

**TOWN OF LA POINTE  
SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING  
2012 BUDGET  
Wednesday, November 2, 2011  
At 5:00 PM At Town Hall**

**Present: Beth Fischlowitz, Jim Patterson, Greg Nelson, Ham Ross, Larry Whalen**  
**Dept. Heads present: Barb Nelson**  
**Public Present: Michael Childers, Glenn Carlson, Lois Carlson**

**I. Call to Order at 5:15 PM**

**II. Review, Discussion & Tweaking of 2012 Budget**

**Glenn Carlson** asked if Public Comment is acceptable. He was recognized by the Chair. Glenn Carlson presented a memorandum in which he strongly urged the Town Board to hire a Town Administrator. His memorandum was placed on file.

**Lois Carlson** reiterated the Madeline Island Chamber of Commerce's request for additional funding to compensate for the loss of the primary fund raiser last summer. [Chequamegon Bay Chef's Tasting]

**Greg Nelson** asked if the Chamber has a specific amount in mind.

**L. Carlson** answered: \$5000; she stated that this is a one-time request.

**Barb Nelson** stated that the difference between expenditures & revenue is currently \$1,820,812; This means that the proposed budget is currently \$214,103. This is the amount that can either be cut from the budget, or the Town electors can be asked to approve [by resolution] going over the levy limit.

B. Nelsons stated that the \$6000 increase the police department budget request for training is included in the budget but not the Chamber request.

Beth Fischlowitz pointed out that there has been a huge decrease in revenue.

**Greg Nelson** pointed out that some of the money will be returning in the form of grant reimbursements and in-kind labor provided by the Town. He also pointed out that by far the biggest expenditure is Local Roads [at \$250,000]. He then pointed out that financing the improvements to local roads is an option that would decrease the overall budget total.

**Beth Fischlowitz** added that \$24,000 of the budget is the Griggs Approach improvement project, which has not yet been decided upon.

Discussion followed regarding the Griggs Approach. **Greg Nelson** ended the discussion by stating that the Town needs to remain prepared to move forward on this project in case the decision is made to proceed. He also added that due to timing of various elements of the project, it may not even occur in 2012.

**Beth Fischlowitz** asked if she was remembering correctly that the \$9000 Library upgrade is to come out of Library designated funds.

**Greg Nelson** also pointed out that the Library labor costs are up 16% and wondered why this is so.

**Ham Ross** stated that the Library has more responsibilities relative to Northern Waters Library Service.

**Greg Nelson** asked if the Library will be open more hours or if the hours are needed for internal work.

**Jim Patterson** pointed out that it would be nice to show additional open hours at the Library: more service to the public for more hours paid for.

Discussion followed regarding the use of designated funds for the capital outlay project at the Library [insulating the crawl space]. **Greg Nelson** pointed out that since interest rates are low, designated funds are not earning much right now anyway.

**Greg Nelson** also pointed out that the Board may not change a line item in the Library budget.

**Ham Ross** stated that there are many more activities at the Library every year.

**Jim Patterson** stated that he would like to see the Library open for more hours on Saturdays.

**Barb Nelson** asked if the Town Board would like to meet with the Library Board.

**Ham Ross** said that he should the Library Board should have an opportunity to discuss the Town Board suggestions amongst themselves first.

**Barb Nelson** stated that the Library Board meets on Monday, November 7, 2011.

The Clerk was directed to request that at its meeting on 11/7/11, the Library Board elaborate on its need to increase its labor budget and state its position on using designated funds for its capital project.

**Beth Fischlowitz** asked for discussion regarding the financing of the chip sealing project that is listed on the Roads budget request.

**Greg Nelson** reminded the Board that the Town's loan rating is excellent.

**B. Fischlowitz** stated that she thinks financing \$243,400 is a smart move for the long-term good of the Island.

**Jim Patterson** added that the Town is never going to get a lower interest rate. He then asked about the Town's current debt service.

**Barb Nelson** replied that the Town is currently in the process of refinancing the gravel and the fire truck loan at a rate less than 3.75%.

**Greg Nelson** stated that the 2000 road project that was financed was paid off in January or February of 2011. He added that while the debt service would increase, there would be a net reduction in the 2012 budget.

**Beth Fischlowitz** summarized by suggesting that the Board (1) finance the chip seal, (2.) request the Library to pay for their capital project from their designated funds, and (3.) make a decision on Griggs Approach.

**Jim Patterson** asked if the Town could postpone the Griggs Approach project till next year: "according to Keith [Town Foreman Sowl], it depends on the lake level."

**Barb Nelson** pointed out that since most grants are reimbursable; they [except the DNR grant] require that the Town incur great expense; however, the reimbursement may not be received till 2013.

**B. Nelson** also stated that the fund balance applied [money left in the cash & checkbook from 2011] has not yet been added into the budget as revenue, and that the amount of the contingency fund has not yet been determined.

Discussion then followed regarding cost of living adjustments [COLA] for employees and/or merit pay increases.

**Barb Nelson** stated that the current COLA is 2.7%.

**Beth Fischlowitz** then asked if the Town would give 2.7% increases to every Town employee across the board. If not, what would be the exceptions. She counted two Town road crew and one MRF employee.

**Greg Nelson** pointed out that a mechanic was hired in the first place to save the Town money.

**Ham Ross & Beth Fischlowitz** suggested a 2.8% increase "across the board."

**H. Ross** asked how the Town can determine which employees are meritorious. He felt that this is unfair to the many fine Town employees.

**Greg Nelson** proposed a 2.8% COLA for all Town employees with an additional 3% increase for one road crew member and one MRF employee. The Board agreed by consensus.

**Beth Fischlowitz** asked if the Griggs Approach decision could be postponed.

**Jim Patterson** concurred.

**Beth Fischlowitz** asked that Barb Nelson figure out the financing on the proposed loan; and she also requested a \$50,000 line item for the purpose of hiring a Town Administrator.

**Barb Nelson** suggested giving some thought to the possible goals of a Town Administrator. Discussion followed regarding the jobs of a Town Administrator.

The Clerk was asked to remind the Board of the Madeline Island Chamber of Commerce's request for additional funding.

**III. Approval of Grant Agreement from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Stewardship Funds for big Bay Town Park.** Motion to authorize the Chair to sign the Agreement for Phase I of the project [laying out the loop, applying for permits & getting the soil testing done]. BF/GN 3A 1 Abs. [HR,LW] MC

**IV. Adjournment** at 6:50 PM

Submitted by Patty Hobin, Town Clerk