

Board of Selectmen
Town Office Annex
February 3, 2018
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: E. Lyman; S. Link; R. Smith

Also Present: M. Callahan; T. Dickinson; D. Dill; T. Gelston; R. Turner; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Lyman called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. General Budget Review Workshop

Ms. Varricchio provided an overview of the budget format and advised that this year a five year average of actual budget data has been added to the expense budgets. In preview of discussion on the Assessor's budget, she noted that the Town provides four tax rebate programs, three of which are state mandated but not all are funded by the state. She noted that the budget narrative will be updated to reflect the amounts of each of these rebate programs.

A. General Government Budgets

Assessor's Budget: The Assessor's budget was reviewed and the Selectmen identified several questions they would like addressed. In response to a question raised by Mr. Smith, Mr. Lyman advised that the Town shares the services of the Assessor with Chester and bills them for 16 hours of her salary.

Building Maintenance & Operations Budget: Ms. Varricchio advised that this budget covers maintenance and repairs for the Old Town Hall, Grange Hall, River House/Annex and Millington Schoolhouse. She noted that it has been reduced by 6% due to the move of the Town offices to the Municipal Office Complex.

Registrar Budget: Ms. Varricchio stated that the increase in the Registrar's budget is due to the state governor's election in 2018.

Finance Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that this budget was reduced since most of the conference and travel expense had been eliminated.

Land Use Budget: Ms. Varricchio advised that the salary for the recording secretary had been reduced and the advertising expense had also gone down since the Town is now using the East Haddam News for its notices. The Selectmen identified several questions they would like addressed by the Land Use Administrator and related Commission Chairmen.

Municipal Office Building/Central Services Budget: The Selectmen reviewed this budget and identified several questions they would like addressed. In response to a questions raised by Ms. Link, Ms. Zemienieski provided information of what was included under the "Repairs & Maintenance" expense line and reviewed several of the utility expenses. The Selectmen discussed how the Board of Education portion of the expenses would be addressed.

Probate Budget: Ms. Varricchio advised that a 2% increase in the Probate Court's lease resulted in a slight increase to this budget.

Selectmen Budget: The Selectmen reviewed the salary line for this budget and Ms. Link reiterated that she still believes the First Selectmen's salary is low which limits the number of qualified candidates that run for office. Ms. Varricchio stated that the Town's First Selectmen salary ranks 11th out of 15 towns of similar size and 80th out of 119 towns statewide.

Tax Collector Budget: The Selectmen reviewed the Tax Collector's budget and Ms. Dill responded to several questions.

Town Clerk Budget: The Selectmen reviewed this budget and identified several questions they would like addressed.

Town Office Building Budget: Ms. Zemienieski advised that a telephone land line would have to be maintained at the site to service the security systems at the vacant buildings. Several other expenses were discussed by the Selectmen.

Fringe Benefits Budget: Ms. Varricchio provided a line-by-line review of this budget. She noted that there was an overall increase of approximately 1%.

Risk Management (Insurance) Budget: Ms. Zemienieski explained the rationale for the adjustments in this budget and stated that she is waiting for CIRMA to provide the premium for the insurance at the new municipal office building.

Legal Budget: Ms. Varricchio advised that there was no increase in this budget. The Selectmen discussed the general counsel expense and identified several questions they would like addressed.

Agriculture Commission Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that no narrative or budget had been provided by the Agriculture Commission so a \$1,000.00 placeholder was put in place.

Board of Assessment Appeals Budget: The Selectmen reviewed this budget and Ms. Dill advised that the increase is because the Board expects property owners to appeal their revaluations next February.

Board of Finance Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that there was no change in this budget and provided information on the contingency expense line.

Conservation Commission Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that this budget was down slightly. In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Mr. Smith discussed printing costs and agreed to provide additional detail. Ms. Varricchio stated she would consolidate some of the line items in the Conservation Commission budget.

Economic Development Commission Budget: The Selectmen discussed the Commission's request to hire an EDC Director/Planner to secure grants for the Town. They identified several questions for the Commissioners regarding EDC's proposed budget.

Historic District Commission Budget: Ms. Varricchio advised that the Commission had not submitted a budget for 2018-19.

Open Space Commission Budget: Ms. Varricchio advised that there was a small decrease in the Open Space Commission's budget. There was a general discussion regarding state grants for open space.

Zoning Board of Appeals Budget: It was noted that there was a slight decrease in the ZBA budget.

Ambulance Association Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that the Ambulance Association had not submitted a narrative for their budget. Mr. Lyman reported that mutual aid calls have gone down and Ms. Link stated she would like the Association to provide their tax returns and financials to the Town per their contract.

Building Department Budget: Ms. Varricchio indicated that there has been a significant decrease in the Building Department's budget due to staffing changes resulting in a part-time Building Official and a 30-hour Administrative Assistant.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Link, to take a brief recess at 11:24 a.m. Unanimous aye.

The meeting reconvened at 11:35 a.m. Mr. Lyman advised that he had received a request to move the Public Comment discussion up in the meeting and the Selectmen agreed to do so.

3. Public Comment: The following public comments were discussed at the meeting:

- Mr. Gelston noted that CCM offers a class on grant-writing and it also has information on software that can locate and help write grants. He suggested the information be brought to the attention of the Economic Development Commission. He also suggested the administrative staffing for the Building and Land Use Departments be re-evaluated when the Town's offices move to the new municipal office complex.
- In response to a question raised by Mr. Gelston, Ms. Varricchio advised that the First Selectmen's salary is \$79,692.00.

2. General Budget Review Workshop (continued)

B. Public Safety Budgets

Public Safety/Emergency Management/911 Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that the only increase to this budget is related to the 911 service. She reported that Valley Shore gave the Town a 3-year consideration as a new client and this is the last year of the reduced fee. She also advised that a federal grant pays for half of the Emergency Management Coordinator's salary. Several questions regarding this budget were identified by the Selectmen.

Fire Department Budget: The Selectmen discussed the response rate of the Fire Department. Ms. Varricchio reported that the Board of Fire Commissioners have proposed a change in the staffing structure of the department which will be discussed when the Fire Department attends their budget review session on February 12th.

Fire Marshal Budget: In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Ms. Varricchio reviewed the duties of the Fire Marshal.

Paramedic Services Budget: There was no increase to this budget.

Police Officers Budget: In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Mr. Lyman advised that the uniform allowance is dictated by the union contract. The Selectmen identified several questions regarding this budget.

Resident State Trooper Budget: There was a general discussion regarding the state's billing rate for Resident State Troopers and the Selectmen identified several questions related to this budget.

C. Public Works Budgets

General Highways Budget: The Selectmen reviewed this budget and identified several questions they would like addressed. In response to a question by Ms. Link, Ms. Varricchio stated she would prepare a report regarding the past 5-years' budgeted and actual performance of this budget. There was a general discussion regarding the turnover in the Superintendent's position.

Snow Removal Budget: The Selectmen reviewed this budget and Ms. Varricchio noted that overtime pay for the snowplow drivers is reflected in this budget.

Town Garage Budget: In response to questions raised by the Selectmen, Ms. Varricchio stated she would re-allocate the cleaning expense line to the Central Services budget. There was a general discussion regarding centralizing the cleaning for all of the Town's buildings to Central Services.

Transfer Station Budget: The Selectmen discussed the request to purchase a new truck to haul waste to the Willimantic location. They also identified several questions they would like the Public Works Director to address.

D. Health & Social Services Budgets

Cemeteries Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that there was a small decrease in this budget. There was a general discussion regarding improvements to the maintenance of the Town's cemeteries.

Chatham Health District Budget: Ms. Varricchio advised that the increase in this budget is related to the decrease in state support of public health agencies. Mr. Lyman noted that one of the benefits of the contract with Chatham Health is the Everbridge emergency notification software.

Human Service Budget: Ms. Varricchio reported that the Town will discontinue paying First Church for parking privileges during Town meetings once the municipal offices move to the Municipal Office Complex location. There was a general discussion regarding several human services programs.

Senior Services Budget: The Selectmen reviewed this budget and discussed centralizing the cleaning services for the Senior Center.

Youth & Family Services Budget: Ms. Varricchio advised that Youth & Family Services have been awarded another 5-year grant for their substance abuse programs.

Early Childhood Council Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that the Board of Education matches the Town's contribution for this program which offsets its United Way grant.

E. Recreation & Leisure Budgets

Lakes Association Budget: The Selectmen discussed the parity of investments across the Town's lakes and several questions were identified for discussion.

Library System Budget: Ms. Varricchio noted that the Assistant Librarian has given notice and a decision was made not to refill the position. The Selectmen raised several questions that they would like addressed and Ms. Link stated she would like to see additional detail regarding the Libraries' expenses.

Recreation Commission Budget: The Selectmen stated they would like more information regarding the Commission's requests for increases in their budget.

Mr. Lyman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, to take a brief recess at 1:05 p.m. Unanimous aye. The meeting reconvened at 1:25 a.m.

Greens/Grounds/Fields Budget: The Selectmen reviewed this budget and several questions were identified.

- F. Debt Service: Ms. Varricchio reviewed the Town's debt service and noted that the USDA loan for the new Municipal Office Building was not yet included in the Town's debt service. She noted that, overall, debt service is down and an amount offsetting the decrease would be added to Interfund Transfers.
- G. Interfund Transfers: Ms. Varricchio provided the Selectmen with a line-by-line review of this item.
- H. Shared Services: The Selectmen agreed to postpone discussion of this agenda item.
- I. Capital Improvement Detail: Ms. Varricchio reviewed funding sources for Capital Improvements. She reviewed the list of Capital Improvement requests and the Selectmen discussed the Planning & Zoning Commission's request to hire a consultant to update the Plan of Conservation & Development. There was a general discussion regarding several Capital Improvement requests and a number of questions were identified. In response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Mr. Lyman stated that the RFQ for environmental testing of the Town Office garage site had been delayed because they wanted to include testing at several additional Town sites in the request. He noted that the RFQ should be posted soon.
- J. General Fund Revenue Detail: Ms. Varricchio discussed the impact of the budget, as presented, on the mil rate. There was a general discussion regarding the downward trend in state support to municipalities.
- K. Other Budgets Items (as time permits): Ms. Zemienieski reviewed the agendas for the February 6th and 12th budget review sessions. The Selectmen briefly discussed the Town's job-sharing agreement with the town of Chester for the Assessor position.
3. Public Comment (continued): In response to a question raised by Ms. Dill, Ms. Varricchio stated that the budget, as presented, represents a .84 mil increase.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to adjourn the meeting at 2:57 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Link, Secretary