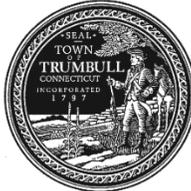


TOWN COUNCIL
Town of Trumbull
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FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING
VARIOUS TOWN DEPARTMENTS
MINUTES
APRIL 12, 2022

CALL TO ORDER: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 Council Chairman, Chief Administrative Officers Cynthia Katske and Kathleen McGannon, Ashley Gaudiano, Director of Public Works George Estrada, Town Engineer/WPCA Administrator William Maurer, Assistant Town Engineer Tatiana Solovey, Parks Director Dmitri Paris, Fleet Supervisor Doug Bogen, Director of Nurses Lynn Steinbrick, Director of Operations Rich Infante, Highway General Foreman Tom Baldwin, Finance Director Maria Pires, Labor Relations Director Thomas McCarthy, EMS Chief Leigh Goodman, Recreation Program Director Noreen Wilipizeski, Health Director Luci Bango, Democrat Registrar of Voters Jean Rabinow, Republican Registrar of Voters Tracy Vonick, Kevin Mallon and Sheryl Baumann of TNAC

02 PUBLIC SAFETY

EMS 01022600

581888 Capital Outlay – BOF increased by 13,000 – Ms. Goodman explained this was due to a misunderstanding, the vehicle was approved and purchased in 2022 and are going into year two of the payment. There was delay in getting the vehicle due to supply chain issues. There is second vehicle they are applying for through ARPA

578804 Mntnce/Rep-Equipment/Building – BOF added 3,000 – There was an initial error but they brought it back to \$6,000 which covers ambulance repairs. They thought public works does all of the vehicle repairs, they do the bulk of them but there are some specialty parts and equipment that this line item covers in the event it is needed.

The Chair noted that they had received one email asking that EMS not be cut and to give EMS everything that can be given.

501101 Salaries-FT/Permanent – (44,470) BOF reduced – Ms. Goodman indicated the BOF asked if she could hold off on the two additional full time EMTs until December. They were bringing them on because over the last year having all per diem EMTs was tough to maintain. A lot of the EMTs are graduating as physician's assistants, and paramedics. They were hoping to stabilize that. If they have to hold off she will have to be okay with it but it brings two challenges. The first is she is doing her best to keep all of per diems within the appropriate department of labor guidelines for how many hours they work. They work hard to do that and it is challenging. The deployment pattern assigned those 40 hours of EMT's as if they were going to be there. If taken out, the per diem budget will be lacking hours. She can make it work for first six months, but in terms of the entire year they'll probably have to meet towards December to revisit how to spread that financing out between the full time salaries and the per diems. She would be remiss if she didn't advocate on behalf of her department. She understands tough choices have to be made and is mindful of that and thankful for the council's time.

Ms. Goodman further explained she works out how many people she wants on the road for the deployment pattern. Currently they would need 21,632 (hours) of EMTs if one of those is empty, (2080 hours is one EMT), the balance will be 19,552 hours. The proposed spreadsheet submitted through the BOF, shows those different options. Ultimately the balance of how many per diem hours are left will need to be adjusted. Even with no further changes to the pattern, and option two adds a little extra, if the extra hours are taken, (about 416 hours), she will still be short in the per diem, because instead of those two EMTs, filling 2080 hours each, she will need to fill them with per diems. She can send all a summary of that in a spreadsheet after the meeting. There is the potential to come back for a supplemental and she had gotten the impression from the BOF that would be looked at favorably. Councilman Isaac stated the BOF was open to the supplemental but wanted to see the run rates for the six (6) months.

03 PUBLIC WORKS

PW-Highway 01030100

Uniform Allowance 501888 – BOF increased by 5,000 – Mr. Estrada indicated they replace these items every two years and this was the year they would have done so. Working with the BOF, they requested half of what they had initially requested combined the new allocation with inventory in place. They are comfortable they can get through the year and preserve safety. They reduced their initial request from 10,000 to 5,000.

Program Supplies 534402 – BOF restored 50,000 – The 50,000 is to support the initial year of a pavement preservation efforts, (crack sealing throughout town). In subsequent years they will

request additional funding. This dovetails into the paving program and initiates the pavement preservation program to extend the life of the roads paved in the last 5-7 years.

PW-Snow Removal 01030101 – They have depleted the snow removal account this year and will be addressing that through the Finance Dept. as an appropriation. Currently they are over 58,847 in over-time and 159,487 over in program supplies. Mr. Estrada explained there is no way of predicting this, there have been some years where they are below budget. You can't go by historical numbers because we don't know what the weather patterns will be for the following year. Councilman Scinto noted his concern for the proposed budget based on gas prices and other increases in costs.

Mr. Infante explained this was not a hard year for snow but there were a number of ice events which uses two-three times more salt than a snow event and many weather events were on the weekends. The cost of salt did increase due to transportation charges. It was confirmed fuel costs were not included in this line item.

PW-Building Maintenance

Salaries-FT/Permanent 501101 – BOF increased 26,601 – Mr. Estrada explained the 10,000 is for a vacant custodial position to be filled. It is a lateral move, the new person will be compensated at the same level as he currently is.

Capital Outlay 581888– BOF reduced \$10,000 for camera purchases – The intention of the program is to support the continuing security network throughout town. This is not meant to have someone monitor the cameras. Further discussion would require executive session and could be scheduled at a later date at the convenience of the council. Councilman Cantafio suggested an executive session be worked into their budget vote. Chairman Gaudio noted this is a worthwhile conversation and will consider whether this will be at the committee level or at the council.

PW-Fleet Maintenance

Transportation-Gas, Oil, Grease 567701 – BOF increased by 75,000 – Mr. Estrada explained this is negotiated through the financial department and the purchasing agent. They explore options, and locked in a contract that appeared to be much more attractive than anticipated.

Mr. Bogen explained the Fuel Master program is used by employees with codes to access the fuel, the keys are coded to a particular vehicle, and the program is so it is known who is putting fuel in a particular vehicle. The Fire Department also uses the program and reimburses the town, they are separate taxing agency. Only official vehicles fuel there.

Currently this line item has 54,000 left in the budget, the heavy use is during the winter with plowing, the police fill up there too.

The following was clarified the budget process for the committee: The Town Council can reduce any item by a majority vote as it comes to you from the BOF. The Council can increase any item or add new items only on a two-thirds vote. To keep a line item where it is requires a majority vote.

Town Engineer 01030500

Services & Fees-Ancillary 522203 – BOF increased by 3,480 – Mr. Maurer explained this is to fund year three of three for the oblique imager, it is for a feature on our GIS site that we need to pay for and wasn't accounted for in the original budget.

Mntnce./Rep-Equipment/Building 578802 – BOF increased by \$800 - It added for calibrating survey equipment.

08 RECREATION/PARKS

Parks Department 01080600

Salaries-FT/Permanent 501101– BOF added 16,372

Salaries-PT/Permanent 501102– BOF added 30,000

Salaries-Seasonal/Temp 501103– BOF deducted (17,112)

Mr. Paris explained the adjustments were attempts to make corrections around funding gaps for positions that we're currently going to be hired, (in the next month), in the current budget year and weren't taken into account in the new budget year that they were still vacant. Those adjustments were all made to fully fund the positions. The Chair noted the only reduction was the reduction of the arts coordinator from the seasonal acct. Councilman Isaac clarified the arts coordinator wasn't eliminated, it was restructured, the position had been vacant during COVID, the BOF added funding assuming they wouldn't be able to get someone for the previous funded salary.

Tree Warden 01080800

Program Expenses 522205 – The BOF added 75,000 – Mr. Paris explained they are working internally on a presentation to all the boards on the Tree Program: What the liabilities are, what the funding ceiling currently is and the historical costs. Unfortunately historically they go over budget and have been questioned why that occurs. Their attempt is to present something that makes for a better understanding of how they should be budgeting the tree accounts in the future. Within the coming months they should have that completed. They also had some questions about what it might actually cost to take on some of the work internally and that will be part of the presentation.

Mr. Estrada explained the Tree Program is similar to the discussion on snow removal, not having a crystal ball. The aging urban forest throughout Trumbull cannot be quantified in advance, they work closely with the BOF and Finance Department throughout the year. Their efforts are to keep the community safe, they respond to concerns and make evaluations and take action immediately when necessary. They are as frugal as they can possibly be, but there is a lot of work out there, they do prioritize to stay within budget in the year but that has become more challenging. It was confirmed they are currently \$135,229 over budget.

Cleanup of the trees taken down by U.I. is a component, but there are also escalating costs to do the work throughout the town, the trees are larger requiring more expensive equipment and costly police detail. He thinks it is valuable to look at the individual components that are causing the escalation in costs and what our limits as a community are, the presentation will include that information.

Mr. Paris confirmed this work goes out to bid and there is the ability to extend for up to three years if the contractor is willing to hold their price. They usually select two to three vendors because they cannot be without if there is an emergency.

06 EDUCATION

Business-Education Initiative (BEI)

The Chair noted this a very valuable item for the community. Mr. Neumann extended the invitation to the council to become involved in BEI.

01 GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Elections 01010800

Ms. Rabinow explained the main difference because of the new split districts is that they will be printing 10 different ballots for every election, rather than seven or eight. They believe they have enough tabulators and have asked for extra stand up voting booths for the extra voters. They have tried to budget for the potential splits.

02 Health Department – Chairman Gaudio extended her gratitude to the department for their work around the clock for the past two years, every time we think COVID is coming to the end it doesn't. The department has done an incredible job. The Chair concurred.

01 GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Employee Benefits 01013400

Fringe Benefits-FICA 511150 – BOF added 4,000

Fringe Benefits-Medical/Dental 511151 – BOF decreased by (34,650) – Ms. Pires explained there were two CNAs in the nurse's department that were eliminated. Therefore we needed to reduce that dollar amount for medical. It was two employees, 23,000 for family health benefits, and also the fact that it was supposed to be for nine months. It was added back.

Mr. McCarthy explained we have the state partnership plan for our employees' health benefits. The state tells us the number, but they don't in time for the budget. They give us an estimate and our experience has been the number doesn't change that much. What is in the budget book is the best information we have right now. The final number won't come until May probably.

Ms. Pires stated they started with an 8% increase but the state gave them an update of 7.5% so that is what is in this budget. The Chair noted this would be the same number for the BOE and the town.

Purchasing 01012200

Salaries PT/Permanent 501102 – BOF increased by 1,025 – To adjust salary to comparable positions.

NURSES

School Nurses 01060200

Salaries FT/Permanent 501101 – BOF restored 6,270 – Restore tiered stipend and denied two CNA's and adjusted for delay in hiring

Ms. Steinbrick thanked the board for reinstating the tiered stipend. It's to compensate for different sized buildings, one nurse may be responsible for 750 students where another might only be

responsible for 500. The person with more students has a higher workload responsibility. The CNA request: Back when we were preparing for COVID, they asked BOE for health aides to help support the nurses supervise the students that were in isolation, they did not provide that, and it was challenging last year. They had three times as many cases of COVID in school this year. COVID actually has brought to light a lot of needs, and school health into the limelight as public health. They thought early on that a supportive person in the health office would be good, other districts do have it. Time to time as a student comes in to the building with complex health care needs that could change the whole dynamic of the health office volume, health office visit, and needs quite a bit of support. Sometimes those students are assigned paraprofessionals if they have enough complex healthcare needs, but then we have the students who don't have complex healthcare needs, when the year starts, end up having some accident, and needing a supportive person temporarily. They might not qualify for it under this special education services. In those case the nurse has to not only manage the regular health office volume, but now an acute short term student/patient that needs complex and more health support. Ideally, it would be nice to have, she requested three, two for the public and one for the private. If she could just try with one this year just to demonstrate the outcomes of how this will could work. It's to help support the nurses, and it's less expensive than hiring another nurse.

Non-Public School Nurses 01060400

Salaries FT/Permanent 501101 – BOF restored 6,600 – Restore tiered stipend

Probate – Judge Rowe was not able to attend, if there are any questions please forward them to the Chair and he will facilitate in getting the answers.

ENTERPRISE FUND

Golf Fund 21

Materials & Supplies-Office 534401 – BOF increased by 14,400 – To restore to original request.

Program Supplies 534402 – BOF increased by 67,975 – To restore to original request.

Don Espach and Joe Gaudiano were present:

They are seeing a significant increase for our fertilizer, as well as our maintenance and parts for their equipment. Those two line items that were restored. Supply chains have been backed up for over a year now. A lot of fertilizer comes out of Russia and Ukraine and are seeing implications of that.

They will be going to do a budget transfer this fiscal year for 105,000, to reduce their capital outlay to 95,000 from 200,000. They will get the work done in this fiscal year rather than next fiscal year.

The Chair noted they have been running in a surplus. This is a gem of the town. It was explained they are running in a surplus but as people go back to the office they expect that this to go down.

They have a lot of equipment needed, many go back to 1980-1990 and also need an irrigation system. They hope to take it from Retained Earnings, so they can pay for most it outright. These are strategic projects and will spend it wisely to reinvest in the golf course.

TNAC 01010100

Ms. Baumann explained they have been working with Cindy Katske, Kathleen McGannon McGannon and George Estrada on issues for the center. They're not included in this budget AND are hoping for ARPA funds. I know that this is not the topic of conversation at this meeting but wanted to advocate for it. There are potential safety issues and not getting them done will inhibit their growth. They hope there's future consideration for those projects, the cost is just under \$75,000 for infrastructure issues.

08 RECREATION/PARKS

Trumbull Day 01080300

Ms. McGannon explained there is approximately 35,000 in the account. They haven't had the 20,000 for the last few years. She will take the 10,000 it helps cover the fireworks which is the biggest expense. Everything is going well with this year's Trumbull Day.

DEBT SERVICE 01090000

Ms. Pires explained there is no ARPA money in this year's budget. There is in the revenue for last year's budget. They used 4.6 million in FY2022, but not FY2023. They did pull out some expenses to be used from ARPA funds. Only the first installment has been received, the second installment is not coming until maybe May or June. The funds are put in a separate fund, as it is used they pull it out and apply it to different activities or expensed. The \$5 million was not incorporated into the budget, the only thing they pulled out was the police cars, emergency equipment in the police department, and a few other vehicles were pulled out. They are paying for the greeters at the town hall as well. They are using last year allocation, which was \$5.2 million and have only used \$4.6 million to date. The First Selectman will hold meetings to discuss these uses and the BOF and Town Council will make a decision as to what the uses will be.

Ms. Pires explained so far they have estimated \$3 million from the General Fund, but the BOF sets the mill rate. They are not using ARPA funds to pay back money to the General Fund. They used \$4.6 million last year and last year's revenue included the \$4.6 million from the ARPA funds. Anytime the fund balance is used you cause a little bit of cliff. At this point we don't know if we have a surplus this year or not, which would cover any use of this surplus of the fund balance. It's hard to say, ideally if we have a surplus it goes back to the General Fund which will build it up again. The plan is not to use ARPA for that revenue this year. We will not have the additional ARPA funds before this budget is completed, it is expected in June. Last year ARPA was in the budget, this year the plan is to use it for one-time purchases and it will not be in the budget. The First Selectman will hold meetings with the BOF and Town Council to make those decisions. Councilman Scinto noted he would rather not take \$3 million from the General Fund.

First Selectman Tesoro explained what's been done thus far are estimated amounts, the BOF will set the mill rate and determine how much revenue they will use, they determine how much they'll take from the General Fund. It is her intention not to take any money from ARPA for the budget and will use that money for one-time expenditures of which the BOF and Town Council will have the opportunity to discuss at a joint meeting. Anytime you put monies outside of the budget process into the budget you create a funding cliff, whether you use General Fund money or you use ARPA money. So if you are going to decide that you'd rather use ARPA money, you create a

funding cliff, it's not generated by either the grand list growth or other revenues that we generate through our departments. Ms. Pires confirmed this.

Councilman Scinto voiced his concern the revenue departments are flat and are estimating using \$3 million from the General Fund, but that is subject to change. First Selectman Tesoro noted the year before last they used 2.8 million from the General Fund but ended up not using it because there was a surplus. They are not different from most communities, many have gone into the General Fund to balance their budgets due to COVID, many like us did not have tax increases for their residents in 2020 and in order to do that they had to go into their General Funds. We are not different and are trying to help the residents navigate these challenging times that continue for all of us. Councilman Scinto is concerned this could balloon. The Chair noted all share the same concerns as they did last year too, but was fortunate it ended up working out better than expected. He extended his gratitude to First Selectman Tesoro for bringing these things to the BOF and the Town Council for consideration, because she has no legal requirement to do so. That shows the community that she believes in the process and wants to make sure we go through the proper channels to make sure everyone has the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

Councilman Isaac extended her gratitude to Ms. Pires for all she does through this process and commended her a job well done.

First Selectman Tesoro extended her gratitude to the all of the town departments. They have spent a great deal of time over the last four months developing their budgets meeting with her, the BOF and now with the town council. They are so willing and cooperative and wanting to do the best they can for the town, which they do when they actually deliver the services to the town on top of creating their budgets. So a shout out to all of our departments for the great work that they do keeping us safe, and providing the great services that makes Trumbull the great place it is to live.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to discuss the Town Council Finance Committee adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret D. Mastroni, Town Council Clerk