

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
Budget Deliberations
April 7, 2008

Present: Susan Bransfield-First Selectwoman, Carl Chudzik, John Anderson, Brian Flood, Mark Finkelstein, Sharon Gibala and Kathy Richards

The Special Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The first order of business was to address questions brought up during the budget workshops. Mrs. Bransfield presented answers to these questions.

What is the increase for the non-union salaries? There are approximately \$23,590 salary increases in the proposed budget that are not contractual.

Can the costs of streetlights be reduced? There is \$125,000 budget for street lights. Director of Public Works-Rick Kelsey stated that there are approximately 750 street lights in town. The cost per light is approximately \$166.00. Mr. Kelsey presented the BOS with some of the options they have to decrease the costs for this budget item:

1. Light only intersections (approx. 250 intersections in town)
2. Reduce lights by ½ the current amount to light only 325 of 750 lights.
3. Target an amount to save, i.e. X amount of dollars

Is there staffing in the budget for the Skate Park? Mrs. Bransfield cut this amount prior to bringing the budget to the BOS. Sandy Darna, at the budget hearings, asked to have this amount put back into her budget. The fund balance for Parks and Recreation was approximately \$76,000 as of June 30, 2007.

Is there enough money budgeted for fuel accounts? Rob Buden, Director of Finance, stated that he believes there is, that a variable rate is being used to calculate the fuels costs for next year. He suggested leaving the amounts as is and using contingency if needed.

Clarification on the Library budget request: There is a position not currently staffed that is falsely overstating the Library budget. One position is stated as 30 hours per week, when it is supposed to be 25. The 16 hour part time position is included in the budget request.

With regard to Education Cost Sharing Grant money that the Town will be receiving, Mark Finkelstein stated that he feels this cannot be used to offset operating expenses because doing so will set up the budget for automatic increases next year. He would rather see this money be used to offset one-time expense(s).

There was discussion on having the non-union positions receive a 0% increase in salary. Carl Chudzik stated that he feels these positions are getting raises as part of their fringe benefits, i.e. rising medical costs, and that the BOS should make a statement that as a sign of hard economic times, pay increases not be given to these workers.

Mark Finkelstein disagreed with this and stated that he cannot support 0% increases for the department heads and non-union positions.

The BOS set the goal for budget deliberations to end up with a 0% increase in the mill rate. Susan Bransfield made the following recommendations going into the deliberations:

Recommendation	Reduction/increase
Reduce BOE budget	(\$150,000.00)
Reduce town pension contributions	(\$113,918)
Reduce fringe benefits w/c insurance	(\$19,340)
Increase fringe benefits	\$9418
Increase fringe benefits	\$ 9902
Grounds Equip Repair & Rental	(\$700)

Page by page deliberations by the BOS brought about the following increases/decreases:

Budget name	Increase/decrease
Board of Selectman	No changes
First Selectman	No changes; Mark Finkelstein suggested increased for First Selectman position. Decision pending.
Probate court	No changes
Elections	Stands as presented. Decision pending on reductions for stipends. Decision pending on private duty police compensation for Presidential Election.
Finance department	No changes, stands as presented
Collector of Revenue	No changes, stands as presented.
Assessors office	No changes, stands as presented
Board of assessment appeals	No changes, stands as presented
Town Clerk	Reduce indexing and recording by (2,000.00)
Town council	No changes, stands as presented
Central services	No changes, stands as presented
Technology	No changes, stands as presented
Fire department	No changes, stands as presented
Fire Marshall Office	Decrease payroll by (\$5,000.00)
Emergency Management	No changes, stands as presented
Building Department	No changes, stands as presented
Emergency Dispatch	No changes, stands as presented
Building Departments	No changes, stands as presented
Police Department	Reduce overtime account (\$3,000.00)
Public Works Director	No changes, stands as presented
Highway Department	Fiscal notes to be amended; highway supervisor is excluded from the payroll

Vehicle Maintenance	Equipment and repair increased by \$10,000
Town Engineer	No changes, stands as presented

There was a motion by Sharon Gibala, seconded by Brian Flood to recess the meeting. Vote unanimous, motion carried. The meeting was recessed at 8:55 pm. The meeting was reconvened at 9:09 pm.

Page by page deliberations continued with the following increases/decreases:

Budget Name	Increase/decrease
Street Lighting	Reduce budget by (\$31, 250.) Public Works will try to reduce the number of street lights lit by 25%.
Grounds Maintenance	Decision pending
Ethics Budget	Total budget = \$1500.00
Snow removal	No changes, stands as presented
Planning Department	No changes, stands as presented
Zoning Enforcement	No changes, stands as presented
Planning and Zoning Commission	Reduce plan consultant by (\$5,500.00)
Zoning Board of Appeals	Reduce Board Clerk by (\$400.00)
Inland Wetlands Commission	Increase CT Cons. Division by \$82 to \$1,824
Conservation Commission	No changes, stands as presented
Capital Expenditures Commission	No Changes, stands as presented
Health Department	Add \$92
Environmental Health	No changes
Social Services	Reduce fireworks by (\$3,000.00)
Senior Citizens Center	No changes, stands as presented
Municipal Agents for the Elderly	Reduced van drivers stipend by (\$1,000.00)
Portland Library	After discussion, clarification of staffing needs and budgeted amounts, part time payroll reduced by (\$16,153.00) There will be corresponding FICA/Medicare reductions TBD.
Fringe Benefits	See above for recommendations
Risk Management	No changes, stands as presented
Debt Service	No changes, stands as presented
Contingency	Decision pending
Transfers	Decision pending
Capital Improvement Plan	Increase \$20,000 repair of slate roof – BIS Reduce police cruisers and equipment (\$53,800) Reduce grounds maintenance (\$41,000)

There was a motion by Sharon Gibala, seconded by Mark Finkelstein, to recess the meeting. Vote unanimous, motion carried. The meeting was recessed at 10:39 pm. The meeting was reconvened at 10:50 pm.

Mrs. Bransfield reviewed for the BOS the reductions/additions discussed. There was further discussion on the % of salary increases that will be given to non-union employees and elected officials. Consensus of the BOS is that 2.5% salary increases will be given. There was discussion regarding the use of Fund Balance to offset expenses and keep the mil rate to a 0% increase.

Budget deliberations will continue on April 8, 2008 @ 7:00 pm in the Wagner Room of the Public Library. There being no further discussion, there was a motion by Mark Finkelstein, seconded by Kathy Richards, to adjourn the meeting. Vote unanimous, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Siena, Board Clerk