

**TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 27, 2013**

Present: Bayard Tracy, Chairman; Steve Buckley, Spofford Fire Precinct Representative; Elaine Levlocke, Selectboard Representative; John Koopmann, Rick Cooper, Chesterfield Fire & Rescue Precinct Representative; Cliff Emery, Charlie Perry, Steve Laskowski, Sue Newcomer, and Dan Cotter (arrived at 7:04 PM).

Absent: Jeff Morse and Marty Mahoney.

Visitors: Will Vogeley and Jeff Chickering

Bayard called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

1). *Steve moved the May 14th minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Charlie and passed by majority. Susan and Elaine abstained.*

Bayard recognized Carol Ross's contributions to the Town. *Elaine moved a moment of silence in her honor. The motion was seconded by Susan and passed unanimously.*

2). Old Business - Bayard reviewed the joint Selectboard and Budget Committee meeting. There was discussion about the perception that the Committee and Selectboard do not get along. It was discussed there could be a representative from the Budget Committee to the Selectboard. Susan stated that the Budget Committee used to send a representative to the different departments. It was suggested that the Town hire a Town Manager similar to the position of Tim Ruehr at the School. The position of Town Manager is run by very specific RSA's. Cliff stated that the Committee should be able to make suggestions to the Selectboard Representative and have the representative take the information back to the Selectboard for action. Bayard had calculated the tax rate increase as 5.1%. The revaluation will change the tax rate. If most of the assessments went down the rate will go up. Dan stated that if your house is 1% of the grand list and it stays at 1% of the grand list then the tax burden remains 1%.

3). New Business –

A). School – Marty was not present and will forward the reports next week.

B). Town – Overall 63% of Budget is expended as of today for 8/12ths of the year. Elaine reported the percentages for each department. There does not appear to be anything out of line. Bayard asked for a presentation of the budget at the next meeting.

C). Spofford Fire Precinct – Nothing new to present. Mike Wiggin has retired from the Commission. Steve Buckley is the new Committee Representative.

D). Chesterfield Fire Precinct – Nothing new to present. Rick is filling in for Frank.

Other –

A). John Koopmann asked about the impact of Vermont Yankee’s closing on the Town. There are approximately 30 families that live here. There may be impact on the school. The Office of Emergency Management is paid for out of RERP. There are approximately 900 homes or 2,500 voters in Chesterfield.

B). Fire & Rescue Precinct 2013 Budget – Bayard asked about the disparity between what the Committee passed and the budget the Precinct is following? How does the Committee want to proceed? Rick stated that the Precinct meeting and articles were advised by Jamie Dow at the DRA. Bayard wants to be sure that the taxpayer is getting value for investment. There was an item taken out of the General Fund in 2011 that caused the tax rate to reflect a 25% increase last year.

C). Bayard stated that Parks & Rec is asking him to come and talk about the budget with them.

Conclusions – There was a discussion as to how to proceed this year to reduce the tax rate. Cliff suggested a guidance letter requiring a 5% decrease. The members do not agree that the budget should decrease by 5%. Susan stated that it is the role of the voters to decide what to vote for. It is the Committees charge to be sure that a reasonable and responsible budget is presented. It is presumed that when people don’t show up it is because they are happy with what they have.

A guidance letter will be drafted. Bayard will e-mail everyone. Individuals can e-mail Bayard back but should NOT reply all due to electronic meeting rules.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 10th at 7 PM.

Adjournment - Susan moved to adjourn at 8:50 PM. The motion was seconded by Steve and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy LaFontaine
Secretary