

Board of Selectmen
Town Office Annex
March 1, 2014
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: Mark Walter; Emmett Lyman; Ernie Malavasi

Also Present: D. Denette; A. Dill; D. Dill; P. Stricker; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler and L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Walter called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to approve the Agenda as written.
Unanimous aye.

2. General Budget Review Workshop: Ms. Varricchio reported a number of adjustments that had been made to the budget. She distributed a copy of an email from Mr. Ventres regarding the engineering survey and other work that needed to be done to the Old Middle School playing fields. She stated that Mr. Ventres advised that the \$200,000.00 quote he had given to Recreation Director Quinn included work that would not have to take place in 2014-15 and he felt a \$30,000.00 allocation to the 2014-15 budget would be sufficient to get the process started.

- A. Special Revenue Funds: Ms. Varricchio reviewed the Special Revenue Funds and noted that the biggest cost center was the Recreation Department fund. She stated that Ms. Quinn will provide the Selectmen with an analysis of that fund.

Ms. Varricchio advised that she is projecting \$19,920.00 to be transferred from the General Fund to a Special Revenue Fund for the Agriculture Commission to seed the Center for Community Agriculture. In response to a question from Mr. Malavasi, she advised that the Agriculture Commission is expecting the Center to be financially self-sufficient by the end of 5 years.

- B. Interfund Transfers: Capital Projects and Reserves: Ms. Varricchio stated funds will be transferred from reserves to pay for various capital projects and purchases. She stated that \$1.1M will be transferred into the Shared Services fund, the majority of which is for salary/benefits and technology projects. She noted the transfers are also planned for the following capital items:

- \$200,000.00 to purchase a new ambulance - the Town has an agreement with the Ambulance Association to purchase a new ambulance every 5 years and money is set aside for this purpose.
- Roof work at the High School - the Town puts aside \$100,000.00 a year for Board of Education capital projects.
- \$50,000.00 for a new fire truck - an adjustment to the annual set-asides for fire

equipment may have to be made after the Fire Department determines what its next large purchase should be.

- She further advised that \$5,000.00/year is set aside for the Lakes Association and \$225,000.00 will have to be set aside for the 2016-17 re-valuation project.

- C. Revenues: Ms. Varricchio provided an overview of the Town's revenue sources including grants and State contributions. She stated that revenue from Investment/Interest had dropped and noted that the Grand List has not recovered from the drop that began in 2008. She advised that if the Town had been working with the 2007 Grand List this year, there would have been a reduction in the mil rate.

Ms. Varricchio stated that she is working with a citizen volunteer to see if they can create revenue projections.

- D. Debt Service: Ms. Varricchio advised that debt service has increased \$296,000.00 this year due to several Open Space purchases. She reviewed notes payable and stated that the listed debt service included both principle and interest.
- E. Agriculture Commission: Ms. Varricchio noted that this item was discussed earlier during the discussion on Agenda Item B. Interfund Transfers.
- F. Board of Assessment Appeals: Ms. Varricchio noted that the Board of Assessment Appeals was reduced by \$1,200.00 this year.
- G. Board of Finance: Ms. Varricchio noted that the only change in the Board of Finance budget was an increase of \$750.00 for the auditor.
- H. Economic Development Commission: It was noted that the only change to the Economic Development Commission's budget is because EDC is no longer sponsoring the Chowder Festival. Mr. Walter advised that the Business Association agreed to take over the event and has revamped it to a Taste of East Haddam to draw in more participants.
- I. Historic District Commission: There was no change in the Historic District Commission's budget.
- J. Open Space Committee: There was no change in the Open Space Committee's budget.
- K. Zoning Board of Appeals: There was no change in the Zoning Board of Appeal's budget.
- L. Ambulance Association: There was no change in the Ambulance Association's budget. Mr. Walter noted that it is challenging to recruit volunteers for the Ambulance Association.
- M. Animal Control: Mr. Walter noted the Animal Control budget has gone up because of new State mandated training and certification requirements for the Animal Control

officer and assistant officer.

- N. Building Department: Ms. Varricchio advised that the only change to the Building Department's budget is the request for \$15,000.00 for mobile technology equipment.
 - O. Chatham Health District: Ms. Zemienieski advised that the budget for Chatham Heath District is based on a per capita formula. She noted that East Haddam's rate is currently \$8.95 per capita and has been trending up over the past few years.
 - P. Cemeteries: Ms. Zemienieski noted that the town has taken on maintenance for town owned Warner Cemetery previously maintained by the Antiquarian & Landmark Society and Mr. Walter added that the Town has taken on more responsibility for the maintenance of Town cemeteries resulting in an increase to this budget line. There was a general discussion about the transfer of the responsibility and the types of maintenance done at the cemeteries.
 - Q. Human Services: Ms. Zemienieski provided some background regarding the Town's Human Services payments and Mr. Walter stated that he would like to increase the payments but, at this time, the Town cannot afford to do so.
 - R. Senior Services: Ms. Varricchio advised that there was a net increase to the Senior Services budget due to an adjustment to the director's salary. She agreed to verify if there was an increase to the director's hours.
 - S. Town Greens: Ms. Zemienieski noted that the budgeted funds in the 2013-14 Other Supplies budget line will be spent in May for Memorial Day flags, plants, etc.
- She further advised that the budget was increased to add a fall clean-up in addition to the spring clean-up and to increase mowing at Heritage Park to every two weeks. She stated that the increased mowing is needed because of the increased activity at the walking path.
- T. Miscellaneous Budgets to be Revisited: There was no discussion under this agenda item.
3. Budget Discussion and Deliberation: Ms. Varricchio said she would provide the Selectmen with a "Budget Terminology" sheet.

The Selectmen reviewed Capital projects and equipment requests and agreed on the following:

- Set aside \$15,000.00 as a dollar-for-dollar allocation for the Conservation Commission's request for funding for materials to construct a footbridge.
- Allocate \$30,000.00 in the Recreation Commission's budget for engineering survey work of the playing fields at the Old Middle School.
- Determine if it is possible to use State reimbursement funds from the 4 – 8 Middle School project to pay for window repairs and phone upgrades at the Middle School.
- Reduce the funds set-aside for the Lakes Association by \$13,728.00 and include a note

asking the Association to research opportunities for citizens to gain access to the lakes' beaches.

- Ms. Varricchio will research the possibility of the schools' food service vendor assuming the cost of kitchen equipment.
- Defer hiring another full-time police officer until next fiscal year.
- Defer the purchase of mobile technology for the Building Department until next fiscal year.
- Reduce the allocation for GIS software for the Land Use Office to \$10,000.00.
- Consider the option of purchasing the police cruiser and fire truck out of Capital Reserves.

The Selectmen discussed the possibility of deferring several other capital requests; however, they felt that all of the other options had significant downsides or had already been reserved. They agreed that they did not have sufficient information to comment on the Board of Education's capital requests.

The meeting broke at 3:45 p.m. and resumed at 4:20 p.m.

There was a general discussion about future purchases of Open Space and it was agreed that it did not seem it is a viable option at this time.

The Selectmen discussed the benefits of leasing IT equipment. Ms. Varricchio stated she supports a leasing option; however, she noted that the Town would not see a significant impact for several years.

4. Budget Resolution: Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman to recommend to the Board of Finance for the fiscal year 2014-15 a budget of \$10,785,482.00 which represents General Government, Shared Services and Capital.

The Selectmen discussed several of the outstanding items and it was noted that Ms. Varricchio will be researching a number of cost-savings options and agreed that they were not prepared, at this time, to recommend a budget to the Board of Finance. Mr. Lyman withdrew his second and Mr. Walter withdrew his motion.

5. Adjournment: There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Tape: None

Respectfully submitted,

Emmett Lyman, Secretary