

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
March 22, 2022**

Present: Ryan Curley-First Selectman, John Dillon, Michael Hernandez, Robert Hetrick, Jr., Shaun Manning, Ralph Zampano

Absent: Michael Pelton

Others Present: Tom Robinson-Finance Director; Dr. Charles Britton-Superintendent of Schools; Stephanie Fragola-Ass't to Superintendent; Sharon Peters-BOE Chair; Bob Shea-PW Director; Carl Johnson-BOE; Members of the Public and Media

1. FIRST SELECTMAN CALL BUDGET WORKSHOP TO ORDER

First Selectman Ryan Curley called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Buck-Foreman Community Room located at 265 Main Street, Portland, CT.

2. Departmental Budget Workshop:

- **Board of Education**

Supt. Charles Britton gave a summary reiterating how they built the budget to align every nickel. His presentation was the vision for the next several years. There is an increase in social and emotional needs. He has a meeting next week with the architect. They made a decision this year to let the committee do their work and make a very comprehensive plan.

The percentage increase is 2.75%. They have been sensitive to increases regarding inflation and the world state. They are comfortable that 2.75% will get us started. They will watch the prices for gas and oil. We are heading into a difficult year. The 2.75% puts them in a strong position. They will be bringing back one administrative assistant. The athletic department is too small but we need an assistant principal. A couple of paraprofessionals have been added. The budget helps to maintain our facilities. They decided to hold off for capital improvements; hope by June they can come forward with a report and next year they will have a modernization plan. This budget keeps us in a good position. Also, with respect to the federal funds received for the corona virus relief, we do have \$312,000 that is available as a 3-year grant. Half of that money is spent or earmarked. His recommendation is to not earmark it; he thinks we need a couple of months and if we are out of the pandemic, it can be used to help students recover from the pandemic and help us improve the indoor air quality.

Ralph Zampano said he remembers garbage pails in the hall collecting water. Carl Johnson responded and said it involves the chimney. He explained the situation and said it is part of the big project. Take part of the chimney down and encapsulate it. Told how wind can cause the problem to happen.

Michael Hernandez asked about the rotation and purchase of chrome books.

A grant was received for \$165,000 and the second batch is \$80,000, allowing the purchase of more chrome books. In 2-3 years, it will have to be funded again and they have a plan for that. The problem is that they come out of the warranty at different times and there are different models. This purchase will put us in a more consistent cycle. Stephenie Fragola explained last year's purchase as well as the current year and explained the warranty program.

Ryan Curley said they plan to work on the track.

- **Public Works and other related funds**

Tom Robinson facilitated the remainder of the workshop.

P.57 Public Works Director: Budget is made up of two full time employees, the Director and the Administrative Assistant to the Director. Slight increase of 3.17%.

P. 59 Highway Department: Increase in payroll. Employee turnover resulted in lower proposed costs than previous years. Overtime is for storm and snow removal. Also had storms that brought trees down. There is a bigger increase in Item 51001 for fuel costs; so other areas were minimized. Equipment supplies and road materials went up. 2.40% increase.

P. 61 Vehicle Maintenance: Made up of one full-time mechanic and one assistant mechanic. Increase is 3%.

P.63 Town Engineer: Engages engineering services as needed. May go over but, at this time, no increase.

P. 65 Street Lighting: 2.50% increase. On distribution side improved rate for supply. Increase in distribution is expected.

- **Grounds Maintenance**

P.67 Grounds Maintenance: Increase of 3.73%. Has 3 full-time employees, one seasonal part-time worker plus about 10% of the full-time Grounds Maintenance Supervisor's salary shared with BOE. Doing pretty good with gas and diesel fuel.

P. 69 Town Buildings Maintenance: 3.49% increase. Increase in service contracts and building supplies.

P.71 Snow Removal: Trying to get it more stable. Overtime increased. This line seems appropriate given the storms in fiscal year 2021-2022. Road materials is expected to increase. Increase of 3.60%.

P.107. Interfund Transfers Out: Increase of 37.01%. Item 90012 Transfer Out – Cap Non rec Town \$322,000. Item 90013 Transfer Out – Cap Non rec BOE reduced to \$12,000.

P.113 Sewer Department: Sewer and water are driven by expenditures. We didn't change much on the revenue side.

P.114 Sewer Department: Tom quickly went through the personnel expenditures. Service contracts went up for pipe cleaning during covid. Electricity has gone up. Increase of 3.03%.

P.116 Water Department: Driven by expenditures. We will hit close to the number in the budget. Personnel expenditures made up of two employees and part-time water and sewer clerk. Don't expect much of an increase. Increase of 3.37%

P. 122 Town Aid Road Fund: Is a state grant to make road improvements. Public Works activity decrease of -0.06%. Fund of \$239,056

P.127: Resource Recovery Department: Increase in bulky waste to \$76,000. Last year was 1st year for brush. Transfer to general fund Resource Recovery has two employees. Service contracts increases \$2,000. Hopes that the sale of metal will continue to be strong. Some bags meet goals but some not.

P. 130: Building Maintenance Fund: Things not in our budget. Very effective for town and board. Remains steady.

- **Parks & Recreation**

P. 132: Parks and Recreation Department: Spoke to director and reviewing what we can get completed and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds within this fund. Next year ARP not included. Work in progress so trying to get fiscal 2023 back to pre-pandemic situation. They currently do not have many participants. They will continue to work on all the projects that the department has. Has two employees: 1-director, 1-clerical staff and temp payroll to help support the park and rec activities. Increase of 2.74%.

- **Long Range Capital**

P.135 Capital Improvement Plan: The amount identified in the CIP for fiscal year 2023 through 2027 is \$41,541,295. \$1,011,595 approved for 2022-23. Mr. Robinson reviewed each item making up the \$290,000 funded through taxation on P. 135.

Total State Grants: \$62,595

Park & Rec Field Improvements \$25,000

\$37,595 for maintenance carpeting in municipal buildings (For Library)

P.136 Capital Improvement Plan - Water and Sewer is on P. 141. Mr. Robinson reviewed the items and costs for the Sewer Department and the Water Department

Chris Donahue (Long Range Capital Improvement Commission) said it is a tough budget year. There are many capital improvement needs and we are only making a small dent in them. He appreciates what the BOS needs to do. There is much need in the infrastructure. Appreciate what you can do to help; meet with dept. heads. Ryan Curley thanked the Capital Improvement Commission for their work.

Ralph Zampano commented on the Town-Wide Improvement for Camera and Fire Alarm System and expressed concern about what happens after hours.

Michael Hernandez asked for an explanation of the Medical Insurance on P.128. Tom responded with an explanation of the medical insurance.

Robert Hetrick asked if we saved money on the LED lights. Bob Shea responded and said the majority are changed over to LED and we did see savings but some are not changed over yet. They are dealing with vendors to get parts. They will have to be updated in the near future.

Robert Hetrick then asked about the storm sewer cleaning. Bob Shea responded that we did very well with it. The way we treat our roads in winter is saving us money. They are working with DEEP to get some forgiveness on the amount of storm drains we have to do. When we are cleaning basins, we measure the depth and often times, it was above the pipe. Since we changed product over, it has made a huge difference in our storm water control. It is a great program and we are trying to save on both ends. We are spending two months less time. The whole thing is now meshing together.

Shaun Manning asked about the truck wash. Bob Shea said we continue to look for a spot that is going to work. It will be more efficient in one spot. There are ways to work within that. We will work with our agencies and will continue to do that. We must find a location where we can wash all our vehicles.

The consensus was to cancel the budget workshop scheduled for March 23rd. The next budget workshops will be on Tuesday, March 29 at 7:00 p.m. and on Wednesday, March 30. The budget adoption is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6.

Ryan thanked Tom for putting his time and work on the budget and explaining it so well.

3. Adjourn Budget Workshop

Robert Hetrick made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by John Dillon. Meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hoy, Board Clerk