

Board of Selectmen  
Town Office Annex  
February 17, 2015  
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: Mark Walter; Emmett Lyman, Ernie Malavasi

Also Present: M. Cooley; S. Daigle; M. Gilroy; Trooper I. Hawes; Officer C. Karabeinikoff; A. Kiley; B. Kiley; C. Mansfield; T. McCabe; J. Moreau; C. Nelan; M. Pear; Officer J. Rhoades; M. Sassi; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler and L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Walter called the meeting to order at 4:32 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

- A. East Haddam Public Library System (4:30pm): Mr. Gilroy introduced Library Board Members Kiley and Nelan present at the meeting and reviewed the Public Library System's 2014-15 accomplishments. He stated that the Library's 2015-16 budget requests included technology purchases and an increase in the Assistant Director's salary to \$38,000.00. He advised that the Library must purchase its computer's through LION in order to take advantage of their service contract. Ms. Varricchio noted that the cost to purchase computers through LION is in line with market pricing.

Mr. Gilroy provided the Selectmen with the findings from his market analysis of salaries of Assistant Library Director's in towns similar in size to East Haddam and noted that the average salary for similar positons is approximately \$50,000.00. He noted that the Town's Assistant Library Director has an extensive financial background and that he would also like to increase her schedule for 29 hours to 35 hours per week.

Mr. Gilroy reviewed the Public Library's Capital budget noting that the Board has requested funding for new flooring at the East Haddam Free Public Library and an HVAC upgrade at the Rathbun Library. Several unspent line items were discussed and Ms. Varricchio stated she would determine whether or not the funds could be used for the HVAC upgrade.

Mr. Gilroy responded to several questions from the Selectmen. In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, he advised that additional staffing would be required to extend the current library hours.

- B. Police Officers & Resident State Trooper (5:00pm): Mr. Mansfield and Trooper Hawes reviewed the Police/Resident State Trooper budgets and noted a \$30,000.00 increase in

the salary line of which \$17,300.00 is contractual. He stated the additional funding would be to hire another full-time officer to cover the night and weekend shifts.

Trooper Hawes reviewed statistics from the years since the additional full-time officer was added to the staff. He noted a significant reduction in burglaries and stated that larcenies have dropped also, however, the system now includes computer crimes so that the larceny statistics are somewhat inflated. He stated that narcotics violations, which generally take place in the evenings, have increased. He agreed to forward the statistics spreadsheet to the Selectmen.

Mr. Mansfield reviewed several items in the budget, including slight increases in the Training and Supplies lines, replacement of two radar guns and uniforms for the proposed new full-time officer.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Lyman, Trooper Hawes advised that burglaries are down both because several of the perpetrators were incarcerated and because of an increased police presence in the neighborhoods.

Mr. Malavasi stated that he could support an additional police officer if there is increased coverage on the weekends. Trooper Hawes noted that could be stipulated in the contract. Trooper Hawes agreed to review emergency calls to evaluate the days/times crimes are being committed so that an appropriate schedule could be proposed for a new hire.

Mr. Mansfield reviewed several items in the Police Capital budget, including moving out the replacement of the Tahoe for a year, replacing the radio in the Tahoe, and replacement of bulletproof vests for the officers.

- C. Emergency Management (5:15pm): Mr. Mansfield advised that, other than the \$10,000.00 contractual increase for KX services, there was little change to the Emergency Management's budget.

Mr. Mansfield reviewed the Emergency Management's Capital budget and discussed the proposed build out of a town-wide radio communication system for first responders. He stated the \$2.1M plan had previously been presented to the Board of Finance. In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Mr. Mansfield stated that a switch from KX to another 911 service provider will not have any impact on the proposed system.

- D. Youth & Family Services (5:30pm): Ms. McCabe and Mr. Sassi reviewed Youth & Family Services (Y&FS) budget and noted that last year they had neglected to include the payroll taxes expense in their budget. They advised that they had made up for the deficit by eliminating the secretarial position and withdrawing funds from investments. Ms. McCabe stated that by adding the payroll taxes expense back into the budget increases the 2015-16 budget. Mr. Sassi stated that that Y&FS will use approximately \$5,000.00 from its non-program fundraising revenues to supplement the budget.

Ms. McCabe and Mr. Sassi advised that all of the Y&FS programs are funded by private dollars and the Local Prevention Council is funded by a federal grant. There was a general discussion about the Y&FS programs, its level of staffing, and how grant funding is utilized. Ms. McCabe stated that they are researching using an unpaid intern to support the counseling program.

Mr. Walter noted that the Y&FS budget has increased by 49% over the past 9 years and Ms. McCabe confirmed that the increase was due to the fact that the state funding has stayed flat over that time period. She noted that there are rumors that the state's funding will be decreased this year and stated that Y&FS maintains a reserve amount of 150% of the state's annual contribution as a backup.

Ms. McCabe and Mr. Sassi responded to several questions from the Selectmen.

- E. Fire Department (6:00pm): Mr. Walter explained that he had separated career and volunteer expenses in the Fire Department's budget. Mr. Pear stated that the career side would like to increase its request for turnout gear from 1 to 2 sets and the volunteer side increased its request from 4 to 7 sets.

Mr. Daigle reviewed several items in the Fire Department's budget, including small increases in Service Training and Building Maintenance lines. There was a general discussion regarding the new software purchase proposed and Mr. Daigle advised that the new software provides better recordkeeping and the statistics it can generate will support future grant requests. He confirmed that the software is compatible with East Haddam's mutual aid towns and that there are no additional hardware requirements.

The Fire Department's Capital budget was discussed and Mr. Daigle advised that the Department's water tanker is 18 years old and reserves have been set aside for its replacement. He stated that he has received an estimate which indicates that the reserves can cover the cost of refurbishing the old tanker plus purchase an additional, barebones, water tanker.

There was a general discussion about the need to start reserving to replace the ladder truck and repurposing the \$12,800.00 reserved for light towers. Mr. Daigle advised that the Zodiac and 90hp engine do not need to be replaced in this budget cycle. The Fire Department representatives and Selectmen also discussed cycling out air-pack replacements versus reserving for a bulk replacement in 2019. Mr. Daigle noted the Fire Department will look into grants to fund the replacement of the air-packs. In response to a question raised, he advised that most of the revenue from fund-raising is used for community events.

- F. Special Revenue Funds: The following Special Revenue Funds were discussed:

- Animal Control: Mr. Mansfield advised that East Hampton pays East Haddam a stipend to use the Town's dog pound and has also requested expanding the

regionalization agreement to include the Animal Control Officers. He stated that there would be no additional cost to the Town and that it would improve coverage for both towns. There was a general discussion about staffing, coverage and use of Animal Control vehicles.

Mr. Mansfield reviewed revenues and expenses for this budget and noted that it is projected the Animal Control Special Revenue Fund will show a profit of approximately \$3,500.00 annually.

Mr. Mansfield noted that the van is past its useful life and that \$24,000.00 in reserves has been earmarked for its replacement.

- Recreation Special Revenue Fund: Ms. Varricchio advised that there is no longer any support for this fund from the General Fund and reviewed the results of the Day Camp program. She noted that for 2014-15 a \$500.00 profit had been projected, however, the Day Camp program currently stands at a \$9,500.00 loss. She advised that the Recreation Commission's revenues have been trending down. Mr. Malavasi asked if discontinuing support from the General Fund has contributed to the downward trend and Ms. Varricchio stated that she feels the trend is more related to the fact that their projections for Day Camp have not been on-target.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Ms. Varricchio advised that the Music on the River event is in its own Special Revenue Fund. Mr. Walter stated that the event will be covered in the Board of Finance's budget discussions.

- Shared Services: Ms. Varricchio discussed the proposed Shared Services budget and noted that a 2.25% increase had been included in the salary line. She stated that the Town Maintenance line had been increased from \$50,000.00 to \$75,000.00 based on this year's experience and the need to do some catch-up work; she noted that this budget line used to be at \$100,000.00.

Ms. Varricchio discussed several budget-related IT items, including a request for \$8,000.00 for upgrades to the Town's website and \$12,500.00 for a new server and laptops. There was a general discussion of a suggestion made by Mr. Malavasi regarding remote hosting of the Town's server needs.

- G. Other Budgets (as time permits): Ms. Varricchio distributed a spreadsheet with information on the Town's cell phone budget. Mr. Malavasi questioned why several positions had Town cell phones and Mr. Walter stated that he feels that access to cell phones for the listed employees increases their productivity and noted that, although most of the employees have personal cell phones, some prefer not to use them for Town business because they do not want them subject to Freedom of Information requests.
- H. Miscellaneous Budgets to be Revisited: No budgets were revisited.

3. Budget Discussion and Deliberation: Ms. Varricchio reviewed the status of the revised budget proposal. Several Capital budget item requests were discussed. Mr. Walter stated that the Land Use Director had advised that his request for a fly over mapping of the Town can be pushed out to next year. Ms. Varricchio stated that \$15,000.00 for Munis can be deleted from the Shared Services Technology budget because she hopes to receive a grant that she would use to request cover this expense.

The Selectmen discussed several items on the Board of Education's Capital budget request. They also discussed the option of purchasing the Public Works truck out of reserves. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Malavasi, Ms. Varricchio reviewed the history of Capital Reserves transfers and Mr. Malavasi stated that he would prefer not to use reserves for the truck purchase.

The Selectmen continued to discuss numerous areas to reduce the budget and made several adjustments, including reducing the Conservation Commission's Open Space improvements request by \$5,000.00, eliminating funding for disk golf, pushing out \$4,000.00 of the Town's website upgrades to next year, and reduction to the Fire Marshal's budget request, among others.

Mr. Malavasi noted the need for the Town to continue to be diligent on the collection of all revenues, fees and penalties. The Selectmen discussed opportunities to develop other sources of revenue for the Town.

4. Budget Resolution: Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to recommend to the Board of Finance for fiscal year 2015-2016, a budget of \$11,079,551.00, which represents General Government Shared Services, Capital and Reserves. Unanimous aye.
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 8:53 p.m.

Taped

Respectfully submitted,

Emmett Lyman, Secretary