

**Town of South Thomaston
Budget Committee Session**

January 26, 2010

The first session of the 2010 South Thomaston Budget Committee was held January 26, 2010 at 6:30 PM. The meeting was called to order by Jeff Northgraves.

Present:

Committee Members: John Duncan, Patrick Florance, Gayle Gallant, Becky Geesey, Chuck Hartman, Moira Paddock and Kennedy Wilson.

Selectmen: Jeffrey Northgraves, Pennie Alley and Dorothy Meriwether

Administrative Assistant: Barbara Black Assistant to Admin: Terri Baines

Assessor's Agent: Bert Taylor

Fire Chief: Bryan Calderwood.

Mr. Northgraves made a preliminary statement about the difficult economic conditions and the impact it will have on the entire budget process. All selectmen agreed that the various departments had made diligent efforts to keep their budgets austere.

The Committee elected Kennedy Wilson as Chairman and Becky Geesey as secretary.

It was agreed to give tentative approval to department budgets as we went along, with final ratification to occur after all the figures were in. The Board of Selectmen gave no pay increases across the board.

Discussion also touched on the fact that state aid will be considerably less, meaning that more education costs will be passed along to municipalities. This may be the year that we cannot stay under the LD1 limit, according to Jeffrey Northgraves. John Duncan commented that we may have no surplus to tap this year.

The first department presented was the Assessors (520). Mr. Taylor explained how the mil rate was computed and how the municipal appropriations effect the tax commitment. His budget was conditionally approved.

Next, the Fire Department (570) was presented. Chief Calderwood had trimmed almost \$1000.00 from his previously submitted budget. He reported that grant money may be available to help with some equipment needs, and he presented a projection of replacement for fire trucks. Chief Calderwood stated he was working on getting the rating for the department to change from a nine to an eight. Which could reduce town/homeowners' insurance rates. The budget was conditionally approved.

Administration (510), Building and Grounds (540), Debt Service (670), and Recreation (660) were reviewed and tentatively approved. Ms. Black commented under Debt Service that a Tax Anticipation Note, usually not needed until April, will be necessary in January for the second year in a row, yet another indication of the tight economy. Mike Florance commented at the end of how fortunate the town was to have Barbara Black and her superb administrative skills.

The Library (650) budget was also tentatively approved, with the notice that they had cut their budget by almost one-third.

Briefly reviewed were Street Lights (600), the Town Landing (550), and the Planning Board/Board of Appeals (530). All three were tentatively approved, although the last had its "due, fees & travel" line reduced by \$350. Welfare (640) was conditionally approved. Public Safety (590), which includes EMA and Animal Control and E-911, had wages cut by \$300 under animal control officers wages.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Geesey
Secretary, Budget Committee