



BOARD OF FINANCE

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street
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TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, February 9, 2009
7:00 p.m.

CJH Municipal Center – Meeting Room “A”

PRESENT: J. Philip Gallagher, Chairman, William Britt, Kevin Riley, William Slifkin, James Roden, Gary Regan, and John Dietter. Also in attendance was the Board of Selectmen and Barry Curina, Comptroller.

J. Philip Gallagher called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

FY 2009-2010 Department Budget Presentations

** Barry Curina, Comptroller advised that salary accounts, while showing an increase, reflect the increase in salary on July 1, 2008 which was after the 2008-2009 budgets were adopted; there are no salary increases budgeted for July 1, 2009 for the classified service employees. Elected officials salaries are determined by the Board of Finance.*

130 Town Clerk

FY 2008-2009	Budget	\$208,007
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$211,149*

Town Clerk Lisa Bergh presented the Town Clerk's Office budget request for FY 2009-2010. She thanked the Board of Finance for the funding provided in the current budget and noted that she did not increase the line items; they will do their best to work within the budget proposed.

140 Assessor

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$180,426
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$201,007*

Ann Marie Heering, Assessor presented the Assessor's Office budget request for FY 2009-2010. She spoke to her responsibility to request what

she believes is needed to effectively run her department; she has been requesting additional staffing every year. She had requested the part-time position be increased to a full-time position, offering that she needs staff to be able to provide the service her department provides. Selectman Cleary questioned the cost to increase the position from part-time to full-time. Mrs. Heering advised that she has minimal to no increases to her department line items.

150 Tax Collector

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$174,425
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$181,525*

Ann Scacco, Tax Collector presented the Tax Collector's Department budget request for FY 2009-2010. She noted an increase to the postage account as it is anticipated that postage costs will be raised in May. She offered that by having the Town Clerk and Assessor's office information on-line, this has been a big help to her department. Mrs. Scacco noted that she had decreased the dues and education account by \$420 but encouraged funding of this account as it is crucial that her department be up to date with all the training resources necessary to tax collection laws and programs.

200 Social Services

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$56,521
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$58,188*

Kathleen Gillen, Director of Social Services presented the Social Services Department budget request for FY 2009-2010. She noted that there were no increases to her budget line items. When asked if she has enough in her account to cover the needs of the community, she advised that she could have ten times the amount and still not have enough; the need is there and will continue to grow in these uncertain economic times.

350 Health Department

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$253,457
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$260,711*

Laura Vasile, Director of Health presented the Health Department budget request for FY 2009-2010. She noted that with the exception for the cost of materials related to the West Nile Virus protection, there are no increases

to the budget. She presented a packet of information regarding all that the Health Department does for the community. It was clarified that the fees charged by the department go back into the General Fund.

340 Town Boards & Commissions

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$109,448
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$108,017*

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the budget for Account 340 – Town Boards & Commissions. He explained that this account provides \$15,000 for secretarial services for boards & commissions and the \$20,000 includes funding the “floater” account to provide coverage municipal workers for vacation, sick time, etc. J. Philip Gallagher clarified that the salary account for the secretarial services for boards and commissions covers all town boards & commissions and that it is not a salary for one person.

405 Intra Government Subsidies

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$526,483
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$389,214

Judith Malin, Director of the Visiting Nurses Association presented the VNA Budget request for FY 2009-2010. She noted that this is the same amount that has been requested year in – year out. She noted the services provided by the VNA to the Bethel community. J. Philip Gallagher requested that the VNA provide a copy of their budget to the Board of Finance.

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Intra Government Subsidies request for FY 2009-2010. This account covers a variety of items. He noted a reduction of \$60,000 to the Paramedic Intercept account; revenue is anticipated from this account due to the new PSA and billing.

100 Selectmen

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$188,423
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$186,222*

First Selectman Burke presented the Selectmen’s Office account request for FY 2009-2010. He noted reductions to the account as follows: #103 Secretary of \$1,000 which provides for part-time coverage of 4.5 hours per

day, #104 Human Resources of \$1,000 – also a part-time position, #201 Office Expense of \$1,000, #301 Dues and Education of \$500, and #302 – Selectman’s Expense of \$250.

160 Legal

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$181,380
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$176,380

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Legal account request for FY 2009-2010. He noted a reduction to Engineering Services of \$5,000 which had been utilized for outside engineering services; it was felt that current engineering staff is sufficient.

170 Probate

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$2,650
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$2,650

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Probate Account request for FY 2009-2010. He noted that there was no change to this account.

110 Treasurer

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$6,750
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$6,750

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Treasurer’s Account request for FY 2009-2010. He noted that there was no change to this account.

120 Finance

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$336,216
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$345,889*

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Finance Department Account request for FY 2009-2010. He noted decreases to several line items and contractual salary increases for union employees.

190 Data Processing

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$134,388
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$134,388

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Data Processing Account request for FY 2009-2010. A discussion took place regarding the computer system; a recent costly "head crash" resulted in added costs for the computer consultants. Mr. Curina pointed out that we have not had a fulltime Data Processing person for many years which saved the town a considerable amount over time.

210 Town Insurance

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$732,403
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$759,699

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Town Insurance request for FY 2009-2010. He noted that this account is a work in progress; based on the market, the Insurance & Pension Commission, who monitors these accounts, may recommend going out to bid.

390 Employee Benefit

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$4,272,996
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$4,441,154

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Employee Benefit Account request for FY 2009-2010. It was noted that industry wide, many municipalities and businesses lost a considerable amount in their pension plans because of the stock market, and while Bethel did lose some money (9%), it was minimal compared to other municipalities. Mr. Curina explained that the numbers on the health insurance are not firm and are subject to change. The funding of the pension plans is based on the minimum requirement as recommended by the actuarial firm.

400 Non-Government Subsidies

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$ -0-
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$40,518

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Non Government Subsidies Account request for FY 2009-2010. It was noted that funding was eliminated in the current budget year.

410 Utilities & other Charges

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$526,483
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$389,214

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Utilities & other Charges Account request for FY 2009-2010. This account was reduced by \$224,851 based on the reduced costs for utilities and locked in pricing for gas and fuel oil. Diesel was locked in at 1.9761 per gallon, Heating Oil at 1.8744 per gallon and Gasoline at 1.7608 per gallon.

420 Misc. Charges and Transfers

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$2,340,078
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$2,115,227

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Misc. Charges and Transfers Account request for FY 2009-2010. He pointed out that due to the closing of the Bethel Beacon, the costs for legal fees will rise dramatically since the News Times is considerably more expensive.

Funding for the contingency account is determined by the Board of Finance.

It was noted that the salary increases for the Classified Service Employees were removed from the budget.

440 Debt Service

FY 2009-2009	Budget	\$3,956,602
FY 2009-2010	Request	\$4,187,023

Barry Curina, Comptroller presented the Debt Service Account request for FY 2009-2010. He noted the addition of the High School Project Interest of \$332,500 and explained that there is one interest payment in FY 2009-2010 and will be two interest payments in 2010-2011 and following that will be the principal payment. He noted that by then, the Middle School debt will come off.

Barry Curina, in response to Board of Finance questioning, advised that at this time, the Total Town Operating Budget reflects at -0.15% decrease, Board of Education is a 2.45% increase, Board of Education Maintenance is a -4.11% decrease and Debt Service is 5.82% increase for a total increase of 1.81% over the current budget.

Minutes of January 12, 2009: William Slifkin made a motion, which was seconded by James Roden, to approve the minutes of January 12, 2009 as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

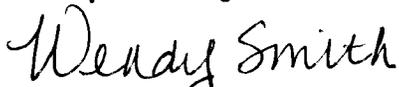
Public Comments: Alice Hutchinson and Matthew Knickerbocker spoke.

Update on Projected Budget Shortfall:

A brief update on the current year budget shortfall was provided; while things are somewhat better, there are still a lot of variables. Mr. Curina will keep the board up-to-date. Mr. Curina and Mr. Gallagher met with the Board of Education Bargaining Units to answer questions previously posed.

As there was no further business on tonight's agenda, William Britt made a motion, which was seconded by William Slifkin, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Wendy Smith, Recording Secretary