

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
April 28, 2005**

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairperson
Susan Kay
Michael Molisse
Colin McPherson
Paul Leary

Also Present: James Wilson, Chief Financial Officer
Franklin Fryer, Town Clerk
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
Jane Hackett, Chief of Staff
Arthur Mathews

Recording Secretary: Janet Murray

Chairman DiFazio called the Budget/Management Committee Meeting to order at 6:30pm.

FISCAL YEAR 2006 BUDGET REVIEW AS FOLLOWS:

1. Mayor

Jane Hackett noted that there has been a significant decrease in the Mayor's budget due to the fact that Property, casualty, and other insurances (Item 05 040) is prefunded in the amount of \$667,000. If this item were added back- the budget would have only increased by approximately 2%.

2. Town Council

Jane Hackett highlighted the points of the budget.

Mr. Swanson spoke to the need for a new copier in the Council Office. He noted that the current machine only collates 10 sets at a time.

3. Town Clerk

Franklin Fryer spoke to the needs for the Town Clerk's Budget. It was noted that there are contractual obligations for step increases.

Mr. Fryer noted that he has been working to replace the equipment at the 18 polling places in town. In 1999 a replacement program was begun to start this process. Eight (8) have been completed. Mr. Franklin referenced a letter he had written to the Council.

Councilor DiFazio asked if COLA increases were included in this budget. Mr. Wilson stated that the SEIU increases are included.

There was discussion regarding the polling places' accessibility. Mr. Fryer stated that one of the priorities for polling places is to move the polling place from DPW back to the Murphy School. The ramp at Murphy needs to be 48" wide. It is only 41" wide. He noted that the Seach School needs more signage. The Nash School polling place was moved to Weymouth High School. Councilor Leary asked to have this polling place moved back to Nash School as he had received constituent calls with complaints about this change.

4. Library

Joanne Lamothe, Director of Library Services, stated that the budget for the library is for level service funding. There is no impact on hours. She noted that the collective bargaining contract for 2006 is already in place. The total budget is \$1.1 million. More than \$850,000 is for salaries.

Richard Swanson asked for clarification on longevity. Ms. Lamothe stated that this money was reallocated into the appropriate program/employee line item.

Ms. Lamothe stated that Weymouth is a part of the Old Colony Library Network (OCLN). There is an assessment charge to each member for this service. The fee is based on a common charge. She noted that the total budget for the OCLN is \$867,900. She noted that there have been dramatic funding cuts by the state for the library network. The difference has had to be made up by the member towns.

There is a gift account. This money must be spent on what the gift was designated for.

Mr. Swanson questioned who owns the Dell computers in the library. Ms. Lamothe confirmed that the town owns these computers.

Mr. Wilson stated that library funds do not go into the general fund.

Ms. Lamothe stated that the Main Library is for research with the branch libraries focus on browsing and neighborhood programs for children.

The overtime line item was at zero. Ms. Lamothe stated that the school patrol would answer alarms.

5. Municipal Finance

Mr. Wilson stated that \$600,000 was received in medical reimbursements. Physical, Occupational, and some of the other type training services and psychological services provided through the School Department to school age children are reimbursable from Medicare. New England Medical Services works to secure the reimbursement for the cost of approximately \$50,000 per year.

Mr. Swanson questioned if the town can budget for unpaid bills. Mr. Wilson stated that State statute prohibits this. Unpaid bills must be itemized and directly funded by Town Council.

6. Information Technology

James Limbey, Director of Information Technology, stated that there has been extensive testing on the network, the email system, and the server upgrade. Councilor DiFazio questioned the upgrading of the Munis reports. He asked if there would be any significant changes. Mr. Wilson stated that the changes would be minor in nature. Councilor DiFazio stated that the current format of Munis is reader friendly.

Mr. Limbey noted that the property viewer for the town sees 17,000 hits per month.

Richard Swanson questioned the 38% increase in the GIS system. Mr. Limbey stated that the free maintenance has run out and it costs \$4000 for this.

Mr. Swanson noted that most line items are level funded. He questioned if there are any scheduled pay increases. Mr. Limbey stated that no increases are anticipated.

James Wilson stated that the town must separate utilities and capital items.

Richard Swanson asked Mr. Limbey if there is an IT Steering Committee. He answered that there is not. Mr. Swanson asked about quarterly reporting. Mr. Limbey stated that this is not a formalized process that it occurs at Department Head meetings.

Councilor Kay requested a breakdown of the payments to consultants. At this time \$30,000 is paid for website maintenance.

7. Human Resources

Denise Coleman stated that there has been an 11% reduction mostly in salary and training. She stated that she is confident that department services can be maintained. The department has generally had three positions filled at any given time. The Human Resource Clerk position has been filled.

Ms. Coleman stated that most training will be done in-house which will result in substantial savings.

She commented that alternative work schedules are utilized which results in reduced hours and more flexibility in working hours.

It was noted that Ms. Coleman has worked closely with the Fire Chief to aggressively review disability and worker's compensation.

Mr. Swanson questioned if other policy and procedures would be reviewed as was recently done with the Recording Secretary guidelines. Ms. Coleman stated that Human

Resources constantly reviews policies and procedures. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action will be reviewed next.

Ms. Coleman stated that the Employee Assistance line item has seen the addition of one half hour of legal and financial assistance for employees. She also noted that prescription reimbursements could total approximately \$2,300,000.

8. Community Services

Caroline LaCroix stated that the budget is level service funded. Ms. LaCroix stated that this budget is program based.

Mr. Swanson questioned the utilities costs, as there was only a small increase in comparison to other departments. Mr. Wilson stated that the utilities costs for this department have been flat which is why the budgeted amount was only increased from \$200,000 to \$238,000.

Councilor Kay questioned the decrease in the funding for recording secretaries. Ms. LaCroix stated that if more funding is needed, there are other line items that can be utilized.

Mr. Swanson questioned the Youth and Family Services line item. He asked if this could be combined with Elder Services. Ms. LaCroix stated that these services are better kept as a stand- alone item as they focus on serving a specific population.

Mr. Swanson questioned the Veteran's Benefits line item. The town has appropriated \$200,000 to provide services for veterans. There has been an additional 20 veterans added to the rolls. The state reimbursed the town 49% of this cost. The State statute calls for a reimbursement rate of 75%. However, this has not been fully funded for a number of years.

Councilor McPherson questioned what services the veterans receive. It was noted that they receive assistance with temporary housing, and prescription and medical coverage until the VA steps in.

Councilor Kay questioned the 50% cut in the miscellaneous line item. It was noted that the Memorial Day and Veteran's Day parades are now funded from the Mayor's line item for celebrations and parades.

Mr. Swanson questioned the number of hours paid for the director of Civil Defense. Ms. LaCroix stated that this position is paid a monthly stipend based on 20 hours. Mr. Wilson noted that considerably more time is spent on this position than 20 hours. The building maintenance was transferred to the maintenance of town buildings budget. This is separate from Central Maintenance.

9. Town Solicitor

George Lane stated that the budget is at approximately \$295,000. He noted a \$30,000 reduction in the settlements line item. He stated he works to prevent litigation and the use of outside counsel.

Mr. Swanson stated that the solicitor's position has a base salary of \$52,530. In addition, the solicitor is allowed to invoice the town for services provided. Mr. Lane stated that he charges the town a modest \$125 per hour. Mr. Swanson asked Mr. Lane to supply a breakdown of his salary plus invoices. From his W-2 and 1099 income, the amounts are as follows.

2000	\$ 89,000
2001	\$ 88,000
2002	\$ 84,000
2003	\$104,500
2004	\$110,000
2005	\$ 89,000

Mr. Lane stated that he pays for all of his law office expenses from these amounts such as insurance, secretary, rent, and publications in the amount of approximately \$50,000.

Mr. Swanson questioned the line item of \$13,000 under management. Mr. Lane stated that this line item is restricted for when Mr. Lane is not available, either due to a conflict or illness.

10. Reserve Fund

The amount in the reserve fund has increased from \$397,000 to \$400,000.

At 8:50 pm, there being no further business, A MOTION was made by Councilor Kay to ADJOURN and was seconded by Councilor Leary and UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Approved by: _____
Kenneth DiFazio, Chairperson