

**BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting minutes**  
**JANUARY 12, 2016**

**Present** Katy Wells, Roger Grey, Craig Davis, Earl Leighton, Ralph Rathjen and Dave Nickerson;  
Selectmen's Representative

At 6:32 pm, Vice Chair Ralph Rathjen recognized the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order.

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

Earl made a **motion** to approve the minutes of 1/05/15, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Craig all were in favor, 5 Yes, 1 abstain.  
Motion passes

**Mail & Correspondence**

None

**New Business**

BOS Update ~ None

Vice Chair Rathjen stated that he would like to see the committee go through the budget and check the figures as he presented and identify the areas in the budget where the figures differ from the BOS.

In review of the budget numbers the following decisions were made:

4155 ~ Earl made a **motion** to except the new recommendation of the BOS for line item 4155.212 that increased by \$2k, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Craig, Vote 6-0 motion passes

Warrant Articles:

Article 1 ~ not voted

Article 2 ~ Craig made a **motion** that the Budget Committee recommend article 2 on the warrant, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ralph, Vote: 6-0 motion passes

Article 3 ~ Earl made a **motion** that the Budget Committee not recommend article 3 on the warrant 2<sup>nd</sup> by Roger, Discussion: The committee discussed this article is an expansion of services, that could expand facilities and both have large costs associated, the committee felt that the voters can discuss and decide. Vote: 6-0 motion passes

Article 4 ~ Earl made a **motion** that the Budget Committee to recommend article 4 on the warrant 2<sup>nd</sup> by Craig, Vote: 6-0 motion passes

Article 5 ~ the committee discussed article 5, the cost listed, there is no bid listed nor general contractor listed and many questions as well as the language in the article. Roger made a **motion** that the Budget Committee not recommend article 5 on the warrant 2<sup>nd</sup> by Craig. Vote: 6-0 motion passes

Article 6 ~ the committee discussed article 6 and although not against the article in any way, it seemed that the article was not properly written. Katy will check with Charlie for any changes that may have been made or could be made. Ralph made a **motion** that the Budget Committee recommend article 6 on the warrant, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Earl. Vote: 6-0 motion passes

Article 7 ~ the committee questioned Dave as a member of the BOS for clarification of this request. Dave stated that Primex is doing a study and there are safety issues that need attention and the BOS is trying to get bids for a structural engineering study. The committee discussed that the language in this article seemed to be very wordy and somewhat not to the point. Katy will discuss this with Charlie. Earl made a **motion** that the Budget Committee recommend article 7 on the warrant, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ralph. Vote: 6-0 motion passes.

Article 8 ~ the committee discussed the plan for the roads for the amount of \$500,000. Dave stated that the DPW has discussed with the BOS a plan for March Road. Earl made a **motion** that the Budget Committee recommend article 8 in the amount of \$534,468 on the warrant, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Roger. Vote: 6-0 motion passes

Article 9 ~ Craig made a **motion** that the Budget Committee recommends article 9 on the warrant in the amount of \$225,000, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ralph. Vote 5 yes 1 no, motion passes.

#### Other

Roger discussed the handout he gave the committee at the last meeting in regards to the Peggy Graham letter to the editor. Roger made a **motion** to have the minority report attached to the minutes of 1/12/16, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Earl, Vote: 5 yes Katy abstained.

#### Future agenda/next meeting

January 19 and 26. Also January 18, Monday at 5 pm with the BOS.

#### Adjourn

At 7:42 pm Roger made a **motion** to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Earl all were in favor. 6-0

Respectfully submitted by

Katy Wells, Recording Secretary  
And Budget Committee member

Several weeks ago Peggy Graham wrote a letter to the editor entitled "Help to rein in spending in Sanbornton". Ralph Rathjen, a Sanbornton Budget Committee (BC) member, was upset with what he considered inaccuracies in the letter and wanted the Sanbornton BC and selectmen to pen a response. Fortunately BC members and the selectmen recognized that while Ralph was free to write an editorial response to the Peggy's letter it was not proper for either the BC or selectmen to take part in that effort.

However, Ralph did succeed in getting his critique of Peggy's letter attached to the minutes of the January 29<sup>th</sup> BC meeting. In my view attaching Ralph's critique to the BC minutes in any circumstance would be improper and is especially so in this case because there was no real detailed discussion about either letter by the BC body (for substantiation see the attached copy of the BC 12/15/15 meeting where Peggy's letter was first brought up).

Since Ralph's comments were attached to the minutes of the 12/29/15 meeting I feel it only fair to respond with a minority report (I voted not to attach Ralph's comments to the minutes). What follows is Peggy's comments (PG) followed by Ralph's comments (RR) and my comments (RG)

1. **PG:** We already have the second highest tax rate in Belknap County, ...  
**RR.** Not True: Barnstead and Gilmanston's tax rates for 2015 are higher than Sanbornton.  
**RG.** Depends on which tax rate you are talking about. If you are talking about the "town tax" as I assume PG is, then of the 11 towns in Belknap County only Belmont at \$9.41 is higher than Sanbornton's \$8.82 (see attached tax comparison).
  
2. **PG.** Sanbornton is not growing >  
**RR.** Not True: Sanbornton has grown from the 2000 census population of 2,581 to 2010 census of 2,966. Current estimate is 2,980. Source: NH.gov population estimates for 2014.  
**RG.** Perhaps PG was using more current information i.e. from nhes.nh.gov (copy attached which shows population of Sanbornton stagnant from 2010-2013 at 2,966. Or maybe she used NH Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau statistics which using NH Office of Energy and Planning Information (copy attached), shows Sanbornton population growing by 78 during the time period 2009-13 a average of 20 people per year and with a current population of 2,983. Or US Census Bureau information (copy attached) which shows Sanbornton adding 5 people between 201-2014. I'll leave it to the reader to determine on their own if Sanbornton is growing or not.
  
3. **PG.** Out of seven listed businesses in our town, the town employees are among the highest number with 25.  
**RR.** Not True: Steele Hill Resort 85 Employees, Sant Boni School 50 employees, Sanbornton Central 36 Employees, Ink Mill Incorporated 25 Employees, Redimix

Concrete 25 Employees, Sanbornton Town 20 full time (4 Administrative 7 police 6 DPW 1 Rec 1.

**RG:** First of all RR did not categorize the last employee on his list, but even so his listing adds up to only 19 not 20, but I can see where it is easy to make a mistake if you are looking at the employee list provided by the town (copy attached) It's really difficult to determine categories. Perhaps PG was using information supplied by NH Employment Security (copy attached) NH Employment Security documents that Sanbornton is tied for 3 place in the list of 5 companies where the number of employees are listed. I'll leave it to the reader to determine on their own if 25 is a excessive number.

4. **PG:** We are not a rich town the medium household income is \$69,861....

**RR:** Note True: Sanbornton's median household income of \$69,861 is higher than the median household income of NH and the US as a whole.

**RG:** The medium household statistic refers to **multi** breadwinners in a household. Right under PG's statement about medium household income she lists the medium male salary at \$51,591 and the medium female salary of \$42,031. The statistical median is the middle number in a sequence of numbers. That means that half of Sanbornton males earn less than \$51,591 annually while half of the females earn less than \$42,031. I'll leave it to the reader to determine the relevance of the numbers to "rich".

5. **PG:** The town tax portion of the 2015-2106 budget increased 57%.

**RR:** Note True: Operating budget increased from \$4,657,897, to \$4,804,221 or an increase of 3% per MS2 and MS232 filed with the NH DRA. \$150,000 of the increase was due to Lower Bay Engineering Study.

**RG:** The Sanbornton property tax rate rose \$1.04 per 100,000 evaluation in December of this year. Of the \$1.04 increase, \$0.60 was due to the town tax while the balance is attributable to increases in school and county tax. The \$0.60 town tax portion of the 1.04 increase is 57% of the increase. In my view PG statement is correct as stated.

6. **PG:** The upcoming town budget proposed increases across the board ...

**RR:** Not True and inflammatory

**RG:** The upcoming 2017 budget has a salary increase of 2% for all town employees, a \$4,217 (7.2%) raise for the fire chief plus another \$1,200 for his retirement, a 5.2% (\$6,322) increase for library, a warrant article for a new recreation building, and two warrant articles not yet discussed by the budget committee: one for a new recreation building and another for 2 full time firemen. The reader can determine on their own if the increases are across the board and inflammatory.