

Board of Selectmen
Town Office Annex
February 11, 2017
Special Budget Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: E. Lyman; S. Link; E. Malavasi

Also Present: D. Dill; E. Dill; Trooper P. Hawes; C. Mansfield; Trooper J. Rhoades; R. Smith;
C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Lyman called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 9:16 a.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. General Budget Review Workshop: Ms. Varricchio reviewed the format of the budget binders. She stated that the Town had negotiated a 2.5% salary increase with two of its unions and that rate of increase had also been used for the Town's non-union employees' salaries and wages and for staff whose collective bargaining agreements are up for negotiation.

She noted that there are significant state cuts this year that will have a negative impact of approximately \$1.6M on the Town's budget. She added that this number changes daily. She further noted that the state is also shifting many costs to cities and towns. There was a general discussion regarding strategies for off-setting the state cuts.

Ms. Varricchio advised that the state had also made cuts to education funding and East Haddam's Board of Education budget increase this year currently at 1.7%.

A. General Government Budgets

The following budgets were reviewed by the Selectmen:

- Assessor – Other than for Salaries & Wages, this budget only increased by \$20. There was a brief discussion regarding the Books & Periodicals line.
- Building Maintenance & Operations – Ms. Varricchio noted that his budget was reduced by approximately \$1,000.00.
- Central Services/Town Office Building - Ms. Varricchio noted that this budget was reduced by approximately \$5,000.00, due to a number of items such as the First Selectman using his own vehicle, copier lease/maintenance savings and building maintenance reductions due to the pending relocation. In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, she stated she would verify the posting of gasoline charges.
- Elections/Registrars – It was noted that since there are no federal primaries or elections planned for 2017-18, this budget line had been reduced.

- Finance Office – The Selectmen noted that only half of the overtime projected for 2016-17 had been expensed and asked if that line item could be reduced for the next fiscal year. Ms. Varricchio recommended maintaining the overtime expense at the same level for 2017-18 due to the many FOIA requests that are being received. There was a general discussion regarding maintaining a separate budget for the FOIA requests.
- Land Use – It was noted that this department’s advertising expense had been significantly reduced as a result of using the East Haddam News for legal postings, etc. Ms. Varricchio noted that the fees budget line was higher than normal because the department had to catch-up on two years of fees. She also agreed to verify why the department was over budget on its engineering expense. It was agreed to ask Mr. Ventres to give an overview of his budget at the 2/13 budget meeting.
- Probate Court – Ms. Varricchio noted that the Town’s assessment for the regional Probate Court had increased 13%.
- Selectmen – Ms. Varricchio noted that \$1,000.00 for the First Selectman’s gasoline stipend had been transferred from the Central Services budget into this budget.
- Tax Collector – It was noted that there was an overall decrease in this budget and Ms. Dill responded to several questions from the Selectmen regarding the department’s budget.
- Town Clerk – Ms. Varricchio noted that the increase in this budget was off-set by increased revenue from fees and licenses.
- Fringe Benefits – The Selectmen discussed the Town’s retiree benefit contributions. Ms. Varricchio advised that they are going out to bid on its health insurance benefits with a goal of maintaining the cost at its present rate.

B. Public Safety Budgets

1. Police – Troopers Hawes and Officer Rhoades reported that body cameras must be purchased for all officers to satisfy a state requirement. In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Trooper Hawes advised that there is no reimbursement for the expense and he has not been able to find any grant funding.

The Troopers responded to several questions from the Selectmen and there was a general discussion regarding the In-Service Training expense. Ms. Varricchio agreed to provide a 5-year history of the In-Service Training expense and Ms. Link requested the Police tighten up their forecast for anticipated 3-year training expenses.

The Police Capital budget requests were discussed and the police advised that in last year’s budget they replaced the Tahoe with an SUV that has a towing package. It was

noted that the Tahoe will eventually be passed on to another Town department. In this year's budget they are requesting a 5th patrol vehicle.

Trooper Hawes stated that they have requested funding to replace the patrol boat with another, larger boat. He stated that the current boat is not sufficient for river patrols and noted that he is investigating the possibility of regionalizing the service with several of the surrounding river towns. Officer Rhoades indicated that they have located a used 24' patrol boat in Rhode Island and, if suitable, it could reduce the expense of this item.

2. Emergency Management/911 Services – Mr. Mansfield reviewed the proposed budget and advised that the only change was a 2.7% increase (\$1,840.00) for the Valley Shore contract. He noted that the Town is currently in the first year of a 3-year contract and the Selectmen should expect an increase when a new contract is negotiated.

Mr. Mansfield stated the communications line may be reduced by approximately \$2,000.00 and he would have more information on that line-item next week. In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Mr. Mansfield advised that the Town did not receive any funds from KX's sale of its assets.

Mr. Mansfield and the Selectmen discussed Emergency Management's Capital budget and Mr. Mansfield noted that his emphasis is on keeping recurring expenses down; however, once the radio system is up and running, the Town will have to budget for on-going maintenance and equipment replacement. He stated that he would like to use the funds from the sale of the old fire/rescue truck to purchase a multi-purpose generator for the Town and that Emergency Management would benefit in having a designated vehicle for transport of supplies, equipment and towing. There was a general discussion regarding CERT training.

At 10:54 a.m. Mr. Lyman called for a break and the meeting resumed at 11:05 a.m.

A. General Government Budgets (continued)

- Municipal Office Complex (Future) – Ms. Varricchio stated that she, Mr. Lyman, Mr. Turner and Ms. Zemienieski had worked on this budget and, since the move to the new location is scheduled for December/January, the budget only represented 6 months.

There was a general discussion regarding the benefits of permanent custodial staff versus a service contract. The group also discussed potential alternatives to full-time custodial staffing to manage fringe benefit expenses. In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Ms. Varricchio stated she would ask Mr. Mansfield whether or not moving expenses were included in the project's budget.

Ms. Zemienieski advised that several budget lines, such as repairs & maintenance, copier leases and building maintenance, represented “start-up” expenses but they would ultimately be merged with the items in the Central Services budget when the town budgets the new complex for a full year in 2018-2019. She reviewed the analysis that had been done regarding building maintenance, supplies and office equipment and noted that it was anticipated that two new multi-purpose copy machines would have to be leased. There was a general discussion regarding the telephone systems for the Town Offices and the Board of Education.

- Conservation Commission – The Selectmen noted there was a 30% increase in this budget. In response to a question raised by the Selectmen, Mr. Smith stated that Open Space trails encourage tourism in the Town and the printed trail guides are very popular. There was a general discussion regarding using an electronic trail app and Mr. Smith advised that the Commissioners had tried that approach; however, it was costly and the developer did not keep it updated.

The Selectmen and Mr. Smith discussed the Conservation Commission’s capital request to purchase a field brush mower. It was noted that the Commission’s Forestry special revenue account has sufficient funds in it to purchase the mower; however, Ms. Varricchio stated that the Board of Finance would have to decide whether or not the funds could be used for that purpose.

Mr. Smith advised that \$10,000.00 had been included in their Capital budget for parking lot improvements. He stated that he expects that amount will be reduced over time once all the properties have had their infrastructure installed and then the annual maintenance could be covered under the Commission’s regular operating budget.

- Resident State Trooper – Ms. Zemienieski reported that, to date, she had not received the expense projections for the East Haddam Resident Trooper Program from the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. She noted that last year the projection was based on 85% of the costs plus fringe for the trooper. She noted that the budget she prepared reflects \$160,000.00 for this line item which is a 4% increase; however, she stated that she just received a notice from CCM a few moments ago advising that the Governor’s budget calls for the towns pay 100% of the cost plus fringe for their Resident State Trooper plus a \$750 per-constable fee for the Trooper’s supervisory function. She noted the potential increase for East Haddam’s Resident State Trooper could bring this line item up to approximately \$194,000.00-\$195,000.00.
- Insurance (Risk Management) – It was noted that there was a decrease in this budget.
- Legal Services – It was noted that this budget also decreased. In response to a question, Mr. Lyman confirmed that the police and clerical union contracts expire 6/30/17 and he is currently beginning those negotiations and the Public Works and Transfer Station contracts will be up for negotiation during the 2017-18 fiscal year.

The Selectmen reviewed this budget line-by-line and discussed opportunities to reduce the budgeted legal expenses.

- Agriculture Commission – Ms. Varricchio noted that his budget was reduced by approximately \$50.00.
- Board of Assessment Appeals – Ms. Varricchio noted that the Town will re-value taxable properties this year which led to a slight increase in this budget.
- Board of Finance – It was noted that this budget was neither increased nor decreased for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Economic Development Commission – Mr. Lyman noted that this budget decreased because some of the expenses budgeted for last fiscal year were one-time expenses.
- Historic District Commission – Ms. Varricchio stated that this budget has remained unchanged from last fiscal year. She noted that the Commission’s advertising line had been cut in half since they began posting their legal notices in the East Haddam News rather than the Hartford Courant.
- Open Space Commission – It was noted that this budget had decreased and the Selectmen agreed to revisit the Commission’s proposed 2017-18 budget with Mr. Ventres at the February 13th Special Budget Workshop Meeting.
- Zoning Board of Appeals – Ms. Varricchio noted that there had been a decrease in this budget.

B. Public Safety Budgets (continued)

- Ambulance Association – The budget request would be located under Sections 6 & 7.
- Building Department – Ms. Varricchio noted that the only increase to this budget was in the Salaries & Wages line. There was a general discussion regarding the expense to have a substitute conduct inspections when the Town’s Building Official was out sick or on vacation.
- Fire Department – Ms. Varricchio noted that the slight increase in this budget was due to the increase in Salaries & Wages which was off-set by a decrease in the Department’s Ground Maintenance line.
- Fire Marshal – Ms. Varricchio noted that the increase in this budget was a result of the increase to the Salaries & Wages line item.

- Paramedic Services – Mr. Lyman stated that this budget remained flat for fiscal year 2017-18 but noted that the Selectmen should expect a significant increase for the next fiscal year.

C. Public Works Budgets: It was noted that the Public Works Director would be attending the February 13th Special Budget Workshop to discuss the budgets for Public Works and the Transfer Station.

D. Health and Social Services Budgets

- Cemeteries – Ms. Varricchio noted that this budget had remained flat.
- Chatham Health – Ms. Varricchio reported that the 4% increase in this budget was a result of the scheduled increase in the cost of the Town's contract for their services.
- Human Service – This is the town's contribution to social service agencies. There was no increase in this budget.
- Senior Services - Ms. Varricchio noted that the increase in this budget was due to the increase in Salaries & Wages. She noted that the program coordinator position has absorbed the café manager position and is now a 35 hour full-time employee.
- Youth and Family Services - It was noted that the Y&FS Director would be attending the February 13th Special Budget Workshop to discuss this budget.
- Early Childhood Council – Ms. Varricchio noted that the Board of Education also contributes an equal share and the increase is driven by the United Way grant that had originally funded this project, had been structured to decline to zero over a period of several years.

E. Recreation & Leisure Budgets

- Lakes Association – The Selectmen agreed to reach out to Randy Miller via phone since he is in Florida for the winter to discuss this budget.
- East Haddam Public Library System - It was noted that the Library Director would be attending the February 13th Special Budget Workshop to discuss this budget.
- Recreation Commission - It was noted that the Recreation Director would be attending the February 13th Special Budget Workshop to discuss this budget.
- Town Greens, Grounds and Fields – Ms. Varricchio advised that the information in this budget had been re-aligned to better reflect the expenses and the only increase was to Salaries & Wages.

- F. Debt Service: It was noted that this budget had declined; however, Ms. Varricchio pointed out that it would increase next year due to the debt incurred for the work on the new Municipal Office Building.
 - G. Interfund Transfers: Ms. Varricchio reminded the board that the increase in Capital Projects Savings is offset by the decrease in Debt Service. She also advised that they had budgeted \$225,000.00 for the revaluation in process but the low bid was for \$195,000.00.
 - H. Shared Services: Ms. Varricchio noted that she would have this budget for the board at their next meeting but discussed several line items in this budget and reported that she expects the budget to be reduced by approximately \$10,000.00.
 - I. Capital Improvement Detail: The board briefly looked at the capital budgets not already discussed earlier in the meeting.
 - J. General Fund Revenue Detail: This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting.
 - K. Other Budgets Items (as time permits): No additional budgets were discussed.
3. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi to adjourn the meeting at 2:00 p.m. Unanimous aye

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Link, Secretary