

**Town of Auburn
Budget Committee Meeting
January 9, 2014**

Members Present: Peter Miles, Bert Ouellette, David Wesche, Paula Marzloff, Mary Beth Lufkin, Don Delande, Alan Villeneuve and Jim Headd

Others Present: Christ Trickett, Brian D'Amelio, Keith LeClair and Anita Gildea, Auburn School Board members; David Dion, Ken Robinson and Dennis McCarthy, Police Commissioners; Police Chief Edward Picard, Police Lt. Ray Pelton, Ed Gannon, and Janice & Jim Fusco, Finance Director Adele Frisella and Town Administrator Bill Herman

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm

Minutes of December 19, 2013 Meeting

Paula Marzloff moved to approve the minutes as printed. Second by Dave Wesche. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion carried unanimously.

Police Court Prosecutor

Peter Miles reported the Police Commissioners had requested the Budget Committee reconsider its decision on December 19th not to fund a \$12,000 request for a police prosecutor. Commission Chairman Davie Dion reported the Commissioners had worked not to increase the overall budget by establishing a new budget line for police prosecutor and reducing the line for part-time police officers by the same amount. Lt. Pelton reported the prosecutor would handle all criminal trial work at the District Court for the flat contracted rate of \$12,000 per year or \$1,000 per month. He indicated Auburn is the only town in the Candia District Court that still utilizes police officers to handle all trial work. Lt. Pelton represented the Town would save \$16,000 in part-time officers wages as the department has part-time officer handle patrol shifts while either he or Sergeant Chabot are out of town handling court prosecution.

Paula Marzloff asked if there had been problems with the success rate of prosecutions with police officers handling the cases? Lt. Pelton indicated it hadn't, but the entire trial process has become too complex and drawn out for police officers to effectively handle the prosecution process. She expressed her concern that this is only a starting point and that it will grow into a full-time position over time.

Bert Ouellette suggested the Budget Committee consider allowing the Police Department to try this for one year and see what happens. He understood the department was trying to provide a more professional presentation in the court.

Don Delande moved to approve Police Court Prosecutor at \$12,000, seconded by Bert Ouellette. A vote was taken; Voting Yes were Mary Beth, Bert and Don. Voting No were Jim, Dave, Alan and Paula. The motion failed.

Discussion continued and Alan Villeneuve renewed his comments from December 19th indicating he was prepared to move the line at \$400 less than requested in order to regain

the \$400 that had been approved previously for uniforms for the office staff at the Auburn Police Department.

Jim Headd questioned the purpose of taking such a position as it will only lead the Police Commission to transfer the remaining \$400 into the budget line from some other source. Alan indicated he understood that, but at this point, this was his only means of addressing that financial item, which he didn't think was a good expenditure of public funds.

Alan Villeneuve moved to approve Police Court Prosecutor at \$11,600, seconded by Don Delande. A vote was taken: Voting Yes were Don, Alan, Dave, and Mary Beth. Voting No were Jim, Bert and Paula. The motion carried.

School District Warrant Articles

Warrant Article #3 – Shall the District vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) to be placed in the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund established in March 2003? (Recommended by the School Board)

Anita Gildea explained the School District had established this Special Education Reserve Fund as they are never able to accurately predict what students they may have for Special Education year to year. The fund is intended to help the School District cover variables that they can not control and will help to address unforeseen situations and expenses. Alan Villeneuve noted there was currently \$126,000 in the fund, but the School Board and Budget Committee had already anticipated \$50,000 being withdrawn to cover expenses in this year's budget. That would leave a balance of \$75,000 and the additional \$75,000 could bring the fund to a total of \$150,000. However, there was a possibility more than \$50,000 would be withdrawn before the current school year is completed.

Alan Villeneuve moved the Budget Committee recommend the appropriation of \$75,000 for the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Bert Ouellette. A vote was taken: Voting Yes were Mary Beth, Alan, Bert, Dave and Jim. Voting No were Don and Paula. The motion carried.

Warrant Article #4 – Shall the District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy-four thousand, five hundred dollars (\$74,500) to update the existing elevator system at the Auburn Village School? (Recommended by the School Board)

Chris Trickett explained the funding would enable the School District to bring the current elevator into ADA compliance while replacing an aging system that has been experiencing repeated mechanical problems. He stressed this is an up fit and not an upgrade as the new equipment would fit within the current structural space for the elevator. He also noted the current elevator is operational, but breaks down often.

Paula Marzloff questioned the timing of the project in consideration of another warrant article seeking funds to design a renovation and addition to the existing school building. Chris Trickett explained the elevator is in failure of compliance and operation at the present time, so timing is important to get it fully operational and functional. He also indicated the work would replace the elevator car with a larger capacity one, upgrade all the mechanics and controls, in addition to replacing the hoist system. But that it would all work within the existing shaft. Alan Villeneuve noted the current elevator has been in place since 1986.

Alan Villeneuve moved the Budget Committee recommend the appropriation of \$74,500 to update the existing elevator system at the Auburn Village School. There was no second.

Mary Beth Lufkin indicated she had a concern the largest part of the school budget is spent on the smallest portions of the overall student population. She is hesitating here on this item in that she is looking for the maximum impact we can make with our money on the largest segment of students possible.

Alan Villeneuve indicated he understood the sentiments Mary Beth was expressing, but noted not having a functional elevator in place may result in disenfranchising from school certain students that then could result in their placement outside the district if they can not be adequately accomodated within the Auburn Village School. He felt the School Board was trying to be proactive.

Alan Villeneuve moved the Budget Committee recommend the appropriation of \$74,500 to update the existing elevator system at the Auburn Village School. Seconded by Peter Miles. A vote was taken: Voting Yes were Alan, Mary Beth, Bert and Jim. Voting No were Don, Dave, Paula. The motion carried.

Warrant Article #5 – Shall the District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ninety-three thousand one hundred dollars (\$93,100) for the purpose of funding Architectural and Engineering fees associated with a renovation and addition to the Auburn Village School? (Recommended by the School Board).

Brian D'Amelio reported the warrant article seeks funding to allow the School District to plan for a renovation of the current school and a potential addition. He indicated it has been determined the current structure is at 136% capacity without the nine portable classrooms in place and at 126% capacity with the nine portable classrooms in place. In 2012, funds had been approved to have a full set of plans developed of what was physically in place at the Auburn Village School. The 2014 warrant article would build on that and provide a bid package for work moving forward.

Responding to questions, it was reported the current student population at the Auburn Village School is approximately 610 students. It was noted the student population has been fairly consistent between 600 and 630 students over the past 20 years.

Paula Marzloff felt this activity could wait a year. She was concerned overall about the loss of revenue from the Manchester Water Works PILOT and that time was needed to know how that affects all items impacting the tax rate. She was of the opinion all additional expenditures should be put on hold until the full impact is known.

Brian D'Amelio indicated one of the things the work from 2012 identified was the current lot size of the Auburn Village School property and its layout. In particular, the lot lines near the existing septic system for the school, which documents that expansion is possible on this site where it had been thought doubtful in the past. Alan Villeneuve also indicated that as a result of the new PILOT agreement, it appears Manchester Water Works is more receptive to working with the School District to address issues of their property bounds and the potential provision of an access road around the building.

Paula Marzloff asked if impact on wetlands and the Shoreline Protection Act have been considered, and Alan Villeneuve indicated they had and the architectural and engineering work to be done would have to address those items. But he also noted any work done would not have any further encroachment on the wetlands than the present facility does.

Mary Beth Lufkin moved the Budget Committee recommend the appropriation of \$93,100 for the purpose of funding Architectural and Engineering fees associated with a renovation and addition to the Auburn Village School. Seconded by Alan Villeneuve. A vote was taken: Voting Yes were Alan, Mary Beth, Don and Jim. Voting No were Bert, Dave, Paula. The motion carried.

Warrant Article – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Manchester

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five hundred dollars (\$500) for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Manchester to support the mentoring program services to youth, families and mentors of Auburn, and to authorize this cost to be placed in the Town's operating budget as an annual expense in future years. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen)

Bill Herman reported this was a new request that had been received in the past week. The Board of Selectmen agreed to advance it as a stand alone warrant article to allow the voters to express their desires on the request.

Paula Marzloff expressed concern for the building up on these types of social service funding requests. She felt their programming will go on whether or not Auburn provides \$500 in funding.

Alan Villeneuve indicated he would abstain from voting as he believed this program was affiliated with Child and Family Services of NH, which he is involved with.

Mary Beth Lufkin moved the Budget Committee not recommend the request of \$500 for the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Manchester. Seconded by Paula Marzloff. A vote was taken; all were in favor, the motion carried.

Warrant Article – Fire Command Vehicle Replacement

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a three year lease-purchase agreement for \$45,500 for the purpose of leasing a new four-wheel drive replacement of the Fire Command Vehicle for the Auburn Fire Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen-thousand-seven hundred and seventy-seven dollars (\$15,777) for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains a non-appropriation clause. (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen)

Edward Gannon reported the Fire Command Vehicle is a 2002 model that has approximately 130,000 miles on it. It is the most used vehicle in the department, responding to 90% of the calls for service. The price included in the warrant article is the worst case scenario, meaning a 2015 model has to be purchased versus a 2014 model. A 2014 would provide an easier set-up by allowing most of the equipment in the current command vehicles to be more easily swapped over to the new vehicle. The 2015 models have been redesigned, and there would be a greater expense equipping the newer model.

Paula Marzloff asked if there would be a problem waiting one more year. Ed Gannon indicated the cost of vehicles would increase in another year. Bill Herman also indicated Chief Phillips indicates that in 2015 the forestry truck will be up for replacement and he was trying to avoid seeking two new vehicles at the same time.

Paula Marzloff moved to not recommend the warrant article seeking funding for a replacement Fire Command Vehicle replacement. Seconded by Mary Beth Lufkin. A vote was taken: Yes – Bert, Mary Beth, Alan, Don, Dave and Paula. No – Jim. The motion carries.

Warrant Article – Griffin Mill Bridge

Bill Herman reported the Committee, at its last meeting, requested input from the Planning Board on this item. He indicated the minutes of the Planning Board discussion has been provided to them, but the gist was they do not recommend any of the currently proposed warrant articles. The Planning Board noted the area is zoned commercial and the potential development that could occur on the combined 25-acres of property served by the bridge, that a two-lane bridge should be designed for the replacement, and not a single lane bridge. Based on the Planning Board's input, Mr. Herman indicated he requested Stantec Consulting provide an estimate for the cost of a double-lane bridge, which totaled \$528,000. Mr. Herman indicated the Board of Selectmen was interested in the Planning Board's input, and would be discussing this item again at their meeting on January 13th. Jim Headd indicated that originally, the Board of Selectmen had intended to place multiple articles on the warrant simply allow the voters to make a determination, but they have been advised they have to recommend a specific approach and would do so on January 13th.

Janice Fusco indicated they wanted the bridge to be replaced as quickly as possible. Since the bridge has been deemed to be insufficient and limited to a 10-ton capacity, fire trucks could not get to either of the houses on Griffin Mill Road, nor could a propane fuel truck get to their houses. Both are too heavy for the bridge. She asked the Budget Committee members to place their homes in her situation and she assumed they would want the same thing. Jim Fusco felt the bridge was a historical asset to the Town and is a recognized landmark. He did not believe it would be more economical to build a road through their property fronting Manchester Road versus replacing the existing bridge. He also felt a two-lane bridge made no sense and was only a means to cloud the issue. He suggested a two-lane bridge or the establishment of a road by the Town would only lead to the property to being developed. He also expressed a concern for the devaluation of their property should a road be built or the bridge not be replaced.

Paula Marzloff indicated the Planning Board did what it was asked to do and look at what was best for the future. She indicated she did not vote on the matter as a Planning Board member, but the Board's discussion was based solely on what is possible to happen on the property. It was not necessarily a recommendation to move in that direction.

Janice Fusco reiterated they were simply asking to maintain the existing road to their home, which included a bridge. They felt even the \$321,000 figure was inflated as Stantec's estimated for the bridge work was approximately \$270,000. Bill Herman indicated the \$321,000 included the cost for the bridge replacement and a temporary driveway to the two properties during the bridge construction period. Mrs. Fusco said they did not need a

temporary driveway; they could drive through the field on their property to Manchester Road.

Bert Ouellette inquired about access to the property from Manchester Road, and it was explained there was approximately 72-feet of road frontage on Manchester Road that would be used for the temporary driveway. He asked if it could be used to place a permanent new road, and Mr. Herman said it could, but that was not an option the Selectmen were advancing at this point.

Paula Marzloff noted the three articles being considered only addressed financing of a bridge replacement, but does not actually authorize the doing the project.

Peter Miles suggested the Budget Committee table this item until a meeting at 7:00 PM on Thursday, January 16th, at which time they should be able to receive the Board of Selectmen's recommendation for which article they recommend.

FY 2014 Revenue Estimates

Bill Herman provided the Committee with a listing of the estimated revenues for the Town exclusive of property taxes, which totaled \$2,482,696. This compared to the revenues actually received in FY 2013, which were \$2,667,189. He indicated the estimated revenue, he felt, were conservative numbers and was largely based on the actual numbers from FY 2013 except for known one-time revenue sources such as the sale of timber harvested from two Town properties. It also included a reduction in the payment in lieu of taxes by Manchester Water Works (\$515,000 in 2014 versus \$680,574 in 2013).

Adjourn

Mary Beth Lufkin moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 PM. Seconded by Dave Wesche. A vote was taken; all were in agreement, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.