



Selectmen's Budget Meeting

Town Office

Saturday, November 3, 2012

Present: Jed Brummer, Chair; Roberta Oeser, Selectman; Samuel Seppala, Selectman; Carlotta Lilback Pini, Town Administrator; Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant

APPROVED MINUTES

MOTION: Roberta motioned that we promote getting goods and clothing to the Swap Shop, boxing them, and trying to get a non-profit to deliver them free to Hurricane Sandy relief efforts in NY and NJ. Sam seconded, and all were in favor.

BUDGET MEETING

Carlotta: I think most folks are aware that the Town operated on a default budget four years 2008-2011 and that this year a budget that was less than the default budget passed. During those previous five years, costs rose – fuel, heating oil, electricity, NH Retirement, and other areas out of our control that had to be accommodated along with cuts to our operating budget.

The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) recommended a 2% cut to this year's budget but the Selectmen advised the Dept. Heads to present what they need to operate and that's what they're going to do today. The 18-month budget presents some challenges, and one of those is the timing of certain expenses. Some projects like the road paving take place in the summer months, and some expenses happen twice – for example, our property/liability payment is due in January so it will show up twice in the 18-month budget. So, it will be a real challenge to compare apples to apples and will require extra work on our part.

It's important to keep in mind why we're trying to do this—to align our Town's budget with the State's and School's—and it's important to know what the legislature's plans are before we pass a budget. The State cut our revenue sharing for Fire Mutual Aid by \$60,000 which had a big impact on Rindge. And last year, they cut our block grant by \$27,000. Then there are changes in the retirement system, some of which happen in May or June after our budget has been passed in March. There will also be secondary advantages to changing the fiscal year in terms of cash flow. At last year's Town Meeting, 60% voted "yes" to discussing a change in the fiscal year.

As we head into this review of the budget proposals, it's important to keep in mind that Rindge is growing. From 1990 to 2010, Rindge grew 41%, and we've had Tractor Supply and Auto Zone come in, and Wal-Mart may be expanding. Plus, Franklin Pierce University just had its largest enrollment in some time. Moreover, the Rindge Economic Development Initiative (REDI) is gaining momentum and moving ahead. With growth, there is a need for maintenance of, and possibly an increase in, services but we all know the economy is still uncertain. There are some other things that I want to point out so we don't have to talk about them each time we meet with a specific Department Head.

Across all the budgets, you'll see that the wages have been left level. The \$16,800 that the Personnel Committee recommended be included was plugged into the Executive Budget but the wage adjustments made this year and last year are factored in for the entire 12-month period. We don't have the health insurance rates that will change on July 1st, so we've plugged in 15% which we hope is a high number. The Retirement system is going to increase. For a history of the NH retirement rates: Since 2002, for the Police, the rates have tripled from 8.2% to 25% , for Fire they've almost tripled, and for other employees they've more than doubled from 4.14% to 10.77%. This is definitely something that has impacted our

budget and will continue to be a factor going forward. There also have been a number of legislative changes. People who are coming into the system now are being treated differently than people who were in the system before. The employees had to pay increases to the retirement system.

I think most people understand the breakdown of the 2011 tax rate of \$25.32 which covers the School (local and state), the County, and the Town. Of that \$25.32, a total of \$4.43 is for Town services. So that equates to \$886 for Town services from a \$5,064 tax bill on a \$200,000 house. We pay the School about \$800,000 every month. We'll be talking today about that \$886 and below is how it's split among the departments. Highway gets the highest portion at 30+%, and the Police are second at just over 20%. The operating budget has had ups and downs over the years. We'll hear from Frank Morrill, the Interim Police Chief, first. Charlie Eicher: If you consider the increases in state retirement and decreases in state funding, it means that you're doing a good job of controlling expenditures.

9:12am: Tom Coneys, Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee, arrived to represent the BAC with Selectman Seppala but he had just missed Carlotta's introduction. He then said that he needed to leave shortly. Tom: The BAC was a little disappointed that the budget is \$250,000 higher and is up about 5%. We noted most significantly that the operating side of the budget has decreased while the wage and benefit side has increased. And the general feeling was that we have to be paying attention to the employee side of the Town's operation. Wages and benefits don't benefit the taxpayers other than the employees. The BAC feels that its recommendation to cut 2% of last year's budget was totally ignored.

Rick Donovan, Fire Chief: I want to share my disappointment that another year has gone by and not one member of the BAC has offered to sit down with the Department Heads. More tasks and responsibilities have been put on our shoulders, and I think it's sad that we can't sit down and discuss this together.

Ellen Smith, Accountant: For the 18-month budget, we can't simply take the 2012 budget figure and multiply it 1.5 times. We have timing issues with some major expenses—our property/liability insurance premiums, for example, will occur twice during the 18-month period. Tom: The BAC understands that. But you're discussing operating costs and that's down by \$50,000. The majority of the increase is on the employee side of the budget—it's all going to the employees. I think the taxpayers would rather see an increase in Mike's road budget than in employee benefits.

Rick: Fire Mutual Aid has agreed to accept split payments. Carlotta: So we can pay half in April and half in July and pay 1.5 the amount instead of twice the amount over 18 months. Mike Cloutier, Public Works Director: I work very hard to try to get my operating budget where it is. And I did not ignore the BAC's recommendation. I'm disappointed that you'd make a comment like that. Tom: The BAC is impressed that operating costs are down. Our recommendation went to the Selectmen.

Carlotta: We are not in a manufacturing business—the reason why you see an increase in the wage and benefit side is because healthcare and retirement and labor costs in general are going up nationwide. Because we're a service business, that impacts us. Our staff provides residents with snowplowing, firefighting, and policing and they're not an exception. Tom: Every business has to work within the revenue stream. John Kauer: According to the American Care Act, we have to offer healthcare to everyone who works 30 hours or more. In the past, we've tried to keep people below 32 hours and now it's 30.

POLICE BUDGET

Frank Morrill, Interim Police Chief, stepped up to talk about the Police budget and thanked the Selectmen. He said that there are increases in wages, benefits, and fixed costs. Some of the wage increase is due to the need to pay officers overtime since they're short-staffed. Frank: We lost officer Hazelrigg and searched for several months until we hired Chris Martin in May. Turnover affects delivery of services and boosts part-time and overtime costs. The only way to get those down is to remain fully staffed. When we lose personnel, there's a cost involved that concerns me and should concern the Board and taxpayers: when an Officer is hired, he goes to the Academy for 14 weeks. During training, he's paid wages and

benefits, plus we pay to cover his patrol hours during that time. We can cover a third of the shifts with part-time staff whose wages are \$20/hour (about \$7,000) and two-thirds with overtime \$30/hour (21,000) for a total of \$28,000. If you can attract a certified officer, they don't go through training and that's where we hope to take this Department. Currently, we're down one person and a senior officer is contemplating retirement so we could be two short. Replacing two officers would cost \$55,000 and three would cost \$82,000 in a year. Plus there's the cost of \$2,500 in equipment and uniforms plus \$800 for a new officer's vest. Three people would cost \$9,000+ right there so I've asked for \$10,000. Jaffrey just lost a full-time officer so some of my staff are looking at their career paths since Jaffrey pays \$10,000 more.

We are running very tightly. Eight full-time officers would be a full complement and we currently have seven full-time. Our Dept. gets three to five domestic calls a month. The recommendation is that two officers respond but often only one can--and the Town could be held liable if that officer gets harmed or killed. Not only does being short-staffed mean there's only one officer during the day, but also what's gone by the wayside is the supervisory coverage. We're running thin, jeopardizing officer safety, and incurring possibly a delayed response time, and if we have an emergency, we have to call in an officer who will be paid overtime. If we were fully staffed, I could possibly cut in half the \$60,000 in overtime. The net effect on the operating side was a 3% reduction in the proposed budget.

Frank: There have been some cost savings—Chief Sielicki's salary was not paid out and that has offset some of the overtime. Sam: I know we got 85 applicants for the Chief's position; to attract a new trained police officer in Rindge, I've heard ever since I got here that Rindge employees are underpaid. Frank: We're paying \$37,211; Jaffrey's paying \$47,000 (they're union and the union dues are about \$15/week or \$500/year). New Ipswich was allowed to bring in full-time certified officers for \$50,000 and no one applied. To bring in a certified full-time officer here we'd have to pay out somewhere in the neighborhood of the middle \$40s. One other way to attract them is the opportunity for advancement. Roberta: What are we paying for someone with three to five years' experience? Frank: We're in the low \$40s. Carlotta: It's not as simple as bringing someone in at that pay—if you do, you've got to adjust everyone's salary. We brought in a number of these officers at \$37,211 and they didn't get raises for years and just hung there at the bottom and haven't made it yet to the middle of their range where they thought they were going to be.

Frank: On the operating side there are the items remaining level-funded, items where I've been able to make reductions, and areas of increase. I recommend level-funding police dues and subscriptions and cruiser maintenance (it's now \$8,000 and I would recommend it stay that way this year but maybe reduce it next year because the fleet will be fairly new), mileage, and police training expenses. I won't be going to the national conferences that Chief Sielicki did. But the Academy is requiring that new officers attend with 2,000 rounds of ammo (\$700) instead of 1,000 rounds. If the following year we're fully staffed perhaps that line item can come down.

We outfitted the new vehicle for just under \$30,000 in 2012. I dropped that budget to \$27,500 because the replacement for the Chief's car doesn't need special painting or a prisoner cage. I'm recommending reducing the police administrative expenses from \$6,500 to \$6,000 because we're saving something with our new copier company. But there are increases for physicals, polygraphs, and psych tests. In 2012, we had a budget of \$500 and spent \$844+. We gave psych evaluations and polygraphs to two candidates. If they had required physicals, it would have been \$100 more each. In the worst-case scenario, we'd need \$1,425 for three candidates. We're recommending increasing the Prosecutor's budget from \$56,150 to \$59,000. Martha already was mistakenly getting this increase in 2012 due to a miscommunication with the former Chief, but that cost was absorbed into the Police operating budget due to staffing levels. She said she won't ask for more increases for the next two years.

We're recommending a minor increase to \$2,933 for police telephone use based on the monthly average. Carlotta: We're looking into changing our phone system to a VOIP to reduce the number of lines we'll have. There will be an upfront investment but cost savings over time. We would purchase the portable phones, which could be carried offsite as needed, and everything could be centralized even in different buildings because it would go to the same number. When the FastRoads network gets built, hopefully the internet will be more reliable.

Sam: Is gasoline a State bid? Frank: Yes; it doesn't fluctuate but the State hasn't announced what the bid will be so I'm recommending a \$2,000 increase in gasoline. We're on track to spend \$26,000 on gas (we average 690 gallons per month) so I'm comfortable with requesting \$25,000. Sam: How have the citizens of Rindge suffered with the Police Department being short-staffed? Frank: Typically throughout the day, when an officer is out, someone shows up and Evelyn has to ask them to wait or leave their number which has generated citizen complaints. We've been bombarded with complaints about speeding vehicles but, being short-staffed, we don't have the manpower to dedicate to a neighborhood. Residential burglaries are the most frequent complaint and we need to be able to serve both the University and Town adequately. Being short-staffed on the weekends and serving at the University shorts the Town. While we were booking students at FPU, there was an emergency in Town, so Jaffrey had to come over and handle our calls. While that was happening, a Jaffrey officer saw vandalism at the Common and pursued the individual on a 100mph chase. Carlotta: Our police are only going to the University when they're called. Frank: We're not patrolling or looking for violations there, except for busy nights.

We've recommended a minor increase to the police contract services and an increase for police communication radios from \$7,500 to \$8,566. We received grant for three portable radios, are buying two this year, and want three more for a total of eight in the 18-month timeframe. There was a small increase in uniforms and the operating side is down 3% from 2012 times 1.5.

Animal control: We're requesting a \$150 increase for the 12-month period. We're not going to spend \$1,500 this year for euthanasia. Larry had \$300 in uniforms, and I'm helping him to get four polos and some boots. Food supplies are increasing from \$50 to \$500. Beth Doyle comes in and looks after Larry's animals. The facility lacks the proper cleaning supplies and they don't even change the cat boxes when a new animal comes in. Larry makes a trip to Keene when there are enough animals in there. We're trying to get citizens to take them in to keep our costs down.

FIRE AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT BUDGETS

Rick Donovan, Fire Chief: We're not looking for an increase in the volunteer wages. Our numbers are down so we need to bring on new members. We need a minimum of six members on a truck. We respond to an average of 700 calls a year – rescue, hazmat, trees and wires down, illegal burns, smoke investigations, auto accidents, etc. We're at 595 calls as of October 31st and average about 60 calls per month. Roberta: How are you doing with responding? Rick: It's a challenge: we have a duty crew. We have to provide mutual aid as much as we accept it from other towns. To extinguish a house fire you need 50-60 firefighters but we don't have that many, so that's where mutual aid comes in.

Sam: If someone needs just an ambulance to get to the hospital, are you required to respond to that? Rick: Yes. Sam: Is there a way to reduce calls by not having the Fire Department respond to ambulance calls? Rick: There's not a simple answer. In the 1970s the town opted to run the EMS service. It's a problem that our ambulance is a private ambulance. We can be helping a person for 15 minutes before it shows up. The Jaffrey ambulance has carte blanche to the Town's liability. If we step out of responding, we'll have no control over the patient care that's given to residents. I don't want the liability of not showing up—I would want the Selectmen to take that on if they want us to no longer respond. The Fire Chief is totally responsible for all emergency calls. Chief Chamberlain in Jaffrey has asked the Selectmen to give him a waiver of liability for not responding. It takes ten minutes to get an ambulance here because it's based in Jaffrey. We don't go on basic transports and don't respond to anything unless it goes through the 911 system.

Carlotta: Rick told us that Rindge is second behind Keene in the number of calls due to our aging population (Payson Village has increased our calls by 24 a year); there are 93 agencies in SW Mutual Aid. The only time we can charge is for attempted suicide, hostage situations, or something triggering the emergency systems, DWI accidents, or alcohol-related underage activity. Carlotta: Given that we have three full-time members and the rest are on-call members, our costs are contained more than other communities that have more full-time members. Deb, Casey, and Rick handle the calls and Casey is the

only true full-time firefighter at the Station. Mike and his team have been a huge help in keeping our costs down; Rich Cloutier and George Fish handle a lot of our mechanics and have saved us breakdowns. Four members are trained to operate the truck; the truck never rolls unless a Rindge officer is manning it. Every Town event is unfunded but we still have to provide safety personnel. We should be trying to retain our call members; if you were to lose all the call members, you would be looking at retaining 16 full-time members – a budget of a million or more in wages and benefits. It costs \$4,000 to train each volunteer and \$600 if they're an EMT or Firefighter 1 class. Jed: Is maintaining an adequate crew becoming more difficult? Rick: Yes.

11:12am: Dan Aho of the Budget Advisory Committee came in; Tom had been gone for over an hour. Selectman Seppala was the only BAC member who attended the whole budget presentation.

Rick: We're asking our guys to be available all weekend from 6pm Friday to 6pm Monday; they can't leave town, can't have a beer, etc. but earn nothing unless they're called. So we're talking about what we can do as incentive for these members to want to be on call. Training comes to just under \$49,000.

Carlotta: The call members voluntarily improved the station and Rick's been trying to keep up their morale by letting them know their work is valued. Sam: Looking at the wages for the Director, Fire Dept. Secretary, and EMT, are you budgeting for increases? Carlotta: The first six months has 25 weeks in it then the 12 months has 53 weeks instead of 52. In this particular budget, the Director's wage had been adjusted in 2011 and the other two positions weren't adjusted until 2012. Rick: Everything in the Fire Department budget is flatlined except that the phone will be up \$680 and SCBA costs are up. The increases are more towards the wages and training. And having call members does save us training costs.

Rick: Pretty much everything in Emergency Management is flatlined also; I'm only asking an increase for \$4,100 for an annual subscription to Code Red which is a recorded phone call to all residents telling them what to do in an emergency. Dan Aho: That system is good in a way, but many have only cell phones.

Carlotta: People can register their cell phones and get text messages and emails too. Frank: The Police are looking into Nixel which is free and allows the sharing of criminal intelligence. Rick: This system owns its own phone lines whereas Nixel shares the public information network. Carlotta: Free services can get overwhelmed during regional disasters. Rick: We're working on getting air horns on the station and a relay to convey it to other parts of Town.

PUBLIC WORKS, HIGHWAY, AND TRANSFER STATION BUDGETS

Dave Bilodeau was transferred from Solid Waste into Highway since he'll only be driving the trash truck once a week. Overtime is level from last year – the Highway guys to cover for Ed when he's on vacation. The contracts for solid waste worked out well and I'm requesting adding \$4,041 to the contracts to make up for the tire trailer, electronics trailer, hazardous materials and recyclables. We're emptying the tire and electronics trailers one more time a year. The one I wasn't expecting was this recycling estimate for \$6,600. We ended up paying for the recyclables instead of receiving money for them. There was talk about cutting the Transfer Station Attendant to part-time. The residents were surveyed and I have 435 signatures saying they do not want the dump closed on Fridays. Our recent traffic count, not including the Swap Shop, logged 155 cars on Friday, an unbelievable 381 cars on Saturday, 278 cars on Thursday, and 218 on Tuesday. The sentiment of the residents is not to cut the position to part-time position or remove some of the hours of operation. The demand is still there and it's not going to change. Ed also plows in the wintertime.

Jed: On average, a citizen uses the transfer station at least once a week. On Fridays, we're only open 1:00-7:00. We're also adding to the people who are using dump stickers and punch cards.

Dan Aho: Highway and the transfer station are 30% of the budget. Mike: Snow and ice control is a major line item and I'd like to level fund it. We took on another ½ mile of road this year. I'd like to leave diesel and overtime the same, salt and sand – sand went down 10 cents a yard. I'm going to go out on a limb and try to keep overtime level (\$22,475), though it depends on the weather. NH Retirement and some salaries have gone up but it all depends on the weather. Rick Donovan, Fire Chief: As of 2013, all radios have to

be narrow-band compliant. A lot of Mike's can't be brought into that narrow band compliance. So we need to replace some of them. Sam: How many radios can you replace for \$1,500? Just one.

Roberta: Highway's health insurance includes the high 15% projected increase and also the addition of Dave Bilodeau for a huge \$66k to \$87k. Carlotta: We'll recalculate once we get the actual not-to-exceed numbers. Mike: My contract is up for renewal in March and that's not reflected here. The Highway block grant will stay the same. I would love to ask for the \$27,000 difference they cut a year ago but that's not going to happen. This year I was able to spend all but \$210 on paving so I got a little closer to four miles this year. The pavement came in the same price as last year. I reduced streetlights by \$1,000; we replaced some with energy efficient fixtures and shut others off. We have 11 acres to mow – cemeteries and parks and playgrounds—and my lawnmowers are getting old. I had some left in salaries so I used it in equipment to buy replacement parts this year.

Carlotta: He underspent the wages and used it on parts and tools and materials. Jonathan Sawyer has been with us a couple weeks now and seems to be getting acclimated. Mike: We went in with the school on heating fuel; we've been averaging 16,000 gallons per year and locked in at \$3.44/gallon--the same as last year. It's pretty flat budgeted. I wasn't too impressed with Tom's comment that we ignored his directive from the BAC; I worked hard on this budget to keep it level.

Carlotta: The Selectmen, per the Personnel Committee's recommendation, have proposed a 1.5% pool in the Executive budget for discussion.

LIBRARY BUDGET

Sam: The total budget is up 7.1%? Flo Marsh: That includes the increase given to our Director, Diane, in April. What we have control over is the operating budget. Ellen: The wages and salaries for the Library are comprised of one number for the Director and another for all the part-time staff. The only one to receive a wage adjustment in 2012 was the Director. Carlotta: The part-timers have not received an adjustment since at least 2008. Flo: And that's a discussion our Board members would like to have. Jed: Do you track usage of the library? Flo: Yes; 2,015 people have library cards and there were 47,000 checkouts, and our internet use is growing. Jed: I wonder if the increased use of the library correlates with the Town's increased population? Flo: That would be interesting; in 1960 we had 941 residents.

The budget's pretty level with no big increases. There's a little more in special programs, and Library training because an employee is taking classes and the mileage went up a little also. Carlotta: I don't think in 2012 there was any revenue from the Library. Flo: No, and there's none this year. We're thinking of expanding on the upper level where the wildlife collection is and looking at what we can do on our own without asking the taxpayers for funds. We want to get active on completing the Library—that Phase 3 that's out there somewhere.

TOWN CLERK BUDGET

Nancy's budget on wages/salaries is what we've talked about except for the Town Clerk's Deputy. Nancy: Having Nicole has been a great asset. I have been so busy so Nicole mans the window, and I'm working behind the scenes. Nicole would be interested in also being trained as a Deputy Tax Collector as well. She catches on quickly and is very ambitious. Ellen: There has to be a direct correlation between the increased population and what happens downstairs. Nancy: She's generally worked around 16 hours/week and lately it's been around 18. She will also be taking boat registration training in the spring and I also want her to be a Notary Public. Dan: People can get their boat registered at Pelletiers or through the State. Nancy: The Town gets \$5 off the bat for a boat registration and more if it's an expensive boat.

Carlotta: I wanted to address the issue of the Deputy because it came up at the BAC meeting and there's still a question as to why Carol can't be the Deputy? Nancy: It's a new computer system. When Carol came back from the training, she wasn't on the motor vehicle system on a regular basis and had her own job on top of it. Dan: I think it came up a few times that Julie filled in. Roberta: It wasn't satisfactory.

Carlotta: When Julie filled in for Nancy, this window up here wasn't covered, so it didn't work. Nancy: This Town has grown since Carol came on. Carlotta: Nancy and Carol each get four weeks vacation, then there are sick days and training. Also, Carol may want to retire at some point. You need to have people who can cover for one another because if there's a catastrophic illness, you're up a creek. Roberta: But you can't use someone from upstairs to do the tax collection. John: Nancy was going to be a Deputy for Carol and now we've hired a part-timer for Nancy and are wanting a Deputy for Carol. Nancy: Carol is taking in the revenues for not just the general fund but the other 24 accounts. Last year, I brought in \$860,000 but it dropped this year; not many people came in with new vehicles this year.

WELFARE BUDGET

Jed: Mary Drew handles Rindge, Jaffrey, and Fitzwilliam and works at the alcohol and drug abuse intervention in Keene full-time. She hears the horror stories and she has to navigate through people manipulating the system. John: We have a trust fund for the overseer of the poor. Mary: Those things are valuable when there is an emergency and people need shelter. Assistance over \$500 paid to a homeowner becomes a lien because the Town's funds are helping them to maintain their home. When the homeowner dies or the house is sold, the lien is paid back. People do have an obligation to repay but few actually reimburse the Town. There were no issues with the budget.

TOWN OFFICE BUDGET

Carlotta: The proposed budget includes changing the Accountant's position from part-time to full-time and I'm proposing 32 hours as an initial transition phase. You all are familiar with Ellen's work. Ellen has been responsible for the preparation of this budget. In years past, Julie was involved in preparing the budget because she was the full-time Bookkeeper and had an accounting degree. When she moved to this office as the full-time Administrative Assistant, she brought that with her. So in Finance, we had a 20-hour Bookkeeper and a 20-hour Accountant, but the Bookkeeper ended up working 28 hours a week. Helene Rogers, a CPA, was our Accountant and was going to be in charge of the higher-level accounting—the reconciliation and journal entries—but she had only a few hours to devote to the job and some things were falling through the cracks. When Kork Little, our Treasurer, resigned, I asked Helene if she would be the Treasurer. When Ellen came in part-time, she started getting our books in order, fixing problems, and implementing a number of recommendations from the MRI internal controls review. Having online credit card transactions has added more duties, and the conversion to an 18-month budget has added even more.

Sam: Ellen, how many hours do you work now? Ellen: 25-30. We're budgeting for 32 and benefits for full-time. We're required to segregate functions for internal control purposes: Pat cuts the checks and Helene signs them. Carlotta: Ellen has been generating reports for the Dept. Heads for their own funds, 25 bank accounts, and impact fees. And she's been meeting with bankers to determine if we can move our accounts because we're getting hits with fees. And the Planning Dept. is talking about implementing TIF districts which will add accounting work. Sam: So the wages and benefits increases are about 50%? Yes. Dan to Carlotta: How did you manage before Ellen and what is your job description? Carlotta: Last year, after Julie left, I generated these reports—you were paying me to do data entry when I'm supposed to analyze the reports, not generate them. Dan: When we hired the Executive Assistant's position, why didn't we hire someone to do that work? Carlotta: Because it doesn't make sense. The Assistant is supposed to run the front office, take minutes, respond to citizen's questions and concerns, prepare correspondence, maintain the Facebook page, create the annual report, etc. The position of the Assistant to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen never had accounting functions in it. When we hired for that position, we weren't looking for those things. Dan: I'm not disputing that, but when I heard Nancy say it's great to have an assistant, of course it is. But if they're not there, the job still gets done.

Ellen: You're not going to go to an administrative function to get your taxes done. By expanding this position, we're not only going to be able to analyze and keep tabs on the expense, but we've cut expenses over the past few years. Carlotta: One of my roles is helping the Planning Dept. implement the economic plans. I had meetings with Jack Dugan about developing the four corners. And I've been in meetings to

increase our broadband access. I should be doing those things rather than plugging numbers into a spreadsheet which is what Ellen does. Dan: Every year our budget increases, and are we getting our bang for the buck for what we used to be getting and are our revenues increasing or decreasing? Which direction are we going? Ellen: We are scared as well because of the shift in expenses and the decrease in revenues from the state. In order to attract and retain citizens, these are things we need. I can maintain the Accounting function and allow Carlotta to do what she does which is to represent the Board of Selectmen.

Dan: Do you think your hours will increase? Ellen: Yes, I have enough easily to do a 40-hour week. Sam: Can we eliminate the Bookkeeper? Ellen: No; she does the payroll. Dan: I thought we were having a payroll service. Carlotta: The Dept. Heads submit time slips for all the employees; Pat completes the spreadsheet and, as you can see, it's complicated. Is there something that we could eliminate? Yes, maybe the five to six hours that Helene is still putting into human resources. We phased out everything on her plate except the reporting to Unemployment and the entry to the NH Retirement data, and transferred all the HR stuff to Ellen. So I do think we could reduce five hours a week (260 hours a year, or \$5,000).

John: I would suggest having the REDI work to go to the Planning Director. How will we handle the 18-month budget? Sam: A 50% increase in wages in a hard sell. Roberta: I agree. Sam: For \$150,000 we can get a \$3M Public Safety Building. You could save that in wages and benefits. We can't increase the budget. Roberta: I understand the Town has needs but it has to be done in a way that the budget's going to pass. I don't think the Town has grown enough in the last couple of years. To say we need more employees is not going to set well. Sam: I love what Ellen's done. Carlotta: The administrative expense is where it was in 2002 because other parts of this budget have needed those resources. You just listed some areas where there were decreases. When the Planning Board had two full-time employees it came from making one full-time position. Now the Planning Board is changing from two full-time to one full-time and one part-time. Roberta: That was in a huge growth time; that's not the case anymore. Carlotta: When the position went from full-time to part-time it didn't work. We have not had the resources to do the job.

Sam: We have to be practical about what's going to pass. We'll have a problem if we go in with a \$300,000 increase. Dan: And it's all in wages and benefits. Sam: We've got to come up with some ideas. Jed: We have to come up with a responsible budget and people have been reluctant to show leadership. Sam: To sell anything you have to believe in it. Roberta: You proposed budgets in 2008-2011 that were voted down. Now people are saying, "I'm doing with less so the Town has to do with less." Jed: But people still want their services. Sam: I understand, but when things are tough, people don't expect as much; they won't expect the services. Dan: If you said we're spending \$200,000 more on paving, people would buy into it, but when you say you're spending it on wages and benefits, it won't fly. Sam: You can do more with happy employees than with unhappy employees. Jed: On Dec. 12th, the Committee will present its line item recommendations to fund the transition to the 18-month fiscal year.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Stonehill, Administrative Assistant