

WINTHROP TOWN COUNCIL
FY 13-14 Budget Workshop Minutes

APRIL 29, 2013 6:45 P.M.

Attendance: Chairman Kevin Cookson, Priscilla Jenkins, Sarah Fuller, Larry Fitzgerald, Linda Caprara, Ken Buck Sr., Don Ellis, Jeffrey Woolston (Town Manager) and Julie Winberg (Secretary).

The meeting opened at 6:45 p.m. for a Municipal Budget Workshop Review

Chairman Cookson addressed the audience notifying them that this meeting was not a public forum but was a continuation of the Council's budget workshop. The State budget is slowly moving forward but a decision on revenue sharing will come after the town's budget, by charter, has to be approved. If the cut to the town's revenue sharing goes through, the town will have to face serious budget cuts and perhaps a supplemental tax bill.

Because revenue sharing is still in question, the Budget Committee which consists of Councilors Fitzgerald (Chairman), Ellis, and Fuller, were asked to find ways to cut \$650,000 which would be the town's shortfall for one year. This Committee was asked to review the feasibility to do away with the Dispatch Center.

Communications Center:

Police Chief Young briefed the Council. A prepared packet was distributed justifying the need to continue with the Communications Center which has served a very essential role to the community for forty years.

Winthrop is a regional center and joins nine other communities. A cost analysis report developed by Chief Young showed that the savings over a five year period would be minimal based on the costing information presented. The community would be losing control, quality and safety according to Chief Young. The service would be less effective, notary service would be eliminated and call prioritization would be an issue. In summary, Chief Young stated that although he understands the town's budget crisis, he still felt strongly that eliminating this department would be a big mistake and would put residents at risk.

The Chairman of the Budget Committee reported that it is still meeting with other representatives from surrounding communities, some of whom were in attendance,

and are in the process of 'doing its due diligence' stating that additional information was needed before a final determination. A closer look into partnering with Gardiner as well as a possible increase to the fee schedule needs to be pursued. The Committee will report back to the Council by mid May. The fire chief from Fayette, among the visitors at this meeting, requested that he be informed of Winthrop's decision as soon as possible noting that Fayette has, obviously, a vested interest.

Motion by Jenkins and seconded by Fitzgerald to approve the Communication Budget as presented, while acknowledging there may be changes at a later date in FY2014 if revenue sharing becomes a reality, passed with a unanimous vote.

Code Enforcement

Beth Young, CEO, was in attendance to answer questions on the alternate plumbing inspector. She explained that he started several years ago to assist. He does not issue permits. Although building permits have been low, renovations continue to increase.

In response to the possibility of reducing the CEO position from full time to part time, she explained that this position would not be able to go forward with all the responsibilities as she outlined for the Council. Complaints would go unanswered, Planning Board and Zoning Board would be unattended. Investigations would go by the wayside (i.e., consent agreement recently approved on 4/1/13).

Motion by Jenkins and seconded by Fuller to approve the Code Enforcement budget as presented was passed with a unanimous vote.

Town Council

Miscellaneous line of \$300 covers copies and printing.

Education line is for MMA training for Don Ellis.

\$250.00 is taken out of wages.

Motion by Caprara and seconded by Buck to approve the Town Council budget as presented passed with a unanimous vote with the following changes: line #15 cut by \$300; line #5 cut by \$400 leaving \$100 for MMA training.

An amended motion was made by Fitzgerald and seconded by Jenkins passed with a unanimous vote to eliminate the \$250 increase in the wage line.

Zoning Board

Motion by Fitzgerald and seconded by Fuller to approve the Zoning Board budget as presented passed with a unanimous vote.

Election

The Clerk noted that it is possible to purchase half of the election booths at this time. There is no volume discounts. The booths that the town owns in need of repair will be evaluated and repaired as needed.

With that decision, this line will be cut in half and reduced by \$2,560.

Motion by Buck and seconded by Fitzgerald to reduce this purchase by one-half passed by a vote of 6-1 (Jenkins).

The printing for this department has increased due to the number of elections (normally two a year with this past year increasing to 6). The food line was self explanatory.

Motion by Fitzgerald and seconded by Jenkins to reduce the printing and food lines to last year's figures passed with a unanimous vote.

An amended motion by Fitzgerald and seconded by Caprara to cut the food line from \$499 to \$250 and to leave the printing line to last year's figures passed with a unanimous vote.

Executive Administration

Motion by Buck and seconded by Fuller to approve this department's budget as presented passed with a unanimous vote noting that the Town Manager had made significant cuts in mileage, education and advertising.

Clerk Tax Collections

The Town Manager noted that the lien expense line has increased by \$910 and that there still remains approximately one million dollars in property taxes still outstanding.

Telephone line consolidation for long distance service is being pursued.

Motion by Fitzgerald and seconded by Jenkins to approve this department's budget passed with a unanimous vote.

Assessing Department

Mileage has been reduced.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Jenkins approving this department's budget as presented passed with a unanimous vote.

Finance

The increase in money for supplies is due to restocking.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Jenkins approving this department's budget as presented passed with a unanimous vote.

Administrative Services

The Budget Committee did an analysis of the health insurance program. Currently, the town pays for 100% of the cost for employees and 70% of the cost for family.

Although the Council, verified by the town attorney, cannot dictate the type of insurance policy an employee chooses, the Council is the legislative body of the town and has the right to decide how much money the town will pay towards those costs.

Motion by Fitzgerald and seconded by Buck to reduce the health insurance line as written passed with a unanimous vote: PPO-500 Policy.

An amended motion by Fitzgerald and seconded by Fuller to reduce line #220 by \$100,000 to allow for more flexibility passed by a unanimous vote.

Administrative Services

Office supply line #250 has increased by \$700. The town manager will review the reason for this increase.

Line #238 for telephone and cell lines will also be reviewed for further consolidation.

Line #246 for legal services shows a more realistic amount for the coming fiscal year. Bernstein Shur does have a history with the town and the likelihood for continuing their services is positive. However, the legal services provided free by MMA should be pursued. In addition, although the town's attorney does have institutional knowledge, his hourly rate is quite high. The town needs to explore the hiring of an attorney with a lower billable rate.

Line #245 bank services – bids are still being accepted and more information is being received and an update will follow by mid-May.

Motion by Fitzgerald and seconded by Fuller to zero out KVCOG and Western Kennebec Economic Development and to temporarily withdraw membership passed with a unanimous vote.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Caprara to restore \$1,000 for the town's website with a commitment by Councilor Fuller to work with Chief Young to oversee a web content management plan keeping it current and more user friendly.

An amended motion to increase the amount to \$1,200 was made by Caprara and seconded by Fuller.

Votes on both these motions died with a vote of 3-4 (Cookson, Fitzgerald, Ellis and Buck).

MOTION BY Caprara and seconded by Buck, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. This passed with a unanimous vote.