

**MINUTES
TOWN OF PEMBROKE
BUDGET COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 5, 2009**

Members Present: David Freeman-Woolpert, Chair; Mark LePage, Vice Chair; Gerry Fleury; Ray Foss; Stacey Sheldon; Bruce Kurinskas; Charles Connor; Mike Connor; Tom Serafin, School Board Rep.; Fred Kline, Selectmen Rep.

Others Present: David Jodoin, Town Administrator; Sally Hyland, Chair, Solid Waste Committee

The meeting began at 7:00 PM.

Documents Distributed: 2009 Library Computer Expansion Plans; Revised Summary of Tax Rate Forecast FY 2009/2010; School Budget Form MS27; Pembroke School District FY 2009/2010 Proposed Budget

A motion to approve the minutes of January 29, 2009 as presented was made by Gerry, seconded by Ray, and passed by unanimous vote.

Due to some recent information received by Dave F-W from two members of the Merrimack County delegation, the county tax rate forecast has been decreased from a 4% increase to an increase of only 1.5%.

The 2009 Library Computer Expansion Plan was accepted as sufficient for the committee members who requested the details.

Tom indicated that the cost of an extra math teacher was approved by the School Board to be added to the proposed budget. This would add approximately \$58,100 to the budget. Dave F-W stated this would increase the tax rate by approximately 0.33%.

TOWN BUDGET

The warrant articles for mandatory recycling were discussed. Sally Hyland gave an overview on the Solid Waste Ordinance which includes updates to the existing ordinance to delete out-of-date references and the addition of the mandatory recycling program regulations if the program is approved.

The committee discussed compliance issues, whether or not the carts should be funded by user fees or added to taxes, and the condition of the current packers. Fred clarified the plan for the current trash packers whether the recycling program is approved or not. He stated that either way, one packer must be refurbished in 2009. Fred also reviewed a cost analysis as it pertains to the automated recycling program. Dave F-W stated that should the collection carts be funded by taxes, the tax rate would increase by approximately 2.6%.

The committee discussed and voted on the following Town Warrant Articles:

Motions to recommend approving Warrant Articles 4, 5, 6, and 10 through 16 as presented were made, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote.

A motion to recommend Warrant Article 8 as presented was made, seconded, and passed 7-3.

A motion to recommend Warrant Article 9 as presented was made, seconded and failed 4-6.

The Committee considered a request from the Recreation Committee to add funds to the town budget to install a concrete pad around the pavilion at Memorial Field.

Fred explained that CIP had given this item a low priority therefore the Selectmen removed it from the budget. Gerry stated that such a concrete pad would not be likely to withstand winter frost heaves.

A motion to amend the town budget to include the cost of a concrete pad around the pavilion at Memorial Field was made, seconded, and failed.

A motion to approve the operating budget as proposed by the selectmen in the amount \$8,965,239 minus the values already referred to in the warrant articles was made, seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

SCHOOL BUDGET

The proposed tax rate for the School District would have to be increased due to funds for an additional teacher. The total projected change in the school portion of the tax rate is now negative \$0.62. The net impact to the tax rate is not affected as much by this entire increase since tuition revenues from sending towns would be increased by 55% of the extra cost. Dave F-W explained that the drop in the county tax rate increase and the impact of the School budget's slight increase would still cause a slight decrease in the tax rate if the Budget Committee approved all other elements of the School Board's proposed budget. There was some discussion regarding funds for the special education reserve fund. Tom indicated that the School Board had decided not to increase the amount that would go into the Special Education Reserve Fund from Surplus over the \$50,000 originally proposed in the Warrant Article. Other items discussed were special education, the new initiative for the alternative high school and the methods of dealing with students likely to be truant after the implementation of the new law stating that children must remain in school until the age of 18.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the tuition revenue split between Pembroke and sending towns and the preparedness of students coming from those towns who would be served by the proposed Alternative School Program.

The Committee then turned their attention to the Warrant Articles.

A motion to recommend appropriating the sum of \$50,000 (from surplus) to go into the Special Education Trust Fund providing there is a fund balance available on July 1, 2009 was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote.

A motion to recommend appropriating \$50,000 from surplus, if there is more than \$50,000, into the School Building Capital Reserve Fund was made, seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

A motion to recommend appropriating \$20,000 (from surplus), to be added to the Instructional Materials Expendable Trust Fund was made, seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

A motion to recommend appropriating \$51,500 for a variety of capital repairs or replacements in school buildings was made, seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

In advance of voting on the general operating appropriation, Tom gave an overview of the School District's History of Cost per Pupil Expenditures, documenting that Pembroke costs per student are lower now than the statewide average; an achievement reached starting several years ago.

The committee then discussed the issue of the late request from school administrators to add funds for an additional math teacher at Pembroke Academy. Several members stated that this should have been included in the School Board's original budget and/or brought before the School Board before presenting it to the budget committee. Dave F-W stated that the Superintendent of Schools had told him that he did not realize the impact that this unusual kind of request would have on the deliberation process. Tom stated that he appreciated the committee's patience and understanding in this regard.

A motion to approve the School Board's recommended budget of 23,885,489 was made and seconded.

The alternative high school was then discussed in detail. A motion to amend the original article to reduce the recommended school district's operating budget line 1100-1199 by \$216,000 was made, seconded, and failed 5-5. This decrease would have covered all the "new initiatives" listed in the School Board's written presentation plus the \$58,100 for the estimated amount for a new math teacher at Pembroke Academy.

A motion to amend the original article to instead reduce the recommended school board's operating budget line 1100-1199 by \$125,000 was made, seconded, and failed 5-5. This would have covered the first year costs of the Alternative School proposal.

A motion to amend the original article to instead reduce the recommended school board's operating budget line 1100-1199 by \$183,100 was made, seconded, and passed 8-2. This amount covered the cost of the first year of the Alternative School program and the additional math teacher.

A motion to amend the original article to reduce the recommended school board's operating budget from the proposed \$23,885,489 to \$23,702,389, which is a decrease of \$183,100, was made, seconded and passed 8-2.

Dave Jodoin described a math correction needed in the town's operating budget to reflect a \$10,000 error in the amount listed on the MS-7 for one line of the amounts to be added to capital reserves.

A motion to amend the motion to approve the town's operating budget from \$8,965,239 to \$8,975,239 due to a misprint on the MS7 for Capital Reserves was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote.

The Public Hearing for Town and School Budgets will be held at Pembroke Academy on Saturday, February 7, 2009 at 10 AM.

The next budget meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2009 when final budget recommendations will be made.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.