

TOWN OF SEABROOK

BUDGET MEETING

JANUARY 21, 2010

Present: Paula Wood
Peg Weare
Cora Stockbridge
Gary Pitts
Richard Maguire
Don Hawkins
Ivan Eaton
Aboul Khan
Barry M. Brenner

6:00PM

Mrs. Wood opened the meeting at 6:07PM.

Mrs. Wood read from a handout she distributed regarding contracts and who has authority to sign them. Mrs. Stockbridge said she would think that would be for the PMC Biotec that cost the Town over \$600K. Mr. Brenner said that the virtual town hall is a maintenance agreement and can be cancelled next year. He said the Town is not obligated to pay the fee for maintenance but is obligated to pay the one-time fee.

WARRANT ARTICLES

The committee agreed to not read the articles but just say what they are about and have discussion if necessary.

Article 10

Mr. Maguire asked if any of the contracts have any other monetary issues. Mr. Brenner said there are no other economic costs associated with the contracts. There were no other negotiations with any contract however there were some language changes. Mr. Maguire is displeased at the late timeframe of receiving the information on the contracts and that there were no other give-and-take with the negotiations. Mr. Brenner said it is not untypical of negotiations going to the 11th hour and sometimes there is no agreement reached. He said in regards to the health insurance each union was in agreement into looking at different options but it was not negotiated any further. Mr. Maguire also asked about any sidebar agreements. Mr. Brenner said there are no sidebars and none was asked for by the Town.

Mr. Maguire had a handout in regards to unseen raises for employees. There is an unseen increase in 2010 of about 2.5%. He just wanted to illustrate these increases that the people may not think about.

Mrs. Stockbridge said she still doesn't understand the incentive and what it applies to. She said the employee is already being paid and what percentage of call backs is being looked at. Mr. Brenner explained it is call backs to staff the ambulance when there is not enough coverage. Mrs. Wood asked if they think an employee is going to come in for 120 ambulance calls for an incentive of \$500. She wonders if this is to open the door for more incentives in future years. Mr. Brenner commented that it is a modest incentive.

MOTION: Aboul B. Khan To recommend the
Second: Gary Pitts article.
Opposed: Paula Wood & Cora Stockbridge
Present: Richard Maguire
Abstain: Ivan Eaton
Motion passed.

Article 11

Mrs. Stockbridge said two years ago a sidebar was made for this union. She said the agreement was defeated at town meeting and a sidebar was done by the Selectmen and she doesn't believe it was legal. It was a \$10/hour increase for details. She said she believes they did receive an increase since 2005. Mr. Brenner said even though there was an increase it is paid by private parties and not through property taxes and there has been no increase that is paid through property taxes since 2005. Mr. Khan commented that the Selectmen requested the Police Chief to look at surrounding towns and what they are paid and Seabrook was very low so they were brought up to about the same pay for police dept services.

MOTION: Don Hawkins To recommend the
Second: Aboul B. Khan article.
Opposed: Cora Stockbridge & Paula Wood
Present: Richard Maguire
Abstain: Ivan Eaton
Motion passed.

Article 12

Mr. Maguire asked about the evaluation process for the employees in the union and would the increase be the same for all employees. Mr. Brenner explained there is nothing negotiated for anything more or less based on performance. The increase is at least 2% every year. Mr. Hawkins asked if this contract would take the place of the voters voting on the contract year after year. Mr. Brenner said there would be a contractual

obligation to pay a 2% increase yearly until a new contract is negotiated and approved at Town Meeting.

Mrs. Weare asked if no one received an increase where would the money go. Mr. Brenner said it would stay in the budget and at the end of the year it would go into the general fund. The intent of this contract is for the Selectmen to budget for the increase.

Mr. Maguire said theoretically it could be that the employees get additional money as it is a bottomline budget. Mr. Brenner said that theoretically it could.

Mrs. Stockbridge said there are steps in the union contracts but if a contract is voted down the steps remain the same they do not increase. In this case if the contract in following years is voted down they still get a 2% increase. She said it doesn't matter if the Selectmen give 2% or 2-million it still needs to go to Town Meeting for approval. She strongly feels the Selectmen have no right to authorize an increase if there is no Town Meeting vote. Mr. Brenner said he appreciates the committee looking at the money but he and the Selectmen look at the management of the Town. Mrs. Stockbridge said there are other systems in place to handle the employees who are not performing. Mr. Brenner said he does not agree. Mr. Hawkins said he agrees with the performance evaluation system what he doesn't like is the fact it doesn't go to the voters for approval on the increases.

Mrs. Weare asked if this would be included in their pay. Mr. Brenner said for the employees not at top pay yes if at top pay it would be a lump sum. This would count towards retirement as it is compensation.

Mrs. Stockbridge commented that the note does not notify the voters of exactly what it means to approve this contract.

There are a couple of employees in this group who can receive overtime. There is no extra duty pay for employees in this union like in police & fire.

While Mr. Hawkins doesn't like how this is done he will support the article as they are Department Heads who are salaried with no opportunity for overtime and have not had increases in 5 years.

Mrs. Wood said she doesn't like the fact it is not spelled out as to what the increase would be and give the voters a chance to

vote on it. She doesn't think this is the appropriate time to do this type of contract with the economic conditions and what people in Seabrook are facing and she will not be supporting this article.

Mr. Maguire said he will support the article for the same reason as Mr. Hawkins and he hopes that people will be looking for this in the line items in the future. He said he voted present in the other contracts due to his concerns with other items not being negotiated and had his vote been needed to put forth the contract article he would have voted in favor.

Mrs. Wood commented that the note says a one-year contract and it isn't she said maybe the other notes are deceiving as well. Mrs. Stockbridge said they only recommend to the voters. The voters are the ones who make the decisions.

Mr. Khan commented that the employees in this group can go to work in other towns and we are the ones who trained them. This is just appreciation to say they are appreciated and we know they work hard for our town.

Ivan said it doesn't say a Department Head can't get a 10% increase and another employee only gets a 2% and that's discrimination.

Mr. Brenner said the note is not the article it is just informational. The requirement is to give the cost information only to the voters.

Mr. Brenner said in regards to discrimination there is an appeal process in place for any employee who does not feel they were treated fairly.

Ivan Eaton asked to move the question. It was seconded by Cora Stockbridge.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To recommend the
Second: Don Hawkins article.
Opposed: Ivan Eaton, Cora Stockbridge & Paula Wood
Motion passed.

Article 13

MOTION: Ivan Eaton To recommend the
Second: Paula Wood article.
Unanimous

Article 14

MOTION: Richard Maguire To recommend the
Second: Ivan Eaton article.
Unanimous

Article 15

Mrs. Stockbridge questioned the 3 police cruisers and if it would add to the fleet. It was discussed the 3 to be traded would be a van, the SUV and a police cruiser.

MOTION: Ivan Eaton To recommend the
Second: Gary Pitts article.
Opposed: Cora Stockbridge
Motion passed.

Article 16

MOTION: Aboul B. Khan To recommend the
Second: Gary Pitts article.
Opposed: Cora Stockbridge
Abstain: Paula Wood
Motion passed.

Article 17

MOTION: Richard Maguire To recommend the
Second: Cora Stockbridge article.
Unanimous

Article 18

MOTION: Ivan Eaton To recommend the
Second: Gary Pitts article.
Present: Paula Wood
Motion passed.

Article 19

MOTION: Don Hawkins To recommend the
Second: Richard Maguire article.
Unanimous

Article 20

MOTION: Paula Wood To recommend the
Second: Cora Stockbridge article.
Unanimous

Article 21

MOTION: Cora Stockbridge To recommend the
Second: Paula Wood article.
Unanimous

Article 22

MOTION: Don Hawkins To recommend the
Second: Richard Maguire article.
Unanimous

Article 23

MOTION: Peg Weare To recommend the
Second: Don Hawkins article.
Unanimous

Article 24

MOTION: Paula Wood To recommend the
Second: Don Hawkins article.
Unanimous

Article 26

MOTION: Aboul B. Khan To recommend the
Second: Richard Maguire article.
Abstain: Paula Wood
Motion passed.

Article 27

MOTION: Richard Maguire To recommend the
Second: Gary Pitts article.
Opposed: Paula Wood & Cora Stockbridge
Motion passed.

Article 28

MOTION: Richard Maguire To recommend the
Second: Cora Stockbridge article.
Unanimous

Article 29

MOTION: Gary Pitts To recommend the
Second: Aboul B. Khan article.

Unanimous

Article 30

MOTION: Richard Maguire To recommend the
Second: Cora Stockbridge article.
Unanimous

Article 31

MOTION: Gary Pitts To recommend the
Second: Paula Wood article.
Unanimous

Mrs. Stockbridge asked who town counsel was and Mr. Brenner said Rob Ciandella.

Article 32

MOTION: Paula Wood To recommend the
Second: Gary Pitts article.
Unanimous

Article 33

MOTION: Don Hawkins To recommend the
Second: Richard Maguire article.
Unanimous

Article 34

Mrs. Stockbridge asked if the petitioner or any other voter who signed met with the Town Manager or Selectmen and if they are a non-profit. Mr. Brenner said there was no meeting and they are a non-profit.

Mrs. Wood said in the past they would come in and meet and if passed it would go on as a human service agency request. Mr. Khan said if passed they would then ask them what the intent is. There was discussion on how they go on the ballot as human service agency.

MOTION: Don Hawkins To recommend the
Second: Gary Pitts article.
Unanimous

Article 39

Mr. Hawkins said these items look like maintenance in our parks and asked if we are doing maintenance. Mr. Brenner said some

appear to be capital improvements but he cannot answer and it is a question for the petitioner. Mr. Khan said this is town property so the Selectmen recommended the article. Mrs. Wood commented that it is town property and why is it not being maintained. Mrs. Weare said the bucket truck is not high enough and the bulbs are very expensive and that is why it is not put in the regular maintenance. She said when they did buy bulbs they bought in bulk and they must have run out. Mrs. Wood said from her point of view it is a safety issue and has never been mentioned during any budget reviews.

Mrs. Stockbridge asked if there was any itemization with the article. She thinks this should come through the budget from the Department Head who would then authorize payment of the bills and she asked who would do the work.

MOTION: Gary Pitts To recommend the
Second: Aboul B. Khan article.
Opposed: Richard Maguire, Cora Stockbridge, Don Hawkins, Paula Wood & Peg Weare
Motion did not pass the committee will not be recommending the article.

Article 40

Mrs. Stockbridge asked if the money was spent or if it was encumbered. Ms. Knowles said all the money was spent except about \$300.

MOTION: Aboul B. Khan To recommend the
Second: Gary Pitts article.
Abstain: Don Hawkins
Motion passed.

Article 41

Mrs. Wood asked if they came back this year to discuss with the Selectmen. She said when Ms. Beaudoin was here she said the council on aging takes of the townspeople and this would be a duplicate service. Mr. Brenner said it is a separate program and he has no statistics on who uses this service. He said it is a volunteer service with volunteer drivers and there were a number of residents who used the service. Mr. Khan commented that he personally knows of a resident who used this service. Mrs. Stockbridge asked where they are located and Ms. Beaudoin said this program may go more north than what the council on aging does.

MOTION: Richard Maguire To recommend the
Second: Paula Wood article.

Unanimous

Mrs. Wood asked if there is any way that a petitioner could be told that it is advantageous for them to come before the Selectmen and/or the Budget Committee. Mr. Brenner explained some come in at the end of the hour but certainly if they come in to get information beforehand we do and can tell them the guidelines. It is recommended to the petitioner that they come in to discuss the article with the Selectmen and Budget Committee.

MOTION: Paula Wood To reaffirm all the
Second: Don Hawkins previous votes on the
Unanimous warrant articles.

MOTION: Paula Wood To reaffirm the beach
Second: Aboul B. Khan district budget of
Unanimous \$74,150.00.

ARTICLE 9 - OPERATING BUDGET

MOTION: Aboul B. Khan To take a break at 8PM.
Second: Paula Wood
Unanimous

Committee reconvened at 8:06PM.

There was discussion on how the committee wants to proceed either by department or bottomline. Mr. Maguire commented it is a bottomline budget and unless there are questions they could proceed as is. Mrs. Wood went over the budgets that were cut, by how much and the reasons why they were reduced.

Mr. Maguire asked to consider some points and presented handout. He went over some of various points to consider (see attached).

Mr. Brenner explained the negotiations with the power plant and said they were done for a portion of 2009. Mr. Maguire asked for an update on the legal fee cost for PMC. Mr. Brenner said there were bills for December but he can't discuss due to the litigation. Mr. Maguire said if the bills were paid it is a matter of public record. Mrs. Wood said if she came in tomorrow and asked to see the bills that were paid couldn't she get that information. Mr. Brenner said they are in process of closing out December and will have the information for the budget committee soon. He said they do not have a number. Mrs. Stockbridge asked if the finance manager had a number and Ms. Knowles said she has to defer it to Mr. Brenner. Mr. Maguire

asked Selectmen Khan. Mr. Khan commented that he is not an attorney and he should not be making any comments as they are still in litigation. Mr. Maguire said he fails to understand this. Mrs. Stockbridge referred to the right to know law and the municipal budget law. Mr. Brenner said once they have that information it would be provided. Mrs. Wood asked for a year end figure. Mr. Brenner said that is going to be when they close the books. He said this year is an entirely different situation and the town will close the books in the black. He said there are still bills to be paid to close out December 2009. Mr. Eaton asked if there are any other reasons he is withholding this information. Mr. Brenner said it is only due to litigation and as soon as the books are closed they will have the information. Mr. Eaton said he feels the Town Manager is overstepping his bounds.

There was general discussion on the default budget in the 120 account for the new equipment line as example. If no new equipment is needed why does the money need to be included in default budget.

Mrs. Stockbridge said she doesn't believe we can vote to reduce the budget any lower however, at the deliberative session it could be done. She also pointed out that the article is less than the Selectmen's proposed budget and urged voters to read the article in its entirety.

MOTION: Ivan Eaton To move the budget at
Second: Gary Pitts \$17,932,392.00.
Present: Richard Maguire
Opposed: Aboul B. Khan
Motion passed.

Mrs. Wood read the school forms with the recommendation of the Budget Committee.

MOTION: Paula Wood To move the school
Second: Richard Maguire budget.
Unanimous

Mr. Maguire asked if there was a Selectmen's meeting on Friday. Mr. Brenner said there was as the Selectmen could not sign the warrant until the Budget Committee takes a final vote on the budget and makes recommendations on the articles. He said the Budget Committee members need to come in on Friday to sign the MS7 form by close of business.

Mrs. Wood thanked the members for their hard work.

BUDGET MEETING

-11-

JANUARY 21, 2010

MOTION: Paula Wood
Second: Gary Pitts
Unanimous

To adjourn the meeting
at 8:39PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39PM.
Minutes taken by Kelly J. O'Connor

Approved and endorsed:

Paula Wood, Chairman

Date: _____