

TOWN COUNCIL
Town of Trumbull
CONNECTICUT
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TOWN HALL
Trumbull

TELEPHONE
(203) 452-5000



FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING
Various Town Departments
MINUTES
APRIL 7, 2022

CALL TO ORDER: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: The called the roll call and recorded it as follows:

PRESENT: Kevin Shively, Chairman, Mary Isaac, Vice Chairman, Nicole Satin, Dawn Cantafio, Steve Choi, Tony Scinto, Joy Colon, Alternate, Mike Buswell, Alternate

ALSO

PRESENT: First Selectman Vicki A. Tesoro, Town Attorney Schopick, Chief Administrative Officer Kathleen McGannon, Finance Director Maria Pires, Town Council Chairman Ashley Gaudiano, Economic & Community Development Director Rina Bakalar, Town Planner Roberto Librandi, Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Director Megan Murphy, Deputy Emergency Management Director Andrew Kingsbury, Building Official Robert Dunn, Town Clerk Mary Markham, Chief of Police Michael Lombardo, Assistant Chief Glenn Byrnes, Sgt. Lopes, Animal Control Officer Lynn Dellabianca, Human Services Director Michele Jacob, Library Director Stefan Lyhne-Nielsen, Lara Walden of TCTV, Kate Donahue, Conservation Commission Chairman Mary Ellen Lemay.

Points of discussion are as follows:

01 GENERAL GOVERNMENT

TAX ASSESSOR 01011600 – Ms. Pires was present and indicated:

- The Vision upgrade will remain in this year's budget, but will probably not be able to get to it due to the current staffing shortage of the department, this will probably be done next fiscal year.

- The average tax assessment increase was 10%-20% and would have to look into why there was that disparity.
- Commercial to Residential: The shift was approximately a 3% shift. It was 77% residential with 23% commercial and is now 80% residential with 20% commercial.
- There are approximately 90-100 current appeals, both commercial and residential.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION 01015400 – Mary Ellen Lemay was present and indicated:

- Program Expense 522205 – BOF added \$12,000 - Representing the Tree Replacement Program. The commission had been working on this for the last ten (10) years. The U.I.'s tree program has been cutting trees across town. The program would replace those with 100 young trees, the program will span over the next ten (10) years. With this program they will be able to apply for grants and the Tree City designation. The key to this was to invest in tree replacement.
- The first year of this program they will start with smaller trees, (gator bags) and will be planting in conjunction with the town and the commission and adjacent property owners, the smaller trees are easier to establish, (approximately 50 trees).
- The plan is to replace what U.I. took down and to provide tree rights to the property owner. They can say no to the U.I.
- Ms. Lemay forwarded additional information for the Council during this meeting and the clerk forwarded it via email to the Council. (Attached).

02 PUBLIC SAFETY

BUILDING OFFICIAL 01023200 – Robert Dunn was present and indicated:

- Last fiscal year they issued 2954 permits, this they are ½ way through the year and are at 1610 permits, and expects to be 20%-25% over last year by the end of the current fiscal year.
- The department is at approximately 58% of their estimated \$680,000 in revenue and is confident at the end of the fiscal year they will hit that goal. He kept it at the same number for next year. This is always based on an educated estimate, they have no control over what type of projects might or might not come to be.
- Chairman Gaudiano noted on page 213 of the budget book there is a table showing from 2010 to present the permit fees and the number of inspections and permits. First Selectman Tesoro added the projected number is at the front of the budget book where all the projected revenues are included.

01 GENERAL GOVERNMENT

TAX COLLECTOR 01012000 – Maria Pires was present and indicated:

- Tax collections are at 98%.
- In the past taxpayers have paid their taxes ahead of time, she does not foresee any change, but no one has a crystal ball.

PLANNING & ZONING 01014200 &

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 01014600 – Rina Bakalar was present and gave a brief overview of the mall and business in town:

- Going to go out for a RFQ for a consulting firm to work with them, it has been a challenge to finalize this with the state. Once finalized they will have the funds for the RFQ for the feasibility study.
- They meet with the mall owners on a regular basis, they are selling the mall, and to date there is no buyer.
- There has been a long term lease signed which is a stabilizer for the mall.
- The building of the apartments is happening but has not hit the grand list yet.
- There has been an uptick of small businesses, there are some projects that are coming to the land use boards.
- A new business, Med Spa is opening at Trumbull Center and a few others are opening elsewhere.
- The property at 6 Cambridge is under contract, it is a business reuse not residential.
- There was a recent revaluation, some properties gained value while others lost value, some key properties came online while key properties lost value, in part because of COVID on their income. Significant grand list value was added, even though all has not hit the list yet, but some of the growth was negated by the loss. It has been an unprecedented situation. Ms. Bakalar did review every commercial property valuation, they did not appreciate in value as the residential did.
- First Selectman Tesoro stated the overall grand list grew 12.5%, residential grew to an average of a 16% increase. This is a complicated subject, Ms. Pires could address this further at a later date. First Selectman Tesoro wants to make sure everyone has the information they need. Ms. Bakalar offered to meet with anyone on this.

02 PUBLIC SAFETY

ANIMAL CONTROL 01022400 – Lynn Dellabianca was present and indicated:

- Ms. Dellabianca noted that she had not followed up with Mr. Estrada on what budget the gravel would come from.

POLICE 01022000 – Chief Lombardo was present and indicated:

- There has been a shortage of officers, they are leaving after 3-4 years. Six (6) left last year, 5 of which left for departments with a pensions. They recently hired 4 new officers, they are in the academy. It will take ten (10) months to fill the vacancies and expect them to be in the field in December.
- He does have three (3) officers currently looking at different departments.
- The department always has to fill the patrol slots first, because they have to have a minimum number on patrol, so he took two (2) of three (3) resource officers and put them back in patrol.
- Recently 39 candidates took the police test and he may hire two (2). Some have applied to other departments as well. Overall there have been less applicants/candidates. This is due to a combination of the tremendous scrutiny of police officers seen in the last few years, also they have lost some to departments with pensions.
- Currently they have 74 officers in the department that includes everyone from himself to every patrol officer. He does have a command position which will retire in May. The three officers that may leave will probably leave by May and the final one will be gone by July if all goes well with their application process and here is someone on long-term sick leave. Due to this they requested an increase in the overtime account. The First

Selectman approved and the BOF has not changed the amount. The department will be over in overtime this year, next year is an unknown. Ordering officers to work 16 hours will affect morale.

- 70% of towns in Fairfield County have defined benefit plans, 5 others have a defined contribution plan and 1 is a hybrid.
- For the officers leaving for departments that offer pensions, the two year period starts from their swearing in. Departments would have to pay for their training if the officer left before the two years, but they never leave before the two years. The officers' first year costs the department \$100,000, their salary starts just over \$60,000 and it depends on what kind of medical coverage they have.
- The department goes to 1739 medical calls per year and it was confirmed the calls are coded as the higher level calls.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 01023400 – Megan Murphy & Andrew Kingsbury were present.

- Ms. Murphy extended her gratitude to the council members who volunteered to pass out the COVID tests.
- There is an account labeled overtime, but it is the account that funds her salary as the emergency management director, she hopes to have the account relabeled in the future.
- They are requesting the iPads to ease FEMA reimbursements so they can capture data faster, more accurately and to track resources.

FIRE MARSHAL 01022800 – Megan Murphy was presents and indicated:

- Permits/Fees YTD are at \$43,437 which exceeds last year's number \$40,350. What next year will bring depends on the type of development the town will see. She expects to be within \$40,000-\$50,000 next year.
- If she were to hire a new deputy fire marshal it takes between 12-15 months before they are boots on the ground. If she hires someone who already has their certifications and some field experience with another town, they could have them out in the field on their own within 3-4 months. She did put in for the second fire marshal to deal with inspecting the new apartments. They are going to do their best.
- If a fire alarm is not confirmed to be functional within a year as required, and there was an event the building owner and the town would be who they would go to.
- It was confirmed the discussion regarding the deputy fire marshal did take place at the BOF meeting and they did say if it does become an issue to come back in January.

05 SOCIAL SERVICES

SENIOR CITIZEN SERVICES – Michele Jacob was present and indicated:

- There was one change, 501105 – an increase of \$18,252 representing a building attendant position. Currently there is custodial services daily and the cleaning crew at night, the town hall custodian has helped out in the past, but now that the center has reopened they need assistance with the programs, setting up and breaking down, all daily operations such as setting up the grill and taking down decorations. This will be a position posted through the town not through the Kennedy Center.

01 GENERAL GOVERNMENT

TECNOLOGY 01012600 – William Chin was present and indicated:

- He started with the town 10 years ago. A lot of the equipment that was there was aging. His first couple of years they replaced pretty much everything. As time has gone by most of those items have come through replacement. Their switches were overhauled two years ago. A complete switch project was done two years ago, as well as the data storage. The firewall was last year and the Wi Fi equipment was done two years ago. Most everything is fairly up to date and modern. Generally they try not to run them to the ground but do run them close to the end of support, though always try to make sure they are ahead of end of life.
- All of the file backup project was done and refreshed two-three years ago. All of the files are backed up periodically, sometimes as much as a few times an hour, sometimes a few hours, most of the time daily. It is then pushed to the cloud, (offsite cloud storage). Also colocation at the police department, that allows us to operate if a piece of hardware fails in one of the two locations. Everything fails over to the secondary and operations still are maintained and being able to be used.
- They are in a contract for dark fiber, it was a five year deal and are probably in year three of that deal with the vendor. All of their fiber is leased and comes back to town hall and connects to the network.
- All of the storage is hosted on site, and the backup is pushed off site. That price is roughly \$22,000. It is the Datto-Datto line item and is roughly \$22,000 for 12 months every year with unlimited storage.
- The sign at Town Hall is a Dmitri Paris project and is not sure where that is in terms of purchasing. He and Dmitri did speak recently with regard to who would be the point of contact, the gatekeeper on what content would get posted and how it gets posted, it was agreed the technology department would post the message and is sure internal approvals will need to be made on what actually gets posted, he wanted to make sure that multiple people would not have access to those things on the sign. That project is with Mr. Paris and is unsure where they are in terms of progress.
- They still have voice-over IP, town hall and police department is on a full generator, Department of Public Works and buildings are also on full generator. They have APC units to handle the bridge as the generator spins up.
- Jeff Hackett is in charge of the BOE technology.
- There is nothing immediate that needs attention right now. When things come up for end of life, that money gets placed in the capital outlay budget and in his budget for replacement. This year there is no major project for replacement of network infrastructure. But will see what the next year brings.
- The security/encryption product purchased is called the Barracuda Total Email Protection System. That product replaced the SonicWALL security bundle, the ZIX encrypt, and it replaced the Barracuda archiver. As the pandemic began, various departments came to them and told them they're supposed to be encrypting emails for HIPAA. All of the medical practices are required to make sure that they follow HIPAA, it's a pretty serious law. They purchased Zix Encrypt right away, especially dealing with a pandemic. That was about \$150 for 10 users and were able to encrypt patient data that they were sending to their various partners. It was decided to upgrade our email security system. So we went from the SonicWALL security bundle to the Barracuda Total Email Protection system

recommended by one of our vendors. They did research and found that it was a decent product. It has encryption, and junk mail filter built into it. The issue that with that system is that it's pretty sensitive towards the HIPAA law. The HIPAA rule on the Barracuda system gets triggered when there are there's mention of a health related term. The term most often in our world right now is COVID, it also picks up on personally identifiable information. So there are different rules. That's a problem for us in the municipal government world, because a lot of things we do is with addresses in town, and properties in town and things of that nature. Unfortunately, in some of the backup material that we're sending anything that has the word COVID in it with a phone number and an address or two addresses, will trigger the encryption rule. A practice put in place now is to post things to the town website, and instead of sending you all the agendas and minutes through email, we're asking you to go to town website through a link to retrieve it. It was confirmed this system has been fully funded and not a subject of this budget.

- It was suggested Mr. Scinto, Ms. Colon and Mr. Chin speak after the meeting to go over other technology suggestions.

TREASURER 01012400 – Mr. Musto was not present. It was suggested Mr. Musto update the committee on investments at a later date.

TOWN ATTORNEYS 01012800 – Attorney Schopick was present and indicated:

- The attorneys do not keep track of all of their time, Attorney Schopick attends the Town Council, BOF meetings and several building committees. Land use: Inland Wetlands, ZBA, Planning and Zoning meetings and the Edit meetings are covered by Jim Cordone and Jim Nugent is doing anything that's litigation involved, WPCA meetings and is also doing building committees. There are also a lot of things going on during the day they get inquiries about, looking over contracts, things having to deal with purchasing and HR situations. They also have a weekly town attorneys' meeting with the first selectman, which generally lasts between 3-4 hours although it's supposed to be three hours. And so, again, it's varies. There certainly is no week when they have nothing to do for the town.
- The Chair indicated the line item increase amounts to \$35,000 charged to the W PCA to cover those things on that side. Attorney Schopick explained if they need somebody outside, they need them tomorrow. It's not a question of going to the BOF waiting for a supplemental. If they don't use the money it stays in the in the general fund.
- There are cases where there are court awarded fees and those come back to the town, the attorneys don't take those.

07 LIBRARY

LIBRARY 01070000 – Stefan Nielson was present and indicated:

- 534402 – Increase of \$15,000 for program supplies. The line item represents their book budget used for purchasing the physical and e-books.
- Staffing is back to its main staffing level, there are some retirements that need to be filled and the pages are starting to come back.

06 EDUCATION

TCTV 01060800 – Kate Donahue was present and indicated:

- The information they had was that the Tricaster system at the BOE was being held up because the superintendent was considering a redo of the Lorraine Smith auditorium at Long Hill, apparently that has been put on hold. The Tricaster project will move ahead, presumably without delay. The Chair noted that project is not part of the budget and was previously fully funded.
- Mr. Chin noted the same equipment and vendor will be used for the BOE and the Town Hall Council Chambers, (a separate project from the aforementioned tricaster). This will be from ARPA funding, not this budget. The Council Chamber tricaster still works, it doesn't stream and they are working on a work-a-round.
- Ms. Walden explained there are two of them working part-time. When a meeting happens, one of them goes to council chambers and downloads the meeting onto an external hard drive to bring it back to the high school to edit to make sure the audio levels are proper. They upload it to the server and schedule it. It's a matter of time, the rendering process can take, depending on how long the meeting is, if the network at the high school is working really well, they can get it rendered in half hour to 45 minutes, if it's a three hour meeting, and one of the computers that they are using is bogged down, and the computers are older, it could take up to, six, seven hours to render. They are definitely working on repurposing equipment in the studio, looking for computers to use them specifically for rendering machines to get this stuff turned around quicker. When streaming to Facebook or YouTube, you can watch the playback. But if it's live, in person and not streamed, then it is a matter of manpower time. The new equipment will stop them from having to drive to pick up the tape to download and correct, it will be done remotely.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to discuss the Finance Committee adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret D. Mastroni
Town Council Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Conservation Commission Additional Information

A Thousand Trees for Trumbull

Proposed Trumbull Tree Replacement Plan by the Conservation Commission and Sustainable Trumbull.

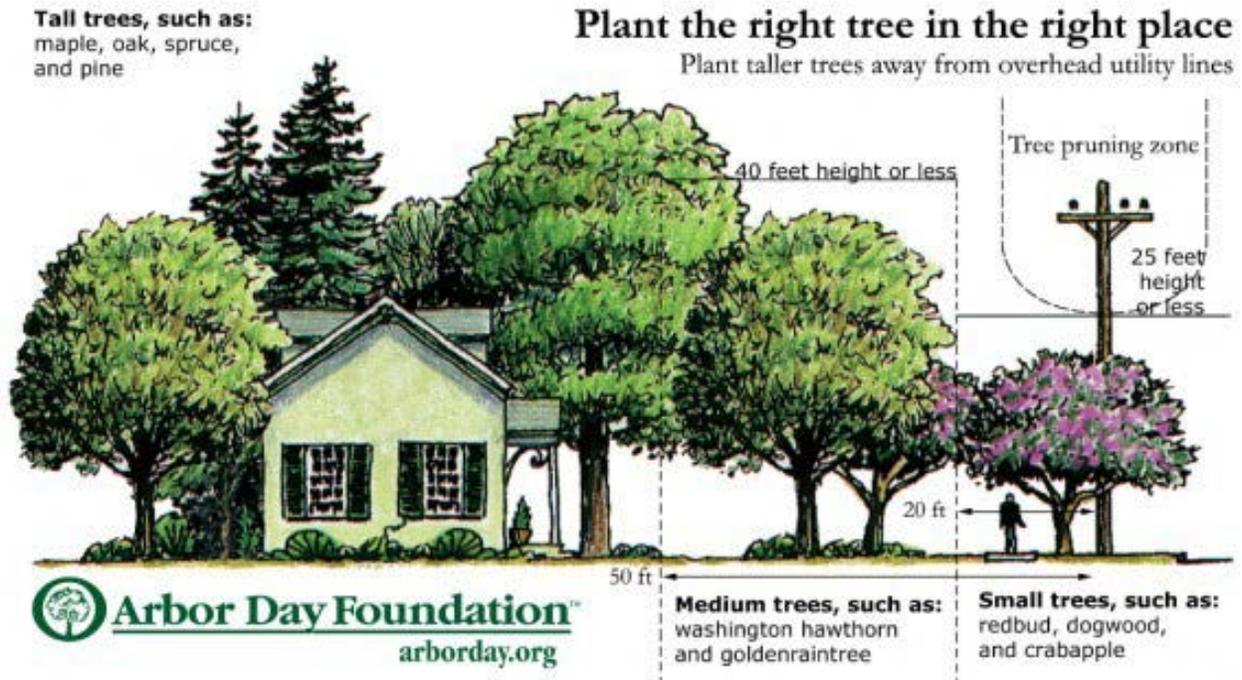
From our Trumbull POCD:

TREE PRESERVATION For some time, Trumbull has been considering establishment of a tree preservation program to help preserve and protect trees in the community. This might take the form of a Town ordinance, a zoning regulation, or some other approach. Trumbull should adopt something to preserve and protect trees.

TREE PLANTING To maintain tree-lined streets and establish treed parking lots, Trumbull will need to plant new trees and replace existing trees as they age. Guidelines regarding appropriate trees to be planted in such areas should be consulted (such as the United Illuminating publication entitled "Right Tree, Right Place").

Tree-lined streets are a defining element of Trumbull's character. Trees and vegetation also improve air quality, provide shade and buffers, provide habitat, reduce erosion and mitigate storm water runoff.

Right Tree, Right Place Parameters:



(The Parameters above are accepted by the Arbor Day Foundations and by United Illuminating).

Genus and Species Recommendations: (subject to change)

When planting trees near or beneath roadside power lines, the Conservation Commission, and Parks Superintendent recommends:

Low-growing trees 30 feet high or less such as:

- Crabapple (*Malus* spp)
- American Flowering Dogwood. (*Cornus Florida*)
- Washington Hawthorne (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*)
- Hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*)
- Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)
- Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Cornelian Cherry (*Cornus Mas*)
- Amur Maple (*Acer ginnala*)
- Green Ash (*Fraxinus Leprechaun*)
- Southern Sugar Maple (20-25ft)

Medium-sized trees, which grow to heights of **30 to 50 feet**, can be planted between 15 and 30 feet from the power lines.

- Green Mountain Sugar Maple (40-60ft)
- Chalk Maple
- Tupelo
- Sawtooth Oak (*Quercus acutissima*)
- Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)
- Turkish Filbert (*Corylus colurna*)
- English Oak (*Quercus robur*)
- European Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
- Scholar Tree (*Styphnolobium japonicum*)
- Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*)

Large Trees, Greater than 50ft mature height

- White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*)
- Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*)
- Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)
- Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
- Sourwood (*Oxydendrom arboretum*)

Planting Guidelines:

- The town will plant no more than 10% of the same genre.
- Amphitheater effect (small trees gradually increasing in height) improves strength of trees and reduces maintenance costs long term.
- Do not use screened soil when planting trees
- Plant 1.5 -2.5 caliper trees
- Plant 20-45 feet on center depending on tree selection and planting space.

- Use Gator Bags for period of time established by licensed arborist

Cost Sharing Program: (starting FY 2022). Matching Grants.

This planting program will be a sustained and consistent effort driven by the Town and Trumbull and a newly created forestry working group of the Conservation Commission. This will be a phased plan over 10 years. Supported by a cooperative venture between public works/ conservation/economic development/ planning.

A starting budget of \$12,000 will be established for the tree replacement plan based on number of trees projected to be required for replacement during a Fiscal Year. This amount will allow for a maximum of 100 trees/year replacement. The current tree removal plan budgets for removal of 85-125 trees/year. Additional funding will be subject to grant availability. It will take years to replace what we have already lost, but the time to begin should have been a decade ago.

