

Subject to Approval

BOARD OF SELECTMEN FY09/10 BUDGET WORKSHOP
February 10, 2009

PRESENT: First Selectman H. William Davis, Jr.
Selectman Carol Hubert
Selectman Ken Kerin
Selectman Barbara McLaughlin
Selectman Stuart Somers
Selectman John Turk

ALSO PRESENT: Treasurer Bill Sarosky, Assessor Mike Moriarty,
Probate Judge Tom Sutnik, Building Official Mark
Cody, Fire Chief Lyman Gilbert, Fire Department
Treasurer Jason Decremer, Public Works Director
Tom Crowe, Assistant to the First Selectman Jennifer
Naylor, and Office Manager Noreen Thompson

Members of the Board of Finance Richard Hill, Arthur Mulligan,
Donna Pereira, and John Reilly

The workshop on February 10, 2009 was called to order at 7:02 p.m. in Room 205 of the Southbury Town Hall.

10069 – Assessor Mike Moriarty explained his budget to the Board. In response to a question from Sel. Kerin, Mr. Moriarty said that the amount for professional services was for consulting fees for help in appraising unique types of property. He explained that the amount for personal audits covered about 30 audits going back three years and it more than pays for itself. Mr. Moriarty said that overall the grand list is down about \$7,000,000. He explained that the grand list is comprised of three parts: motor vehicles, personal property, and real estate. The motor vehicles list is down because, in part, Southbury has a lot of SUV and SUVs depreciate the most. There is a 14% increase in the personal property list due to businesses buying new equipment during the period 11/07 thru 9/08. The Board of Assessment Appeals will probably reduce the real estate grand list some more. Also, there are five assessment law suits in the courts. (The lawyers fees are in the town legal budget.)

10060 – Probate Court

Judge Tom Sutnik explained the Probate Court budget to the Board. He said that all the costs of labor for the Court are paid from the fees that are earned. Actually, Judge Sutnik explained, the Southbury Probate Court is a net supporter of the state probate system – number 10 out of 117 courts. Every year he writes a significant check (\$250,000 - \$300,000 out of about \$500,000 yearly revenue) back to the state probate fund after the salaries are paid. Judge Sutnik said that by statute the town pays for fundamental things which are a function of the workload of the court (operating costs), for example: postage (significant because Southbury is the busiest court in the state per capita); offsite storage for documents (storage is required by law); a DSL line to the state; office supplies; etc.

In answer to a question Judge Sutnik said that Roxbury is going to pay its pro-rata share of expenses (as would any potential merged town). Judge Sutnik reported that the Governor has proposed going from 117 probate courts down to 36 courts. But, Judge Sutnik said, the Southbury facility is well sited both by geography and physical capacity to be a court in the future.

10071 – Building/Zoning Inspector

Building Official Mark Cody explained his budget to the Board. One fourth of the new color printer for the 3rd floor is in his budget. The new flyovers need a color printer to show everything. He is calling out the truck because it is going to be 10 years old. He would like a lap top computer so that he has access in the field to such things as elevations. And also so that he has access to the Code in the field as he is responsible for teaching the Code, not just enforcing it. Bill Sarosky doubted the entire GIS would fit on a lap top. It was pointed out that Mr. Cody would need wireless access too; but, it would still be cheaper than having to travel back to the office. In answer to a question about education expenses, Mr. Cody said that as a building official he was required to have 90 hours of education every three years. Board of Finance member John Reilly asked if the building department could make its own forms. Mr. Cody said they were very economical with forms – still using carbon paper on permits. They would have to pay for expensive heavy stock if they printed the forms themselves. Sel. Kerin asked if it was pretty flat in the office as far as permits and people coming in. Mr. Cody replied that they were still decently busy – not with building houses but with things like

woodstoves going in, a generator plant at IBM, and 12 new buildings at East Hill Woods. They are almost ready to send out letters to people who should have gotten permits and didn't. Mr. Cody anticipates quite a bit of money from that effort.

10090 – Fire Protection

Chief Lyman Gilbert and Fire Department Treasurer Jason Decremer explained their budget to the Board. They were being careful about the heat in the building so the figure for heating oil was down. However, their electricity was underbudgeted this year. Except for minor things vehicle maintenance is farmed out. There are 13 vehicles in all – ranging from a 1984 tanker to a 2007 pumper. They take such good care of their equipment that they are re-looking at their 20-year plan. Under "self-support" they are expecting fewer contributions. Chief Gilbert noted that the current employment problems seem to help with attendance at fire calls. He added that they are always looking for new guys. They do their recruitment/retention in house so the budget figure is for materials and ads. There were 476 call outs in 2008 which is about average. But, January (63 calls) and February this year are tracking to have record numbers. The malfunctioning automatic alarms are "killing" them. Mr. Decremer passed out a sheet showing 3% in cuts. Under "communications" they explained that their radios take abuse. The radios get wet or hot or fall and need to be replaced or repaired. In answer to a question about the 40% cut in fire prevention, Chief Gilbert said that they had some surplus materials and had gotten a grant. The Fire Department makes over 30 school visits during Fire Prevention Week.

In answer to a question Chief Gilbert said they no longer get reimbursed by the state for calls to I84. They were asked if they could get reimbursed by private insurance for calls to I84. Bill Sarosky said that the town could do the actual billing. The Fire Department has billed insurance for haz-mat calls (mostly to get reimbursement for used equipment). They said that Middlebury bills for medical calls, but the Southbury Fire Dept. does not do medical calls. Chief Gilbert said that a lot of the members considered themselves volunteers, and they did not want to charge. However, he will look into what Newtown and Middlebury are doing.

10118 – Town Properties – Outside

Public Works Director Tom Crowe explained the Outside Town Properties budget to the Board. In answer to a question as to why the

figure for gas and diesel went up, Mr. Crowe said they budgeted wrongly last year. The turf management for Settlers Park is a separate figure because it is contracted out (going into the second year of a five year contract). Sel. Hubert noted that this was because Settlers Park overlays the aquifer and so needs special care with no pesticides, etc. The other four parks come under the "Turf Management" figure and the work is done by the town. Mr. Crowe said he thought the "Turf Management" figure could be reduced by another \$5,000. In answer to a question about resting the fields, Mr. Crowe said the baseball season is the rest time, because baseball and softball really only use a few specific parts of a field, which parts can be restored relatively easily. In answer to a question from Sel. Hubert, Mr. Crowe said he thought that the new practice field at Settlers Park (requested by Parks & Recreation) would be needed for Lacrosse which really could not share a field with any sport other than football. (Lacrosse uses Region 15 fields now.) Mr. Crowe said the dumpster service goes out to bid and is on a five year contract. Mr. Crowe said that the town crew has only one large trailer to carry their equipment around; and he thinks two smaller trailers would be more efficient and economical.

10119 – Solid Waste Disposal

Mr. Crowe explained the solid waste disposal budget. Mr. Crowe said they are looking into closing the transfer station on Mondays. They are talking with Copes (the only collector affected) and think they can manage with Monday closing. One full time employee has left. Mr. Crowe recommends not replacing him but increasing part time hours instead. In answer to a question from Sel. Kerin, Mr. Crowe said that increasing the fees for demolition waste (per the new transfer station fee schedule) should help offset the cost of demolition hauling. Also, they have found a new, cheaper site to dispose of demolition waste. So the demolition hauling figure in the budget can go down to \$85,000. Mr. Crowe said the tipping fee is going to be \$62 per ton. He said he originally projected on 7,800 tons of garbage per year, but now thought 7,500 tons would be a more accurate figure. This would lower the tipping/hauling figure by about \$22,000. Mr. Crowe said that they are going to recondition the old compactor to compact the single stream recyclables.

10120 – Highway – General Maintenance

Mr. Crowe explained the highway general maintenance budget. Sel. Hubert questioned the 2% reduction for sand and salt: and Mr. Crowe

said it was just a hopeful guesstimate. Mr. Crowe said they are trying to reduce the volume of maintenance work that is material accompanied. First Sel. Davis said they were talking about turning the street lights off at night, but found that it might cost more rather than be a savings. Mr. Crowe said it would cost more in the first year because the lights were on photocells and they would have to be put on a timer. Sel. McLaughlin asked if sand and salt was the best way to treat the roads. Mr. Crowe said he was aware Heritage Village was using an "ice-be-gone" product and pre-applying it. Mr. Crowe said he did not think there was a big difference in price because with the "ice-be-gone" product you would use less of a higher cost product. The savings would be in the clean-up. Mr. Crowe said they were looking into a system to automatically and evenly distribute the material for a uniform application instead of driver option. Mr. Crowe did not think the town should put all of its eggs in either basket considering some of the topography in Southbury. Regarding the two new trucks in the capital budget, Mr. Crowe said he realized all capital items were open. There followed some discussion of reducing the capital budget for roads.

At 8:50 p.m. the budget discussion was tabled until the following evening at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jocelyn Bagger