

**APPROVED MINUTES
TOWN OF RYEGATE
PO BOX 332
RYEGATE, VERMONT 05042**

**ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING
MINUTES – January 16, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Paul Keenan. Other Budget Committee Members present: Andrew Smith, Gregg Gandin, Robert Zambon, Richard Colby II, Richard Hodgson. Also present: Cheryl Slayton, Patricia Crocker, Gail AuClair, Tom Dole, Gene Perkins, Nelson Elder, Helen Morrison, Judith Ross, Marsha Nelson.

Those making a budget request were seen in the order in which they arrived. Gail Auclair was present from Little Rivers Health Care, requesting \$2,000. The Health Center is Federally Qualified and therefore must seek financial help from the towns. She mentioned the many programs that have been developed and are in service: Pain Management, Diabetes Prevention, Opiat Prevention (Certified), Saturday and Evening Hours. There is a Dental Van for kids and screening for depression. Paul moved the \$2000 be a line item in the budget to be voted at Town Meeting. Andy seconded the motion and it carried.

Tom Dole was present representing the Auditors. They would like to increase their salary line to \$1500 and try to be more in depth with their work. Tom discussed a computer program they would recommend for the Treasurer's Office. It will take planning beforehand. The auditors would prefer to work with NEMRC over a period of time and have the Town establish a soft ware fund by putting \$5,000 a year in for three years. Richard Hodgson talked about an external audit. This computer program is expensive and would not take the place of an external audit but would prove beneficial during the audit. Paul recommended putting in a new line item for \$5,000 for the Treasurer's Soft Ware Program. Cheryl agreed it would be good.

Helen Morrison was present representing Kingdom Animal Shelter. They are located in St Johnsbury but take in cats from all over Caledonia County and as far as Bradford. They spend about \$500 a year per cat taking them in, finding new homes etc. Andy moved a \$500 line item be placed in the budget for a vote on March 7, 2017.

Judith Ross was present from the Restorative Justice Center. She is a volunteer with that organization and believes in the program. Those who have committed a crime in their community have a chance to talk about it and pay back for their action. They discuss what they will do to restore trust in the community and then make a plan and report back on what they did. Two people have been involved in Ryegate. This gives them a chance to fix what they broke. This is an extension of the Caledonia County Court System. Paul moved the addition of \$200 to the proposed budget for this program.

Gene Perkins was present from the Fire Department and Recycling. He went through his line items. They are included in the budget worksheet with the minutes. Andy mentioned the Highway Budget will kick in \$240 towards internet service. Gene mentioned the 1997 truck is due for a \$27,435 refurb. It was explained there is enough money for that with \$13,000 a year going into the equipment replacement fund after the \$13,000 payments were complete for the lease truck.

Nelson Elder was present for the Proposed Highway Budget discussion. Extended Warranties are being purchased for some vehicles. That money is coming out of the Machine Fund. The Committee went through the worksheet line by line. Robert Zambon congratulated Nelson for plowing out town turn arounds. He appreciates being able to use them.

Rick Colby was present with a Cemetery Request. Jim Winget is increasing the mowing bill by \$300. It has been a long time since there has been an increase. Another item was discussed was very old marble stones in the Blue Mountain Cemetery. They are in need of repair. The Cemetery Commission asked for a new line item: Cemetery Stone Repair and/or Replacement as there is no Perpetual Care money now coming in. Andy wondered about what to do to honor the stones and the families if the stones are replaced rather than repaired. He said it is a good project but a plan is needed to take proper care of the old stones. Jim Winget is willing to mow the South Ryegate Fire Station as it is not getting done.

The worksheet was filled in and totaled. The Group felt the percentage of increase was too much and decided to amend the Proposed Highway Budget by decreasing the repair budget on the 2015 Kenworth Truck and the 2016 International Truck to \$3500 each rather than \$6000 as the Extended Warranties on both should help. It was also decided to decrease the Machine Fund figure to \$75,000 rather than \$80,000,*and level fund the Gravel Budget at \$56,000* cutting the Highway Budget by \$14,000.

The proposed budget to be raised by property taxation is \$842,187.00.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM on a motion from Claudette seconded by Andy that carried.

Marsha Nelson, Clerk