

BUDGET WORKSHOP

APRIL 9, 2007

The Wethersfield Town Council held its first budget workshop on Monday, April 9, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. at the Eleanor Wolf Buck Nature Center.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Drake, Forrest, Kirsche, Kotkin, Montinieri, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Fortunato and Chairperson Adil.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk took attendance.

OVERVIEW

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this is a very level budget with no new items. The low mill rate increase is a result in the belief that the State will come through with additional funding. The Governor's budget is what the Town is using for State numbers. If something drastically different happens with the State budget, then the Town could have some issues. The legislature will not pass a budget before the Town's May 15th budget deadline. The State and Towns should all be on the same time frame, but since they are not, the best that can be done is to keep after the State Legislators to give the towns funding. With this budget, the mill increase will be .6 percent or about \$100 for the average taxpayer.

REVENUES

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the largest piece of the revenue for the Town is the tax rate based on the grand list. The other revenues come in under \$13,000,000. The total appropriation for the Town Council's consideration is almost \$70,000,000. Permits and licensing are remaining unchanged. Interest on investments is a little over \$1,000,000. The reason the budget is showing only \$800,000 is due to the arbitrage system of bond funds being spent over a few years. A cushion is built there to offset any repayment of arbitrage. Another cushion is the planned conservatism in case the Governor's budget is significantly changed.

Councilor Drake asked why monthly income varies so much.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that a big part of that has to do with the collection of taxes in July and January. That revenue is invested and then used on an as needed basis. The bond proceeds that were not spent and better than anticipated investment rates contribute to the difference. The next section is the State Grants and Pilots. There has been a reduction there because the one time property tax relief grant is not anticipated next year in the State budget. Most of these grants are based on the Governor's proposals. Charges for services have a slight increase. This is where the conveyance tax fees are located. The Town has used the current level. Under other revenue there is a new proposal through the CRRA for about \$23,000 that has to do with recycling waste disposal. The Town will now be paid for the items sent to the recycling center at \$10 per ton. The next big increase is in the Education Grants. There is a substantial increase there based on the Governor's budget. This number may change during the legislative process. Under other financing sources, she is comfortable with \$700,000 in Fund Balance Appropriation. That subsidizes the tax rate.

Councilor Kotkin said that the monthly sheet shows interest on investments for the first 9 months of \$974,000 and he is trying to square that with the full year of 2006/2007 of \$925,000.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that this was a snapshot as of September 30th. The numbers did change because of investment enhancements.

Councilor Kotkin asked what the estimate today was for 2007/2008.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that she will take a look at it and get back to Council. She said it should be over \$1,000,000.

Councilor Kotkin asked how the Town will handle the issue of whether the Town will send money back to the Federal government for the arbitrage.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said currently the bond money is invested separately. Those funds would be transferred over to the General Fund. It will be sent to the IRS.

Councilor Kotkin said that his point is that she is proposing \$200,000 less interest income next year than this year. Interest rates probably won't be higher. He felt there was some excess conservatism in these numbers.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that she can review the numbers again. She said that there will be less cash to invest in the upcoming year because the bonding of phase II will be going out soon. She agreed that this was a conservative figure.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there were areas of the Governor's budget that the Town would receive less funding.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town will receive less money for the Town Aid Road and LOCIP funds.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the anticipated fund balance appropriation represented the full year. The adopted figure is \$711,000 and the estimated is \$338,238.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the Town is only going to use about \$330,000 worth of the fund balance. The excess of \$400,000 was pulled out of that balance. She felt that \$700,000 could be removed from next year's fund balance and still leave an 8 percent fund balance.

Councilor Montinieri said that if the interest income comes in at \$1,200,000 at year end is there a possibility that the subsidy will be in the 2007/2008 budget as a reduction of the property tax increase.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that she would be cautiously optimistic. It will depend on how the other revenue sources come in as well as the expenditures for the rest of the year.

Councilor Cascio said that the fund balance was such a hot topic for this Town Council and it is important to get it at a good level. He asked if the Town Manager was comfortable with that number for the fund balance and what would that leave the Town as a fund balance.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town doesn't know how the year will end up but thinks the fund balance will still be at about 8 1/2 percent.

Councilor Cascio asked if the fund balance helps the Town with its bond rating.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it does help the Town with its rating. She said that \$700,000 towards lowering the tax rate will not hurt the Town's rating. It should stay above 8 percent.

Councilor Cascio said that there was some concern with using the fund balance to go towards GASB 45.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town will have a formal report at a later date but she and Lisa Hancock are heading for the first year to take all the monies that the employees have given towards their health insurance, which is over a \$1,000,000, and put it in a trust fund so that the Town makes over \$1,000,000 on the initial deposit into GASB 45. This will make the bond agency very pleased and give the Town a break for a year.

Councilor Cascio asked where the new cell tower would be located that was mentioned in the Town Manager's report.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the new cell tower will be added to the existing tower. It is not a new tower.

It is a new carrier on the existing tower.

Councilor Drake asked why fund balance was even on the revenue sources sheet.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it is how the budget is built. It is not revenue, it is another operating source but it helps offset the budget so that the budget balances revenues and expenses.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said it is an accounting standard that the Town has to follow.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked about the State Owned Pilot. She asked if the \$227,000 figure came from OPM or is it based on a formula.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that this number comes from the State. It is a formula.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Pilot funding has gone way down in recent years.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that the Town has many State buildings located in Town. She suggested that Town officials discuss this formula with State Legislators at some point. She asked what impact the zeroing out of the Property Tax Relief Block Grant would have on the Town.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the money was used to offset the revenues. It was a one time resource for the Town.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked about the Goodwin Park Grant.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it is a very involved calculation that takes into account revenues and expenditures as well as that portion of Wethersfield's grand list as compared to the other Grand Lists that share in this revenue source.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the slight increase in this amount is based on a court order from when Wethersfield and Windsor sued Hartford. It is a very convoluted formula based on Grand Lists.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if this was the park that Hartford was trying to make changes to and if so, is the Town of Wethersfield monitoring the situation.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town had a meeting last year with Lee Erdmann, Hartford City Administrator who was going to speak with American Golf about how much money they were putting towards capital. She asked him to give her a copy of the list of capital so that the Town Council could see it. It never happened. She said that she did not know of any new legislation being discussed regarding this issue.

Councilor Kotkin asked to have the Finance Director take another look at the beginning balance for the new fiscal year of \$6,500,000 in light of the fact that the Town may have more interest income and more contingency.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it didn't include some of the additional investments and that she would be reviewing all of the numbers.

Councilor Forrest asked if she had the adopted number for 2005/2006 on the investment income line.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the number the Councilors are seeing is the actual figure. The adopted figure was \$240,000. The Town realized over a \$1,000,000.

Councilor Forrest asked what was the investment income percentage and actual number now.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it was about 8 1/2 percent and she would have to get him the actual number as of today.

Councilor Forrest said that if there are large amounts of expenses in June, how will it affect the investment income figure.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the Town anticipates to be at 8 or 8 1/2 percent at the end of this fiscal year. She will get the latest numbers.

Councilor Forrest said that the Town Council passed a Strategic Plan and then the Financial Plan. Do these plans have numbers in them?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the plans have target numbers in them. The Town has met the target amount.

Councilor Forrest asked if from a Bond Agency standpoint, there is a magical number.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the Bond Agency looks for 20 to 25 percent. There is no way financially that most Towns can do it.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - 181 & PLANNING DEPARTMENT - 182

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Economic Development and Planning Departments have been combined this year. Peter Gillespie, Town Planner; Chris Traczyk Vice Chairperson is here for Tourism; and Howard Greenblatt, Vice Chairperson is here for EDIC and Tony Martino is the Administrative Analyst for Economic Development and Planning. This is the first area that zero based budgeting was implemented this year. Tony did a very good job at working with Department Heads and looking at the programs and the costs of these programs.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that this is the first time the Town has combined the Economic Development and Planning items. The zero based budget worksheet attempts to categorize each of the functions of the office and put a percentage total based on the man hours in the corresponding budget. It is interesting to see how man hours are used. There is an increase from the last year, attributed to the fact that he has requested marketing funds that have not been asked for before. The Town has not proactively used funds to market the Town before to specific segments of the economic development community. It is time to do that now. Sometimes some of the numbers may be shocking. On page 68, under Professional Services, Councilors will see several items that have not been asked for before: economic development brochures (\$4000), electronic development (\$9000), and additional media coverage. Under Support Services, he is requesting additional funds for advertising and improving the visibility of the Town's website. Everything else in the budget is maintaining the status quo.

Councilor Cascio said that he is excited to see the advertising additions. He asked if the Town is being advertised as one Town and that Historic Wethersfield is just one part of the Town. He said that there are other areas of economic development that also need to be focused on.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that the Historic Wethersfield brand was used for tourism and for all of Wethersfield. In the economic development world, historic or old is not always what the Town wants. The intent is to promote the Town as a single brand.

Councilor Kotkin asked, in regard to media relations, who does the Town think it will have successfully pick up on stories. Is it local news coverage? He is concerned that a lot of money can be spent on advertising without a lot of success.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that he is requesting \$13,000 and Keiler and Company, the Town's current marketing company, said that in order to keep the profile in the media on a recurring basis, the Town could spend \$5,000 a month. Obviously, he didn't feel that this was a good use of the Town money. A database of contacts has already been created and the Town will be very selective in deciding on what needs to be done and with whom. There have been some successes. The Town was in Yankee Magazine and CT Magazine. They suggest the Town target Connecticut based travelers for visitation. The Town has not decided on which media outlets will be used.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Town tracked how many people have been brought to Town because of advertisement.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that it is very difficult to track. A visitor survey has been started with retailers and the Keeney Center and some other venues to help the Town track the visitors.

Councilor Drake said that he thought the advertising money was being used for developers and it appears that it is more for tourism. He would rather have money for development and not for tourists driving by for a slice of pizza.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that the intent was for both tourism and economic development.

Councilor Cascio asked if there was any thought on creating a video on Wethersfield. Can the Town in the video send the message "bring your business to Town because ..." and list the reasons. Another part of the video could be geared towards tourism.

Chris Traczyk said that there have been discussions on a video. Economic Development and Tourism have had joint meetings with the Central Connecticut Regional Tourism District and the Visitors and Convention Bureau to create some relationships with the convention center and the Hartford Civic Center. Video production has come up and the Town is in discussions with the Central Connecticut Regional Tourism District on visitation to be sent out to people and also put on the website. It is branding the Town with the same thematic message whether it be for tourism or economic development.

Councilor Forrest said that he looked at the website market and asked if the newer, fresher look of the website will be available when this budget rolls around.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that they are in the process of trying to switch over. It has proven to be a challenge with existing man-hours and staff.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it is an item on the agenda for tomorrow night's meeting.

Councilor Forrest asked if there was a projected timeline to complete the website.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said tomorrow night there is a budget transfer request for some of the work. Kieler and Company would charge \$50,000 to do this work. Peter Gillespie did get the price down to \$40,000 which she would never recommend spending. The staff will have to do it. Tom Hemphill, Information Specialist will do it but he also is responsible for the public safety radios. He can probably work an hour or two a week to get this project done.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that the intent is to get the website on-line when the new budget kicks in.

Councilor Forrest asked if that will change the \$10,000 estimate because the website may not be up and running for the entire 12 months.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that it might be a consideration but he is hoping to have the website running shortly.

Councilor Forrest asked what the \$4,000 requested for Tourism Signage would be used for.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that the intent is for the Town to be eligible for the implementation of the Preserve America plan. One of the recommendations is for signage. Matching funds are needed to do this.

Councilor Forrest asked what part of your budget is dedicated to the development side?

Peter Gillespie said that the larger items previously discussed support development, separate from that is the \$50,000 capital improvement request for the Redevelopment Agency.

Councilor Drake said that the money should go where it is needed to get the Town in discussions with companies relocating.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that one of the numbers within that request is for database work. Keiler thinks that this is a good way to send information to databases that reach the larger world.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that she sees a request for funding for a trade show that the Manager did not submit. Are there any dollars in the budget to participate in any trade shows?

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said no as typically those shows promote individual properties through the real estate community. There is a real estate firm in Town that participates in those types of shows in New York and Boston and he has discussed piggy backing with them. He was told that those shows infrequently produce results unless a specific property is marketed. The Town can provide information on particular properties but these shows are designed to be deal making events and since the Town doesn't own the properties, it can't make any deals.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato said that information kits could be brought to shows and advocate on the Town's behalf. The Town needs to take full advantage of the I-91 corridor and the Merritt Parkway. The Town needs to be more aggressive. Hopefully, the Redevelopment Agency will be able to do some of this in the future.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that the Town's electronic marketing efforts can do some of the same work and may be even more effective.

Chairperson Adil asked what was the next step in the Preserve America process.

Peter Gillespie, Town Planner said that the planning process will take the Town through the rest of this year. At that point, there will be some numbers associated with the requests and the priorities will be assessed then for submittal of an application.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT - 530

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this is another department that did the zero based budgeting. She said that the Zoning Board of Appeals budget was included in the Building Inspection budget.

Brian O'Conner, Chief Building Official said that a proposal was made to increase the hours for the Historic District Coordinator and Property Maintenance Inspector to accommodate their work loads. Property Maintenance has removed some properties from the Blighted Properties List. He said he would also like a full-time clerk position to replace the part-time position. Since it was not approved last year, this year he is requesting an additional 8 hours for the position. Two years ago, the Property Maintenance Code became the responsibility of the Building Department and since then the Department has been behind with no additional help. Because of the renovation of Phase II of the Town Hall, he and Mike Turner are proposing having two full-time secretaries up front in their area so that existing staff doesn't have to stop work to assist customers at the counter. This will increase the level of customer service. Unfortunately, these requests were cut out of the Town Manager's budget.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that all additional personnel requests Town-wide were cut from the budget also.

Tony Martino, Administrative Analyst said that the increase in the budget for Office Machinery Services is to lease a copier annually instead of owning the current copier and paying for a service contract. The machine is shared by three Departments. The entire amount is seen in the Building Department Budget.

Councilor Drake said that it is difficult without support staff. Has the Town looked into having floaters or job sharing?

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that these are all union positions. When someone moves from one Department to the next, there may be grievances if someone feels the floater is doing that person's job.

Councilor Drake asked why insurance was way down.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that these figures are now split out to show how much is the health insurance number, per last year's request by the Town Council.

ELECTIONS - 050

Pam Rapacz, Democratic Registrar of Voters said that the Town had a big change this past year to initiate electronic voting machines. The State paid for all of the telephones that were need for the electronic voting so that the Telephone line item is gone. The \$4,500 line item for ballots has been removed because the Secretary of the State's budget shows that the State will pay for the ballots. In the future, there may be issues with keeping items locked up. It made it very difficult to set up the polling places last year for this reason. It cost overtime and exhausted the workers. There is a way to make this easier; it is called election in a box. The State may pay for it but the Town may have to pay some of it as well. A room is being built in the sally port to keep all of this equipment when not in use. The cost will probably be about \$15,000 for the election in a box, of which the State will pay for about \$10,000. The Secretary of the State will have all of the information at the Convention this month.

Chairperson Adil asked if the election boxes would result in a reduction in staff time.

Pam Rapacz, Democratic Registrar of Voters, said that it would result in less overtime hours since the boxes could be dropped during regular business hours and picked up during regular hours, also.

Councilor Drake asked what was the \$50,000 included in professional services for.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the money was for the people paid for their work during the election.

Pam Rapacz, Democratic Registrar of Voters said that the money is for the poll workers. The cost is usually \$25,000 an election. Nect year there will be a November election and a February Presidential Primary.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that there is nothing budgeted for an April referendum that the Board of Education is requesting. It would be an additional \$18,000 to \$20,000. She suggests a referendum be held with an election to save some money.

Councilor Kotkin asked about the raises for the Registrars.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Registrars of Voter receive raises every other year by State Statute. This is the off year.

ASSESSMENT - 064

Jan Neumuth, Assessor said that there are no major changes to the budget. The reduction for professional services for the audit of personal property is because there are not too many large businesses in Town that have not been audited.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager asked the Assessor to discuss the revaluation.

Jan Neumuth, Assessor said that the Town is coming up for a full measure and list revaluation. The Town will contract with a revaluation company to come into the Town and have them do an interior inspection on every home. They usually have a contract with a guarantee that so many interior visits have to be made. A supervisor would go up and down and review neighborhoods with the assessor cards. The Assessor's Association website has a list of all certified revaluation companies. She said that she is in the process of sending out letters to see who would want to be included in the bid list. The estimates are between \$50 and \$60 per parcel. There are 10,300 taxable properties. The exempt properties can be worked out in the contract so that a lot of time is not spent on those parcels. The process will begin this summer. Public relations will be very important to inform residents about the process. Payments to the revaluation company will span two fiscal years.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked about the PILOT program. She asked when the properties were assessed.

Jan Neumuth, Assessor said that every year a form is sent into the State listing all state property according to type of property. The formula changes every year as to how much the State will pay the Town. The assessment of the buildings is the same from 2003. The formula is the same throughout the State for all State buildings. The PILOT is never what the Town would receive if the buildings were taxable. The tax revenue would be much greater if a taxpayer owned the building.

Councilor Kotkin asked where the money for the revaluation was shown.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it was in the budget with radio replacement money on page 216.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that through this budget, the Town has \$252,500 set aside. The Town was proposing about \$630,000. There would be \$63,000 left for the next year's budget.

DATA SERVICES - 062

Brian Clement, Chairperson of the Information Technology Committee introduced the members of the Committee: Peter Kuzma, Dennis Colclaugh, from the Board of Education, and Paul Dudley, Data Services Coordinator.

Paul Dudley, Data Services Coordinator said that the Salary and Wages and Insurances are existing expenses. 1/4 of Dennis' wages are budgeted and he will address the Strategic Plan issues working with the network architect and disaster management. Travel and Dues is one of the discretionary areas of the budget. Support Services is the maintenance contracts on the existing platforms, hardware and software, and licensing and support. The upgrading, expanding and replacing of equipment is a big dollar item in the budget. It is part of an on-going growth to the network.

Dennis Colclaugh said that the upgrades to the infrastructure need to be done. The demand is overwhelming and creates problems if the upgrades are not done. GIS has two software updates planned.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said the back bone of the Town Hall computer network is falling apart. The present staff spends all of their time band aiding the present system. No long term planning can be done or website development. The Town has been so far behind for many years. The Town needs to upgrade the system. All of this money in salaries is being used to supply helpdesk responses to employees and these positions should not be used as help desk assistance.

Councilor Montinieri asked how equipment requests interface with phase II of the Town Hall renovations.

Paul Dudley, Data Services Coordinator said that as part of Phase I, the entire first floor was rewired and a wiring closet was redesigned. There is now reliable wiring downstairs. There are also some runs to the computer room upstairs. As part of Phase II, the computer room will be moved to a different room with new server racks and wiring. The wiring will have more direct runs from the desktops to the wiring closets.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the proposed improvements to the system will be compatible with the Town Hall Phase II renovations.

Paul Dudley, Data Services Coordinator said that everything should be compatible. The overall design in the renovated areas is up to specification.

Councilor Kirsche asked about a proposed bill before the State Legislature concerning consolidation of technology services.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she was not familiar with it but would look into it.

Councilor Walsh asked if the conversion over was from a hub to a switch technology.

Paul Dudley, Data Services Coordinator said that the switch over is basically complete. The main constraint now is that the growth of the network has created a situation where multiply sites are coming off of a single drop. This will create expandability.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked Dennis to share his observations with the Town.

Dennis Colclough said that part of his job is still evolving. Current staff is not using its areas of expertise because of all of the other stuff that needs to be completed. All of this restructuring needs to be done as well as consolidation of technology budgets.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the Town has benefited by the sharing of this position with the Board of Education in regards to purchasing.

Dennis Colclough said that the two work with very different purchasing lists and it would be tricky to find a way to do it. The Board of Education may get pricing at X for something that private sector and municipalities are not eligible to receive. Dell has said that since the Board of Education is purchasing a large amount of computers, the Town can be included in a bid but may not receive the same pricing. He said that vendors set up lists with pricing. The Board of Education has consolidated its technology software and hardware. The Board of Education has realized a savings with this streamlined process.

Councilor Forrest asked if the Town was up to date with Disaster Recovery.

Paul Dudley said that Dennis has developed a list of who to involve in the planning process and what bases to follow. Daily back up procedures are in place with the periodic removal of information to storage.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this is an outline for what the Town needs to do.

Councilor Drake asked if the PC's are all that are needed to be replaced? She said that servers and routers need to be replaced, too. They were not all included in the renovation process.

Dennis Colclough said that a lifecycle for a computer is about 3 years. Since the Town can't replace computers at that schedule, it is trying to implement an 8 year rotation cycle where every four years computers are updated.

Brian Clement said that Town employees have seen an improvement in the last year. The Committee has seen a lot of improvements and is here to support Town staff. The committee agreed another IT person is needed.

TAX COLLECTION - 063

Marlene Desjardins, Tax Collector said that there has been no major change to this budget. There is a request for a drop box to be installed in the parking lot for the taxpayers. Most other Towns have such boxes for taxpayers to drop off their payments when the office is closed.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager asked that the Tax Collector discuss the tax collection search product that was not included in the budget.

Marlene Desjardins, Tax Collector said that there is a program called Accurate that locates taxpayers through their date of birth. It guarantees a hit. Currently, part-time staff look on-line and through telephone books in an attempt to locate taxpayers. There are a lot of returns, mostly motor vehicle. Accurate claims that half of that can be collected. Other tax collectors have used it with success. The fee is \$1,500 a year.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she would anticipate a 10 fold return on the \$1,500 fee in collected taxes.

Councilor Kirsche asked if the Town was advertising the tax credits it offers.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Assessor's Office is advertising the tax credit programs. New brochures were created.

Councilor Forrest asked what the collection rate was for the budget.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that the collection rate is 98.6 percent. The collection rate to date is about 96 percent. The collection rate has been consistent.

Councilor Cascio asked if the glass in the office will be staying with the renovations.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the glass was for a safety issue. One person is actually barred from Town Hall.

Councilor Cascio said that the Assessor, Tax Collector and Town Clerk's office are customer service oriented. From a safety point of view, the office staff should not have to go out into the hall to go from one office to the next. The current setup is not staff or customer friendly since someone has to leave one office and go out into the hall to the next office.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that she doesn't believe there are any plans to remove walls from offices in the phase II renovations.

Chairperson Adil said that this started with a safety concern.

Marlene Desjardin, Tax Collector said that her office collects all of the revenue for the Town.

Councilor Forrest asked what line item the Town Council would add the \$1,500 to in the budget.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it would go under the Support Services line item.

Councilor Forrest asked for a four year history of the proposed and actual tax collection rates.

TOWN COUNCIL - 010

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this budget is relatively constant. There is additional money in the travel line item which the Mayor had requested be added to the budget.

Chairperson Adil said that no one has been to a National League of Cities Convention. The Town may be missing out on ideas from these meetings. This would allow for up to four people to attend the convention.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the remainder of the unfunded requests are for individual organizations like HERC and Nutmeg Big Brothers and Big Sisters to receive Town funds. The audit is the other line item. It is an item that has to be done by law every single year.

Deputy Mayor Fortunato asked if the \$5,000 for energy would be here.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it would not be here but in the Physical Services budget.

Councilor Kotkin asked about the reduction in the audit cost.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Board of Education amount was no longer included in the audit.

TOWN MANAGER - 020

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that her budget has no changes from last year.

HUMAN RESOURCES - 024

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this is for training for Town staff. It includes tuition reimbursements as per the union contracts, recruitment, and drug testing.

TOWN ATTORNEY - 030

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this is always a guess. This year, she will probably have to make a budget transfer request mainly because of Motorola and a number of new litigation cases with the Historical District Commission. In a revaluation year, there will be more tax appeals. This budget is for litigation only, not labor negotiations.

Councilor Drake asked if the Town could share Attorney services with another Town.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it is an issue that can be looked into.

TOWN CLERK - 040

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said that her budget is pretty much the same. She said that there is money for the completion of the Code Book update in this year's budget. She said that she had requested one of the part-time assistant positions be made into a full time position but it was removed from the Manager's budget. She said that the office has so many varied duties that it can be difficult to complete some tasks during crunch time.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Code Book work would be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said that the Code Book is never up to date because there are always changes, but the current updates will be completed. Then it will be reprinted with five hard copies and it will also be available on-line.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the Library assistance will be needed anymore.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said that Library staff just started in March. Three different people have come for a period of two hours at a time. It is a help, but it is also time consuming for staff to set the person up and explain where the last person left off. There are items that will need Council action before it can be codified.

Councilor Cascio asked if Library staff could do something else in the Town Clerk's office while staff is working on the Code Book.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said that the Library staff could answer phones but couldn't field questions or sign papers.

Councilor Cascio said that the State Vital Statistics are changing a lot of files and procedures.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said that the office has the vital records on computer and can print out vital records. The Town has not ever seen any State changes yet.

Councilor Cascio said that there is \$1,300 in training. He asked if there was any staff training.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said that the training she received last year did not come out of this account. She said that she sends her staff to training to keep them up to date.

Councilor Cascio asked if there was any training regarding customer service and relating to the clientele. He said he would like to see particular programs in place in that area for staff.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that next year, the four Towns have agreed to have a very intensive customer services program.

Councilor Cascio said that he has discussed this every year. The office is customer based and he doesn't feel that it is customer friendly. The Town Clerk's office is the hub of Town Hall and the Town has to be very aware of the fact that a lot of people walk through the doors. He asked for additional information on what the part-time position to full-time position would accomplish.

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk said the office is responsible for various duties requiring time for reports and updating records and she has no objections to job sharing but no Department currently has the staff available to learn all of the rules and regulations of the various jobs.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town-wide Radio system will be on another agenda.

TREASURER - 060

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that this budget has stayed the same.

FINANCIAL CONTROL - 061

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that in this budget the Salary and Wage account has changed because part-time employees were moved into a different account. Wage changes are contractually required increases. There is a request of \$4,000 for coverage of increased workload periods. Everything else is essentially the same. The major impact of the current budget is the part time analyst position. The structuring of the office has changed some of the duties. She implemented a new check reconciliation module on the Munis system. This streamlines the bank reconciliation process. The next item the position worked on was the implementation of the on-line requisition process. The staff person for this part-time position has submitted her letter of resignation and now the projects will have to be carried forward with new staff. There are Statement of Accounting Standards that accountants are required to follow. Auditors are no longer going to be able to complete the Town's financial reports. This will have an impact on the Finance Department for additional work. There is nothing in the budget to handle this. There has been a lot of turnover in the office, too. Some of the Financial Analyst duties were put aside so she could help with other office duties.

Councilor Kirsche asked if the position has been posted.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it is advertised and the closing date is April 16th. There was a challenge finding someone during the first hiring. The pool was very limited and a majority of them were interested in a full-time position.

Councilor Walsh said that he is concerned with the overtime trends. He thought that by hiring employees, overtime would go down instead of seeing it double from last year.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that it is for the implementation of some new processes and training. This should not be a continuing trend.

Councilor Drake said that there are a lot of part-time positions. He asked if someone may be able to work mornings in the Finance Office and afternoons in another Department.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that they would have to be very different jobs or it would have to become a full-time position.

Councilor Drake said that last year the Town was trying to revise the Volunteer Firefighters Pension Fund and asked if this was completed.

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that she is in the process of working with the Pension Committee on it. The current plan has to be brought up to date and then alternatives can be brought to Council.

Councilor Forrest said that on page 22 there are two Financial Analyst positions. Can they be combined?

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that one of the staff cannot work full-time and she is an asset to the Department. Also, the Town would be cutting back on hours if it created one full-time position instead of the two part-time positions.

CENTRAL SERVICES - 067

Lisa Hancock, Finance Director said that this is part of the budget that accounts for centralized copying services and salaries for telephone services. Consolidated leasing was approved for copier services last year. Postage increases are due to the consolidation of costs. Postage will increase May 1st. The telephone and communications account changes are for moving 42 voice telephones during the renovation. The funds were not included in the bond package. The big increase in office supplies went from \$1,500 to \$6,000 because paper budgets were taken out of individual Department budgets and combined into one account.

PROBATE COURT - 095

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this budget is to support the Probate Court judge. The figure is subject to change depending on the needs of the Probate Judge.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:15 p.m., Councilor Cascio moved "TO ADJOURN TO THE NEXT BUDGET WORKSHOP ON THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2007" seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

As approved by vote Council on May 7, 2007