

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP DELIBERATION
MINUTES
March 26, 2024**

Present: Ryan Curley-First Selectman, John Dillon, Michael Hernandez, Robert Hetrick, Jr., Shaun Manning, Michael Pelton, Jim Tripp

Others Present: Members of the Staff, Public and Media

1. FIRST SELECTMAN CALL BUDGET WORKSHOP TO ORDER

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

2. Budget Deliberations

Ryan received a number of letters supporting the BOE budget. He thanked those who wrote in.

Changes: Revenue Page 5-7:

P.6, 00302 PILOT Telecommunications down by \$23,000 to \$22,000.

Item 00012, Prop Taxes – Interest & Liens, go from 150,000 to 155,000.

Structural Permits, 00328 go from \$331,000 to \$349,000.

P.136: 00214 State of CT Grants, increase to \$130,327

P. 140, Sidewalk Repair/Construction grant-funded - \$50,327.

P.135 Cap. Improvement: Michael Hernandez asked if the \$92,000 for the dump truck could be pushed off for a year. A discussion ensued with the decision to budget \$72,000 to replace the dump body includes tarp. This leaves \$20,000 (13,000 plus 5% say \$14,000.) Allocate for dump body without canvas. Money will go for attachment but if can get mulcher then get mulcher instead. \$65,500 with dump body + \$14,000 = \$79,500. If it comes in under then can get the mulcher.

Tom expressed concern that there is no cushion to absorb any increase in dollar value. If there is an overage, then they have to have a special meeting to get the money. Shaun asked about the cost of renting equipment. Because the equipment can get beat up, it is more cost-effective to buy. If properly maintained, it could last 20-30 years.

Ray Sajdak spoke regarding the status the Fire Marshal's budget. It was easier in 2009 to create a budget than it is now. For next year, he put in \$38,000. Currently he is averaging \$4,500/month due to inspections at Brainerd Place. They don't use the money just because it is there. Dollar General was a quick 30-day build. He will have a third review for a special permit for Brainerd Place. He put a request in for \$52,000. He is worried about what we are seeing this year going into next year's budget. He thinks we will be short on the payroll side. \$54,500 would get the job done. Decision was to table it for now.

Page 93, Social Services. Robert Hetrick suggested removing \$500 from each of two accounts and giving the Portland Fair an extra \$1,000. After a brief discussion, it was decided to not move the funds and the Fair donation will remain at \$2,500.

Fire Chief Puida expressed need for more increased funds for more training. He has new members that are being certified. He shared some of the costs.

Page 119: Animal Control: John Dillon questioned the nearly \$105,000 for Animal Control and if there was a better option. Ryan said right now, we have a good deal with the current situation. He said there is a new State statute regarding dog pounds and we may be forced to look elsewhere because it may be price prohibitive. Ryan said we may look further at Middletown. We have one full-time employee and any change would impact that employee.

Pelton: BOE Doesn't see lot of areas you can cut. If you had to, where would you cut and if you had more, what would you fund.

Dr. Britton told how they already made significant cuts and the difficulty in juggling the budget as the number of students can constantly be changing. He again explained the difficulty in knowing how many kindergarten classes they will need as well as the ever-fluctuating costs for outplacement.

Shaun asked about the maintenance budget. He told of the recent tour what needed repairs they saw. He can't understand why we're not maintaining them. Bob Shea: explained that ceiling tiles fall during rainstorms. It is an on-going process. He explained the difficulty and how he is always struggling with it. Cosmetic stuff is tough!

Michael Hernandez believes we are spending too much on overhead in BOE. We need to get rid of a building and we need to do it now. Why aren't we starting it now? We have way too many buildings. Don't cut teachers; go administrative.

Capital Improvement Plan, Page 137, High/Middle School. The tennis courts are beyond repair. Change amount to \$575,000 for 2025-2026 and \$575,000 for 2026-2027 for tennis court replacement. Longevity should be the same as the track. Bob Shea said for now, he hopes to make repairs.

Page 138, 89040: Remove \$13,000 from the 2024-2025 budget for "Replace Outboard Motor on M7" and add the \$13,000 to the 2025-2026 budget under Thermal Imaging Cameras.

P.140, Highway Division/Vehicle Maintenance: Increase excavator to \$20,000 in 2024-25, and then \$30,000 in 2025-2026.

Shaun Manning made a motion to cancel tomorrow's budget deliberation, seconded by Jim Tripp, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

3. Adjourn Budget Workshop

Shaun Manning made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Robert Hetrick, all were in favor; meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hoy, Board Clerk