

Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Rooms 1 & 2
February 20, 2019
Special Meeting Minutes

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

Also Present: E. Blaschik; W. Brady; M. Callahan; L. D'Aquila; R. Dill; A. Lord; J. Moreau; C. Varricchio; J. Ventres; S. Wheeler; L. Woodward; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Lyman called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. and the attendees said the pledge of alliance.
2. 2019-2020 General Budget Review Workshop

A. General Fund Review Detail

Ms. Varricchio distributed materials related to expense and revenue totals and advised that the Governor had release his budget proposal earlier in the day. She reviewed the preliminary state budget as it relates to the Town's revenues and noted several line items have been significantly reduced. She also distributed sheets showing the budget's impact on the Town's mil rate in \$100,000.00 increments. There was a general discussion regarding how to best manage the expense to repair the damage from the September storm, taking into account expected FEMA reimbursements.

B. Debt Service

Ms. Varricchio briefly discussed this agenda item and noted that the USDA loan for the Municipal Office Complex is being amortized over a 20-year term rather than the usual 40-year term. She also advised that there is over \$4M in the Town's Capital Projects Savings Plan.

Ms. Varricchio stated that the Board of Education will be voting on its Capital Projects plan and the Superintendent will attend the Board of Selectmen's February 25th budget workshop.

C. Interfund Transfers

Ms. Varricchio advised that the High School roof repairs will be paid for from the Board of Education's general budget and reserves as well as Town reserves set aside for the Public Works truck proposed last fiscal year that is not being purchased.

There was a brief additional discussion on this agenda item and Ms. Varricchio reviewed several Special Revenue Funds.

D. Public Works Budget: There was no additional discussion regarding this agenda item at this meeting.

E. Health & Social Services Budgets: There was no additional discussion regarding this agenda item at this meeting.

- F. Recreational & Leisure Budgets: There was no additional discussion regarding this agenda item at this meeting.
- G. Shared Services: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed until the February 25th Budget Review Workshop.
- H. Capital Improvement Detail: There was no additional discussion regarding this agenda item at this meeting.
- I. Public Safety Budgets

Ms. Varricchio advised that she had received the Fire Department's statistics and vehicle information. The Selectmen discussed strategies to reduce the expense related to the department's increased emergency call responses. They also discussed discrepancies with the department's fuel charges.

The Selectmen discussed the proposal for a School District Resource Officer in the schools. They also agreed to reduce the Police department's vehicle maintenance budget to \$4,000.00.

The Selectmen agreed to Ms. Varricchio's request to move the request for a new Animal Control vehicle to the Capital plan.

Ms. Varricchio advised that she had received notice from the state for the Resident State Trooper reimbursement expense. Ms. Zemienieski stated that expense had increased slightly from her projection because the increase to the overhead piece had gone up by 6%. There was a general discussion regarding the Town's ability to provide input into the its trooper assignment and Mr. Smith expressed his opinion that the Town should not accept canine officers due to the added expense and associated time away from duty.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to take a brief recess at 5:00 p.m. Unanimous aye. The meeting reconvened at 5:05 p.m.

- 1. Ambulance Association: Ms. D'Aquila distributed emergency call statistics sheets and Ms. Varricchio distributed the Association's Profit and Loss information.

Mr. Lyman referenced the Fire Department's request for an additional full-time staff person due to its increased response rate to emergency calls. Ms. D'Aquila advised that there has been a reduced number of volunteers signing up to be on the ambulance schedule. She stated that the Association had met with Middlesex Hospital regarding concerns about the overall increase in mutual aid calls and they had developed a plan to address the problem. She reported that, effective March 1st, the Association is revamping its incentive plan for volunteers, will be hiring an EMS coordinator and is contracting with a temporary emergency services agency to fill scheduling gaps. In response to a question from Mr. Smith, Ms. D'Aquila confirmed that the Association has the funding for the EMS coordinator and temporary emergency services wages.

In response to a request from Ms. Link, Ms. D'Aquila agreed to provide a copy of the Association's balance sheet and a graph of mutual aid calls from 2016 thru the end of 2018. In response to a question from the Selectmen, Ms. Woodward stated that the Association's collection rate is 99%.

There was a brief discussion regarding the timing of purchasing a new ambulance and Ms. Varricchio confirmed that the purchase is in the current capital budget plan.

J. General Government Budgets

1. Land Use Office – P&Z, IWWC, WPCA, OPSP, HDC: The Selectmen discussed the Economic Development Commission’s request for funding for several engineering plans/studies. Mr. Ventres advised that EDC had contracted for a sewer extension study in 2015-2016 and any future studies should be within the WPCA budgetary responsibilities. He further noted that the state has issued a notice that they will not contribute to any sewer/water projects unless a need can be shown; he advised that there have been no septic failures in the Moodus or 4-Corners commercial districts and, it is his opinion, that there is not currently a need for extending the sewer lines.

Mr. Ventres advised that the Plan of Conservation and Development calls for additional sidewalks in the Moodus area but not in the 4-Corners area. He also noted that he believes technology in the Land Use department can develop a plan for Town-owned public pathways along the riverfront and to the Nathan Hale School House property at the old Town Office site.

The Selectmen agreed to remove the proposed \$12,000.00 for contracted services from EDC’s budget.

- Planning & Zoning Commission – Ms. Varricchio confirmed that \$25,000.00 will be transferred out of the capital budget plan and into the P&Z general budget and that those funds will roll-over from year-to-year.
- Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission – There was no discussion regarding the IWWC budget.
- Water Pollution Control Authority – Mr. Lord discussed recent equipment repairs and noted that the four existing vaults were under-sized and he would like to enlarge some/all of them at some point in the future.
- Open Space Committee – Ms. Varricchio noted that there was no change to the Open Space Committee’s budget. There was a brief discussion regarding the cost of property appraisals and, in response to a question raised by Ms. Link, Mr. Ventres advised that CT DEEP has signage requirements for open space.
- Historic Districts Commission – Mr. Brady noted that there was no change to the Historic Districts Commission’s budget other than the standard increase to the recording secretary’s salary. He noted that he and Mr. Ventres are in the process of organizing the historic districts records so that they can be digitized. He confirmed that the digitization will be done in-house and will result in no increase to the Commission’s budget. He further advised that he plans to take on a personal project of creating a new photographic record of the properties in the historic districts to update the photos that were taken in the 1970s.

The Selectmen and Mr. Ventres discussed the Land Use department's engineering budget line and Ms. Link noted that it had not been spent the past two fiscal years and she does not want citizens to pay taxes on items that are not expended. There was a brief discussion regarding unplanned engineering needs and it was agreed to maintain \$2,000.00 for engineering services in the WPCA and IWWC budgets.

K. Other Budget Items

The Selectmen briefly reviewed a number of departmental budgets. In response to a request from Ms. Link, Ms. Varricchio agreed to move the Board of Finance's recording secretary wages from the Shared Services budget into the Board of Finance budget.

Ms. Varricchio reviewed changes made to the Conservation Commission's budget. She noted that a new Special Revenue Fund will be created for the Conservation Commission and a threshold will be established such that funds exceeding the threshold will be moved to the Commission's capital budget.

The Selectmen discussed the schedule for the Public Works seasonal workers and the Facilities department's request to add a seasonal worker to its budget.

The Selectmen discussed the increase in the Fire Department's budget regarding the career staff's response to emergency ambulance calls and Mr. Smith recommended that the department/town be reimbursed by the Ambulance Association for those calls. Mr. Lyman advised that he is negotiating the new contract with the Ambulance Association and they are discussing payment of the \$50 per call volunteer stipend to the Town as reimbursement.

The Selectmen agreed to schedule a tentative wrap-up workshop for 6:00 p.m. on February 26th.

3. Public Comment

Mr. Moreau reiterated that he supports a 3-person coverage at the fire house; however, stated that he feels that the schedule could be accommodated without adding an additional full-time person through the use of the part-time staff and volunteers. He noted that he had previously submitted such a scheduling proposal to the Town.

Mr. Moreau stated that he has always supported paying the equivalent of the ambulance volunteer stipend to the town as reimbursement for the emergency response calls the career staff conduct. He also noted that, in general, overall fire calls are down and most fire departments respond to more EMS calls.

Mr. Moreau noted his background as a professional fire-fighter for the town of West Hartford and offered to provide any assistance he could to the Town regarding any questions they may have. In response to a request from Mr. Smith, Mr. Moreau agreed to send the Selectmen his scheduling proposal.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Ms. Link, to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Link, Secretary