

**MINUTES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**JANUARY 16, 2008**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Wilson with Bill Neault, Beverly Lund, Nick Thomo and Bob Barnes in attendance. Mr. James Allen, Selectmen; Betty Benoit, Town Accountant; James Dunbar, Treasurer; Lois Moores, Collector and Chief Ross Ackerman, Police Department were present.

**BUDGET REVIEWS**

**Town Accountant**

**Accountant Expense** - shows an increase of \$500 bringing the total budget to \$3,790. This increase is due to increased educational expenses. The Audit Expenses in level funded at \$11,500.

**Accountant Salary** – The Accountant currently works 36 posted hours which includes four ½ paid lunch periods. She estimates that she actually works between 44 and 45 hours per week, the excess at home.

**Casual Laborer** - Mrs. Benoit is requesting a new position of casual laborer to do clerical work and assist her in other areas during the year for a total wage of \$3,000 annually at approximately \$10.00 to \$15.00 per hour for 300 or 200 hours a year.

It was noted that the Accountant's salary last year was \$41,813 with an additional \$600 to compensate her for night meetings for a total of \$42,413.00 and it has been level funded at this amount for 2009. For a point of information, Ms. Lund stated that it was her understanding that this \$600 would be a one time amount and if the Accountant did not attend night meetings, then the amount would be reduced. To date, the Accountant has not attended Advisory Committee meetings other than this evening to explain her budget.

Mrs. Benoit advised that there were unexpected receipts of approximately \$17,000 from interest to the tax collector and rollback taxes.

**Town Treasurer**

**Treasurer Salary** - Mr. Dunbar level funded his salary as suggested by the Advisory Committee at \$26,370 for the Treasurer and \$21,173 for the Treasurer's Clerk. The Committee will review the entire budget when completed and then make a recommendation for an increase to salaries.

**Treasurer's Expense** - This budget has increased by \$100 for a total of \$8,725, the increasing being in postage.

**Health Insurance** – Shows as decrease due to changes in personnel and their need for different coverage, \$320,270 to \$306,000. This included a 10% built in increase but he is looking probably a 6-7% increase. He will get the new rates in the next couple of weeks and will provide them to the Board.

**Maturing Debt Principal** - this remains the same at \$275,000 while the Maturing Debt Interest has gone up from \$177,797 to \$181,394 due to the new highway garage and the town hall roof.

The above figures do not include the debt for the new fire truck. \$215,000 will be borrowed and the sum of \$8,500 could be added to the interest. He is looking at whether or not to borrow for five or 10 years. He would like to see if paid off as soon as possible if the budget can handle it. The Highway Garage and the School construction is debt excluded while the fire truck and the town hall roof are not. The current percentage of debt to the total budget is very small and in Mr. Dunbar's opinion the Town could take on debt for a new police station. Mr. Dunbar will get back to the committee with a figure as to how much debt the Town can take on for the Police Station.

**Worcester Country Retirement** - This contribution has increased from \$99,144 to \$104,000,

**Pension Liability Account** – This account is level funded.

**Unemployment** - This remains the same at \$10,000.

**Medicare** - The Town's share of Medicare remains the same at \$37,595.

### **Tax Collector**

**Salary** - Mrs. Moores is looking to increase her salary by \$420 to compensate her for attending meetings and school for a total of \$29,251. She is not looking for a cost of living increase. Mrs. Moores currently works 27 posted hours with three ½ paid lunch breaks per week and has not as yet been certified. The \$1,000 in the budget will be returned to free cash if she does not become certified in 2009. Mrs. Moores has level funded the Administrative Clerk at \$2,682 until the Advisory Committee can make a recommendation.

The expense budget has increased by \$623 due to the increased mileage rate, postage increase and the increase to contracted services.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Thomo moved; Mr. Neault moved to approve the minutes of January 3; so voted.  
Mr. Neault abstained.

Mr. Neault moved; Mr. Thomo seconded to approve the minutes of January 9; so voted.

## **BUDGET REVIEW Cont.**

### **Town Clerk**

**Assistant Town Clerk Wages** – Includes an increase in hours from eight to ten resulting in an increase from \$4,611 to \$5,907. The individual has been employed for three years. Due to the fact that the individual holds another position and works ten hours in this position, the current employee would be eligible for health benefits, holiday pay, vacation and sick leave. It was noted that the current employee would not need health insurance but it was noted that the situation could change i.e., another person could be hired who would need insurance, loss of insurance from another source, etc.

It was noted that the issue is coverage. The Town Clerk works 27 posted hours and often has to be away at meetings, seminars, etc. The hours would be Mondays, 5 hours, Wednesday 5 hours. The current employee currently works Tuesdays and Thursdays five hours each day.

It was also noted that at the end of last fiscal year, the Assistant Town Clerk was working after the scheduled hours to make up hours that were not used and the Town Clerk wanted then used before the end of the year. Mrs. Lincoln indicated that the statement made by the Assistant Clerk was misspoken and that was not the case. She advised that there were things that needed to be done at the end of the year thus the hours were needed.

**Town Clerk Expense** – This budget has increased from \$3,860 to \$5,235 due to the need for additional supplies, the increase in dog software, education and training for both employees, the increase in mileage benefits and the proposed increase in postage.

The Clerk has also requested \$1,000 which is included in the budget to purchase a laptop. After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of all present to reduce this figure to \$500.

**Election and Registration Wages** – The wages have been increased by a 3% COLA. This budget also includes the wages of a police officer for elections with the hours that the officer will be needed not being known at this time. There will be three elections in Fiscal Year 2009. This budget has increased from \$7,808 to \$9,000.

**Election and Registration Expenses** – This budget has increased \$6,638 to \$9,200 due to the fact that there will be three elections and the need to code the handicap ballot. The state paid for the booth last year but it is not known if they will pay this year. Mrs. Lincoln will get an answer from the state and advised the committee.

Printing and promotion has also increased due to the expected increase in voters for the presidential election. She has requested the use of the school for the election but to date has not received a reply. If the venue is changed notices have to be sent to all registers voters of the change.

**Parking Clerk Wages** – This included a 3% COLA bringing the budget to \$242 from \$235.

**Parking Clerk Expenses** – This includes an increase of \$7.00 from \$335 to \$342.

### **EXTENSION OF MEETING**

Mr. Neault moved; Ms. Lund seconded to extend the meeting beyond 9:00 p.m.; so voted.

### **Police Department**

**Police Expense** – This budget has increased by \$3,500 bringing it from \$65,000 to \$68,500. This figure includes \$16,800 for expenses, \$25,300 for utilities and lease of the police station.

**Salaries and Wages** - The budget includes \$185,000 for full time officers, \$17,500 for part time, \$14,628 for Administrative Assistant wages, \$25,000 for overtime and \$58,657 for the Chief's salary.

The figures for the wages and salary include a 3% COLA increase. The full time wages include one sergeant and four full time officers as recommended by the Selectmen. The part time wages have decreased with the establishment of a full time police department. The number of part time officer will be reduced to four in the future. The over time account has increased due to the need to pay overtime for court time, town events, arrest, investigations and training which will be done by the full time officers.

It is the consensus of the Selectmen and the Advisory Committee that a full time force will prove to be more effective, eliminate twenty shifts a month, reduce the administrative time for scheduling the shifts, eliminate the loss of police officers to other towns and the full time officers will have police academy training. On the other hand the full time officers will be entitled to benefits whereas the part time officers are not. It is believed that this fact will be an incentive to recruit fully trained officers and retain them in the employ of Brookfield.

The Administrative Assistant wages includes an increase from 12 hours to 20 hours per week. At the present time the individual holding this position is employed in another department and is currently receiving benefits due to the fact that the individual works 20 hours per week for the Town.

**Articles** – There is the possibility that an article will be needed to purchase a cruiser as 3103 which is a 2003 has over 100,000 and is need of major repairs.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Thomo moved to adjourn; Mr. Barnes seconded; so voted. Meeting adjourned at 9:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly A. Lund, Secretary

Date approved by the Advisory Committee: February 13, 2008

Date submitted to the Selectmen: February 14, 2008