

March 21, 2023
Board of Finance and Town Council Finance Committee
#2 Department Budget Hearings
FY 2023-2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lainie McHugh called the virtual meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom. All those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The clerk called the vote and recorded the following:

PRESENT

Lainie McHugh
Paul Timpanelli
Michael Barker
Marty Isaac
Scott Zimov
Justin Scheuble
Vincent DeGennaro – Alternate
Marc Mascola – Alternate
Christine El Eris – Alternate

ABSENT

The Finance Committee did not have a quorum:

Mary Isaac, Vice Chairman	Michael Buswell, Alternate
Dawn Cantafio	Nicole Satin
Kevin Shively	Tony Scinto
	Anthony Dorsey
	Joy Colon, Alternate

Also present:

First Selectman Vicki Tesoro; Maria Pires, Finance Director; Kathleen McGannon, Chief Administrative Officer; Cynthia Katske, Chief Administrative Officer; Rebeca Lopez, Internal Auditor; Ashley Gaudiano, Town Council Chairman

01060800 – TCTV

Kate Donahue

- We have a new assistant working with Lara Walden.
- Capital expense was cut. She originally requested 4 new camera and will only be able to buy 2 and that is fine. She will get the other 2 at a later time.
- We can now track who is watching us by age and gender on both Facebook and YouTube.
- BOE meetings – the new system will allow us to stream to both Facebook and YouTube at the same time. Actual viewership is far greater than what we could fit into the Long Hill Room.
- YouTube viewership – people are viewing live and long after.
- Sports events, graduations, meetings, and concerts, etc., are all being watched. Trying to meet our residents on the platforms they are using.
- YouTube can automatically add captions to help you find programs.
- Does not know what would be required to give people the ability to download the video to a zip drive.

01022600 – EMS

Andrew Weber

- Call volume and transports are increasing.
- Recruiting new individuals is becoming more difficult. We have 37 volunteers.
- Would like raises for employees for FY 2024 and remainder of FY 2023; 7.5% now and 7.5% in 2024. This will bring us in-line with surrounding towns and increase the volume of applications.
- He made a change in deployment, adding 2 hours on either end of each shift for a total of 4 hours.
- Additional cuts included the 2023 pay increase.
- Estimate of lost revenue is \$20,000 each year; using loss of 90 calls during 4 hours.
- Board of Finance needs additional information that was used to compile the information presented.
- Information that was provided was used by the First Selectman in completing her budget.

01030000 – Public Works Director

George Estrada, Director

- In preparing the Budget he saw escalations in costs that affected every aspect.
- He has suggestions for working around the budget cuts so they can address more critical needs.

01030025 – PW-Street Lights

George Estrada

- He is looking to update the Street Lights Policy within the Public Works Department working with the town attorney.
- Policy is for adding street lights; the current policy is very loose. Looking to give the policy more structure.

01030100 – PW-Highway

George Estrada

- Established promotional steps within job classifications in the department, which was good for moral and assist with retention.
- We now have more balance within the labor descriptions so this gives us a more balance approach to internal movement.
- Working with Union with training and skill sets so there can be upward mobility with employees.
- Salaries are less than requested; there is a \$60,000 cut for turnover. Doesn't know when positions will be filled. Currently have 4 vacancies within the department and we may be filling sooner than we projected. We are working with HR to fill.
- 10% built-in for price escalation with supply chain increases reduced.
- Public preservation process for pavement is done with ARPA funds.
- Capital outlay 3 items removed. Using ARPA funds to purchase outright.

01030101-PW-Snow Removal

George Estrada

- Questioned what is being spent on mailboxes during a season, since replacing them is not part of the town policy.
- Denied the Ford F 250 \$12,000; however, rather than approving the mason dump truck for \$14,000 would prefer the Ford F250 approved. It is a supervisor vehicle and used for emergencies to carry equipment.
- Currently have about 50% of necessary material on hand.
- Elevate stock pile during end of year sales; remaining funds from this year will be used to purchase for next year.

01030105- PW-Construction

George Estrada

- Line item for ongoing maintenance removed by the First Selectman; will use TAR and LOCIP funding and we should be able to support any emergencies that may occur.
- Old Mine bridges needing emergency repair and bids were received. Trying to get contracts awarded and work started; part of the capital plan.

01030200-PW-Building Maintenance

George Estrada

- Always in reactive mode due to years of deferred maintenance. Not having enough funding puts us off. This budget says we will maintain at the same level as last year, not for emergency repairs.
- There have been numerous failures over the past year.
- He proposes a quarterly report on maintenance to keep track what is ongoing throughout the year.
- Salary overtime is 50% higher; need more overtime due to merging of departments coming out of parks/rec budget. Not everyone wants comp. time so we need to put the overtime out there, per union provision. If employee chooses overtime associated with building maintenance we need to have overtime available but we may never need it.

01030300 - PW-Fleet Maintenance

George Estrada/Doug Bogen

- Whatever we defer this year will come back next year along with new issues. The fleet is aging.
- All prices are going up; doing it this year is cheaper than doing it later
- Mr. Bogen indicated that he would prefer to replace the Ford F 250 for \$12,000 (denied) rather than the mason dump truck for \$14,000 (approved).

01030400 - Recycling Center

George Estrada

- Negotiations have been ongoing for disposal fees with Easton and Monroe.
- The Region has been pushing back; not sure where it will end.
- Increase in tipping fees not yet a consideration.
- No one involved in this group has posted a budget with an increase in this line item.
- Negotiations should be finished by July 2023.
- Food recycling is currently taking place in Fairfield. To implement here, we would need to create a safe area that we can maintain easily and have the public be able to access. Residents are issued a kit and the food waste is collected in a special container, which is then placed in a larger container that is then brought to the transfer station. Completely sealed. Must be located in an area that is closely supervised.

01014800 - Inland Wetlands Commission

George Estrada / William Maurer

- No changes from last year's budget.

01030500 - Town Engineer

William Maurer

- 522202 Services and Fees Professional account was cut \$6,000.
- We needed to cover inspections at the mall for the building department.
- These Funds are used for Grants, etc., small items, but very much needed.
- Dredging of Katz's Pond will be done without regard for the Veteran's Center. We do not have an estimate.
- We will explore all grant opportunities for this.

20100000 - WPCA

William Maurer

- The fee we pay to Bridgeport continues to increase.
- We have had 6 major outflow problems this year and we are working through it.

01080400 – Recreation and Parks

Dmitri Paris

- Most of budget items are unchanged.
- Program expenses has increased for this budget; asking for \$40,000 to be reinstated to bring programs back to pre-COVID; 80/20 split with partnered programs, i.e., tennis is one of those programs; we would earn 20%. We are completely selling out on tennis and pickle ball.
- Special revenue used for this purpose was closed out to the General Fund. We are now showing revenue and expenses that we haven't seen before.
- Camp Program has been restructured a new program that includes use of buildings and offers what other camps offer and will cost more.
- Park stickers will be mailed with motor vehicle tax bills; parks and rec. will pay to mail to anyone who does not fall into this category who might need one, i.e., babysitters, grandparents, etc.
- Revenue from Recreation and Parks is budgeted at \$460,000.
- Port-o-johns will continue to be in use at locations in order to keep vandalism at a minimum.
- Parks vehicles are deferred and park ranger vehicles are to be replaced. Mr. Bogen indicated that one mason dump truck needs to be replaced now, as they have the most wear and tear and he would prefer to put the Park Ranger vehicles on hold.

01080400 Tree Warden

Dmitri Paris, Parks and Recreation

- This budget is too difficult to predict.
- Many variables are involved including weather and blight.
- Would like to provide quarterly reports to monitor the issues; however, it does not seem sufficient since the amount has been lowered to a level that we have not been able to maintain previously.
- We are dealing with only the most critical issues.
- The deputy tree warden position is currently vacant and we can't seem to find someone to fill it; it is an HR issue.

01060600 - Business Education Initiative

Dan Neuman

- 4100 kids have been exposed since the beginning of the school year.
- 6 field trips are done and 6 more are planned with companies; there is an expense of travel associated with these trips.
- We are coming back from COVID. BEI has been open to public and private schools and if turned over the Board of Education it would deprive the children in the private schools; it has always been run as a town program.
- There is a Fund-raising portion from corporations, etc., and last year we only grossed \$7,000.
- This year-to-date we have grossed \$6,000 from mini grants and are actively fund raising.
- Private schools do not contribute to this program. Rotary has been a contributor but not the Chamber of Commerce. He will look into any available grant funding.

01010800 – Elections

Jean Rabinow and Tracy Vonick

- At the time the budget was submitted, they did not know how many polling places they would need and for how many days, so they calculated 1 polling place in town for 10 days; however, they don't know how many workers they will need.
- There will be a Presidential Primary next year in April 2024 and will need to be added. That primary will be in all of the 7 locations and they will need extra workers.

01040000 Health Department

Luci Bango

- They have applied and received Federal and State funding through grants, totaling \$89,000. We used that money to pay for materials and supplies
- Continued to increase the vaccines they currently offer and having extended hours to reach those who cannot come in during the day.
- Monitor communicable diseases in town.
- Collaborate with other agencies for training, etc.
- Continue to conduct mandatory inspections, etc.
- Wants to continue to offer more community outreach programs; offer more services to the town.
- Approved last year for a sanitarian position that we did not fill and now have a potential candidate
- Would like funding for a permanent part-time position for someone to do the vaccination billing 19.5 hours a week. This year, we have processed 3,000 claims and last year it was \$11,000 claims. Claims must be processed and monitored to make sure payment is received, etc. Grant being used to fund the position no longer permits them to use funds for that purpose. Revenues recognized from the vaccines totaled \$68,000 year to date so it is beneficial for us.
- Expenses are related to cost of vaccines. Not sure what we might be charged for these going forward.

01012200 – Purchasing

Kevin Bova

- All of his line items are fine.
- 30% of his time is spent working with the Board of Education.
- Conversations with the BOE have taken place, according to Maria Pires.
- There is a facilities director at the BOE, so more is getting done now, through us, when compared to the previous director.

01010400 First Selectman's Office

First Selectman Vicki Tesoro

Kathleen McGannon, Chief Administrative Officer

Cynthia Katske, Chief Administrative Officer

- F/S Tesoro continues to focus on public health and public safety, one of her highest priorities.
- She strives to maintain investment in Trumbull's high-quality school system.
- We would all like to see another grocery store in Trumbull Center; however, we can only ask the property owner to look in that direction.
- Metro-cog funds us with state money through LOTCIP, which provided funding for a variety of municipal transportation capital improvements.

01013000 – Human Resources / Civil Service

Thomas McCarthy

- Longevity reduced with the retirement in the department.
- Regular contractual increases were put in the budget.
- Increases are not determined by the Human Resources department.
- Non-union staff currently do not receive an annual review before receiving a salary increase.
- We are currently in a very difficult hiring environment and we are falling behind what other towns are offering.
- A full-time recruiter for police officers is not a viable option.
- We have a strict Civil Service requirement; testing is mandatory and time consuming.
- We are hiring non-stop for police officers. When one test closes, we open another.

The Chair asked for a motion to go into Executive Session.

Mr. Zimov moved, seconded by Mr. Scheuble to move into Executive Session at 1:45 pm

The Chair ask the following individuals to join in Executive Session:

- Board of Finance and Alternates
- Town Council – Ashley Gaudiano, Dawn Cantafio, Kevin Shively, Mary Isaac
- Maria Pires, Director of Finance
- Tom McCarthy, Director of Human Resources
- Vicki Tesoro, First Selectman

Mr. Barker moved, seconded by Mr. Timpanelli to come out of executive session at 2:36 p.m.

01013000 – Employee Benefits

Maria Pires & Thomas McCarthy

- Fica is based on the number of employees times 7.65%.
- Medical insurance was initially quoted at 10-12%; when we first started the budget process it was 8% and by the time the budget was put together it was a 7.1% increase.
- Workers comp. is budgeted at \$1.4 million; this number depends on claims and injuries. Currently, we have \$2.6 million in reserve.
- Unemployment budgeted at \$20,000 reduced from \$35,000 last year.
- Pension increased \$225,000 for the Town; Pension increased \$288,000 for the Police. The Town changed their mortality table assumption to the most recent one and kept the rate at 7.25%; the Police reduced their rate to 7%.
- Police \$75,000 for Retirees medical insurance. The police pay 1% into the plan and when they retire they pay 30% and the fund pays 70%.
- Deferred Contribution Plan the Town pays 7% to employees and 10% to the Police.

01080300 –Trumbull Day

Kathleen McGannon, Chief Administrative Officer

Cynthia Katske, Chief Administrative Officer

- Reduced from \$20,000 to \$15,000.
- \$45,000 balance in reserve; will lose it if it rains.

21100000 - Golf Commission Tashua Knolls Golf

Joe Gaudiano

- One change to be made to the golf course mechanic position to bring it up to level FF \$78,482 annually.

01040400 - Nursing / Senior Wellness

Lynn Steinbrick, Nursing Director

- Lynn Steinbrick, Nursing Director, was not able to attend.
- No change to budget.

01060200 –Nursing / Public School Nurses

Lynn Steinbrick, Nursing Director

- Lynn Steinbrick, Nursing Director, was not able to attend.
- \$37,900 stipend for building census keeping Tiered stipend based on school and # of students.

- Capital outlay increased for several AED machines; batteries and pads have expiration dates and it is difficult to get them; not making them for the machines.
- Concern about keeping them operational.
- Lynn orders for all of the Police and EMS.

01060400 – Non Public School Nurses

Lynn Steinbrick, Nursing Director

- Lynn Steinbrick, Nursing Director, was not able to attend.
- Reduced vacation salaries based on historical usage.
- \$6,600 for stipend.

01090000 - Debt Service

Maria Pires, Finance Director

- BOE budget (06) has the amount for the schools.
- Town pays 25% of the WPCA construction and the homeowner pays 75%; both included in the debt.

Revenues

Maria Pires, Finance Director

- Real estate and motor vehicle taxes.
- State contribution for motor vehicle taxes to offset the cap set by the State (32.46%)
- Credits for elderly and disabled.
- Maintenance to volunteer fire and EMS; based on taxes paid and years of service.
- Payoff on deferred taxes.
- Reimbursement from Vo-Ag.
- Interest on liens and lien fees.
- Field Maintenance reimbursement and recreation are combined, since the two departments were combined.
- Tuition for children attending that are not town residents. We pay the Magnet School from these funds.
- Town Clerk fees, being conservative, real estate isn't as active as last years.
- Sales tax – check received and not sure if it will continue.

01012400 – Town Treasurer

Anthony Musto, Esq.

- Attorney Musto indicated that everything is the same as last year.
- Most of interest comes from deposit interest rates over which we have no control.
- We made our budget this year; it is difficult to predict.
- Large bond payment coming due in August; \$10 million is the most we can commit.

01010600 – Probate

Judge T.R. Rowe

- \$12,944 this year a \$500 increase. Trumbull's portion increased 1.2%.
- Increase in postage and office supplies.
- Postal rates went up and usage did not decrease as expected.

01010100 – Nature Commission

Sheryl Bauman, Director

- Goal and objectives much the same as last year.
- Membership is not how we measure success; we measure on participation rates and last year was the highest ever.
- New Programs - more than ever.
- Unilever, Amazon and Henkel – volunteers
- Sacred Heart students as volunteers.
- New Grant \$10,000 from Henkel and a new foundational grant received.

By unanimous consent the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis C. Collier

Phyllis C. Collier – Board of Finance Clerk