

Approved

Special Town Council Meeting
April 25, 2015
Pitkin Community Center
Fireside Room
Minutes

Present: Mayor Paul Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Steve Barry, Council Members Gerri Roberts, Donna Hemmann, Jeff Kotkin, Tony Martino, Stathis Manousos, Michael Rell, Michael Hurley.

Staff Present: Michael O'Neil, Finance Director, Jeff Bridges, Town Manager.

Meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the Town Manager's Proposed 2015-2016 with the Town Departments.

Wethersfield Public Library: Representing the Wethersfield Public Library was Brook Berry, Library Director, Doreen Ciarcia, Library Board Chairperson, Martha Conneely Vice-Chairman, Library Board Members George Kelly, and Hannah Granfield.

Ms. Berry discussed the budget requested by the Library and went over the plans for the Library. She stated that they needed to update the Library's technology, the strategic plan, hire a Teen Librarian and to develop a succession plan for impending retirements. She also stated that she is maximizing the hours of the union part time (20 hour or more a week) employees. Ms. Berry went to say that they have rearranged spending in the budget to provide resources for a new web page. They will also be looking to replace furniture to a more vinyl chairs and away from cloth chairs. Finally there is \$25,000 in the capital budget for architecture / engineering services to look at rearranging the service areas and provide more electrical power. They are also very concerned about the Governor's cuts to the State Library and the resources libraries share throughout the state.

Wethersfield Police Department:

Chief James Cetran and Ellen Walsh, Police Operations Analyst, appeared to discuss the Police Department's proposed budget. The largest newest expense is the addition of three new dispatchers to bring the minimum staffing of the 911 operation to two dispatchers on at all times. This is two new employees and the reclassification of one of the records clerk positions (currently vacant) to a dispatcher. This would increase the budget by about \$172,000. Non-dispatcher overtime is also increasing by \$25,000.

Building Department:

Building Official Steve Lattarulo and Administrative Analyst Lori Schroll appeared for the Department.

Mr. Lattarulo reviewed the operations of the Department. He discussed the part time Historic District Coordinator and the proposed increase in the hours for the Historic District Coordinator from 12 hours a week to 15 per week.

The Council asked questions regarding the Building Permit fees that are estimated in the budget. Mr. Lattarulo and Mrs. Schroll went over how the revenues are projected focusing mostly on the residential side since the permits fees due to commercial construction are harder to estimate.

Fire Marshal

Fire Marshal Anthony Dignoti and Administrative Analyst Lori Schroll appeared for the Department.

Fire Marshal Dignoti reviewed the budget and talked about the availability of the Deputy Fire Marshal and how that has helped getting the job done particularly with the High School and the CREC project occupying significant time. He requested the replacement of two tablets in the budget for field inspections.

Planning and Zoning:

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner and Financial Analyst Lori Schroll appeared for the Department.

Ms. Bradley and Mrs. Schroll reviewed the department's budget. There were questions over the banner on Marsh Street and several of the events held in Town.

Engineering Department:

Mike Turner, Town Engineer, and Financial Analyst Lori Schroll appeared for the Department.

Mr. Turner stated that there were a couple of increases in the budget. The Town sidewalk line was increased \$5,000 for more sidewalk work to \$35,000. He stated there used to be \$70,000 in that line. Also, the Department is seeking a reclassification of Mrs. Schroll's position to Engineering Analyst. This budget also includes the budget for the emergency management supplies. Mr. Turner stated they are working on preparing a trailer with emergency signage and cones that can be deployed in the event of emergencies.

Mr. Turner then went over the items in the Capital Budget as recommended by the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee.

Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department:

Chief Rich Bailey appeared before the Council to review the budget of the Fire Department.

Chief Bailey stated that the bid difference in this budget is the cost of the hydrant rent from the Metropolitan District Commission. This is increasing \$14,340 for next year. Also, there is an update to the software of \$2,100 in the budget. He stated that they have a staffing of about 80 members.

Elections

Carol Hurley and Camille Mogelnicki appeared for the Department.

The two registrars went over their proposed budget for the upcoming year.

Town Council

The Town Council then reviewed the Town Council Budget. The biggest change is additional costs of printing costs for the annual letter that goes out in the tax bills.

Town Manager

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager went over the Town Manager's budget.

There were no program changes in the budget, staffing changes has caused differences in the budget.

Finance Department

Michael O'Neil, Finance Director reviewed the Finance Department's budget with the Council. This also included discussions on Data Services and Central Office Budgets. The Council asked about the status of the Shared Services project to merge the IT departments of the BOE and Town. Discussion on that followed by a general discussion regarding the IT needs of the Town and its network.

Debt Service

Finance Director Michael O'Neil reviewed the debt service budget. The 2015-2016 Budget includes the debt service for the \$22 million in bonds issued for the high school project. The payment increases the debt service substantially. In addition, the Town received a premium with the sale of the bonds. The proposed budget for debt service uses \$650,000 of the premium towards the debt service and also includes \$300,000 towards the first interest payment on the next set of bonds to be issued in the fall of 2015. The net impact to the budget for debt service is an increase of \$1,105,470.

Parks and Recreation

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation and Social and Youth Services and Sal Crucia, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation appeared for the Department.

The Council and Mrs. Bagley discussed several topics including the Showmobile, the impact of the minimum wage on the program budgets, the cost of water, and the new

server for the Rec.Track software. There was also discussion about tennis courts and cracks in the courts at Mill Woods. Mrs. Bagley said she would look into that.

Mrs. Bagley also went over the operations and budget for the Nature Center. She stated that the new Youth Program Manager, Rachel Sunny has done a tremendous job increasing programs at the Nature Center. She also stated that there were a couple of ice dams on the roof of the Center this winter that Tremco had to look into.

Social and Youth Services

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation and Social and Youth Services, Sal Cucia, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, and Erica Texeira, Assistant Director for Social and Youth Services appeared before the Council.

There was substantial discussion regarding the Dial-a-Ride Service and finding other transportation options for seniors to take day trips or expand service. The Senior Citizen Advisory Committee has also been looking at the transportation issue and seeing what is available for enhanced transportation. Mrs. Bagley will be reviewing that issue with our current provider, Curtain Transportation. There was some additional discussion regarding other needs for transportation that there may be some synergy with the senior transportation.

Tax Collector and Tax Assessor

Tax Collector Marlene Desjardins and Chandler Rose, Tax Assessor appeared for the Departments.

The Council reviewed with Ms. Desjardins the tax collections and the changes made in the program in the last few years. The Town has seen an increase in collections. Mr. Rose discussed the next revaluation to take place in a few years and some of the enforcement action the state is taking regarding out of state registered cars.

Insurance

Michael O'Neil, Finance Director reviewed the Worker's Compensation and Liability, Auto, Property (LAP) insurance with the Council. The Worker's Compensation Insurance is split between the Board of Education and the Town and the Town pays all of the liability, auto, and property insurance. CIRMA, the Town's provider, has held the Town flat on LAP insurance. However, the current proposed budget increased Worker's Compensation by 12%; however, CIRMA has informed the Town that the increase will be 15%. That adjustment will have to be made to the proposed budget which is an increase of approximately \$20,000.

Retiree Reserve

Michael O'Neil, Finance Director reviewed the Retiree Reserve budget which provides insurance to the retirees of the Town and has line items for Heart and Hypertension insurance claims and compensated absences. Mr. O'Neil also went over with the Council how the prescription drug expenses will now be part of the stop loss calculation for the health insurance.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Approved by Vote of Council
June 1, 2015