

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2019
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,
Jeffrey Beatty, Jonathan Trotta and Kenneth
MacKenzie, Finance Director Maryjane Malavasi,
Human Resources Director Mitch Goldblatt, Asst.
to Finance Director Sandy Offredi, Assessor
Jennifer Bernardo, Asst. Assessor Barbara
Hammarlund, Y&Fs Director Lyne Landry, Historic
District Commission Chair Ann Street, Youth and
Family Services Director Lyne Landry, Social
Services Director Tammy DeFrancesco and Clerk
Traci Brinkman. Joining the meeting in progress:
Tax Collector Deb Milano, Town Clerk Anna
Dwyer, Registrar of Voters Lisa Kops and
Gloria Nemczuk, Building Official Bill Thody,
Natural Resources Planner Kevin Magee, Town
Planner George Kral, Health Director Dennis
Johnson, Executive Assistant Karen Quercia,
In-House Counsel Pam Millman, Information
Systems Specialist Tony Santarcangelo, Economic
Development Coordinator Brian McGlone and Golf
Course Superintendent Ted Tighe

Media: Mike Graziano, taping for GCTV

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

Historic District (Ann Street)

24.3% or \$1,010 decrease in budget.

Ms. Street said there is a decrease in secretarial fees. The budget depends on how many applications they get. The rest of the budget is the same.

Youth & Family Services (Lyne Landry)

2.6% or \$13,715 increase in budget

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Ms. Landry said last fiscal year through their programs they reached 2,300 kids. One-time events reached over 9,000 kids. Clinically they see 60 clients and had over 2,100 appointments this past year. They provided direct services to 20 kids.

She added that salaries are contractual. She reduced as many lines items as she could. Ms. Landry said the part-time salaries line item is down because they hired a new part-time clinician and the other one switched to contractual. Building Maintenance is up since their HVAC system is old. They reduced postage since they mostly do everything electronically.

Ms. Landry said they have projected \$106,000 in revenues the past few years, but they have been surpassing that so she cautiously increased it to \$110,696. She added that if they lose a clinician it takes them three months to panel a new person with the insurance companies.

Ms. Landry explained that the Full-time salaries contain part of the town's matching funds for the Drug Free Communities grant. Eventually the town will have to cover the entire position when the grant ends, but they can ease into it the next couple of years.

Board of Assessment Appeals (Barbara Hammarlund)

53.4% or \$5,670 decrease in budget.

Ms. Hammarlund said the new clerk to the board will be starting this year. The salary for the clerk was eliminated since it is now included in the job description for the Assessor's Aide. The board stipends were reduced. The board decided it only needs a total of six members instead of seven. The other expenses are staying the same.

Zoning Board of Appeals

.9% or \$52 increase in budget

Slight increase in secretarial fees.

Social Services (Tammy DeFrancesco)

2.2% or \$3,692 increase in budget

Ms. DeFrancesco said they are still seeing around the same people year to year. She added that other than contractual salary increases the other line items stayed the same or went down. Ms. DeFrancesco said she left in the overtime. She added that it is not overtime just extra hours for her employee to work forty hours instead of 30 during their busy times.

Mr. Hoey said there seems to have been a consistent rise with Operation Fuel over the last several years.

Ms. DeFrancesco said Operation Fuel gives them a certain amount of dollars and the parameters on how they can use it changes every year.

Assessor (Jennifer Bernardo)

9.8% or \$25,461 decrease in budget

Ms. Bernardo said there is a decrease in full-time salaries due to the retirement of the Assessor and staff changes in the office. The other line items have remained stable. There is a small increase in the copier budget, education and training and dues and memberships. There is required education for new staff as well as an increase in the court parking fees. She added that there is a decrease in office supplies.

Tax Collector (Deb Milano)

8% or \$11,238 increase in budget

Ms. Milano said there are contractual salary increases as well as an increase in hours from 19 to 24 for her part-time employee. There is an increase in Dues and Training. Her new part-time assistant is not certified and will be taking classes. She added that she is asking for \$2,500 for a money counting machine. Last year they purchased one for \$500, but it was not what they needed so they returned it. The one they are looking at is smaller than those at the banks, but will detect counterfeit bills. Ms. Milano said they get a lot of people paying their taxes in cash and with smaller bills.

Town Clerk (Anna Dwyer)

3.7% or \$3,488 decrease in budget

Ms. Dwyer said most of the decrease is in salaries due to the retirement of her long-time assistant. Everything else has stayed the same. There is a slight increase in the copier lease and she is asking for a little more money in office equipment/supplies to purchase three label makers for absentee ballots.

Registrar of Voters (Gloria Nemczuk and Lisa Kops)

3.7% or \$3,488 decrease in budget

Ms. Nemczuk said their budget is less than last year, because last year was a large election year. She reminded the board that they only budget for one referendum and if they do have another then the cost will be more. She added that education and training is up a bit since they have a new Registrar.

Building (Bill Thody)

6% or \$7,058 increase in budget

Mr. Thody said the only increases in his budget are due to contractual salaries and vehicle maintenance. The other lines have stayed the same.

Natural Resources (Kevin Magee)

23.3% or \$52,322 increase in budget

Mr. Magee said there are slight increases in full-time salaries and for the board/commission secretary. The larger increase is in the GIS line. He added that the license has increased since they added users. There is also additional funding for MS-4 compliance for the Engineering Department. They need to update the water system mapping to help with compliance for the MS-4 permit. Mr. Magee said there is also a large increase in his tree maintenance and removal account. He added that the town has aging populations of trees. Since July he has noted 180 trees that are in various stages. Some he is still investigating and others are in the removal process.

There was a brief discussion on how Mr. Magee coordinates with Eversource and the state on tree removal.

Planning & Zoning (George Kral)

4.8% or \$9,898 increase in budget

Mr. Kral noted the contractual salary increases. There is a decrease in part-time secretary and a slight increase in education and training. He added that more zoning commission members are interested in taking classes and the new Zoning Enforcement Officer is taking advantage of training opportunities.

The largest increase, which has been moved to capital is \$65,000 for the Re-Codification of the Zoning Codes. Mr. Kral said the last time the codes were re-written were in 1978. They have been added onto and changed numerous times. It is difficult to follow and use. It is disorganized and has inconsistencies. He added that there has been a movement among neighboring towns to edit and recodify their codes. The projected cost is based on the experience of other towns with the vendors that specialize in this. Mr. Kral said they would not be making substantive changes, but rather re-organizing it so it is consistent and clearer with words and definitions. Since it is still a zoning code amendment it would require various public hearings.

There was more discussion about the process of doing this and possibly using the other towns that have already done this as models going forward.

Health Department (Dennis Johnson)

14.9% or \$33,927 increase in budget

Mr. Johnson explained that there are the contractual salary increases. He is also proposing under part-time salaries a sanitarian data entry position in order to get caught up on the back log of septic permits and inspections. As part of the Sewer Avoidance Program the WPCA is supposed to notify residents every five years when their tanks need to be pumped out. They have been doing a little, but cannot do it at the level they had been. There is a back log of permits and they have only been able to file them, but not enter them into the data system. He added that he used to have a part-time person that did this, but when that person retired the position was not replaced. In addition this person could assist with Food Service inspections. He added that permit fees have increased 30%. They have been busy in the field with inspections for new septic system, repairs and soil testing. A lot of existing homeowners are adding on.

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Mr. Trotta noted that the topic with regard to the backlog of data entry came up last year as well when Mr. Johnson asked for extra overtime.

Mr. Hoey said he did as for it and it was not approved. At the time the thought was that they could get it done with current staff. He noted that they are in the middle of a significant initiative to bring the permitting system on time. Mr. Hoey said Ms. Plaziak is trying to determine how much it would take to clean up the backlog using some savings in her current budget.

Board of Selectmen (Karen Quercia)

4.5% or \$18,560 increase in budget

Ms. Quercia noted the contractual salary increases as well as increases in the Copier line, COG dues, Expenses/ Travel and Miscellaneous. She added that the Veteran's Advisory Board has requested funds for printed distribution to Veterans and there is more interest in attending conferences, etc.

Legal (Pam Millman)

19.2% or \$82,593 increase in budget

Ms. Millman noted the contractual salary increases. She added that there is an increase in General Labor. This covers FOI, DEEP matters and all non-labor issues. This has gone up in part because of a series of DEEP issues. Ms. Millman said Labor historically has been around \$100,000, but this year she increased it to \$170,000 because there are five union contracts that are up in 2020. Police Grievances, Heart and Hypertension and Pension matters are also in this line item. With regard to Revaluation Claims that has been reduced because those are historically lower the second year after a revaluation. There are about 37 claims still pending.

There was discussion about a recent move to put mediation issues and police grievances into the legal budget.

Information Systems (Tony Santarcangelo)

32% or \$76,519 increase in budget

Mr. Santarcangelo said he is looking for an additional IT employee so there is a large increase in the salary line. There is a slight increase in the Town-Area Network Service line, because he is increasing the fiber band width since there are a lot more users. He added that Software Licensing and Maintenance also has an increase. This is related to the larger IT project they are doing and includes support services from CT Computer. There are also slight increases in computer supplies and Education and Training Technical Support.

Ms. Malavasi noted that there are some items in capital for IT and if those are not approved there would be changes here. She added that out of the committee put together to examine IT there was a request for two new positions - One for Town Hall and the other for Police and Fire.

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Mr. Santarcangelo described the increase to the technology infrastructure since he began working in town and a second person would be helpful to deal with day to day issues while he tends to larger network issues. Also, when he is on vacation or out of the office there is no back up.

Ms. Malavasi said the main issue is when things go wrong and Mr. Santarcangelo is on vacation and in addition, it would be helpful to have someone that can take on the more mundane tasks.

There was further discussion about IT.

Economic Development (Brian McGlone)

1.9% or \$877 increase in budget

There is a slight increase in Part-time Salaries and a small increase in the Secretary line.

Mr. McGlone noted that the town continues to have a robust year and the activity has been continuing. He also discussed how he supports the current businesses in town.

There was a brief discussion about the benefit of the Town's participation in REX.

Golf Course (Ted Tighe)

6.55% or \$18,193 increase in budget

Mr. Tighe said the past season was slow. They had a lot of rain in the fall. He added that the Golf Pro Mike Papp has been working with new clientele and promoting the course, which has helped. He put on a bunch of tournaments and has really been bringing new people to the course.

Mr. Tighe noted the contractual salary increases as well as increases in equipment and ground maintenance and education and training. They also increased contracted services to give Mr. Papp an additional month for the season.

He added that the commission voted to increase the season passes and daily fees by 14%, which will generate \$35,000 more in revenues for the 2019 season.

There was discussion about an increase in hours for the part-time maintainers. Mr. Goldblatt said historically they have exceeded what the budget has been. There was more discussion about the golf course and it was suggested that the board have a meeting with the golf commission at some point in the future.

Human Resources (Mitch Goldblatt)

12.2% or \$17,192 increase in budget

Mr. Goldblatt noted that contractual salary increases. He added that his administrative assistant's job was pulled out of the union and reclassified as a confidential non-supervisor position, which is where it should have been. Mr. Goldblatt said there are five employees

classified as confidential, which do not fit the definition. The employee has to be actively involved in negotiation. When those other positions change-over they will be brought back into the union. His administrative assistant and the Executive Assistant to the First Selectman are the only ones that have access to that information.

He noted smaller increases in the remaining lines.

Employee Benefits (Mitch Goldblatt)

5.3% or \$410,328 increase in budget

Mr. Goldblatt said there is a decrease in the reserve for personnel line. He added that there is a slight increase in the Pension, but he noted that besides the defined benefit plan this line also includes OPEB costs, and the town's contribution to the Teamsters Pension. Mr. Goldblatt noted that this increase is not as significant as they have had in the past. He added that the Pension Committee has lowered the rate of return from 6.7% to 6.5% and they will probably continue to see a decrease in that.

Mr. Goldblatt went over the various line items. He added that the increase for Medical Insurance is still rising, but they have a much better handle on it since they are moving to the HSA plans. He added that Life Insurance is up slightly. That is based on the number of employees

Insurance (Mitch Goldblatt)

8.1% or \$66,813 increase in budget

Mr. Goldblatt noted that the majority of the increase is Workers' Compensation as well as a slight increase in Crime/Fiduciary and Liability insurance.

Finance (Maryjane Malavasi)

.1% or \$420 decrease in budget

Ms. Malavasi noted that they have had a retirement in her office, which has resulted in savings. There are also slight increases in Expenses/Travel, the annual Audit and Education and Training.

Debt Service (Maryjane Malavasi)

Ms. Malavasi said these are figures that come from bond counsel based on the debt schedule. The Principle represents a 10.1% or \$555,000 increase and the Interest has increased 12.6% or \$377,331. She added that 2021 is the height of the debt, after that it should go down.

There was discussion about the decision to front load the GHS debt and by doing so, the town saved \$24 million. A question had been raised at a finance meeting about possibly spreading that out. It would cost more in interest, but would provide some relief for budgets.

Contingency (Maryjane Malavasi)

Ms. Malavasi noted that they have taken contingency out the past couple of years so she put it in for discussion.

Mr. Hoey said they have been running surpluses and have a healthy fund balance so he is not sure if they need it.

Ms. Malavasi said also in the past they have budgeted 1/5 of the cost for revaluation each year. Last year they chose to fund it in a different way. She just wanted the board to be aware of the impending cost.

2. Discuss and take possible action to establish a program to defer taxes owed by eligible federal employees in accordance with recently approved State Legislation.

Mr. Hoey explained that recent legislation was passed that allows towns to defer interest on taxes of federal employees. He was hoping the board would approve this tax deferment program for federal employees as defined in the state statute. Mr. Hoey said it is narrowly defined to include employees laid off on the certain date of the federal shutdown and provides for a brief time period when the shutdown ends. It defers interest on taxes for a late payment. Then 60 days after they return to work, they will have to make the payment. No interest will be due until the 61st day and at that point interest from February 1 will be applied retroactively.

Mr. Hoey noted that many borrowers have taxes in escrow so this wouldn't apply to them, but there is a potential for motor vehicle taxes. He added that it is not going to be a lot of money.

Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Renner and seconded by Ms. Offredi, the board voted unanimously to approve the following RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A TAX DEFERMENT PROGRAM FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY THE SHUTDOWN

WHEREAS, the current shutdown of the Federal Government has impacted certain Federal Employees ("affected employee"), including those that are taxpayers of the Town; and

WHEREAS, HB 5765, defines "Affected employee" as a federal employee who, during the shutdown, is (A) a resident of this state, and (B) required to work as a federal employee without pay or furloughed as a federal employee without pay;

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2019, the State of Connecticut passed HB 5765 permitting municipalities to defer real estate, motor vehicle, and personal property taxes, and water or sewer rates, charges or assessment, for affected employees of the Federal Government impacted by the shutdown; Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen, pursuant to HB 5765, hereby establish a deferment program to defer the due date of taxes on real property, personal property or motor vehicles, or water or sewer rates, charges or assessments, owed by affected employees as defined by HB 5765; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen directs the Tax Collector to administer the deferment program, so that the Town will not charge or collect interest on any tax, rate, charge or assessment or part thereof that is payable by an affected

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employee and which became due during the period when such individual was an affected employee.

RESOLVED, that those affected employees seeking to participate in the Town's deferment program shall prove their eligibility by providing the Tax Collector with proof of Federal Employment and sign an affidavit stating that they are (a) a resident of this state, (b) the department of the federal government they are employed by, (c) that they are required to work as a federal employee without pay or furloughed as a federal employee without pay, and (d) they will no longer be an affected employee when the branch of the Federal Government they are employed by is funded and its employees are called back to work.

RESOLVED, that each tax, rate, charge or assessment deferred under a program established pursuant to this section shall be due and payable without interest or penalty not later than sixty days after the date on which an individual is no longer an affected employee. Thereafter, any portion of the tax, rate, charge or assessment or installment or portion thereof which remains unpaid and all interest and penalties otherwise provided by law shall apply retroactively to the original due date for the tax, rate, charge or assessment or installment or portion thereof. All provisions of the general statutes relating to continuing, recording and releasing property tax liens and the precedence and enforcement of taxes, rates, charges and assessments shall remain applicable to any deferred tax, rate, charge or assessment or installment or portion thereof.

RESOLVED, that nothing in this section shall affect interest or penalties on, or lien rights or collection of, any tax, rate, charge or assessment due before December 22, 2018, or after the date on which an individual is no longer an affected employ

Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Havrda and seconded by Ms. Ruoff, the board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Traci K. Brinkman
Clerk
Board of Selectmen