

Subject to Approval

BOARD OF SELECTMEN FY09/10 BUDGET WORKSHOP
February 18, 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, Assistant to the First
Selectman Jennifer Naylor, and Office Manager
Noreen Thompson

Members of the Board of Finance Richard Hill, Ken Korsu, and Art
Mulligan

**The workshop on February 18, 2009 was called to order at 7:03
p.m. in Room 205 of the Southbury Town Hall.**

10050 – Board of Selectmen

Sel. McLaughlin felt that the Assistant to the First Selectman, as a political appointee and unclassified employee, should not be getting a raise. (The Assistant to the First Selectman, the Director of Services for the Elderly, and a clerk in the Town Clerks Office all were hired about a year ago. First Sel. Davis felt a 2.5% raise for them was only fair since these three did not get a 2.5% raise last July 1 when everyone else did.) Sel. Hubert felt that there should not be a raise for any of the three new employees because no one else is getting a raise in FY09/10. Sel. Kerin agreed the three should not get a raise because, he said, the unions are being asked for a wage freeze. Sel. Turk and Sel. Somers had no comments on the matter. Board of Finance member Ken Korsu suggested looking at the job offer letters for the three new employees. Sel. Hubert said that every new employee is on probation for a year. They are reviewed after a year, she said, but there is no promise of a raise. Mr. Korsu asked if vendors are being allowed increases. First Sel. Davis said he told department heads that if they think something is high they should get another price on it. Sel. Hubert reminded the workshop that the Board has been looking for a zero% increase from everyone who comes before it. Assistant to the First Selectman Jennifer Naylor said she

concurr with Sel. McLaughlin. First Sel. Davis added that Ms. Naylor said no to her proposed raise when he first mentioned it. Sel. Kerin summed up by saying, we are all in the same boat together; we are going to not lay anyone off, hold the line on wages, and cut the rest of the budget where we can. It was decided to take the 2.5% raise out. Sel. Hubert thanked Ms. Naylor. It was mentioned that the First Selectman's salary was set for two years as of each election. Sel. McLaughlin asked who the part time employee(s) were. Treasurer Sarosky said part timers included the summer help in the tax office and the person taking minutes. Sel. Hubert asked if this was the year to phase the switchboard position out since the town no longer has a switchboard. First Sel. Davis said quite possibly it is the year. He said he could see a consensus.

10051 – Town Hall Service Expenses

Treasurer Sarosky said the telephone budget went up because they were too aggressive with this year's telephone budget and he thinks they are going to fall short. First Sel. Davis pointed out that postage is going up 5%.

10052 – Other Expenses

Sel. McLaughlin asked to have the professional services explained. First Sel. Davis said the budget line is used for consultants in personnel and labor relations, mapping ground water, appraisals when buying open space, etc. Treasurer Sarosky added bonding disclosure and a water study for drainage. He said it's a catchall category.

10053 – Committee Expenses

Sel. Kerin noted that Southbury Day had been taken out of the budget. There was some discussion about this. Fireworks are the biggest expense and a deposit for them has to be made by June 30th. It was decided to leave the Southbury Day line at zero recognizing some funds remained from the past fiscal year. The Charter Revision line is for an eventual referendum. All agreed to remove \$250 for Historic Trees from the Historic District #2 line.

10055 – Labor Related Expenses

Sel. McLaughlin queried the low amount for training/tuition reimbursement in light of the amount to be spent in FY08/09. Mr. Korsu asked if the union contract had a cap on tuition expenses. First Sel. Davis said there was not a cap but one should be considered in future negotiations; and further, there should be a policy that a reimbursed employee has to work for the town a specified time after completing a reimbursed course. It was mentioned that the reimbursed courses had to be job related.

10056 – Computer Expenses

Sel. Hubert suggested that the town try to negotiate and lower the fee of the outside vendor for tax collection and assessment software maintenance.

10070 – Town Clerk

It was noted that there would be a zero increase in salaries.

10072 – Insurance & Bonds

Treasurer Sarosky said the amount on the bond line was for a bond for the tax collector.

10073 – Legal Expenses

In answer to a question from Sel. McLaughlin, First Sel. Davis said the reduced figure for legal expenses was a guess. It was pointed out that police contract negotiations would take place next year. Mr. Korsu mentioned that there was a new trend for legal fees away from billable hours.

10074 – Planning Commission

10075 – Inland Wetlands Agency

10076 – Zoning Commission

On Sel. Kerin's suggestion it was agreed to take \$5,000 from planning professional services, \$2,000 from inland wetlands professional services, and \$3,000 from zoning professional services. It was noted that now these lines were pass-throughs anyway.

10078 – Economic Development Comm.

Sel. Turk said, in answer to Sel. Hubert's questions, that the EDC has about \$3,000 in bills coming in during the next couple of weeks and that they would probably spend about \$4,000 more this year. He said EDC expenses included data bases, conferences and updating brochures and web sites as they get more information.

10092 – Police Protection

Sel. Kerin asked about the budget figure for gasoline which is estimated at \$3.20/gal. Treasurer Sarosky said he is working on it. Sel. Turk asked how much gasoline each department uses. There was some discussion of protesting the proposed increase in what the State charges for a state trooper. Treasurer Sarosky said the overtime figure is for investigations, filling in if someone is ill, and training.

10096 – Conservation Commission

First Sel. Davis stated he believed the budget is for continued weed control in Janie Pierce Park on Transylvania Pond.

10098 – Emergency Services

The fact that PAR Ambulance went down 21.8% will be verified.

10100 – Pomperaug Health District

The Board is waiting to hear back from the health district before the end of February.

10101 – Visiting Nurse Services

The budget was reduced 50% at the suggestion of the Director of Elderly Services.

10110 – Comm/Services for the Elderly

It was noted that there would be a zero increase in the full time salaries.

10111 – Historic Buildings Commission

In answer to a question, Treasurer Sarosky said the operating budget covers electricity, cleaning the buildings, security (alarm systems), etc.

10112 – Library Board

Sel. McLaughlin suggested reducing the open hours of the library by closing on Sunday and opening one hour later in the morning. She estimated this would save \$18,955. Sel. McLaughlin thought this was reasonable in light of the cut in the transfer station hours and the cut in money for the roads. Also, the Librarian had said that traffic was light when the library first opened in the morning. But, Sel. Turk pointed out that Sundays were the second busiest day at the library with an average of 76 people per hour. (80 people/hour on Monday, 64 on Tuesday, 74 on Wednesday, 62 on Thursday, 67 on Friday, and 72 on Saturday) Sel. Kerin said that when the new library opened, library activity went up 40% and library activity has not gone down since. He pointed out that the savings would be in people hours. But, Sel. Kerin added, people hours had not been cut in the rest of the town: this despite the fact that areas in the town hall have been slack, whereas the library is very busy. He mentioned that the library is the heart of the community. Sel. Kerin said the "slow" times in the library are not slow. He noted that the public computers get filled up pretty fast as soon as the library opens in the morning. Sel. Kerin

pointed out that the closing the transfer station on Mondays was the result of an opportunity when someone left. Otherwise, he said, the Board had been protective of jobs though out the town, even in areas where people are underemployed right now (which is not the case in the library). Someone else pointed out that the library was an outlet for the unemployed and others who could not afford to pay for vacations or other amusement. The library is also a place for the unemployed to research jobs.

Sel. Kerin moved that the Library budget be accepted as presented to the Board of Selectmen. Sel. Turk seconded the motion. All voted aye except Sel. McLaughlin who opposed the motion.

10113 – Recreation Commission

Sel. Hubert brought up the Parks & Recreation revolving account. She would like to be able to get a better handle on that account.

10114 – Other Community Activities

The Director of Youth & Family Services is supposed to get back to the Board with a budget that is down 5%. Sel. Hubert would like to see a YFS budget with no salary increases. Sel. Kerin passed around a written study of Middlebury's share and Southbury's share of the YFS budget. He figured that Middlebury is paying \$57 per counseling session while Southbury is paying \$106 per session. First Sel. Davis said he brought up the inequity with Middlebury's first selectman last week. The consensus seemed to be that the split should at least be 70/30.

10117 – Energy

Treasurer Sarosky said the town will be out of the consortium as of 8/1/09.

Reserve Fund

In answer to a question, Treasurer Sarosky said reserves for long term land acquisition and pool reconstruction were cut out; and the open space reserve was cut from \$180,000 to \$50,000.

There was some discussion of the roads budget.

At 9:36 p.m. the budget discussion was tabled until Tuesday, February 24, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Selectmen
Budget Workshop

6

February 18, 2009

Jocelyn Bagger