

Minutes – 9/21/06

Allenstown Budget Committee

Tom Gilligan, Chairman brought the meeting of the Allenstown Budget Committee to order at 6:33pm at the Allenstown Town Hall.

Tom explained that he would be running this meeting by Roberts Rules of Order, He would be taking roll call first, then the acceptance of the August 17th meeting, then the hearing of the Police Budget, we will look at the 2006 expenditures thus far, and then if there was any new business he would present it then and also he would be happy to accept any nominations for new members.

Roll Call: Carol Merrill, Henriette Girard, Roger LaFleur, Tom Gilligan, Tom Irzyk, Dan Howe, Bill Barnett, Dennis Carmichael, Sted Holton. NOTE: Phyllis Parker arrived at 6:45pm and Larry Anderson arrived at 6:55 pm.

Excused absence: Robin McAfee

Also Present: Kelley Collins, Armand Verville and Claudette Verville, Police Chief Shaun Mulholland, Lt. Paul Paquette, and Richard LaMarche

The minutes of the August 17th meeting were accepted with two changes. The unexcused absences of Dan Howe and Henriette Girard were changed to excused absences, as they had not been informed that the meeting had been changed back to the original date. Dennis moved and Sted seconded to amend the minutes to excused absences for Henriette Girard and Dan Howe, as they were not notified of the correct date of August's meeting. It was mentioned by Tom Irzyk that the amount of money returned to the town from the school was 125,000.00 not \$25,000 as in the minutes. It was then motioned and seconded to accept the minutes with the two corrections, 1: - changing the unexcused absences to excused. 2 - change the amount the school board returned to the town to be \$125,000.00 not \$25,000. It passed unanimously.

This brought us to the Police Department's 2007 budget

Chief Mulholland explained that this was the first opportunity that he has had to present the Police Department's budget to us and he hoped he could do it right and everyone would be able to understand it. He has tried to cover as many areas as possible so that we could come to an agreement on their budget. A lot of changes have taken place since he became Police Chief. The supervisory positions have gone from four to three and he intends to keep it that way. They have brought the vehicle number down from 7 to 6. There are no plans in the next five years to add any new personnel to the police force or support staff. Any thing he wants to do like having a drug officer, detective will have to be done with the people he has now or not done at all.

Chief Mulholland then outlined the main critical areas of problems they have:

1. The retention of qualified experienced personnel at all levels. They have a very high level of turnover. They lose personnel to larger police forces that can afford to pay the officers more than they can make here. They are hired at base salaries that are higher than what a Sergeant would make here. They have to provide the funding to invest in the training of the officers and that comes to over \$19,000. The officers tend to leave just as they are becoming seasoned which is between two and three years of employment. One of their main goals this year is to retain those officers.

The primary operational issue is the drug problem facing the community. They have had some success in impacting the drug trade but there is a lot more to be done. Chief Mullholland is exploring steps that do not directly affect the budget. This includes help from state and federal law enforcement agencies. They have been working more closely with Pembroke Police Department and the Merrimack County Sheriff's Department. The weakest area in the police department is the fact that there is no detective or any such position assigned to criminal investigation. The level of crime in our town continues to climb.

This requires more time to complete and a higher level of experience and training. Right now patrol officers investigate the cases. they take the initial report regardless of their level of experience. Supervisors will assist in these cases when needed or take them over themselves. This limits their ability to keep officers on the street and answering lower level priority calls. It also limits their ability to investigate and develop intelligence on the drug trade, burglary rings and other criminal enterprises. They have made some very significant arrests in the last few months with the help of these other agencies.

Outlook of the Five year Operations Plan: SPOTS (State Police On-line Telecommunication System) which gives each cruiser a laptop in their car will aid the officers a lot but it also will add to dispatching costs, software licenses, and recurring annual fees. When this is activated they will have access to all police agencies in the country...he also anticipates increases in the training budget to meet the annual training requirements, which continue to increase. He is also going to utilize state and federal agencies that can help them that does not take any tax money from the town's people. It is already paid for and he will access what he can use.

Capital Improvements Plan:

The New Police Station at 40 Allentown Rd. meets all state/national requirements. The facility has adequate space to house expanded staff should that occur. It will require maintenance and replacement of major items as time goes on. These items are included in the spreadsheet that we all have. It includes replacing shingles on the portion of the roof that was not reconstructed. There are still some wood framed windows that will need to be replaced. Painting and replacing carpeting (on the second floor) will need to be done as they wear. There are no projects for facility expansion in the next ten years other than the replacement of the animal shelter, which is presently at the highway garage. They will have to construct a new one when the highway department moves.

The vehicle replacement plan they have takes cruisers out of front line service to auxiliary service (building inspector, fire dept.) and that allows them to reduce our overall maintenance costs. No plans to add to the number of vehicles they have. The present in-cruiser video cameras are growing older. The companies that made their VHS recorders no longer make them. They will find it difficult to repair the existing units

when they fail. The first one was installed in 2006 and the four additional units will need to be replaced. It is planned to do one unit a year. The unit installed in 2006 was to replace the existing VHS tape to digital recorder. It was paid for out of the Police Safety Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. If this article passes each year it will be 2010 before all cruisers have the new system and if one fails before that time they might have to replace them sooner due to the critical shortage to replace these systems.

Henriette questioned the number of computers and questioned one being replaced every year. He explained that that had been the policy since he was here. She wondered why the figure for the year 2009 was \$4,678.00 instead of the \$2,000.00 like the other years. Chief Mullholland explained that the extra cost was for the new server they would be having. Dennis they questioned if there would come a time when the other agencies that were helping them would ask for payment. Chief Mullholland stated that no they would not, as they are already being paid and their services were available to them and he would use them when needed to help out our town.

We then went into discussion on the actual Police Department Budget, Tom stated we could vote line by line or bottom line but could have discussions anywhere along the line. It was decided to discuss each item and only vote on the bottom line.

Part-Time Salary: \$1.00 Chief had no plans to add part time help.

Secretarial: \$39,924.00 3% cost of living and 3% step increase

Overtime: \$31,372.00 Chief explained that the overtime was based on what the officers did in the past. No way they can adequately state what the overtime will be, especially with the cost of living increases and step increases

Prosecutor: \$42,306.00

Telephone: \$12,104.00 – Chief wants to reduce one cell phone and hopefully be able to have just one carrier for everything.

Computer Expense: \$3,500.00 the reason for an increase is for bringing software up to date, as they did not want to do it last year. A Lease program was issued, but Kelly explained that the hard drives have to be destroyed. The board would like a response to a lease program for their computers.

Office Repair/Equip: \$2,884.00- they can now scan and e-mail documents to lawyers that normally they had to mail

Training: \$15,000.00- most of this is having every officer retrained on their firearms and use of deadly force, shooting of a move, under stress, low lighting shooting, each officer has to go thru training classes. Identity theft classes, on scene crash investigations, field training officers, and other classes that the chief feels are necessary. Basic drug investigations, sex crimes, are just a few examples. These are to have the officers keep up their certification. We need officers trained, even though the more training they receive the more appealing they are to other agencies. What they receive in the basic training at the academy is just the basics. It's an ongoing progression. You cannot stop the training

because you are afraid to lose them, as we need them trained also. Can the police do in training, instead of sending them out, yes? The police here do some of the training but not the more technical classes. Firearms classes will not be discarded, as these are essential to all people in the crime scene are at risk. The Chief said he would meet the minimal requirements of all his officers by 2007.

Dues and Subscriptions: \$1500.00. They would have gone over in this year's budget but he cancelled subscriptions he could get online and some books that were not essential.

Supplies: \$3500.00

Postage: \$500.00

Maint/Repair Radar: \$2,000.00 Henriette questioned why there was 70% of their budget in that line still there, and Chief Mullholland explained that remainder was for the inspections that were due on them.

Gasoline: \$30,400.00 saving some money by buying what they can from DOT, they can only go when two people are on, if not they buy at Mobile On the Run. He based his estimate on \$3.16 a gallon

Vehicle Repairs: \$7000.00 – oldest vehicle is a 2001. We own them at the end of the lease; they can sell or give to another department. He is looking at using the car they replace this year as a turn in for a cheaper lease. Also general maintenance is included with the leases. Normal usage oil changes, etc was not being done in the past they are now being done.

Uniforms: \$7000.00 In the past we have bought only two uniforms for the officers, now we purchase three or four. They don't pay for boot, or gloves, but it includes jackets, hats, and holsters. They get some things in Manchester and some on line, wherever it is the cheapest.

Crossing Guard: \$6167.00 Tom Irzyk believes it is a public safety issue and therefore a police line item and would like the budget committee's input. Tom Gilligan asked Kelly and the Police Chief if there was any RSA stating whose responsibility it belongs to. It sounds like an administrative issue and the selectmen have decided that it belongs to the school. Tom Irzyk feels that since the police have to train the school crossing guard that they should just do it themselves. Larry brought up the fact that the school is responsible for the safety of the school bus drivers so they should be responsible for the crossing guards. Tom Irzyk made a motion that the line item be increased in the police department's budget by \$4500.00 so the total crossing guard budget would be \$10,717.00. The Police Chief stated he did not want to continue it as he did not have enough officers, and there have been times when an officer was at the crossing guards position and he has gotten a call to leave, leaving that area uncovered for the children to cross. He would have to bring an officer in and pay him overtime to cross those children and he does not feel that is right. Larry seconded the motion. The vote was three for the motion, seven against the motion, and one abstention. The vote failed.

Dispatch: \$21,000.00 Shaun was informed that there was no increase in charges this year.

Police Detail: \$1.00 this is a line where they do a lot of things off budget. The town does make money when the officers are on special details. The total was over \$11,000.00 that came into the town.

Police Cruiser: \$26,500.00 –This amount represents the cost of the three leases. When a lease ends we lease a new vehicle. At the end of the three-year lease the town owns the vehicle. The lease also has a maintenance contract, which, has saved considerably on maintenance costs. One new cruiser will come on line in 2007. We will be trading in two older cars. This will be the first time they are trading in vehicles. They will get a lot more in trade in value then from turning the vehicle over to state surplus.

Heat: \$5,000.00

Maintenance: \$4,000.00 this pays for routine maintenance and contracts. If anything major goes it has to come out of their Public Safety Capital Reserve Account.

Janitorial: \$8,517.00 – includes the step increase and Cola Increase. Roger was stuck on the additional amount being more then 6% but it is because the half of year that is in the budget that was voted on last year.

Plowing\$1.00 – between the town and highway, there is no money in the budget for the fire department for their helping the police cleanup. Do you feel the highway department does enough in this line? There are times they cannot get out of the parking lot. They do get fartherthen they use to.

Recruitment/Hiring: \$16,00.00 In the past they were not able to recruit as they would like so they have put this in its own line so that there would be monies if they need to replace staff. This also means if there are any that leave not of there own desire there is money to help recruit new ones.

Accreditation: \$3500.00 this is a new item. There is no cost for the state accreditation To insure they meet national standards to provide the town with the knowledge that the police department is doing what they are suppose to be doing. This is a first time fee and then a \$207.00 annual fee, and then every three years they come in and reassess you again. This helps when there is litigation against the police department.

Full time Salary: \$423,167.00 the difference between what the police asked for in 2007 and what the selectmen gave them is that Police Chief Mullholland did not put in an increase for himself. The Selectmen thought he should have the increase along with the other policemen Phyllis asked if there was not something we could do to make the salaries more compatible so we do not keep losing officers. Chief Mullholland says he thought he was doing the best he could with what this town could afford. Dennis questioned what the pay scale was for the particular officers and how the step increases worked. How does someone make step? It is based on performance plus time. Is there a plan to make all the officers master patrolmen? If an officer does not make his next grade, he would just get a step increase. Dennis made the motion to increase the salary line by \$1,117.00 to bring it up to what the selectmen changed it to. There was no second so the motion died on the floor. Larry then made the motion to accept the bottom Line of \$712,444.00 for the Policemen's budget. Dennis seconded it. In further discussion Chief Mullholland explained that there is only one person that could be qualified to be master

patrol officer and if he did not make it this year he probably wouldn't make it next year and another person is at least two years before they could possibly make it. Henriette then Asked about the step increases for the chief, lieutenant and the sergeant. The chief explained that he put in for COLA increases for all three of those positions and only a step increase for the sergeant and lieutenant, he did not put in an increase for himself. However the selectmen added the step increase for him also. She then asked what the chief's salary was last year. His base salary when he was Captain was \$49,000.00 and change before overtime. He has now eliminated the Captain's position and it goes from the Chief down to the Lieutenant and then the Sergeant. He has absolutely no plans to have more officers or to add the Captain position back on the list as long as he is chief. Henriette then asked if there was any ruling or statue of conflict of interest in voting on the police budget. Mr. Barnett's wife is the secretary and she would to see if it is proper for him to vote on this budget. The Police Chief stated you could not be a full time officer and be on the budget committee, but you could be a part-time officer and be on the budget committee so that certainly a spouse would be able to be on the board. Henriette then said she would like to see a ruling on that. Tom then explained that he did not know just what the ruling would be but as a taxpayer ad especially as she was on the Budget Committee she had the right to ask Mr. Barnett to recuse himself from voting. By the same token he had the right to refuse to recuse himself. Tom thanked the chief for all the effort he had put into his department, and asked whether or not there would at some point be a detective added to their positions. The chief said yes, and he hope at some point one of the employees they now have would be ready to be a detective. That is one area where they do not have the coverage they should and it is something he is going to be working on. Not a new position, but someone already on the force. He reiterated that he has no idea of adding any new positions. They possibly have a grant coming to them for a K-nine. The dog would be assigned to one officer, it would live with that officer, but the police would pay for the food. If they get the grant, fine, but if they do not get the grant they will not get the dog.

If they do get the grant it would not cost them to get the cruiser refit for it, they would have to buy the food, and vet bills. Only one officer is trained for the dog. If the police officer leaves for any reason then the dog would be retrained with another of our officers.. The police department themselves will buy the food and then give it to the officer who is keeping it. Twice a month the dog has to go for training.

On the ruling of Mr. Barnett being in conflict of interest in voting on the police budget the answer is as follows: If you go to Title 111 Towns, Cities, Village Districts and Unincorporated Places; then go to Chapter 32 Municipal Law – Budget Committee, then to Section 32:15 Budget Committee Membership – The Budget Committee shall consist of: Line V – V. No selectman, town manager, member of the school board, village district commissioner, full-time employee, or part-time department head of the town, school district or village district or other associated agency shall serve as a member-at-large. Every member-at-large shall be domiciled in the town or district adopting this subdivision and shall cease to hold office immediately upon ceasing to be so domiciled.

Tom then stated that Henriette had the right to ask Mr. Barnett to recuse himself, as did the Chief of Police as it was their budget, and if Mr. Barnett refuses, she has the right to ask for a formal decision on this. Mr. Barnet was then asked if he would recuse himself from voting on the police budget and he said that he had planned to. Police Chief Mullholland then stated that the average mileage put on a cruiser in a years time was 19,000 +. Tom then called for the vote on the police budget, which was motioned by

Larry to be \$712,444.00, and seconded by Dennis. The vote was 8 for the budget, 1 against, and 1 abstention. It was then brought up that if we just simply asked questions instead of making Kelley search thru RSA's it could save time. Dennis stated that last year Selectman Viar had stated if there were issues we should get them checked out.

Tom then gave the board a five-minute break at 9:03pm. We resumed at 9:08pm

NOTE: In doing the minutes I noticed that after the line item heat, there was no mention at all of the three next line items: Electric, Water and Sewer. I only mention this as we were going down the list of all line items, and as much as I did not notice it at the meeting I did notice it when doing the minutes. I am not in any way saying this would make any difference in the bottom line but knowing that you were following protocol is the only reason I made this notation.

The next item of business was \$10,000.00 expenditure by the board of selectmen that caused some concern by citizens and Tom told them he would look into it. Tom then turned the floor over to Carol Merrill a selectman there tonight in place of Peter Viar to explain what the \$10,000.00 was for and where it came from. Armand Verville came forward to talk about the \$10,000.00 that the selectmen have advanced them in order to repair the roof at the Old Meeting. They consider it an emergency. Kelley told them it would not be considered an emergency unless the roof fell in. If the roof were to come down then the only part of the building that is still the historical part the plastered walls that have been written on by residents over 200 years ago. They have Mr. Roger Blazon that will put the new roof on. He is scheduled to start the roof the first of November. The total cost is \$30,000.00. They have raised over \$20,100.00 of the money and might still have money coming in on grants that they have applied for. But they had to sign off with Mr. Blazon by the 15th of September or he would have to look for other jobs. They are hoping that they will not need to use the \$10,000.00 from the town but the only way they could guarantee that the roof would be done this fall before snow comes, and if we have a bad winter they could lose the roof, was to go to the board of selectmen and ask for help. They have three strong shots in getting between \$11,000.00 - \$15,000.00 but it would not be here before the 15th of September. On the 7th of September they had a meeting and decided to approach the board of selectmen and see if there were any funds anywhere available for them to use in order to guarantee that Mr. Blazon would be able to do the roof in November. They know that if the grant monies come in they will not have to give us the money. The board was able to come up with the money, Mr. Verville was not sure where that came from, Carol Merrill would have to explain that, but they were extremely grateful for their help in being able to keep the Old Meeting House safe this winter if they a lot of snow and ice. The only thing they can guarantee is that it will not go over the \$10,000.00 they will not have to make the final payment to Mr. Blazon until the first or middle of December so that there is time for the grants to come in. Mr. Verville today came up with over \$400.00 in materials for the roof. They have an agreement with Mr. Blazon that what is donated in materials will be deducted from his bill and they have a list and price for everything needed. So while they are still waiting on an answer from the grants, he is out trying to get donations in money or materials so that the town will not have to use that money. Dennis asked if there had been any votes by the town on helping to repair the building. The DAR originally owned the building, and they turned it over to the state, as they could no longer afford to take care of it as it should be taken care of.

The state did nothing with it and two or three years ago they offered it to the town. The town voted to accept it and that was the last that they have done towards it. There was a fire there in 1986 while the state still owned it and they did install trusses and nothing else has been done since then. There has been damage by water and some places are rotting out. They are the third owner of it, and the two prior ones did nothing. Tom asked what the town purchased it for and Mr. Verville stated that it was a transfer.

Carol explained that they had the money in the welfare account that they could use for the roof. Kelley explained that the welfare officer is only part time since the full time one resigned in the spring and there is over \$22,000.00 in that account and that the \$10,000.00 they gave for the town would easily come out of that fund. On page six of our expenditure sheets that account has \$22,008.00 in its account and that is roughly 64% of its budget.

Now that the building inspector is full time, some of his salary is also coming out of that account. The auditors have suggested that they open up a general account and place it there instead of putting it in the welfare account. There are other accounts that it could come from. There is a Capital Reserve account for the Old Meeting House with just over \$1290.00 in it and another account. Additional accounts. The money could come from these if it was placed in there. Also Henriette brought the March 2006 warrant article to our attention where it was that the town appropriate \$2000.00 for the Old Meeting House. It failed by a vote of 479 against and 364 for. The vote by the selectmen was unanimous to help out the Old Meeting House. Dennis then brought up the fact that two of the selectmen, Carol and Sandy were both going to benefit from this action as they are on committee's with the Old Meeting House. It is not our place to regress the Selectmen about this issue. Carol Merrill is the steering committee's representative to the Selectmen, and Sandy McKinney is a representative of Allenstown Revitalization Organization. Tom Irzyk does not agree with the way the process was done but he does agree with the end result.

Tom Irzyk made the motion to send a letter to the selectmen that they did not agree with the process that they used to give this money to the Old Meeting House, and Dennis Carmichael seconded. In the discussion that followed Tom Gilligan explained that what the voters voted on in March was the bottom line figure, not each line item of each department's budget. Kelley also explained that what the town had was an emergency, and people get upset when they feel the selectmen have done something they should not have done and then we could be in the red at the end of the year which is not the case. In any case, they would be mad because of the way it was done, but they would have been just as mad had the Old Meeting House had collapsed and we did nothing about it.

Armand Verville explained that they still are eligible for three grants that still can come in before the final money is due from Roger Blazon. They knew the roof was bad, they thought they had a grant coming in from the state and when their final budget was completed in June their grant had been cut out. They are still working on getting contributions of both materials and money and he believes they have done everything they could have possibly done. Tom Irzyk feels the town should have taken care of his roof as soon as it was turned over to them but since they did not he feels that the selectmen probably had no other choice. Tom Gilligan said that in all fairness to the selectmen every organization that has had ownership of this building has felt that it should have a historically replaced roof put on the building. However this would cost between \$75,000.00 - \$100,000.00 and this they could definitely not afford. This is probably the reason it has been so long in being replaced. Armand then said it was going

to be a trussed roof and as near a historical one as is possible. Tom Irzyk recanted his motion so it died on the floor. Tom then thanked Armand Verville for his time.

The next order of business was the animal control budget. There were only two items on it, and it was decided to do it tonight even though Chief Mulholland had left. The two items were:

1 – animal control officer’s salary at	\$14,931.00
2 – supplies	\$500.00

Bringing the total animal control budget to: \$15,431.00

There was no discussion, so it was moved and seconded to accept the bottom line of \$15,431.00. It passed unanimously.

Tom then asked if anyone wanted to join the board. Richard J. LaMarche who has been to three of the board meetings said he wanted to join. Tom Irzyk made the motion to accept him as a member and Dennis Carmichael seconded. It passed unanimously.

Carol Merrill and Phyllis Parker explained the Voice Operated Recorder that she is using for the Planning and Zoning Board. It will be the towns and kept by Phyllis only as long as she keeps the minutes for the Budget Committee, Planning Board, and Zoning Board. It was moved and seconded to donate \$15.00 for one-third the cost of the digital Recorder.

The next meeting was set for October 5th, 2006 at the Town hall. We will be doing the Fire Department’s budget and if enough time the Civil Defense and the Forestry’s budgets.

With their being no further business, Tom Gilligan recessed the meeting.

