

Board of Selectmen  
Town Office Annex  
February 13, 2017  
Special Budget Meeting Minutes

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

Also Present: D. Dill; M. Gilroy; J. Leonardo; B. Lunt; T. McCabe; J. Moreau; L. Prichard; T. Quinn; B. Reas; R. Smith; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Lyman called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 9:43 a.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. General Budget Review Workshop: Ms. Varricchio distributed an analysis of the impact of the state's proposed budget cuts on the Town's budget and noted that the potential impact is a negative \$1.9M.

A. General Government Budgets

Several General Government Budgets were discussed later in the meeting and are covered in the minutes below.

B. Public Safety Budgets

- Fire Department (Career) – Mr. Moreau reported that the full-time fire fighter had elected to purchase his health insurance coverage from IAFF resulting in a reduction to the Fringe Benefits expense. In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Mr. Moreau advised that there has only been one full-time fire fighter for over 5 years and part-time staff do not qualify for Fringe Benefits.

Mr. Moreau and the Selectmen discussed coverage provided by the career fire fighters when the Ambulance Association does not have any volunteers scheduled for Saturdays. Mr. Lyman noted that the Town's contract with the Ambulance Association does not address weekend coverage by the paid staff and that gaps in the schedule will be addressed when the contract is renegotiated later this year.

Mr. Moreau reviewed several other line-items and responded to several questions raised by the Selectmen. Ms. Link requested more detail on the expense incurred by the Fire Department due to the ambulance coverage it provides and Mr. Moreau stated that addressing the Ambulance Association's scheduling gaps is the best opportunity for cost-savings in the Fire Department's budget.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Mr. Moreau and Mr. Lyman stated that switching to a contract with a professional ambulance service would be prohibitively expensive.

## I. Capital Improvement Detail

1. Board of Education Superintendent: Superintendent Reas reviewed the Board of Education's Capital requests. He noted that he expected, given the state's cuts, several items may not make it through the budget process. Items that he considered a high priority included replacing the inside fire doors at the Elementary School, replacement of the High School fire alarm system and setting aside funds for the replacement of the roof on the High School (a 44% state reimbursement would apply). Mr. Reas noted that funds were allocated to the 2016-17 budget for the replacement of the boiler at the High School, however, that project has not yet started.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Mr. Reas advised that there are a number of repairs and upgrades necessary at the Elementary School and the Building Advisory Group had to prioritize that list; the items that were chosen for the most recent project included, roof repairs, parking lot safety improvements, and boiler replacements.

## C. Public Works Budgets

- General Highways - Public Works Director Lunt reviewed the department's budget and noted that, other than the increase to Salaries & Wages, the budget remained fairly flat. She noted that Public Works employees are now offered a \$100/year stipend for the use of their personal cell phones.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Ms. Lunt advised that the Engineering and Other Professional Services lines are not always used; however, it is necessary to have funding set aside for unplanned emergencies that require engineering and/or professional services input.

- Snow Removal - Ms. Lunt noted that the snow removal budget was based on a five year average.
- Town Garage Maintenance – Ms. Lunt noted a reduction in electricity to reflect a more accurate usage figure. It was also noted the Cleaning Service line was for a number of other town buildings and not just public works.
- Transfer Station - Ms. Lunt advised that the Transfer Station budget had held steady with the exception of Salaries & Wages and the scheduled increase for the contract with Willimantic Waste. It was noted that the projection for revenue from the Transfer Station had been decreased from last year's amount and Ms. Lunt provided an explanation for the reduction.

The Selectmen and Director Lunt discussed the possibility of instituting a fee for use of the Transfer Station.

Public Works Capital - Ms. Lunt reviewed her capital requests including the purchase of a new backhoe and scheduled road repaving projects.

#### D. Health & Social Services Budgets

1. Youth & Family Services: Director McCabe agreed to confirm with Superintendent Reas regarding their \$8,000.00 contribution toward revenue. She advised that the main increase to the Salaries & Wages line is due to the proposed increase to their counselor's hours to address the waiting list of requests for services.

Ms. McCabe agreed to provide the Board of Selectmen with detail regarding the Services' total restricted and unrestricted funds raised last fiscal year. She confirmed that fundraising pays for programs and not operations. There was a general discussion about the impact of the state's fiscal crisis on Youth & Family Services budget as well as the Town's budget.

#### E. Recreation & Leisure Budgets

1. Parks & Recreation Director: Parks & Recreation Director Quinn reviewed this budget. In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Ms. Quinn addressed the \$5,000.00 increase to the Salaries & Wages line. She advised that there are several reasons for the increase: (1) the mandated increase to the minimum wage rate, (2) her recommendation to increase the hours of the Assistant Director from 10 to 30 hours to provide supervision at the gym in the new Municipal Office Building, and (3) increases to the lifeguards' rate of pay. She noted that competitive rates for lifeguards is around \$10.50/hr. Further, that the state is moving toward requiring day camps to be licensed and when that happens one of the mandates will be to have an on-site adult supervisor for the lifeguards. She is working toward having the Recreation Department's camp licensed in the near future and has built the cost of the expected staffing requirements into her budget's Salaries & Wages line.

Parks & Recreation Capital - Ms. Quinn responded to several questions regarding her Capital requests. In response to a question from the Selectmen, she advised that the cost of upgrades to the tennis courts was not included in the Municipal Offices Building project.

Mr. Lyman called for a break at 11:50 a.m. and the meeting resumed at 12 noon.

2. Library Director: Mr. Gilroy reviewed the East Haddam Public Library System budget and, in response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, confirmed that the Town does not own the East Haddam Free Public Library (EHFPL) building and, therefore, the electricity costs for that building are not included under the rate the Town negotiated. In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Mr. Gilroy explained the ownership status of the two library buildings and the endowment/trust by which each is partially supported.

Mr. Gilroy responded to several questions from the Selectmen regarding staffing and usage of the libraries and noted that state cuts had also impacted the library system. He also advised that the library's contract for telephone services with Frontier has expired and that there could be potential significant savings if the libraries were included on the Town's system. Ms. Varricchio noted that they are still in the analysis stage of what changes will be required when the Town offices and the Board of Education move into the new Municipal Office Building and she will ask to have the libraries included in that analysis.

East Haddam Public Library System Capital - Mr. Gilroy reviewed the Capital requests and stated that his priority is to have the ADA compliance study funded. He agreed that the other Capital items could be pushed out until it is determined which, if either, library building is most adaptable to ADA requirements.

#### A. General Government Budgets (continued)

The following General Government Budgets were discussed:

- Land Use Office – In response to questions from the Selectmen, Mr. Ventres explained that the Engineering and Special Project budget lines are typically used to pay for contracted professional services required for large commercial projects. Ms. Varricchio stated she would provide a 5-year analysis averaging actual expenses under these line items. After further discussion, Mr. Ventres agreed that the Special Project budget line was not required.

The Selectmen and Mr. Ventres agreed on several small budget reductions, totaling approximately \$1,500.00.

- Open Space Committee - Mr. Ventres explained the process of approving a parcel of land as a potential Open Space purchase. He stated the Appraisals and Surveys budget lines would be used if it was determined the Committee was interested in pursuing a particular parcel. There was a brief discussion regarding the state's requirement for signage on Open Space properties to which it contributes.
- Water Pollution Control Authority - Mr. Ventres reviewed the WPCA budget line and provided detail on the revenue generated from the water pollution control system.

The Selectmen and Mr. Ventres agreed that the Legal budget lines for Open Space and WPCA could be reduced.

- Land Use Capital - Regarding Land Use's Capital requests, Mr. Ventres advised that the projected expense for the Fly Over and updating the Plan of Conservation and Development could be reduced to \$25,000.00.

- New Municipal Office Complex – Ms. Varricchio reported that Mr. Mansfield had informed her that moving expenses for the Town Offices and Board of Education were not included in the Building project's budget.

Mr. Malavasi requested Ms. Varricchio get information on the cost of a private cleaning service for the building to compare against the cost of hiring permanent staff.

- F. Debt Service: This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.
- G. Interfund Transfers: This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.
- H. Shared Services: This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.
- I. Capital Improvement Detail: This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in the minutes above.
- J. General Fund Revenue Detail: This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.
- K. Other Budget Items

Mr. Lyman reviewed his proposed cuts to the budget with the Selectmen. The Selectmen agreed with Mr. Lyman's recommendations for approximately \$1M in budget cuts and Ms. Varricchio stated she would update the proposed budget appropriately and provide a summary of the budget cuts.

The Selectmen agreed to schedule the following additional Budget Review Workshop meetings: February 15, 2017 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Grange and, if needed, February 22, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Office Annex.

- 3. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Malavasi, seconded by Mr. Lyman to adjourn the meeting at 2:23 p.m. Unanimous aye

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Link, Secretary