

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2020
8:30 A.M. – COMMUNITY CENTER**

First Selectman Matthew Hoey called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Present: Board Members: Matthew Hoey, Charles Havrda, Susan Renner,
Louis Federici and Sandy Ruoff

Town Officials: Board of Finance Members: Michael Ayles,
Veronica Wallace, Jonathan Trotta, Jeffrey
Beatty, Kenneth Gamerman, and Robert Hartmann,
Finance Director Maryjane Malavasi, Human
Resources Director Mitch Goldblatt, Clerk Traci
Brinkman, Assessor Jenn Bernardo, Library
Director Rob McCoolle and Human Services Chair
Pam Ellman. Joining the meeting in progress: Parks
and Recreation Director Rick Maynard, Parks and
Recreation Commission Chair Rose Dostert, Police
Chief Jeff Hutchinson, Deputy Chief Butch Hyatt,
Police Commission Chair Bob Welsh, Facilities
Engineer Steve Neydorff, Town Engineer Janice
Plaziak, Public Works Director Tom Fillion, PWC
Chair Mark Larkins and PWC Member Richard
Wallace, Fire Chief Charles Herrschaft, Asst. Fire
Chief Mike Shove and Fire Commission Chair Ken
Wilson, Jr.

Media: Mike Graziano, taping for GCTV

Mr. Hoey noted that within the individual department budgets you will not see many salary increases since there are five to six unions contracts coming up for negotiations. The money for that is put into Reserve for Personnel. He added that the numbers are a bit misleading since you will not see the salary impacts, however the overall budget does include that money it is just in a different area.

Mr. Goldblatt noted that they did include a \$.25 per hour increase for the board and commission secretaries so that small increase will show in the budgets.

- 1. To meet with the following town departments to discuss budget requests:**

Assessor (Jennifer Bernardo)

1.2% or \$2,724 decrease in budget

Ms. Bernardo said part of the decrease can be attributed to a new hire in her office at a lower amount. She did add a part-time salary line, which is just money reallocated from the field work line. There is a slight increase in printing and scanning. They are trying to scan old field cards because it is very helpful for the Health Department. They are also looking to add a fax module to the copy machine. They are projecting a slight increase in revenues than the previous year.

Board of Assessment Appeals (Barbara Hammarlund)

15.2% or \$520 decrease in budget.

Ms. Hammarlund noted that the stipends were reduced since there are less members on the board. The part-time salary line was removed since those duties have been added to the Assessors Aide position. They also reduced training since only new members need to go through that.

Library (Rob McCoole)

.4% or \$4,190 decrease in budget.

Mr. McCoole said the support they receive from the Friends of the Library and the Library Board is incredible. He noted there is a slight increase in the maintenance line since they moved the \$5,000 from capital into there. Mr. McCoole said he was able to reduce electricity which has been down because of energy upgrades with Johnson Controls.

He added that there is a slight decrease in revenues. The Library consortium they are a part of has implemented a new renewal policy. If a patron does not ask for the renewal, instead of imposing a fine, the book will automatically be renewed two times. If it is not returned after that, then a fine is imposed. Mr. McCoole said that while it will decrease the revenues from fines they receive it will reduce activity at the circulation desk.

He added that the salaries are a bit lower due to a lower cost for a replacement. Mr. McCoole said their book line is very low at \$2,500. It used to be \$24,000, but was cut over the years. He would like to eventually see it at about \$6,000. He noted that while ebooks and electronic requests have increased, it is not replacing the demand for hard copies.

Human Services (Pam Ellman)

3.3% or \$3,000 increase in budget.

Ms. Ellman explained that all the agencies in the budget this year are the same except for two exceptions. Lifelinx is included again this year, but they did not receive an application from Orchard House. She added that every agency must provide services to Guilford residents. This year they are recommending a substantial increase to the VNA and BH Care. Ms. Ellman went over the services provided by both organizations and noted that 284 Guilford residents are served by BH Care and 569 Guilford residents were provided homecare this past year by the VNA. She added that with the new Medicare Payment Model there is a drastic change to reimbursement which will put many healthcare agencies out of business. She noted that the VNA will have to change its model, whereas it will still serve the same patients, but would have to make fewer visits.

There was discussion about the application process and how the Human Services Council determines its funding recommendations as well as how to make cuts if requested by the Board of Selectmen.

Parks and Recreation (Rick Maynard, Rose Dostert)

1.9% or \$30,978 increase in the budget

Mr. Maynard gave a brief overview of the department and how many people they serve through their various programs.

He noted a drop in utilities due to efficiencies from the Johnson Controls contract. There is also an estimated decrease in Natural Gas due to installation of new boilers. He increased the water usage at Jacobs Beach in anticipation of the splash pad. Building maintenance is down due to an upgraded HVAC system. There is an increase of \$4,600 due to the rental of the office trailer. Last year they rented it for a half year, but this year it is in the budget for a full year. Field maintenance has increased because they are working toward using more organic fertilizer. There is a \$1,000 increase in the senior meal subsidy, but they did go up \$.25 per meal. Mr. Maynard said overtime increased \$5,000 due to anticipated salary increases in addition they provide two or three employees to help Public Works plowing roads. They increased the part-time receptionist hours from 17.5 to 19.5 hours. The main driver for this increase is an increase in calls for appointments and meals etc. He added that Guilford has a graying population. The cost is \$12,000 for those additional hours, but they expect a contribution from the Shoreline Institute for Learning of \$3,000 so the net impact is \$9,000.

There was discussion about the Splash Pad and if the project would even be completed this year since there is still a great deal of fundraising that needs to be done by the group.

Police Department, Municipal Animal Control (Jeff Hutchinson, Bruce Hyatt and Bob Welsh)

.9% or \$46,774 increase in budget

Chief Hutchinson said there are no significant changes to their budget. They are not adding any positions and are eliminating one civilian position – the second animal control officer. He added that they can meet needs with current staff and do not need to replace the second MACO officer.

Chief Hutchinson said \$35,000 of the increase is for step/grade increases for the officers, collective bargaining increases are not reflected in that amount. The remaining \$11,000 is non-salary related increases. He noted there is an \$8,600 decrease in training overtime. This is money that is spend if the officer as to work extra to complete training. Since they are in a good place staffing wise that can be reduced.

Chief Hutchinson explained the overtime, overtime training and replacement salary accounts. Since they are fully staffed, it eliminates the need to replace officers who are sick, taking personal time or going to training.

There discussion about the new vendor being used for the promotion process. The increase in the budget for this is \$7,500, which is the main driver of the increase on the non-salary side. There was also discussion about money donated by a resident to purchase another police canine as well as the Project Lifesaver Tracking Program.

Town Properties (Steve Neydorff)

1.4% or \$14,403 decrease in budget

Mr. Neydorff noted that streetlighting has decreased since the town purchased the streetlights. The town now owns the lights and they were changed to LED's so they are saving on electricity. He does have a new line in his budget for streetlight maintenance. The Fire Hydrant rental is going up, because they will be adding more hydrants with the Mulberry Point Water Project.

There was discussion about Fire Hydrants as well as a discussion on overtime.

Engineering/Public Works (Janice Plaziak)

4% or \$12,235 increase in budget.

Ms. Plaziak said she is holding the Contracted Services line at \$20,000 because of MS-4 compliance and stormwater testing that will need to be done. There is an increase in Hazardous Waste Disposal because they are looking to hold a satellite hazardous waste collection in town. Normally the waste collection operates out of the New Haven site and the towns pay for its residents that use the site. If they hold a collection in town it would be sometime in April and they would expect an increase in the number of users which will increase their cost as well as some site for dumpsters, etc. They are estimating a \$13,000 increase for this event. A private company, however, will come in and set everything up, handle the collection, and take the waste out.

There was more discussion on Hazardous Waste Disposal in general as well as this satellite event.

Public Work (Tom Fillion, Mark Larkins)

5.4% or \$116,802 increase in budget.

Mr. Fillion went over increases in Utilities, Fuel, Winter Road Maintenance and Road Striping/Signs, which was cut last year. There is also an increase in Salaries due to an increased need for manpower and a request for an additional two employees.

Mr. Larkins said for the past 5-7 years he has been involved with the Public Works Commission there has been a need for additional manpower. Years ago, there used to be 26 trucks on the road to plow snow and now they are at 18, which includes the help from Parks and Recreation. They have 186 miles of road and each driver covers an average of 12-15 miles of road, but really that average should be at 8 miles. Mr. Larkins said it has become hard to find part-time contractors willing to drive our trucks, because you do not get the commitment that you have with a full-time employee. In the next two years there is going to be a high turnover at Public Works with retirements this year and more possibly next year. Two extra people would help with the winter and summer work as well as the turnover. The Public Works Department is asked to do a lot and if the town had to hire out some of the work the department does it would cost a great deal. Two additional employees in the long run will help get the work done and save the town money.

There was discussion about the workload and what has not been getting done because of the lack of manpower and the need for the additional positions. There was also discussion about possible savings in the coming year or two with the retirements and hiring new workers at a lower salary which could offset the cost of some of the increase for the two additional employees.

Fire Department (Ken Wilson and Mike Shove)

6.3% or \$292,513 increase in budget

Mr. Wilson said there are no increases in personnel. The contracts up for renewal and not part of this budget is the IAFF, two management contracts and the GEA. The majority of the increase (\$272,840) is the result of the SAFER Grant financial obligation reduction from 75% to 35% for 37 weeks and the town paying 100% contribution for 15 weeks as well as grade increases and increases in vacation weeks. The increase in the towns portion for the SAFER Grant personnel also affects Overtime and Replacement Salaries as well.

There was discussion about the positive impacts of having the North Guilford Firehouse now staffed through this SAFER Grant.

Also noted were increases in cost for Operating Supplies as well as increases in Education and Training to meet OSHA and NFPA requirements in addition to increases in Vehicle Maintenance.

Communications (Charles Herrschaft)

Board of Selectmen Special Budget Workshop Meeting of January 22, 2020

2.7% or \$18,443 increase in budget

Chief Herrschaft said the increase in Full-Time Salaries and Overtime is due to Negotiations. There is an increase in Equipment Maintenance due to an increase in service contracts. He noted that he manages all the cell phones, iPads, etc. for the Town.

Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Ms. Renner, the board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:42 p.m.

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff
Opposed: None
Abstaining: None*

Respectfully submitted,

Traci K. Brinkman
Clerk
Board of Selectmen