

## **Budget Committee Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2013**

**Members Present:** David Graham, Jeff Schall, Bob Demers, Glen Eastman, Michael Waddell, Reuben Rajala, Terry Oliver                   **Excused:** Lisa Kardell, Terry Rhoderick  
**Other:** Robin Frost, Denise Vallee, Michelle Lutz

**Call to order** by Jeff Schall at 6:30 pm

**Approve Minutes** The minutes of the December 18<sup>th</sup> meeting were not completed and will be voted on at the next meeting.

**Committee Appointments:** It was noted that Debra Ackerman was not present to take minutes, but that Denise had forwarded the upcoming meeting schedule so that Debra should be present to take minutes in the future.

**Emergency Expenditure Request:** Denise explained that the final payroll in 2012, on 12/31/12 had inadvertently been left out of the 2012 budget. She apologized to the committee for this error. A budget report and calculation of the budget shortfall was distributed to the members and reviewed. It was noted that of the invoices listed, an invoice due to Skip Sansoucy for \$45,000 for defending the BTLA case vs. Portland Pipeline was for only the month of December. A long discussion took place about the need for the Town to defend the values set by Skip Sansoucy and Mike Waddell outlined the work necessary to defend such a case and other cases against corporations such as Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart was initially assessed at \$19 million, then went to \$20 million, then down to \$15 million. Michelle Lutz was not sure exactly what the current value is at. Mike Waddell also provided assessment information relative to other recent Wal-Mart cases.

Glen Eastman made a motion to withdraw \$57,000.00 from the Town's 2012 Fund Balance, seconded by Terry Oliver and all were in favor. The committee members then signed two letters to the NH Department of Revenue authorizing the Emergency Expenditure, which will be mailed to the DRA along with the MS-4E form.

**General Discussion:** Mike Waddell made a point that regardless of how people feel, the operating budget should not be this close at the end of the year, that either services need to be cut or the budget needs to be raised as we go forward. Bob Demers stated that something has to be done about the cost of health insurance. He suggested that the Town only pay for coverage for the employee and no other family members. Denise commented that the reduction in take-home pay for Town workers would be too high. Mike Waddell cautioned that the school has to compete for good teachers and that the wage & benefit package is important. Reuben Rajala stated that the State needs to have new revenues and that property taxes can no longer be the only revenue source. Bob Demers said that Gorham has one of the highest tax rates in the state. Mike Waddell commented that it is the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> highest and that Berlin has the lowest valuations, which result in the highest tax rate. Berlin needs to bring some value in to lower their tax rate. The value of the Cascade Paper Mill was discussed. It is currently just under \$10 million.

**Next meeting:** January 15, 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Public Meeting Room to review the Finance Budget and Capital Reserve Funds.

**Adjournment:** Motion made by Glen Eastman, seconded by Terry Oliver; all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.