

MINUTES
Board of Finance
and
Town Council Finance Committee
Department Budget Hearings
February 19, 2014

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
Andrew Palo
Thomas Kelly
Roy Molgard
Bill Haberlin
Vincent DeGennaro, Alternate

ABSENT

Kristy Waizenegger, Alternate
Karen Egri, Alternate

Also present: Maria Pires, Finance Director

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

PRESENT

Cindy Penkoff
Vicki Tesoro

ABSENT

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

01022600 EMS

Joseph Laucella, Chief

Chief Laucella indicated that the EMS is currently answering 92-95% of their call volume. In addition, the collection rate has gone up. They are currently using two contract / staffing companies; one provides the paramedics, one provides EMTs, and currently we have 42-45 volunteers. There are at least 10 people in various stages of EMT training at all times.

We are not running EMS classes; however, in September, we partnered with Fairfield University and are actively involved in the classroom. The students come to Trumbull EMS to do their clinical rotation and once they became certified and graduate they come back to us to volunteer. We are not running EMT classes; however, we have agreed to run Emergency Medical Responder classes twice a year.

He is currently forecasting revenue of 1.265 million for this year; they are turning calls around faster and can take more calls. He noted that we have a large population of Medicare patients so we don't see a full collection rate. We have a 50 - 55% Medicare rate, so a lot of the money is written off. We have a 5% Medicaid or no insurance population. We try to make sure that we get as much information as possible for billing purposes, which helps in collecting funds. We haven't done any fund raising yet.

Chief Laucella indicated that at some point in the future he would like to see the EMS purchase a Lucas Chest Compression system, which would allow EMTs to sit safely while they administer to the patient's other needs. In addition, he would also like to see 4 bicycles for trail monitoring.

Chief Laucella indicated that we are currently putting 20,000 miles a year on an ambulance. One is usually down for general maintenance or repair. We have 4 ambulances and one is brand new. Current response time is 6.8 – 7.2 minutes where it was previously 8.5 – 9 minutes. We are currently working with South West CMED, a regional dispatch center. Very responsive to the EMS needs; medically trained; give instructions over the phone; get resources out to the people. They provide a system that lets you see what is going on in the region.

Comstar bills 3 times; if ignored, the bill is sent to collection. We have a new collection policy for the town; patients are responsible for their bill unless they can prove a hardship and then we will write off anything below \$50. We can also put people on payment plans. Insurance companies do reimburse but it is not at 100% of cost.

It would be to our benefit to have an additional paramedic on staff during the day during peak hours 8:00 am – 6:00 pm so we do not have to rely on Mutual Aid.

522202 – Professional

The First Selectman reduced Vintech Staffing by \$16,500.

534402 – Program Supplies

The First Selectman reduced this request by \$5000 after speaking with the EMS Chief. Increase in request from last year has to do with volume.

581888 Capital Outlay

The First Selectman reduced this request \$5000 by extending a lease over a five-year term vs. a four-year term.

01022800 Fire Marshal

Megan Murphy

Revenue is up \$5,000 from last year and there is an additional \$1,000 in permit fees not yet reflected. Budget for next year is the same except for the 802 account.

578802 – Equipment

The new radio frequency is on delay; so we are giving the funds back until then. The software request will speed up entering information.

581888 – Capital Outlay

- \$ 750 – Scanner; no room left in office; no space; time to scan; the public wants e-mail vs paper mail.
- \$ 200 – Safety respirators;
- \$ 260 – Halligan Bar

The following items were omitted, in error:

- \$1,200 – Docuware license is not included in budget
- \$ 500 – Fire house software license
- \$3,600 – License for Energo
- \$5,300 – Total missing from request

01022824 Fire Hydrants

Megan Murphy

This is in the Town Budget; not the Fire District. We pay Aquarion \$1.416 million per year just for the hydrants. It is going up \$80,000 this year and it appears we might be short based on the annualized figures.

01023200 – Building Department

Graham Bisset

From July 2012 through June 2013, we issued 2715 permits. From July 2013 through December 31, 2103, there has been a 25% increase in the number of completed inspections.

501101 – Salaries F/T/Permanent

Need to upgrade PT to FT. Full time person approved in FY2013 budget, no time to go through civil service, so with Dan Nelson's permission went with part time to assist with backup in workload. In this budget, the First Selectman denied FT position. Increase 25% in permits issued from 7-2012 to 6-2013.

As of 2/13/2014, new codes implemented will increase workload. In 2015-2016 codes will change again, increasing workload. Upcoming projects will generate fees (est.) totaling \$874,831.42. Permit Fees to date \$381,841.97; projected \$650-\$700 revenue fees for Westfield Mall; Reservoir Avenue; Park Avenue. Last year \$1,000,000+/- municipal project fees waived which would have generated \$13,273 in fees.

Mr. Lavoie noted a 30% increase in permits; however, revenue is flat. Mr. Bisset noted revenue would be flat due to small permits, i.e., generators -oil to gas- these generate no revenue but require many inspections. The high school renovation also generated many inspections yet no revenue was recognized. The strip mall on White Plains Road is coming down; will open up the area; Starbucks looking to put up a single building somewhere.

The initial 2015 department budget request included an increase in full time salaries and a decrease in part time in order to fund a full time person and remove part time person. Currently there is a backlog of 3 days; however, it is going to increase and backlog could go to as long as 2 weeks.

The Chair asked if we should look into increasing fees to match the permit request and time spent.

- Town Council would adjust fees based on Graham's input.
- Wants survey from surrounding towns to see rate structure currently in use.
- Wants Graham recommend the Town Council to increase fees if he can support it.
- Budgeted income this year was \$700,000 in fees; currently annualized at \$571,000.

Permit Fees are paid upfront; if codes change, it does not affect existing permits already pulled.

01080400 Recreation

Mary Markham

The Chair indicated that some fees go into Special Agency accounts and then Mary uses them to pay for events and programs. We should probably have a list of what goes on in each account' therefore, do not think this is all that we are spending on Recreation.

501102 – Salaries PT/Permanent

Budget has not changed over the years. The part time position reduced to 21 hours, and then reduced further. Mary feels that this cut is a problem for this department; she wanted it to stay at \$26,373. Cut made by First Selectman; Munis calculates salary based upon normal part time hours, using 19.5 hours, although Mary's person works more.

Part time instructor funds used for person to fund person to hand out park stickers, last year. This person is not in the budget this year. Currently, the part time recreation department person hands out park stickers.

01080900 Arts Commission

Emily Areson

There should be 7 members on the Commission; there is no Commission at the present time. People that were on it left and no one has come forward to be on it.

522201 Services & Fees – Clerical

Clerk fees cut since there is no Commission there are no minutes for; will reinstate if Commission resumes. First Selectman did not want to increase her pay by the clerk fees not used; has made same salary for 15 years.

522205 Program Expenses

Expenses are for the Cabaret. If she goes over \$6,000 budget, there is the money she gets from the Mallard Foundation. If there is an overage on expenses for the Art Festival Emily uses proceeds of Cabaret to offset.

01050400 Youth Commission

Merial Cornell and Mary Joan Wright

501102 – Salaries PT/Permanent

Request for increase in hours to 30 denied.

522205 – Program Expenses

Request cut by \$4000.

Increases requested for the following: Implement full town participation; add a class; parents are asking for more; using the high school increases the fees for musicals even though they can't fill all of the seats; Got bumped from Madison for the Spring program since the elementary schools now want to use the auditorium for their concerts instead of their gymnasiums.

Would like to see a Community Center and a Community Theater. Revenue covers all expenses except salaries; usually covers royalty, etc., and they get a grant from the Counseling Center.

Range of \$4500-\$8000 for royalty fees; average \$6000 to \$7000; go by the number of seats even if you can't fill the seats; overall, costs more.

Use of the Senior Center costs \$200 per occasion for the custodian; the Town account covers expenses for using the school system. Would like to use it more often, on weekends, since it is a great place on a Saturday to hold workshops for children. They can't afford to pay \$200 for each use so it is used as a last resort.

Overall reduction: \$30,676, as follows: \$24,676 salaries; \$5,000 programming; \$1,000

01011800 Board of Assessment Appeals

Scott Charmoy

This is a non-valuation year, so he expects the legal notices, clerical fees, and professional fees to be the same. The First Selectman approved as requested. There has been a fairly consistent number of appeals, but not nearly as many as the last revaluation. Real Estate appeals 15-20 appeals; Commercial can go straight to court. Commercial appeals last year were 7-12. Appeals increase during the valuation years. In non-valuation years, people just think taxes are too high and disagree with the field card.

We usually send out an inspector to verify the information on the field card. Complaints about the valuation of land or general complaints based on the neighborhood comps.

01022400 Animal Control

Lynn Dellabianca

501102 – Salaries PT/Permanent

Requested a second kennel assistant to work two days, Fridays and Saturdays at \$10 per hour for \$5980, since she doesn't have anyone to work. The First Selectman denied. She usually uses a summertime temp. for \$1500 - \$10 per hour.

501888 – Uniform Allowance

Requested a uniform increase for new kennel assistant.

556603 Professional Dev-Inservice

Training needed for new assistant.

581888 – Capital Outlay

\$27,500 Capital Outlay request for generator was moved to the Dog Fund by the First Selectman.

Cannot use Dog Fund for personnel. The Chair asked Maria to see if there are any expenses that we can charge against the Dog Fund in order to free up funds for personnel. Dog Fund renews each year with dog license revenue.

01023400 Emergency Management

Lt. Ronald Kirby

Nothing has changed from last year except the Alert System contract cost went down. No storms this winter have been emergencies

581888 Capital Outlay

Includes funding for emergency cots / bedding.

501102 Salaries – PT Permanent

1 person on salary (part time).

01022000 Police Department

Chief of Police Thomas Kiely, Deputy Chief Michael Harry, Deputy Chief Glenn Byrnes, Lt. Ron Kirby, Lt. Tom Savarese

501101 – Salaries F/T/Permanent

We are looking to add full time personnel. We added 3 positions last year. A very large percentage of our force is at retirement. Once you fill a position, it is an 18-month process training new officers and it is expensive. They attend the academy for 6 months and then have 3 months field training.

The State has changed requirements and it is now legal for you to hire existing police officers with less than 2 years with one police department. 2 years ago, they eliminated the 2-year work requirement. Police departments are taking people away and the Pension Plan is a big reason, along with not needing to give an agility test.

In July 2014 we are moving from a Pension Plan to a 401K. The agility test is in several ways. Just because you don't need to give the test does not mean that you won't give the test.

The town of Norwalk recently took 9 officers from Stratford and the Town of East Haven lost 27 officers over a 2-year period. Lateral transfers are becoming more popular and you can go by the last time the test was give, etc. We have not made that decision here and the Chief needs to speak with the Police Commission.

We cannot obligate a person to stay once they are trained; you cannot obligate them to reimburse you for the training costs. Normally, the junior officers will leave early in their careers to go to a town with a Pension Plan but not veteran officers..

There are about 7 or 8 towns that are currently on a Defined Contribution plan and they have lost trained officers to other plans, saving those towns acquiring the officers the expense of training new hires.

Chief Kiely indicated that we need a way to evaluate the impact that moving from the Pension to the Defined Contribution Plan will have on the force.

The Union filed an MPP due to the condition of the cars. The Town and Union agreed to hire a part time mechanic. The funding denied by the Board of Finance and was overruled and the part time mechanic was hired. The First Selectman denied the FT Mechanic position and increased PT position 2.25%.

\$200,000 was budgeted for school Security Officers . The First Selectman's plan includes offering these positions to retiring Trumbull police officers first and then officers from other towns. The Chief still needs to have more discussion with the Dr. Cialfi and the First Selectman. The Chair indicated that full time security positions during the school year might require benefits and no one is sure the Board of Education will agree. According to the Chief there will be officers in the elementary schools and one in the high school. Currently security lies with the Board of Education and there are people there now. The Chief indicated that there is still work to be done on this.

There are currently 6 full time positions to be filled and the budget assumes they will all be filled. The Chair explained that they use a 20% turnover factor, and this has never created a problem.

01022000 – 501102 Salaries-PT/Permanent

The First Selectman denied the FT Mechanic position and increased PT position 2.25%. The Union had filed an MPP due to the condition of the cars. The Town and Union agreed to hire a part time mechanic; however the funding was denied by the Board of Finance and the Chief decided not to go ahead with the hire. The Chief contact the labor counsel and his decision was overruled making it necessary to hire the part time mechanic as originally agreed upon.

501105 – Sal Overtime

Factor affecting overtime this year:

- Minimum manning requirement for patrol. Each shift has a certain number of officers that must be on the road and there must be an officer in communications and a supervisor per union contract. Looking to fill 6 vacancies
- LT disability affected 9 officers; more than 30 days out.
- 32 officers with 20 years maximum vacation; 30 to 42 vacation days per year; increasing overtime.
- Annual raises 2.9%
- 63% of overtime is driven by minimum manning.

The First Selectman reduced by \$250,000 based on 5 new officers being hired. The Chief indicated that there are hiring issues; if you rush the process, you could make a 25-year mistake. We adhere to stringent guideline.

Special duty does not go through salaries and does not affect overtime.

581888 – Capital Outlay

Reduced by \$52,000; 5 patrol vehicles with 5 year leases denied. The Chair requested complete list of vehicles. Of the 5 indicated with high mileage replacing 2 canine vehicles. 13 approved last year; came down to actually getting 8. Radio system contract not yet signed but negotiated with Motorola and the attorneys. The Chair wants to see renovation overseen / designed by someone who understands what it takes to retro fit an old building.

501114 - Training

Chair asked for report on training that we funded last year; include the number of people, type of training and the number of hours.

01012600 – Technology

William Chin

501101 – F/T Salaries

Mr. Chin indicated that he needs additional help. FT position denied by the First Selectman \$62,275. Mr. Chin indicated that IT is being stretch by the PD. A lot is done remotely; at times, all the techs are involved. An actual breakdown by hours of time spent at PD requested. Mr. Chin noted that support tickets not always submitted. Since systems at PD are unique from Town Hall, IT needs to sit with them and see how it works; they have a good rapport with the provider's support system.

501102 Salaries-PT/Permanent

Denied request to eliminate PT and add FT position due to budget constraints. Part-time position increased by 2.25%

581888 – Capital Outlay

Audio going in on Friday in Council Chambers and then new e-mail exchange service; existing does not support new version of word. Next years' projects are more back end. Everything will be hosted without adding hardware. All requests are new this year. The First Selectman reduced \$53,800 for Police Dispatch Center to be bonded. IT only needs \$19,350.

522204 – Contractual Services

Majority refers to Microsoft licensing fees.

556601– Professional Dev–Sem/Conv

Requested 3 classes for each technician. First Selectman reduced to 3 classes in total. Mrs. Pires reminded him that he still has \$10,000 left in his budget from this year that he can use.

01013600 Town Clerk

Suzanne Burr-Monaco

Noted that overtime and service contracts reduced. They just finished entering 1907 sewer liens that are applied once an individual owes \$5.00. The Town Clerk indicated that re-doing the bill will help as well as sending out delinquent notices. Once the lien is applied, the only way to remove is to pay it. Mrs. Pires indicated that the new system will help.

501101 – F/T Salaries

Town Clerk's salary was discussed. It is thought to be too low, since the assistant clerks are earning more. Both assistant clerks have 22 years, are certified and at the top of their salary range. The Town Clerk does not have to be certified.

501105 – Sal Overtime

Overtime is reduced.

522204 – Contractual Services

Service contracts reduced.

01040200 Vital Statistics

Suzanne Burr-Monaco

Next year she will be looking for additional space. She would like to scan documents and then move them off-site.

01012200 Purchasing

Maria Pires

Full time person retiring; new person will start at step 1 so salary will be lower.

01012400 Treasurer

Maria Pires

We can put in for an increase; however, the raise does not go into effect until the new term. Elected officials cannot get a raise during a term.

01014600 Economic Development

Edward Lavernoch

Steady stream of economic activity. Great potential for that to continue. The First Selectman made no changes to the budget.

Trumbull Center: New grocery store being pursued; need more parking and visibility. Can't take the front building down until CVS moves. Landlord continues plans to upgrade property.

Home Depot complex is owned by same owners as Trumbull Center. It has been difficult to get Home Depot to agree regarding tenants in strip mall there.

01014200 Planning & Zoning

Jamie Brätt

Visual Preference survey; design guidelines being formulated to use. Doug Wenz has handled over 100 blight items. We are showing financial gain for handling zoning violations.

Long Hill Center: Land put on market adjacent.

Luigi's: Trying to sell; wanted to remodel and put in residential units above. There are environmental problems to be remediated and extent is not known. Property was sold but there are issues.

Garden Exchange property. The developer wants to do something ambitious for 1.6 acres. Wants to put in first floor retail with second floor one bedroom rentals. Concern with residents in neighborhood.

501101 – F/T Salaries

Opening approved last year is still open. The process takes a while. The job description wasn't approved until 2 months into the budget year. There were 100 applicants that had to be screened and tested.

522202 – SVS-Prof

Asking for \$41,000. First Selectman cut to \$31,000, since \$10,000 is for FY 2014.

01010600–Probate

T.R. Rowe

The budget this year is less than last year. Probate is funded by the State and the 3 municipalities – Trumbull – Monroe - Easton. There are 3 full time clerks. Costs are divided by a percentage based on their grand lists among the 3 towns. The State pays the salaries for the 3 full time and one part time employee. Trumbull Monroe and Easton pay for the costs associated with office.

Postage request increased since the mail rate has increased. In addition, the law changed, so we now must mail out notices to a broader base.

01015400 Conservation Commission

Mary Ellen Lemay

No changes

01012800 Town Attorneys

Robert Nicola, Esq., Edward Walsh, Esq., Mario Coppola, Esq.

Requesting a 2.25% increase; offset by change to professional contractors from employees and reducing Town's insurance and FICA. Authorized funds have fallen short of what expenses have been incurred.

01070000 Library

Sue Horton

Reorganized space at the library; people want places where they can read, meet people, etc. Feels that there needs to be a strategic plan if expansion or renovation is being contemplated. There are grants available and to apply you need a strategic plan.

First Selectman eliminated FT position. Over the last year, we have been using overtime to cover a position that was vacated, giving part time people additional hours. We need a certain skill set to handle these part time positions, and on July 1, we will lose the ability to offer part time people additional hours. If position not reinstated, we will have to shorten the library hours.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted

Phyllis Collier
Board of Finance Clerk