

MINUTES

Board of Finance and Town Council Finance Committee

Department Budget Hearings February 12, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Elaine Hammers called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM at the Town Hall, Trumbull, Connecticut. All those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

Members present / absent from the Board of Finance:

PRESENT

Elaine Hammers, Chairman
Paul Lavoie, Vice Chairman
Roy Molgard
Lainie McHugh
Bill Haberlin, Alternate
Vincent DeGennaro, Alternate

ABSENT

Karen Egri, Alternate
Andrew Palo
Thomas Kelly

The Town Council Finance Committee did not have a quorum with three members present.

PRESENT

Cindy Penkoff
Vicki Tesoro
Lori Rosasco Schwartz

ABSENT

Mark LeClair, Chairman
Bethany Llodra Gilman, Alternate
Thomas Christiano
Daniel Marconi, Alternate
Tony Scinto

Also present: Maria Pires, Finance Director

01022600 – EMS

Joseph Laucella, Chief

In 2014 EMS was dispatched to 4052 calls, an increase of 3% over the previous year. They responded to 93% and transported 76%. The average call took 7.2 minutes. In addition, we have 61 volunteers, and added a new ambulance in January. We received an \$80,000 grant from FEMA last year, and used the funds to purchase 2 cardiac monitors. We can now renegotiate our paramedic pricing due to these monitors; however, we need to purchase ALS supplies. With this equipment, we would be able to add a paramedic. We received a donation of \$34,000 this year to start purchasing equipment and an additional \$66,000 from the same donor that we will use to purchase equipment.

501105 – Overtime

Increase for clerk fees at new rate for Commission meeting.

501888 – Uniform Allowance

Increase due to addition of volunteers. Once trained and cleared it is \$300 per person.

522202 – Professional

Decreased from last year due to reduction in what we will need for paramedic providers and the reduction in ALS intercepts. C-med increased slightly.

522203 – Ancillary

Increased Comstar billing services. The number of calls that are not covered by insurance has increased 4%. After a 3rd bill is sent, we send a letter offering to assist with a payment plan, etc., and people ignore the letter and it will go to collection. It was expressed to Comstar that they need to do a better follow-up. We currently have \$476,000 outstanding, which represents 120 days. This is at full rate; on 54% of our calls, we are collecting only a portion of what we charge and writing off the rest. \$1.256 million returned in collections last year; should be higher this year with increased calls, which are up 2% this year for a 6 month period compared with the same period last year.

534402 – Program Supplies

The cost of ALS supplies is increasing. We have only been purchasing them for a few months, so it is hard to budget for the years.

01010100 THE TRUMBULL NATURE COMMISSION

Pam Georgas, Chairman

522201 – Svs Clrc

This could be reduced by meeting quarterly.

01023200 – Building Department

Graham Bisset

Current large projects, which are taking time more time:

- 5520 Park Avenue –\$86 million medical building inspections
- The Bridges – a 64 bed memory care facility on Reservoir Avenue
- 35 Nutmeg – RD Scinto; remodeling building \$3 million project
- Bridgeport Board of Realtors on White Plains Road
- Long Hill Market Place – strip mall near Long Hill Green
- Westfield Mall – always something going on
- Dunkin Donuts – Trumbull Center
- Madison Village – restaurant; gift shop; package store
- Luigi's/Franco Gianni's – purchased by owner of Carl Anthony's ; develop area; 3 apartments
- 50 Corporate Drive – Scinto putting in an 80,000 square foot warehouse and 20,000 square foot office space.
- CVS – not sure what they are doing; supposed to take down the Brinsmaid building; Walgreen's going in at other end
- Fees were increased last year per the Board's request.
- Currently scanning permit cards to make a database to assist the realtors and title searchers.
- Budget goal for the year was \$750,00 and we are at \$738,000.

578801 – Mntnce-Sv

Increase in maintenance and support fee for energov.net software.

TAX ASSESSOR

Mark DeVestern

522202 – Professional Fees

Less requested this year. Legal fees have gone down and we have settled all but one case. We are doing revaluations this year. There was growth in the personal property list due to previous new construction of commercial property. Revaluation started late and was not budgeted until late in the fall.

- Data collection - mailers going out to all homes
- 2015 will affect the July 2016 tax bill
- Prepared to do 1/2 to 1/3 of the inspections (as needed)
- \$115,000 for this year is revaluation; last year also budgeted \$115,000
- United Healthcare - was not our largest account; loss should be made up with new commercial property coming in.

556601 – Professional Dev.

Increased this year; mandatory requirements.

01011800 BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

Scott Charmoy

No changes from last year. He expects the same level of activity as last year. He feels that it is necessary for the 2 new members and alternate attend classes. Approximately 20-30 appeals per year.

01012200 – PURCHASING

Maria Pires

We hired a new agent this year. He has been implementing new, cost saving procedures. We did not lock into pricing; he has been checking gas and diesel prices daily and ordering when low. Currently looking into a new phone system but has not yet gone out for an RFP; he will need to bring to the Board of Finance once we figure out what needs to be done.

545501 – Legal Notices

Fee has increased due to pricing increases. We have no control over this and use it for RFQs and RFPs.

01023400 – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Lt. Ronald Kirby

- High school is now ready as an emergency shelter.
- Generator is functioning.
- Senior Center also has a generator and is Tier 1 as a shelter for 100 people; has not exceeded 100 people but came close during Sandy.
- Kitchen at the Senior Center downstairs passed inspection.
- \$20,000 grant money is still available for upgrades for the upstairs kitchen.
- High school is tier 2 as a shelter.

534406 – Program Supplies

Includes office supplies and food.

578801 – Mntnce-Svc

This fee is reduced to \$8,585, since the Everbridge town wide alert system set-up fee is no longer included.

581888 – Capital Outlay

Increased by \$4,000 for bedding and supplies and office furniture.

590014 – Telephone

\$6843 is lower this year; lines eliminated; keeping basic lines.

01022400 – ANIMAL CONTROL

Lynn Dellabianca

Currently not at full capacity.

501888 – Uniforms

Needs to add \$600 to the budget for uniforms allowance; apparently dropped when entered into Munis.

01022000 – POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief of Police Michael Lombardo

Deputy Chief Glenn Byrnes, Lt. Ron Kirby, Lt. Tom Savarese

501101 – F/T Salaries

Increased \$411,000 for 2016; in the past it was underfunded \$200,000 each year; \$49,000 for a mechanic; \$150,000 turnover.

501105 – Sal Overtime

Overtime account reduced \$100,000 by First Selectman from \$725,000 to \$625,000; previous year was budgeted at \$525,000

- Currently 5 in field training - cannot work alone; 2 need to be hired; 4 are out on long term leave = 11 not working; impacts OT.
- 1 patrol sergeant to be made a permanent sergeant in the detective bureau; day and evening coverage; reallocating a person; cost savings of \$2,970 for first year; Captain requested.
- More accountability; better chain of command.
- 24 officers who are eligible to retire; OT is driven by collective bargaining agreements; figure is more realistic than in the past.
- 3rd year in a row where OT is \$700,000; 70% of budget is for shift coverage.
- Next year we will be able to give a very detailed accounting of what is driving the OT- vacation, sick time, weather emergencies, etc., and can then address with union when contracts come due – job of new captain will include this function. Officers can be out on paid sick leave for up to one year.

The Chair addressed the OT issue with Chief Lombard, since OT keeps increasing when the BOF keeps giving you more people; does not see vacancies filled, she sees officers getting promoted and therefore are no long working in the field. In addition, she doesn't see any vacancies with salaries. The Chief indicated all 78 positions were budgeted for. He indicated there were 5 vacancies on the first page of their schedule. Mrs. Pires indicated that all positions were accounted for in the budget. 2-3 people retire each year; accounting process shows \$150,000 for turnover – “bridge” to hiring the next person.

The Chair recommended the chief wait 6 months before getting back to the Board with a report of the overtime hours with detail. Chief Lombardo indicated that the OT is a common issue with police departments. He did a survey but doesn't know what their contractual details are vs. our details. All reflect contractual obligations. He indicated there is a maximum of 4 officers that can be out at one time at the same level. The Chair asked for a breakdown of the “rules” governing time off, etc.

501114 – Training Expense

Need to keep officers taking classes not just for new hires; liability goes up even more than investment in training if there is a problem. Liability to Town too great if training record is not up-to-date and there is an incident.

581888 – Capital Outlay

- Requested 6 cars; reduced to 2 by the FS.
- FS approved 2 in the budget for K-9 - 1 from insurance from demolished vehicle.
- Serious repairs done on remaining vehicles at least 4 out of 5 per week are being worked on. Idle for a long period of time; high performance vehicles; high speed. First responders - \$20,000 a year.
- He does not want officers at risk; wants to make sure all calls get answered; 1.5 cars in the last 2 years; hard to keep up with repairs die to aging fleet.
- Only received 1.5 cars in last 2 budgets.
- Hard to keep up with repairs due to aging fleet.
- Paying down leases over the last 4 years.
- Did not budget for body cameras; looking for grant money.
- Firearms and medical equipment in this request.

01012600 – Technology

William Chin

- Coordinate dispatch center renovation.
- Upgrade Town-wide phone system.
- Security system at Town Hall.
- Swipe card Time and Attendance to get away from time sheets.

55660 – Professional Dev.

Training enhancement classes; put in for 12 classes; cut to 6; can do online or go off-site.

581888 – Capital Outlay

None this year.

01013600 – TOWN CLERK

Suzanne Burr-Monaco

- Scanning-digitize-microfilm.
- Take minutes off-site; don't want them stored in the basement per state.
- Hope to have all volumes scanned in.
- Company would scan them and index them.
- Paid for with historical preservation funds (we get a grant)
- Some towns have enough space so the don't need to "back scan"
- All land record information is scanned in when received.
- Volumes 178-250 have to be scanned in; smaller books need to be taken apart. .
- Death records were never done; doctors did not want).

01040200 – VITAL STATISTICS

Suzanne Burr-Monaco

No changes

01012400 – TREASURER

John Ponzio

- Tax bills can now be paid on line; doing will without advertising; sewer bills are next.
- Use e-check or visa debit; \$2.00.
- Use credit card 2.5% of tax bill.
- We don't get the fees.

01015400 – CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mary Ellen Lemay

No changes.

010111400 – BOARD OF FINANCE

Maria Pires

501101 – Salaries

Currently advertising for an internal auditor; salary reduced to step 1.

01014200 – PLANNING & ZONING

Jamie Brätt

- Long Hill Green
- Madison Village
- Main Street
- Daniels Farm Road

- Reduced file capacity
- Revenue is up due to blight fines and compliance
- 1% of housing stock is in foreclosure; some homes are empty

501105 – Overtime

Clerk receives overtime and not a set fee; meetings are longer, so fee is higher.

581888 – Capital Outlay

FS reduced by \$5,000; request for a car.

522202 – Services

FS Reduced by \$10,000 for Planned Development District Study.

534401 – Office Supplies

Increased \$500 to \$1000 normally put in program supplies.

01010000 TOWN COUNCIL

Maria Pires

No changes

01010200 – ETHICS COMMISSION

Maria Pires

522202 – Services Professional

Fee eliminated from budget.

01015800 – Transit District

Maria Pires

522205 – Program Expense

Represents our portion due the GBT District for public bus service.

01011000 – FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Maria Pires

- Time and attendance system.
- Possible bi-weekly payroll; would need negotiation with some unions.
- Department analysis being done to maximize efficiency.
- Reorganization – Pension Administration; move different functions around; have someone come in and evaluate positions and functions.

01080000 PUBLIC EVENTS

Maria Pires, Director of Finance

- Includes parades, dinners, etc.
- No change.

01080300 TRUMBULL DAY COMMISSION

Maria Pires, Director of Finance

522205 – Program Expense

\$13,000 currently in account and \$7,000 requested so we can get fireworks that cost \$20,000.

01010600–PROBATE

T.R. Rowe

- Budget up by \$704.
- Need to do more mailing – need for postage and envelopes.
- Telephone expense – included.

545504–Postage

- Mail out more by mandate.

534401–Office Supplies

- Additional copies by mandate.

01070000 – LIBRARY

Sue Horton

- One of biggest things they need is part-time staff; need to find the right people and we are not paying competitive wages. Need to raise compensation.
- Strategic Plan – need to know if town is serious about new construction. There is grant money available but you need specifics in order to apply, etc.

501102 – P/T Salaries

- Part-time staff turnover is high; requested 2.5% increases and raise the base salary from \$10.50 to \$11.50 in order to be competitive (\$5660) without using money saved from attrition.
- Part-time reduced \$30,000 by the First Selectman for shelvers and substitutes; student shelvers and volunteers = 500,000 items per year plus other related duties=500,000+.
- 5 positions classified as substitutes. 3 of them have regular hours each week and they fill in gaps from the permanent part-time employees for a total of 28 hours per week. This would go away along with another \$3000. We would have no back-up for unpaid leave, etc. We would like full restoration or \$52,177 and there would be no effect on the public.

578801 – Mntnce-Sv

- Reduced by \$4800 by First Selectman for new lease color copier; wait until current lease expires 12/2017. Currently they outsource or use Town Hall copier.

01014600 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Edward Lavernoich

- Downside of Trumbull Center: outdated layout.
- 965 office building – CVS will potentially go there - site work needs to be done on retaining wall and it will be quite costly. The property where CVS is now is supposed to come down.
- Reconfiguration of the property on the east side.
- Shelton was perfectly positioned in the '80's to take advantage of expansion. Mostly farms, not abandoned buildings and factories. Hard to replicate these conditions.

522202 – Professional Services

Increased from \$5,000 to \$7,000. Foreclosure of gas station will possibly need clean-up work from contamination and expenses related to sale of excess Town property, etc.

556601 – Professional Dev.

Request reduced by \$1000.from previous FY.

545503 – Com. Publ RL

Request reduced by \$1000.from previous FY. We give out brochure to promote the town; fees include advertising in journals; active outreach-we sponsor a golf day invite them and pitch the town.

01012800 – TOWN ATTORNEYS

Dennis Kokenos, Esq.

- Presented for both law firms: Owens, Schine and Nicola and Cohen and Wolfe.
- Same as last year.
- Covers everything except litigation.
- Flat fee for Town; however we do have a reduced amount in retainer agreements; we submit monthly bills.
- Litigation on revaluation – handled under general retainer: tax assessor; tax collections – assisted in collecting \$934,000 in delinquent taxes.
- Wetlands and land issues (Cohen and Wolfe) Attorney Marino also backed up if conflict with other attorneys.
- FOI – respond to requests made to Town Hall once paperwork supplied.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted

Phyllis Collier
Board of Finance Clerk