

Board of Selectmen
Town Office Annex
February 22, 2017
Special Budget Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: E. Lyman; S. Link; E. Malavasi
Also Present: R. Turner; C. Varricchio; L. Zemienieski

1. Call to Order: First Selectman Lyman called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. 2017-2018 General Budget Review Workshop

Ms. Varricchio distributed a packet of materials summarizing the cuts the Selectmen had previously made to the proposed budget including changes made to expenditures and revenue. She noted that the Governor's budget cut funding of the Circuit Breaker program in half.

The Selectmen briefly discussed the Circuit Breaker Program and it was noted that participating seniors will receive approximately 50% of what they received last year. Ms. Varricchio confirmed that the town has no say in the amount of state funding for the program.

Ms. Varricchio stated that the current status of the Town's 2017-2018 budget represents an increase in expenses of \$1,128,464, or 3.62% over the last FY budget; however, over \$1M of the increase is a result of the Governor's proposed Teacher Retirement Benefit (TRB) assessment. She noted that the Board of Education budget did not factor in a Special Education grant of approximately \$988k and, consequently, the net effect of the TRB assessment and the Special Education grant results in a lesser increase to overall expenses. Ms. Varricchio advised that netting out the grant and the TRB assessment results in a \$140k, or .4% increase, to the Town's total budget. The Selectmen agreed that it is the Board of Finance's decision as to whether or not the TRB assessment should be included in the Town's budget since a final decision on the Governor's proposal has not yet been made by state legislators.

Mr. Malavasi asked to revisit the Fire Department's Repairs and Maintenance budget line. He noted that only \$18k of the \$70k budgeted for that line item had been spent to date and suggested trimming it. There was a brief discussion regarding this item and the Selectmen agreed to cut the budget line to \$50k and bring that cut to the Board of Finance's attention.

The Selectmen briefly discussed training/education requirements for Town employees. They also reviewed the past 1.5 years of expenditures from the Town's Maintenance Fund budget line equal to or exceeding \$1,000.00. Ms. Varricchio and Mr. Turner clarified some of the smaller Board of Education expenditures. She noted that maintenance of the Town's facilities has improved over the past three years.

The Selectmen reviewed the Libraries and Police budgets and discussed several line items. Ms. Varricchio noted that the Lakes are requesting a 35% increase to their budget and the Selectmen reviewed their previous budgets. They agreed to reduce the Lakes proposed budget to \$20k.

The Selectmen reviewed the Recreation Department budget and discussed the Director's requests for additions to staff and an increase in hourly wages for the life guards. No further changes were made to the Recreation budget.

The Selectmen reviewed Director Gilroy's write-up detailing several items in the Library's budget. The Selectmen agreed to make the following changes to the Library's budget: reduce the Repairs & Maintenance budget line to \$1,500.00, reduce the Grounds Maintenance budget line to \$14,000.00, and keep the Books & Periodicals budget line flat with the last FY budgeted amount. Ms. Varricchio stated she needs to meet with Director Gilroy to re-categorize a number of budget items.

The Selectmen discussed the Senior Center budget and agreed not to make any changes.

The Selectmen took a recess at 7:07 p.m. and reconvened at 7:12 p.m.

Ms. Link advised that Trooper Rhodes had informed her that the body-camera law went into effect in July 2016; however, he said they could push out the purchase for another year to allow them time to research grants and the need for compatibility with their vehicle cameras. The Selectmen agreed to remove the cost of the body-cameras (\$4,000.00) from this fiscal budget.

The Selectmen revisited the proposed budget for the new Municipal Office Building and discussed several line items. They agreed to cut the proposed maintenance staff to one FTE and monitor the situation to see if there are opportunities to phase in the cleaning of other Town facilities by that individual.

Ms. Varricchio advised that, including the changes made to the Town's budget at this meeting and exclusive of the proposed TRB assessment, the total increase to the combined Town and Board of Education budgets is approximately \$69k. She stated that \$9k of the increase is for the paramedic contract with Middlesex Hospital and \$40k is for the increase in the Town's share of the expense of the Resident State Trooper and noted that both expenses are a result of the state's reducing their share of the cost of those programs. There was a brief discussion about the grand list and opportunities for additional PILOT revenues. Ms. Varricchio recommended a separate meeting to brainstorm revenue producing opportunities such as PILOT and the Transfer Station.

3. Potential Budget Resolution

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to recommend to the Board of Finance for fiscal year 2017-2018, a budget of \$11,186,594.00 which represents General

Government, Shared Services, Capital and Reserves. The Board of Selectmen budget has made no provision for the Governor's proposed \$1,016,006.00 Teacher Retirement Benefit assessment to our community. Unanimous aye.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Ms. Varricchio stated that the Selectmen are voting on an expense budget and, consequently, the revenue from the anticipated Special Education grant does not have to be addressed in their recommendation to the Board of Finance.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m. Unanimous aye

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Link, Secretary