

**Budget Committee**  
**November 4, 2017**

**Present:** Jerry O'Connor, Chair; Priscilla Colbath; Charlie Edwards, Selectmen's Rep; Dave Tibbetts, Sanbornville Water Dept Rep; Howie Knight; Dave Silcocks; Ken Paul; Steve Brown, School Board Rep; Kelley Collins, Town Administrator; and Toni Bodah, Secretary.

Gabe Smith and Donna Martin, both of ClearView Community TV, were present to record the session. Various department heads and organizational representatives were present as indicated below. Mr. O'Connor led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance and called the posted meeting to order at 9 a.m. Review of the proposed 2018 municipal budget followed.

**Public Safety – Ambulance**

Mr. Knight noted that as of November 3, 2017, \$166,000 in revenue had been realized, as billed by the outside contractor. He anticipates total revenue for 2017 will cover the 2017 expenditures. Chief Todd Nason referred to the proposed substantial increase in the wage line (01-42152-110). His goal is to have 24/7 coverage by April 2018. This, obviously, would result in another increase in 2019, when the budget would reflect 12 months of 24/7 coverage. Chief Nason stressed that this has nothing to do with completion of the second floor of the public safety building—that is just a bonus. Wakefield is certainly not the only town facing the problem of coverage, and all area towns are trying to help each other. Another option is paying per diem; however, Chief Nason believes it is better for Wakefield to have its own staff. He proposes the addition of 3 fulltime staff members, with one existing employee taking on the role of supervisor. Mr. Knight noted that the Budget Committee has known this was coming for some time. The demographics of Wakefield indicate the necessity of having an ambulance available in a timely fashion.

Mr. O'Connor asked if this would affect the salaries in the Fire Department. Chief Nason stated this increase is all in the Ambulance salaries, which includes coverage for vacation time. Mr. O'Connor noted that the cost of health insurance is always something to be considered. Ms. Collins has estimated an increase of \$8000 based upon a 6.2% reduction in the rate for 2018, coverage from July 1 (considering 60-day waiting period), and assuming 2 single plans and 1 family plan. The Town pays 88% of the coverage. Mr. O'Connor is concerned this is the beginning of another series of increases, similar to what occurred with implementation of the wage study. Ms. Collins stated that nothing stays static—all are living documents. The Town continues to lose firefighters/EMT's, as well as patrol officers. Earlier this year, the Board of Selectmen revised wage rates for FF/EMT's, having compared those rates to the rates for patrol officers in an effort to offer a fair wage in order to retain employees. She added that compensation is the largest cost of operations. These rate changes do affect the Town's NHRS contribution, which is expensive—but so is the cost of turnover.

Mr. Edwards noted that those leaving are going to nearby communities. Mr. Brown questioned, given the amount of training involved, whether there has been any thought given to require a commitment of some length to the Town. Chief Nason advised they had attempted that a number of years ago, but such a contract was found not to be enforceable, so he stopped. However, that option could be reconsidered. Ms. Collins added that the Town doesn't send FF/EMT's to an academy as is done with the Police Department. There is really not much outlay for training. Chief Nason stated that FF/EMT's must have all their credentials coming into employment with the Town.

Mr. O’Conner referred to the following scenario: The Town hires 2 people at the same rate; however, one individual gets the benefit of a family plan while the second individual only gets a single plan. He questions whether there is a way to even that benefit out, as the individual with a family winds up actually making more than the individual without a family. Ms. Collins stressed that we cannot ask the status in advance of offering employment—if we could, then everyone would only hire single people. Rather than adjusting salaries, other towns grant a stipend for not taking insurance through the Town. That is certainly something she would be willing to investigate and discuss with the Board of Selectmen. We need to look at the entire compensation package of each person, which can be used as a retention tool. Chief Nason would be more inclined to offer a stipend rather than adjust the benefit package to arrive at equal pay.

Mr. Paul asked whether all night shift personnel live out of town. Chief Nason estimated that 50% live out of town. He further stated the proposed shift will be 24 hours. Mr. Paul believes a number of employees have left in order to work 24-hour shifts. He also noted that per diem personnel do not necessarily know the town and/or the people and issues. Mr. Paul asked how many employees are needed to form a union. Ms. Collins advised it requires 10 non-supervisory employees, for which the Town of Wakefield would not qualify. Mr. Paul noted that the ambulance is averaging 3 calls per day. Chief Nason added that as of July, calls were up 20%.

Chief Nason confirmed to Mr. O’Connor that we would expect another significant increase in the 2019 budget should this 24/7 option be approved. Mr. Knight suggested that revenues may also increase, but it would likely not be dollar for dollar. A brief discussion followed regarding circumstances under which the Town can bill for services. **Mr. Paul moved the section total at \$334,676. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

#### **Public Safety – General Fire**

Chief Nason advised that he adjusted the stipends to reflect an anticipated increase in workload. Ms. Collins referred to the difference between the Department Head request and the Board of Selectmen’s recommendation, explaining that the Chief had not included an increase for himself; however, the Board was inclined to authorize same. **Mr. Paul moved the section total at \$203,827. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

#### **Public Safety – E Wakefield Fire**

**Mr. Knight moved the section total at \$4780. Mr. Paul seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

#### **Public Safety – Union Fire**

**Mr. Knight moved the section total at \$4500. Mr. Paul seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

#### **Public Safety – Forest Fires**

Chief Nason stated that he will need to purchase additional hose. **Mr. Knight moved the section total at \$2001. Mr. Edwards seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Chief Nason stated that he has provided a schedule for truck replacement, as well as his request for various capital reserve funds.

**Community Services – Wakefield Library**

Peter Brown spoke to the Library's endowment fund and stated that they are trying to gradually wean away from Town support. **Mr. Paul moved the line at \$7710. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

**Gen'l Gov't – Legal**

Ms. Collins recommends level funding, noting that \$1 is kept in the Claims/Judgement line (01-41533-320) to keep the line open and separate. **Mr. Knight moved the section total at \$30,001. Mr. Paul seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

**Community Services – Gafney Library**

Dick DesRoches noted that the increase in this year's request relates to slight wage increases. Mr. Knight questioned what contracted outside services represents. Mr. DesRoches advised it relates to IT. Recently, their web site was upgraded to enhance use. A former library board member had previously provided that service free of charge. In response to Mr. Knight, Mr. DesRoches also stated that the amount of travel to meetings is difficult to predict. **Mr. Knight moved the line at \$138,655. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 7-1 (Mr. Paul voting against).**

**Community Services – Adult Learning Program**

Mr. DesRoches stated that the level of funding necessary is based on expenses. They do receive a grant for the coordinator of that program. They have 4-5 tutors, and the participants are primarily Wakefield residents. They hope to bring that program into the village of Sanbornville when the Gafney is expanded. Reference was made to the type of tutoring offered. Ms. Donovan stated they have 300 visits per year. Mr. Edwards asked whether other towns (sending participants) have been approached for funding. Ms. Donovan advised they have approached those towns in the past without success; however, they will do so again. She stressed that it is generally only 1-2 participants from each other town. Mr. DesRoches stated they hope to track this in more detail and will have better information for the 2019 budget. Mr. Edwards believes that other communities should be willing to support the program used by their residents. Mr. Paul expects to see a greater need in the future. **Mr. Paul moved the line at \$25,000. Mr. Silcocks seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.** Ms. Donovan stated that they anticipate a greater use of technology in the future and are teaching in that direction.

**Gen'l Gov't – Town Hall (and Town Hall Annex)**

Ms. Collins confirmed to Mr. Knight that the Town has contracted with Irving Energy for the provision of #2 fuel at \$1.93 per gallon and propane at \$1.268 per gallon. The contract includes the Food Pantry, Paul School and SAU's 64 and 101. Mr. Knight stressed that Irving has been good to work with. **Mr. Paul moved the section total for Town Hall at \$51,640 and the section total for Town Hall Annex at \$11,240. Mr. Silcocks seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Mr. O'Connor called for a recess at 9:56 a.m. and called the session back to order at 10:10 a.m.

**Human Services – Welfare**

Mr. Knight asked about the GAP software. Ms. Fogg advised that this program, obtained through the State, allows towns to share important information and includes forms and training. Mr. Knight noted that each year the General Assistance line (01-44421-810) is under-expended, adding that Ms. Fogg does a great job directing applicants to various available resources.

Mr. Paul asked whether Ms. Fogg is training anyone else for this position. Ms. Fogg advised that she does have a qualified back-up. **Mr. Paul moved the section total at \$49,390. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

#### **Gen'l Gov't - GWRC**

Ms. Colbath noted that Ms. Olimpio is unable to be present. Mr. Paul questioned the \$1000 increase recommended by the Selectmen over the Department Head request. Ms. Collins stated the Board had been approached about replacement of panic doors—one inside, one outside. The management agreement indicates the Town will address maintenance on the outside of the building. Once she obtained a hard number for this work, she increased the line by \$1000. In addition to the door, Ms. Collins would will to address a gate for the steps in the rear of the building. The septic tank was replaced this year; however, there is a septic pump in the basement which has failed. The cost to replace this pump is \$1950, plus the cost for electrical. **Mr. Knight moved the line (01-41943-430) at \$5000. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

#### **Human Services – Outside Agencies**

Northern Human Services/Mental Health Center – Eve Clauson appreciates coming to Wakefield each year, where there is high community spirit and bipartisanship. They are seeking level funding. Ms. Clauson spoke to their various programs and services. **Mr. Knight moved the request at \$4300. Mr. Silcocks seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Tri County CAP – Lisa Hinkley spoke to their programs as well as their working relationship with the Wakefield welfare director. They have seen an increase in calls for fuel assistance, and they are trying to work with individuals throughout the year in order to alleviate their need to seek assistance. Mr. Knight referred to the benefit to Wakefield residents totaling about \$244,000. Mr. Paul questioned the Selectmen's reduction of the original request by \$1000. Mr. Edwards stated the Board was just trying to keep the numbers down. Mr. Paul asked how that would affect services. Ms. Hinkley stated that overall funding reductions could result in staff reductions, which in turn could affect services. She advised Mr. Edwards that they never have unexpended funds at the end of a year. Mr. Edwards stated that given services to Wakefield being down by 14% and concern with an overall increased municipal budget, the Board looked for areas that could be reduced. Ms. Collins noted that Tri County no longer provides local outreach services, and it is sometimes difficult for residents to get to their facility. Ms. Hinkley stressed that it was not cost effective to pay a staff member time and mileage to travel to Wakefield for only 1-2 clients. The use of technology has filled in that gap. **Mr. Paul moved the request at \$5000. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

GWRC – Deb Gauthier referred to the 2 dinners per week provided at the GWRC, plus coordination of the meals-on-wheels program. Mr. Knight referred to the Selectmen's \$1000 reduction of this request. Ms. Collins stated that the \$1000 represents the cost to coordinate the meals-on-wheels program, which service is being provided at no charge. Ms. Gauthier stated there is still a cost associated with coordination of the drivers, as well as much communication with Ossipee Concerned Citizens regarding the meals being provided, which is all currently being done by the Center's administrator. Ms. Collins suggested that the applications could be vetted by the Wakefield Welfare Director, as she is already communicating with many of these applicants. Ms. Gauthier stressed that service is being done free of charge; however, the Center's administrator is still providing service over and above her work with the GWRC itself.

**Mr. Paul moved the line at \$30,000. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Wakefield Projects Inc – Mr. Becker advised they are running out of ‘middle-ticket’ items that can be addressed independently. The next 2 projects range from \$250,000 to \$750,000. WPI has also had a difficult time replacing their long-term treasurer. Mr. Becker has been filling the role; however, grant requirements frown on such a situation. WPI has not expended the 2017 allocation from the Town. Can they keep the funds and put them into their restricted account for future projects? The account currently has \$56,000. There is also a CRF. Mr. Becker advised that one project would require replacement of the joists in the opera house floor, which would interrupt operations on the main level of Town Hall. The other project involves construction of a fire stair on the east side of the building to address a second means of egress, and to include a mechanical room to address air conditioning in the opera house, if not the entire building. He advised Mr. O’Connor that the fire stair would not encroach into the back parking lot, but it would take up most of the grass area. Mr. O’Connor noted it might have been more cost-effective to address the floor joists at the same time the sprinkler system was installed. It is believed this project was not included in the CIP. Ms. Collins suggested that the 2017 appropriation could be returned to the undesignated fund balance, or put into the 2018 CRF. **Mr. Paul moved the line at \$1000. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.** Mr. Becker noted that use of the balcony depends upon addressing the joists in the opera house floor.

AWWA – Ms. Schier thanked the Town for its support. AWWA requests level funding for 2018. Much effort is currently being expended at Province Lake. The Wakefield Director of Public Works has been a great partner. They are also working with students regarding the importance of the condition of our lakes. Ms. Schier also spoke to the YCC program. In response to Mr. Paul, Ms. Schier advised they have had 2 year-round staff members since 2008. **Mr. Paul moved the request at \$15,000. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

CASA – **Mr. Paul moved the request at \$500. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Wakefield Food Pantry – Mr. Knight referred the Committee to the WFP annual report in their packets, as well as a matrix comparing YTD September 2016/2017 figures. He is concerned with the increase in the number of individuals under the age of 18 they are serving. They have opened services to Newfield, Maine, and Milton. He will address the Town of Milton for funding. To date, they have had no applications for Newfield residents, so they will not request funds from that town. They have partnered with Lovell Lake Market to provide emergency food during the summer for those children who have been nourished through the school breakfast and lunch programs. **Mr. Paul moved the request at \$6500. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 7-0-1 (Mr. Knight abstaining).** Mr. Paul hopes the WFP will request funds from all towns potentially served, even if no residents are currently being served.

Cross Roads House – Sandy Beaudry advised they are located in Portsmouth but serve a wider area. They are often over-capacity, and they do much work to help people get into permanent housing. Although they have not served any known Wakefield residents in 2017, Ms. Collins advised she has referred transient people to them. Reference was made to the on-site services provided, including management skills. Ms. Fogg confirmed that Cross Roads has never refused anyone that she has sent, including transients. **Mr. Paul moved the request at \$1000. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Children Unlimited – Joanne Kelly spoke to their various programs, stressing that they are trying to keep people off of welfare. The organization serves Carroll County and is located in Conway, with additional staff in Wolfeboro. Many referrals come from DCYS. Mr. Edwards stated the Board reduced the request since this is a new organization, and we are not familiar with its statistics for Wakefield. Ms. Collins would like to track this use through the Town's welfare office in order to avoid duplication of services to Wakefield residents. Ms. Fogg stressed the importance of those clients signing release forms in order for her office to track these services. Ms. Collins stated it is important to offer services where the residents can access same. Ms. Kelly stated the services are provided both at a facility and in people's homes. **Mr. Knight moved the request at \$1500. Mr. Paul seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Medication Bridge – Ms. Collins advised there is no request to consider as other funding has been received.

American Red Cross - **Mr. Knight moved the request at \$0.00. Ms. Colbath seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

White Horse Addiction Center – Ms. Collins suggested that White Horse make a request to the Town. The Town is using them as a referral for services other than those which are being partially funded by the County. Sue Thistle advised they served 7 Wakefield residents with 61 units of service. Their goal is to be able to provide residential care. Reviewed use of funding (food, clothing and training), which cannot be used for programs supported by Carroll County. Mr. Paul asked how to get the word out to donate to their thrift store. Ms. Thistle stated they have an email program, but otherwise people seem to know about this need. Mr. Paul suggested a donation bin at the Transfer Station. Ms. Collins suggested we could include a banner on our web site (coordinated by Arlene Fogg). Ms. Fogg stated she has been able to get donations of furniture from local contributors. **Mr. Knight moved the request at \$2000. Mr. Paul seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

VNA – **Mr. Knight moved the request at \$12,000. Mr. Paul seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Ossipee Concerned Citizens – **Ms. Colbath moved the request at \$13,518. Mr. Silcocks seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Starting Point – Ms. Collins noted that the request increased although the statistics did not change. Neither has Starting Point requested payment of their 2017 appropriation. Ms. Fogg stated she has used this organization in the past; however, she has not had much contact this year. This request will be tabled until the November 9 meeting.

Pride of Wakefield Volunteers – This group is seeking \$500 to assist with their monthly electric bill to light the sign across from the Mobile station. Mr. Edwards noted that their sign is on private property, which may be sold. The sign could be moved to another location, where it would also be lit. Mr. O'Connor believes this is use of public funds on private property. Ms. Collins suggested it would be safer to support a more public project. Mr. O'Connor stated this need should be addressed through the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Edwards wonders whether this could be paid for under streetlighting. Mr. O'Connor noted that he pays for the streetlight on his property, which lights up part of Route 16. He added that we need to refrain from use of public funds on private property.

There is another sign in East Wakefield, which Mr. Edwards believes is on State property. Mr. Paul stated this group needs to come up with a better reason for financial support from the Town. Mr. Edwards stated that the Budget Committee knows that the sign is good for Wakefield; however, it is located on private property. Discussion followed regarding the status of the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. O'Connor suggested there may be another way to fund this organization other than via taxpayers' money. Mr. Edwards agreed that the townspeople are generous and he believes they would get private donations for this need. Mr. Paul stated that perhaps they should have considered use of solar powered LED lighting.

**Mr. Paul moved to adjourn at 11:53 a.m. Mr. Knight seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Toni Bodah, Secretary