

Board of Selectmen Meeting  
Town Hall Annex  
February 23, 2016  
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: M. Walter; S. Link; E. Malavasi

Also Present: Fire Chief B. Auld; D. Barlow; J. Bielot; Fire Lt. H. Bogue; Fire Marshal D. Angersola; M. Gilroy; Officer R. Gingras; Trooper I. Hawes; Officer Karabeinikoff; J. Moreau; Officer Rhoades; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Walter called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. General Budget Review Workshop: Ms. Varricchio distributed updated materials and recapped the changes from the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. She stated she would provide details on the Shared Services budget at the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - A. Police Officers & Resident State Trooper: Resident Trooper Hawes reviewed the status of the police staff. He stated that the \$29,000.00 increase in salaries includes additional part-time hours, projected overtime, and the contractual 2.25% wage increase. In response to a question from Mr. Malavasi, Trooper Hawes confirmed that the addition of two full-time officers has allowed them to cover the evening, weekend, and holiday shifts. He also advised that the training and vehicle maintenance budget lines were increased because of the increase in staffing.

Trooper Hawes discussed the department's request for a \$3,000.00 increase in the water-safety budget line with the Selectmen. He agreed that the use of non-officer staff (i.e. EMTs, fire-fighters, etc.) as the second person on the patrol boats could reduce the overall water-safety expense by approximately \$1,500.00 but would need to be negotiated with the union.

Trooper Hawes reported that the department has requested \$2,500.00 for the party-patrol work they do with Youth & Family Services. He noted that the funding would be viewed favorably by the federal government when it considers their \$20,000.00 grant application.

Officer Rhoades reviewed the crime statistics and noted that there has been a significant decrease in all categories since the Town began using full-time officers after 2012.

The Selectmen discussed the Police Department's capital budget. Trooper Hawes and Officer Rhodes agreed that the requests for a third cruiser, replacing the water-safety boat, and the purchase of a Taser could be pushed out, reducing the requested increase in capital projects from \$134,000.00 to approximately \$50,000.00. The officers requested that the Police department be allowed to keep the Tahoe, after a replacement is purchased, rather than rotating it to another department.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Ms. Varricchio advised that the \$150.00 for insurance is to cover the premium for life insurance for part-time officers. She noted that the Town self-funds this program and stated she would remove the expense from the budget.

Mr. Walter thanked the officers for attending the meeting.

- B. Registrars: Ms. Varricchio noted that the registrars reduced their budget request and as such would not be needed to discuss their budget.
- C. Fire Marshal: Fire Marshal Angersola reviewed his goals and distributed a flier for a planned new adult education program. He stated he has also requested funds to purchase smoke detectors that can be installed in homes without them. He stated that the Book & Periodicals budget line is for handouts for students and the rental of the smoke trailer for emergency escape demonstrations.

In response to a question from Mr. Malavasi, Fire Marshal Angersola confirmed that he is still conducting inspections of multi-families and commercial properties. Mr. Angersola and the Selectmen briefly discussed his work with Franklin Academy and at the new Dutch propane facility.

Mr. Walter thanked Fire Marshal Angersola for participating in the budget meeting.

- D. Public Works: In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Public Works Director Lunt stated that the removal of trees on Beebe Road was for preventative maintenance. She reported that the increase in the Grounds/Maintenance (trees) budget is because the Tree Warden Association is advising Connecticut public works departments to expect an infestation of beetles that will wipe out the ash tree population and they recommend increasing the budget to remove the damaged trees. She noted that there is no way to prevent the infestation.

Director Lunt discussed her request for \$4,000.00 to install GPS in all Public Works vehicles for tracking and monitoring purposes. She discussed the increase in the cell phone budget with Ms. Varricchio and advised that the union contract stipulates that all hourly employees must receive a cell phone stipend. Ms. Varricchio stated she will research the agreement and notate the budget accordingly.

The Selectmen and Ms. Lunt reviewed the increase in the department's salary line and it was noted that, in addition to the negotiated 2.25% increase for hourly workers, the Director's hours were increased from 35 to 40 for 2016-17 and the budget also includes the new Road Superintendent's salary. Ms. Lunt stated that she feels the new Superintendent is getting up to speed quickly and has already added value to the department.

There was a brief discussion regarding the status of the 2015-16 snow removal budget.

Ms. Lunt reviewed the Transfer Station budget with the Selectmen and she stated that revenues from single-stream recycling is down; she noted that reimbursement is currently at \$5/ton while, less than 5 years ago it was \$20/ton.

It was noted that, in the past three years, reserves had been used to purchase new Public Works vehicles. The budget as it stands does not rely on reserves and he would like to suggest that the board recommend a 50% reliance on reserve and completely eliminate the dependency on reserves for this item next year.

The unexpected replacement of the Bone Mill Road bridge was discussed and Ms. Varricchio suggested asking the Board of Finance to consider a special appropriation for the expense. She noted the action would have to be approved at a Town Meeting. The Selectmen agreed to remove the expense for the 2016-17 budget in anticipation of the special appropriation being approved.

Ms. Lunt and the Selectmen discussed other capital projects. Director Lunt stated that she has requested an additional \$25,000.00 for repairs to the salt shed but noted that the work may be able to be done in-house reducing the expense. She stated that she had included a \$10,000.00 request for upgrades to the Transfer Station but is hopeful the Town can get a STEAP grant approved for the work. Ms. Lunt advised that she had removed her request to expand the security system at the Transfer Station.

In response to Ms. Varricchio's comment about Transfer Station fee revenue being down by \$10,000.00, Administrator Lunt advised that reimbursement for scrap metal has decreased.

The Selectmen and Ms. Lunt discussed options for increasing the Transfer Station revenue, including eliminating the tipping subsidy for commercial haulers and charging Town residents an annual fee for a Transfer Station sticker.

Mr. Walter thanked Director Lunt for participating in the budget meeting.

- E. Fire Department: Fire Chief Auld reviewed the department's staff and equipment. He noted that 15 new members have joined the department since last year. Mr. Moreau reviewed the department's career budget and staff. He stated that the increase to the salary line includes one additional part-timer and time-and-a-half pay on holidays for the part-timers. He reviewed the EMS/Fire Department goals and noted that motor vehicle accidents are flat but EMS calls have increased.

Chief Auld reviewed the gear budget and noted that the increase in the training budget reflects the increase in staff. He acknowledged that there was a large increase in the repairs and maintenance budget but explained that, in the past, routine maintenance was often deferred resulting in the need for catch-up repairs. The Selectmen discussed how best to set funds aside for planned repairs and maintenance.

The department's capital budget was discussed. Ms. Varricchio reported that the budget includes the department's request to replace the Zodiac engine (\$4,000.00) and that a full replacement of the boiler may not be necessary. She further noted that a rolling partial replacement plan for the air packs has been worked out and Chief Auld advised that the expense could be reduced if the valves do not have to be replaced.

Mr. Walter thanked Chief Auld and Mr. Moreau for participating in the budget meeting.

- F. East Haddam Public Library System: Mr. Gilroy introduced members of the Library Board of Trustees in attendance at the meeting and distributed a handout covering the Libraries requested budget increases. In response to a question from Ms. Link, Mr. Gilroy stated that the Library has 12 employees whose schedules equate to 7 full-time equivalents. In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, he advised that the LION membership fee has been moved to the Shared Services IT budget.

The Selectmen discussed Mr. Gilroy's \$20,000.00 capital request to replace shelving at the East Haddam Free Public Library. He agreed that, although the shelving is in poor condition, it does not represent a danger and could be replaced over a two-year period. The Selectmen agreed that the \$12,000.00 capital request to make the restroom at the Moodus library ADA compliant should be approved. Ms. Varricchio noted that the \$30,000.00 capital request to replace the boilers could be reduced if an evaluation shows upgrades could extend the life of the equipment.

Trustee Barlow advised the Selectmen that the Board of Trustees is researching grants for the libraries and also considering hosting a large fund-raising gala.

Mr. Walter thanked Mr. Gilroy for his input.

- G. Economic Development Commission: The Economic Development Commission's budget was not discussed.
- H. Other Budgets (as time permits): No other budgets were discussed at the meeting.
- I. Miscellaneous Budgets to be Revisited: No budgets were revisited.
3. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Malavasi, seconded by Ms. Link, to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Unanimous aye

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Link, Secretary