

MINUTES
Board of Finance
and
Town Council Finance Committee
Department Budget Hearings
February 17, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Elaine Hammers called the meeting to order at 8:45 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
Andrew Palo entered at 10:30 am
Karen Egri, Alternate entered at 9:20 am

ABSENT

Thomas Kelly

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

PRESENT

Cindy Penkoff
Vicki Tesoro

ABSENT

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

Also present: Maria Pires, Finance Director

01030000 PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

Adjustments made for salaries.

01030025 STREET LIGHTS

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

- Reduced to reflect anticipated change in electric generation.
- Our contract with Trans Canada expired; anticipated savings.

01030100 PUBLIC WORKS HIGHWAY

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

501105 - Overtime

First Selectman reduced request by \$41,000. The DPW indicated we dodged a bullet this year. The DEP had proposed new regulations to insure all leaves were collected by December 15th each year, and all

catch basins were cleaned every year and every road was swept once a month. State was trying to make sure leaves stayed out of the catch basin so they stayed out of the Pequonnock River. Frank Smeriglio, Town Engineer, went to Hartford to testify against this. If we sand and salt on the leaves and go out with vacuums it would cause the machinery to wear out and it is expensive to repair, so hiring overtime to get job done was cost saving. The alternative to this would be to have residents bag them and then we pick them up. The state was trying to insure that the leaves stay out of the catch basin and stay out of the river. We outsource now and haul them away; we don't compost them. He was asked to provide the cost to outsource the project. In addition, the cost to bag vs curbing and what would be saved.

590014 – Telephone

Need to add \$14,400 for GPS modems. Permits you to track snow plows, i.e., where the trucks are, how fast the trucks are going. Allows us a wealth of information that we can use when we receive complaints and it will be invaluable in an emergency.

01030100 SNOW REMOVAL

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

Currently over budget \$20,000 for this FY.

01030500 HW CONSTRUCTION

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

522205 - Program Expense

First Selectmen postponed Seeley Road for a savings of \$39, 805 and \$100,000 LOCIP funds to be used to reduce this account.

01030200 PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING MAINTENANCE

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

501103- Seasonal

Request for 2 reduced to 1 for summer; 12 weeks.

501105 - Overtime

Increased by \$7000 this year to be consistent. Previously unrealistic. These funds are used when help is needed during weather emergencies, i.e. snow, or when something needs to be fixed. Can't actually perform maintenance with buildings or machines are in use. This year was very high due to the snow,

522203 – Cleaning – Outsource

This contract going out to bid this year. Budget reflects current cost. Senior Center to be hire P/T custodian via outside agency.

578802 – Maintenance Eqp.

First Selectman reduced. Reduced library, \$16,300; Berkshire Avenue \$16,000; %5,000 Ranger station. These are being delayed, not cancelled. Berkshire avenue needs a roof but it is not a building the town actually needs.

01030200 PUBLIC WORKS – FLEET MAINTENANCE

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

Not much change from last year.

501101 - Sal Full-time

Salary account reduction due to full time senior mechanic being replaced with garage mechanic.

501888 - Uniform Allowance

Requested \$8030; reduced to \$2225 by First Selectman; need to purchase additional equipment/gear every other year glasses, gloves, hats, raingear etc. Clothing was left in for each year.

01030400 RECYCLING CENTER

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

522204-Contractual

- Account increased.
- Hauling fees *reduced* for brush and leaves @ \$25.88/ton
- MSW went from \$92.31 to \$88.93/ton \$1,569,000 last year down
- Spreadsheet requested breaking out where the increase is occurring

01030500 TOWN ENGINEER

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

Response to search for civil engineer is not what they had hoped. May have to wait.

522202- Professional

Reduced \$35,000 by First Selectman – Roadway Rating System was eliminated in this budget to be performed at a later date. Per DPW, this is done by an outside agency that drives over the roads, evaluating the road system and the traffic. DPW would then be able to select roads for repair (etc.) that are not in obvious need. We would use their software and their data. We would not need to re-evaluate for a long time. We have about 220 miles of road in Trumbull.

01014800 INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

- Seminars are DEP required and some are not free. This includes seminars for new commissioners.

01080800 TREE WARDEN

Warren Jacques, Tree Warden

522205 - Program Ex

\$120,000 budget reduced by \$20,000 to \$100,000, which is still an increase of 25%. The UI decides which trees are a problem and he goes out.

01080400 RECREATION

Mary Markham, Recreation Director

578801- Mntnce-sv

Reductions

501101- Full-time salaries

- Assistant Rec Director and clerk position eliminated by the First Selectman.
- Assistant Rec Director left in November; trying to restructure using a clerk full-time and an assistant rec director part-time.
- Serves 5,000 people in regular programs.
- Generates revenue; provides a service.
- We offer more programs than other communities such as Fairfield and Stratford. Fairfield does it through the Y and Stratford does it through Sterling House.
- Fees are more reasonable than other towns.
- Park Stickers are going out this year; they will still need to be picked up but there is no fee; still do not mail stickers with tax bills.
- Fees are more reasonable than other communities.

Discussion followed regarding revenues and expenses. Report incomplete; she did not have all the information available because she was working from home.

Some programs have no expense to us. Fees are used to cover expense of clerk doing registration. The Chair would like to have a list even if there is no expense. Phone chain used to cancel a class for seniors. Give information to police department to implement automatic calls.

All fees go into the special agency accounts. How do the funds come out?

Mr. Paris indicated the following:

- 21 account is used for lights; we collect a fee whenever anyone uses a field at night with lights and we use this fund when we have a problem with the lighting.
- 53 account is used for Park Sticker fees-funds to be used for printing, etc.
- 55 account men's softball - covers league fees, umpires, etc. and it is a wash – not a budget line account. We collect the league fees and we pay the umpires out of is ASA registration and insurance. Fee is set up to cover exact cost plus trophies.
- Co-ed sports program – league fees, umpires, referees. – run by assistant recreation director. We tried having a stipend leader, but there were too many problems so it was turned over to the assistant rec. director to handle.
- Men's softball – there is a “stipend” leader who receives \$500 to run.
- Softball leagues, per Mr. Paris, wanted more service; higher level than we provide. We calculated the costs and as they sign up the fee goes into this account and then used to pay the monthly bill. We are going to be using this protocol for all of the leagues moving forward. Leagues started contracting services on their own. We will be taking this over; contracts go out to bid and are administered by the Town.

01080600 PARKS

Dimitri Paris and John Marsilio, Director of Public Works

- The Pit – soccer field on Hillcrest property; isolated; irrigated; renovated, regraded, etc. and now a useful field.
- Bill property – we stabilized garage and leveled off the area used for a dumping ground; trying to grow grass.
- Army Corps of engineers - Twin Brooks; invasive species.
- GPS – Part of highway.
- Hurricane – trees taken down; federal funding for 48 hour period – reimbursement only.
- Abraham Nichols property – greenhouse – brought to BOF last year; decision made last year to upgrade it; use for gardening groups.
- Pool house filter – scheduled project; fences are falling and will be fixed as project progresses. Will be completed by Memorial Day.

501105 - Overtime

Highway / Parks – entitled to overtime. Crews from Parks sent to highway for leaves, etc.

501103 - Seasonal

This includes the part-time rangers and the provisional maintenance hire. How many are year round. How many are seasonal. First Selectman denied salary increase from \$11.50 to \$12.75; he did allow for a 10% increase. The ranges earn \$11.50 per hour and they are on their own, in a vehicle, patrolling. This is not seasonal. The Chair indicated that she would like additional information.

01022800 – FIRE MARSHA L

Megan Murphy, Fire Marsha

- Cancer Center has broken ground and Madison Village is coming around.
- \$76,000 revenue last year; we are at \$48,000 YTD.

501887 - Uniform Allowance

Increase of \$100; cost of dry cleaning has increased.

581888 - Capital Outlay

Put in for new vehicle GSA list quote \$7,500; but not to outfit properly. Needs \$400 to bring it to \$7900.

01022824 – FIRE HYDRANTS

Megan Murphy

Budget is lower this year. Change to accounting system and savings will be passed on the to customers.

01010800 ELECTIONS

William Holden and Laurel Anderson, Registrar of Voters

\$470 for election day registration per election.

522203 Ancillary

Registrars work over a 4 year cycle; need less people. Moderator school – need to be trained every 2 years.

522205 - Program Expense

Need to add \$500 for a dedicated phone lines for moderators.

01010400 FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Timothy M. Herbst

Reorganization of Parks and Recreation

- Cannot talk just about expense; need to talk also about the revenues.
- He does not feel that the Parks and Recreation departments have not fully demonstrated the amount of income that is generated in order to justify the expenses.
- Union employees are working for contract individuals.
- Parks, recreation and golf should come under one umbrella.
- Cannot determine from the information provided how much the Town should be contributing to the operating budget.
 - Need to make sure quality is there
 - Will save the Town \$40,000
 - Does not affect existing employees
 - Bring golf – parks and recreation departments together
- Hire someone who will factor in the expenses and revenues in the format needed to make sure our fee schedule is fair and the programs are of the quality that the Town deserves.
- Clerical staff being reduced in the recreation department; seasonal help and existing clericals need to be managed better.

Youth Department

- Youth Department needs to be managed.
 - Only see 2 employees.
 - Examined what programs are being worked on and discovered revenues being generated are being used to finance summer musical.
 - Grants, private fundraising and sponsor ship, participation fee junior, participation fee.
 - Fees were not approved; used to general revenue.
- \$119,000 to fund this program when you add in expenses and revenues. Revenues are exceeding what you approved in the operation budget.
- The Charter no long has the Youth Commission and no policy making body ever approved the fee schedule which is being used to offset the expenses.
- Revenues are being used to hire professionals.
- Revenues of the Recreation Dept. are not properly accounted for and in some instances are not properly used. Special Agency accounts are being used to supplement part-time hours in order to get additional clerical assistance.
- He wants a chain of command with revenue and expenditure being accounted for.
- He feels that there are too many Special Agency Accounts.

01012000 TAX COLLECTOR

Donna Pellitteri, Tax Collector

On-line bills have been in effect for 6 weeks and to date we had 900 transactions for a total \$450,000.

Sending out stickers with tax bills:

- Size of sticker.
- Cost associated; need special paper.
- 40,000 car tax bills issued.
- Only 11,000 stickers were issued; why have 40,000 printed; would be costly; since there is only 1 manufacturer who make the paper for the sticker.
- Many people who live in Town do not own real estate. Real estate bills go to the banks.

545504 – Postage

Reduced postage; thinks last year was too high.

501103 - Seasonal

1 part-time person in July 3 for consecutive evenings. July 28-29-30.

01013000 HUMAN RESOURCES

H. James Haselkamp Director of Labor Relations

We are looking at getting better rates for the workers comp. programs.

Pay Plan – originally came from the city of Stamford for non-union employees, appointed and elected officials. It was then adopted by the Town of Norwalk. The plan plays out salary ranges for different positions. Ranges matter to the elected officials. It is a way to move elected and appointed officials salaries using an external index, in this instance, every other year. Taken from the former American Compensation Association. The rest of the plan deals with job changes.

501101 – Full time

Increased by 2.5%, based on comparable union increase. Increased by \$50,000 for a non-union executive assistant. When reorganization took place, clerical work was shifter to Mary Ann. Currently there are 20 vacancies in the Town. Currently using 1 / 2 person borrowed from Planning and Zoning.

522204 – Svs-Contract

Purchase an on-line application system \$7,500

556601 - Prf Dv-Pub

Reduction from last year \$5,075 found less expensive way to perform a background check.

01013400 –EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Maria Pires, Director of Finance

511150 – Frnge – FICA – based on salaries.

511151 – Frnge – M/D – hire a consultant.

511152 – Frnge –WC – implementing a managed care program so it should be a savings.

511152 – Frnge – Unemployment – we pay as we go; we bill golf for their share..

522202 – Svs - Prof Pensions – Police and the Town.

\$140,000 savings –change in prescription, moved to coalition pricing. \$60,000 saved on stopped loss insurance; pharmacy is the driver of medical costs; demographics – senior workforce – highest costs in the United States. Other changes will take place during contract negotiations. Went from a broker, to a consultant.

Town Hall

Maria Pires, Director of Finance

522202 – Professional

Reduced by \$75,000; this was a one- time fee and is not being incurred this year.

501102 - Part-time

Request for a floater part-time; needs to quantify with numbers for the BOF. When someone is out who deals with the public it is necessary to have coverage. Normally, we have to take someone from another department.

522205 - Program Expense

John Ponzio made the BOF aware that the banking fees were increasing.

01040400 SENIOR NURSING

Coleen Figliuzzi

- We still have a nurse at Stern Village, since there is a larger geriatric population. Not all of the seniors at Stern Village will go to the Senior Center.

01050200 MARY J. SCHERLACH COUNSELING CENTER

Coleen Figliuzzi

501102 - Part-time

New position – requesting a part time counselor.

- Youth problems increasing and we can see more families if we have a part-time person.
- First quarter, in the high school 28% of students needed at-risk assessment; 22% needed suicide assessment risk 9% had to be referred to out placement.
- School counselors are helping the children; however, they are not doing what the school counselors are supposed to do.
- Provide family counseling so parents learn how to deal with student and their medical needs, etc.
- We provide a resource that insurance doesn't cover.
- We will refer to a psychiatrist if we cannot provide what they need.

01060200 SCHOOL NURSES

Coleen Figliuzzi

School nurses can distribute any medication given by doctor with parent approval.

581888 - Capital Outlay

Schools have either one or two AED machines. We are responsible for 27 right now and we are replacing 5 AED units each year as they are becoming obsolete; we may have to replace one ahead of its time this year. Replacing with the same units that EMS and Police Department are using for ease in transporting a patient. The Pad replacements are less expensive now. Each school nurse and PE teacher is being trained on how to use the machine.

01060400 NON PUBLIC SCHOOL NURSES

No comments.

01040200 HEALTH DEPARTMENT

First Selectman Herbst / Lynn Arnow Chief of Staff

In December 2014, the Town decided to withdraw from the Regional Health District. Pursuant to the charter, in the absence of a Health District there is a 5 person Board of Health. These individuals have already been appointed; their terms will commence July 1, 2015 and continue over a five year cycle.

The expenses this year will be less than portion we paid in last year's budget. New pension parameters will be 7% / 7%; would like to begin looking for a director.

The Plan is to use property we already own on route 127 (White Plains Road) for both Parks and Recreation and Board of Health.

Needs of Town were assessed; we have sewers, so we don't need as many sanitarians here as compared to those needed in Monroe. We will have 1 full time sanitarian and a director who functions as a part time sanitarian or a part-time sanitarian (1.5) will meet the Town's needs; an administrative assistant; Director; a part-time nurse and a part-time health administrator. We projected costs to be 65% of the total of running the Regional Health District.

Projected income is 64.9% of district revenue last year was \$95,000. Income derived from permits for businesses – nail salons and restaurants, septic systems, day care facilities. There are different requirements for these inspections. Must have a health educator; state mandated.

In an emergency, we would have what we need by way of collaboration of other agencies: EMS, Police, mutual aid, etc., as in the past.

The district has a \$60,000 CD and there are existing loans used to finance pension contributions and he wants it used to close out any outstanding items prior to the dissolution to eliminate any long term financial exposure. Want to use funds to pay down existing Health District liabilities so we close out as much as possible by the end of the fiscal year.

522205 – Program Expense

The \$9,548 included in the account represents 64.9% of the district's current debt which were put in the budget assuming worst case scenario that we would need to absorb 64.9%. The lease, car and copier were put into the budget as a cushion for the worst case scenario. The outstanding total liability to the town is currently being reviewed by counsel. We are waiting to hear if we are liable for any time that may be remaining on the lease; we do not believe we are liable. The lease was between the Town and the District and is over on 7/1/2015. It was for 10 years at \$3337/month, signed 5/11/2010. There is also a loan which was taken out for their pension; we assumed payment of this loan in this budget. Lease is underwater and will most likely be able to rent it for more.

01050000 SOCIAL SERVICES

Jean Fereira, Director of Social Services

Residents have been very good about donating to the food pantry. You can also give a monetary donation. 30-40 families are using the pantry and at times upwards of 100. The need goes up during the summer months or whenever the kids are at home; snacks, etc. They don't have the school lunch program to fall back on. Many children and adults have dietary needs so we go shopping. We post food items needed on the Town website. There are many residents that don't know we have a pantry. Many people don't think about it except during the holidays.

01050600 SR. CITIZEN SERVICES

Jean Fereira, Director of Senior Citizen Services

501102 – Part-time Salary

Budget cut will result in loss of a bus driver; Director will have to take something away if she loses a bus driver. Seniors that used to drive are in are now coming in on buses, no longer able to drive, and hesitate to call. She doesn't want to take away shopping day; doesn't want to cut hours for doctor's appointments; using the GBTA for the veterans and dialysis grant; GBTA forgets to pick-up individuals; families are depending on Senior Center to get them to their doctor's appointments during the day because they have to work. Part-time woman will now be 19.5 hours a week and cannot go over, which mean there is no coverage if director has to be out. At least one senior has been falling each week. Definitely 580 hours a year to cover 1-4 each day. Director did not get a week of vacation last year due to lack of coverage.

Needs to know when she is gone on vacation that there is front desk coverage; Hours are 1-4 but they are there until 5:00. Director notices they are coming in early and staying late to conserve on their heat bills; turning it down when they are at the center.

Reason for cut-back given is the thought that it can be consolidated and run more efficiently.

We have 4 buses and we keep 2-3 on the road every day from 9-12:30 and then the afternoon for programs every day. 1 bus, 2 drivers -1 bus picks up seniors for programs, so it can take a while and get there around 11. Bus leaves at 1:00 to take people home and returns around 3:30-4:00. Another bus leaves and takes to doctor appointments and then picks up from doctor day days, 2 drivers. They also have 3 shopping days (1 bus, 1driver). The GBTA buses take them to Fairfield, for dialysis and chemotherapy on a regular basis and veterans going to the VA. There are also special activities so they will hold off taking them. We now have aides coming on the bus too. We are servicing 36 people a day. There are 750 people a month; must do quarterly report keeping track of who is going. The same individuals do not come every day for the nutrition program. We do have to turn people away for doctor's appointments; this is where she will use the shopping doctor. Veterans are at the mercy of the VA and can't easily change their appointment and that is where they pick-up their medications. We use GBTA grant to get them to the VA. She will decline a person who is on a bus route. If you are 1.5 miles from bus stop, GBTA won't pick them up. GBTA funds are with them; we do not have the funds. She sets-up a schedule for a month at a time.

Currently charging resident seniors \$5.00 per year membership fee and non-resident seniors \$20.00 per year membership fee. Ads in the newsletters bring in about \$7,000 - \$8,000 per year. Director will get a copy of the special agency account to the Board of Finance and a list of programs they wish to add.

20100000 WPCA

John Marsilio, Director of Public Works / Frank Smeriglio, Town Engineer

- Budget similar to last year.
- 75% of expense is what we pay Bridgeport.
- Legal fees – solely for regionalization.
- Focus this year is our existing infrastructure.

581888-Capital Plan

Compelled by DEP to do a study regarding unauthorized dumping into the sanitary sewer collector system; \$850,000 study was subsidized by DEP. Capital improvement plan came from this study. Items in budget will prevent our ground water or storm water from going into Bridgeport's system where we do not have allocated space.

Contract V- There are 460 houses that are part of original area. One half of the properties are on one half acre or less and are more susceptible to failing. We don't know how many have failed septic systems. There are problems and there is very little a homeowner can do; homes predated requirements for reserve areas and the area has a lot of rocky area, ledge. Contract III, IV and V are designed; contract 5 work engages in those steps you need to take. We can then get a probable cost from a professional. We can then approach homeowners.

21100000 TASHUA KNOLLS GOLF

Ron Drey, Chairman of the Golf Commission, Jonathon Turk, Finance Chairman, Bobby Brown, Golf Director

Golf course doing well despite the decline of golf across the US. Overall budget this year went up 2.82% due to contractual obligations; we added \$154,000 to retained earnings, which are now over \$1,000,000.

What incentive can you provide to golfers to reward them for their loyalty; plan on bringing back the season pass; number of rounds then a reduced rate; not yet sure. Special Projects included: bunkers, painted the clubhouse; barn repair; nothing new coming up.

Women's golf and junior golf programs are thriving considering overall decline of golf across the US. Those without programs seem to be doing worse than those with programs. We have Monday morning free golf for Trumbull residents from 7:30 to 9:30. Nice program that gets all ages involved.

Utility water line appears to be an increase; noted as a decrease; Mrs. Pires to look into.

01090000 DEBT SERVICE

Maria Pires, Director of Finance

Debt is down and is also reflected in the BOE budget. The interest expense had to do with new bonding. The principal is only affected once a year. Interest on long term bonds and short term bonds is up, whereas principal is down. Education and debt service total is down. Mrs. Pires will provide a schedule.

There being no further business to discuss the Board of Finance adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
