containers. To rebuild would be about \$3,000 and new would be about \$7,500-\$7,800. He said that the Lake Pauline Flood Control dam needs work.
- iv. Howard Barton asked about the West Hill culvert.
- v. Brett Sanderson said that had not been done yet and it has serious issues.
- vi. Frank Heald said they will reapply for a Structures grant for the lower one. He said that the Trailside Culvert got replaced after the storm. He presumes they will get 90% funding and will true up in FY2012.

H. DEBT MANAGEMENT

- i. Frank Heald said it is pretty straightforward.

I. FIRE DEPARTMENT

- i. Frank Heald said that there was a volunteer fireman who was injured while working, but not on duty. Workers' Comp did not pay. The case went to court and the court said Workers' Comp would have to pay. VLCT suggests towns provide Workers' Comp for firemen. He projects that bill to be about \$10,000. He added that that is the only anomaly in the Fire Department budget. He added that the fuel costs should come down because of the newly installed Rinnai propane heater.
- ii. Howard Barton said they should have a better feel for the propane usage in a month.

J. HIGHWAY.

- i. Frank Heald said that after their last meeting, he reduced bridges to \$5,000 because of a 90% match and he added to Miscellaneous.

K. INSURANCE

- i. Frank Heald said that Unemployment is up due to the Transfer Station employee. He has not separated out seasonal, cemetery and some bus drivers' times. The balance of insurance. Property Casualty and Liability is up because of costs related to the Community Center.

L. INTERGOVERNMENTAL

- i. Frank Heald said that he is not sure about this one because they don't know the county tax, yet. He does not know what the countywide equalized grand list will be. Ludlow's grand list went down.
- ii.

M. LISTERS

- i. Frank Heald advised that the reappraisal should be completed by FY2013. They are talking about making working hours for Margot Martell as 40 hours per week, 20 hours per week for Terry Thayne and 15 hours per week for Mark Gauthier. In the last budget he said knocked the total costs for hours to \$50,000 and the listers decide who gets what portion of that. He also took \$10,000 out of the Reappraisal fund as the reappraisal should be finished.

N. MUNICIPAL TRANSIT

- i. Frank Heald said that he took some money out of the salary lines. We have reached a point where we are running busses all over and we need to cut back on bus hours. We have 6 months to figure out how to do that.
- ii. Bruce Schmidt said we will let the town decide. We need to have a discussion about it.
- iii. Frank Heald said that is true. We have 6% more in drivers' salaries and have leveled funding for part time and overtime drivers. The budget is up \$26,815. We need to work on this and have conversations with the 2 school principals. The other option is this board can raise it. This may be a place to save.
- iv. Howard Barton said if that works, the diesel costs and other expenses may also drop.
- v. Bruce Schmidt noted an increase in diesel.
- vi. Frank Heald said it is level funded this year.
- vii. Bruce Schmidt said salaries are up \$6,600.
- viii. Frank Heald said that is a union contract.

- ix. Howard Barton asked if Frank Heald is still working on that one.
- x. Frank Heald said yes.

O. PLANNING

- i. Frank Heald said that unless business picks up, we are looking at decreasing the assistant's time from 4 to 3 days per week.
- ii. Bruce Schmidt asked if there was any chance of sharing other administrative personnel with Planning and not having a 2nd person in Planning.
- iii. Frank Heald said while the Planning Director is not overwhelmed, we would like to think business will pick up.

P. POLICE

- i. Frank Heald said they finished the review of the Police budget at the last meeting.

Q. RECREATION

- i. Howard Barton asked if Frank Heald had found out about the fees charged to children from other towns.
- ii. Frank Heald said that in most programs there is an upcharge for non-Ludlow children. The Recreation Committee has reviewed the fees and will present it to you in their minutes.
- iii. Howard Barton said that at the last meeting, the Recreation budget was up 18%, this time it is 19.2%.
- iv. Brett Sanderson said that he still has a problem with adding a person. He thought the new B&G person was to also work with Recreation. He said this board really needs to watch this. We keep adding programs and the costs keep rising. He also does not agree with the \$15/hour for the assistant.
- v. Howard Barton asked if they could look having that person be part time and not full time. We need to look at the hours.
- vi. Frank Heald said that weekends are less, but Monday through Friday we are open until 8:00 p.m.
- vii. Howard Barton said that he recently went by on a weekend and there was no one using the facility. We need to watch these costs.
- viii. Bruce Schmidt said it is a constant back and forth with the Recreation Department. It is good to have programs. The success is due to Howie Pall. He puts in a lot of time and effort. What if he leaves? He would like to see a job description for the 2nd person and maybe include help with center programs.
- ix. Howard Barton said he also thought the extra person hired last year was supposed to help out.
- x. Frank Heald said that person could be the person working 12:00 to 8:00 p.m. Noon to 8:00 p.m. is largely building maintenance in the winter. We did not count on the work that is done from 7:00 to 12:00 p.m. It does not work the way we thought. Also, we should have someone there who is acquainted with the gym and weight room activities. The net additional cost for the additional person would be about \$18,000. In order to cut costs, we need to cut programs. He suggested scheduling a meeting for this board and the Recreation Committee. He said that he did not make up their budget, it came from Howie Pall. They did discuss it. This board needs to talk to the committee about cutting costs.
- xi. Bruce Schmidt said the committee gives guidance to the Recreation director, but did they work on the budget with him. This is an ongoing debate – recreation costs.
- xii. Frank Heald said that this board may also set a budget number for the department and let them work within that number.
- xiii. Brett Sanderson said an increase of 19.2% is too much and \$15/hour for an assistant is too high.
- xiv. Bruce Schmidt said that \$31,000 is not too high for someone working with children. Howie does a lot of the coaching, but the assistant would still be around the children. We need to have the right type of person.
- xv. Frank Heald said that he needs guidance from this board.
- xvi. Brett Sanderson said we need to cut this budget somewhere.
- xvii. Frank Heald said he would work on it.

R. SOLID WASTE

- i. Frank Heald said that he revised the Disposal costs and it ends up about -2.7%.
- ii. Howard Barton asked why the 9.5% jump under Assistant – was it because we operated without a full time person for a while.
- iii. Frank Heald said yes. Also, she may be paid a little more than the previous employee.
- iv. Bruce Schmidt asked how many hours per day.
- v. Frank Heald said 9 hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and they work through lunch. She usually works 1-2 hours per day OT.
- vi. Bruce Schmidt asked if it is necessary to have someone that many hours.

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- vii. Frank Heald said it is necessary to have her there. They are hourly and only get paid when they are there. He said that he would not be in favor of cutting back hours at the Transfer Station for anyone. The operation is working well and the stuff gets moved. Also, you never know when people will show up. He added that the culvert under the landfill was recently checked and is in good shape. We will need to run a sleeve in there in the next 1-2 years.

S. CLERK TREASURER

- i. Frank Heald said that he increased the recording fee a bit and also the current tax interest. There is \$130,000 in back taxes going to sale in February. Tax collections for the first 2 quarters this year are pretty good. This office operates on a positive basis. They are at about a 3% increase.

T. ARTICLES

- i. Frank Heald advised that they have included a \$5,000 Community Center fund.

3. Adjourn

- A. MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Bruce Schmidt to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.
B. Meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman

Brett Sanderson

Doug Ficken

Bruce Schmidt

John Neal