

Pownal Budget Committee

March 09, 2011

APPROVED

Roll Call: Establish a Quorum: Confirm Agenda

Members Present: Bill DeWitt, John Green, Mary Ann Hodsdon, Scott Kaplan, Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest, Andy Wyatt

Members Excused: Carlene Harvey

Guests: Fire Chief Jesse Peters, Suzanne Crowell

Selectman: Fred Fauver

Six of the seven members were present. A quorum was established

Secretary's minutes: Bill DeWitt made a motion to approve the secretary's minutes for January 19, 2011 as written. Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest seconded the motion. Carried

There was no official meeting on February 9. There were not enough members present to establish a quorum.

There was no Public Comment.

There was no selectmen's comment.

Andy Wyatt introduced John Green, the new member of the Budget Committee.

The first item of business was the 2011/2012 budget for Public Safety. To introduce the budget Carlene Harvey submitted the following letter:

Dear Budget Committee members – first I apologize for not being there in person especially because this is Chief Peters' first budget season.

Although this is his first budget season, I have never been more confident in the Public Safety Budget and our Fire Chief! Jesse and I have met multiple times over the last few months and we have put in somewhere near 8 hours of joint work on this budget, and multiple hours of homework! This is more in line with what we need to see from this department.

Throughout our process I constantly challenged Chief Peters – I think he may have felt like I was putting his budget in a vise grip many times – however he always rose to the challenge. His due diligence on this budget was astounding and far beyond what he is compensated for.

In addition to work on this fiscal year's budget Chief Peters has made great strides towards documenting all tasks and other functions of the Fire Department so that future funding of the department becomes based more on fact and less on speculation. All of this work has been accomplished in addition to running the department and holding down a full time firefighting position in another town. It has occurred to me more than a few times that we – the town of Pownal – are getting far more than we are paying for in Chief Peters!

I want to take this moment to thank Chief Peters for his hard work and going above and beyond the call of duty! I also want you – the budget committee – to know that I back the proposed budget 110%.

Thank you for your ear!

Sincerely,
Carlene J Harvey

Chief Peters spoke to the projected increases for the 2011/2010 fire department and Public Safety Budget. Vehicle Maintenance has increased due to rising costs of both maintenance and increased need for maintenance. The newly donated forestry truck uses gasoline instead of diesel. The proposed 2011/2012

budget should be \$10710. Estimating the actual cost of gas and diesel fuel is difficult. Costs will go up, but the chief can only estimate how much. Replacement parts are also increasingly expensive.

Fire Department and First Responder training and calls have been included under payroll. Because all members are part time workers, payroll does not pay FICA or Social Security.

There is a \$2150 increase in Public Safety. Freeport has increased their Ambulance transport rate to \$16500. Pownal pays this fee to Freeport for transport services. Call volume went up in 2010/2011 as did the fees. The fire department signs an agreement with Freeport accepting the transportation fees.

Mutual Aid: The increase in mutual aid funding is because some of the mutual aid towns are working together to try to bring down the fire insurance rates set by ISO by convincing them to change the rating. A rating change could mean potential savings in homeowners insurance.

Officer Stipends are increasing in 2011/2012. Ideally Pownal will have two deputy chiefs at a salary of \$1000 each, two captains at salaries of \$600 each and two lieutenants at \$300 each.

Software is another addition to the budget. If the current program is updated and maintained, the chief will be able to generate more reports pertinent to the fire department and spend less time on the computer. Utilities will be more expensive in 2011/2012, as will fuel oil. There is a web site which helps consumers estimate these costs. The chief used this website to estimate utility and fuel costs.

Items that were mentioned that were not included in the Public Safety budget for 2011/2012 include: pumping the septic tank at Center Station, checking the tank that holds water for the sprinkler system at Mallett Hall and purchasing a generator for Mallett Hall. These are public safety issues, but not necessarily part of the public safety budget.

Compensation Request for 2011/2012:

The fire chief's salary will increase to \$10,000 in the 2011/2012 budget. Part on that increase is the chief will also become the Emergency Management Director. He will coordinate disaster preparedness and will interact with other county agencies when necessary.

The compensation Committee would like to see a committee formed to review the costs of the fire department: Equipment expenses, salaries and check to see if some equipment and training costs could be shared with fire departments in surrounding towns.

The compensation budget includes a number of changes for 2011/2012. The turnover in office staff will change salaries of the staff. Some staff members have started at beginning wages. However, since staff members are under review, if their performance is good, they merit an increase in pay. A question was raised concerning retirement pensions. The information was not available at this meeting.

The presentation from the Compensation Committee included their recommendations and a job description for the Road Commissioner. Copies of these reports were presented to all members present, and will be filed with the minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Hodsdon