

BUDGET WORKSHOP APRIL 12, 2007

The Wethersfield Town Council held its second budget workshop on Thursday, April 12, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. at the Eleanor Wolf Buck Nature Center.

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

Absent: Deputy Mayor Fortunao

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

Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk took attendance.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT - C-55-57 (p. 167)

Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District, said that the Central Connecticut Health District is an independent, semi-quasi governmental agency that is overseen by a nine member Board of Health. It includes Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Berlin and Newington. The Budget for the Health District was established at a Public Hearing in February. The membership fee was then brought to the member towns. This is the third year that the rate has remained at \$4.06 per capita. The Department of Public Health's population estimate is used to determine what is the cost for each member Town. Much of what the Health District does is governed by State Statutes. He said that the annual report shows, in detail, what the Health District does. The report is also available on-line. 78 percent of the budget is for salary and personnel. Rent is paid for the office space the Health District uses in Wethersfield. He highlighted some recent activities - Community Health Survey, logo design contest, creation of a sanitary code for licensing, and volunteer recognition luncheon.

Councilor Kirsche asked if Newington was the latest addition to the Health District and if it was a smooth transition.

Paul Hutcheon, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District said that Newington joined the Health District last June. That addition increased the population by 50 percent from 60,000 to 94,000 people for the District. It is probably the eighth or ninth largest Public Health District in the State. A Chief of Environmental Health was hired. The position works out of the Newington Senior Center. She took the place of Newington's former Public Health Coordinator. The Newington Sanitarian has joined the Health District to give continuity to the services.

Councilor Kotkin said that part of the Health District's funds come from the State. Are there any changes with that funding?

Paul Hutcheons, Director of the Central Connecticut Health District said that he has been an advocate to the Legislators for more money. Health Districts get the largest rate of per capita grants. The current per capita rate is \$1.66 for Health Districts, down from \$1.99. The biggest source of revenue is the money received from the Towns. There is \$2.49 per capita in the State's Appropriation's Budget. He said the 2007/2008 Health District budget is balanced by a transfer of \$67,000 from its reserve account. If State money is higher than anticipated he doesn't know if it will be used for new expenses or to offset the withdrawal of the reserve fund. The Board has not discussed it yet.

Chairperson Adil said that:

- He applauds the efforts of the Health District staff in regard to the youth violence programs it will be implementing.
- He has spoken to Representative Russ Morin today concerning State funding for Wethersfield. Representative Morin said that in Appropriations today, a number was given for Wethersfield that included everything except Special Education, which they feel will go up as well. Last year, the Town received \$6,803,716 from the State.

This year, the Town is projected to receive \$9,324,877. This is very good news for the Town.

RECREATION AND PARKS - C-65-73 (p.183)

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that:

- This year the Recreation and Parks Department sent its brochure out much earlier, at the beginning of March.
- All of the budgets have stayed the same with the exception of utilities, payroll and benefits.
- She had asked for several years for the increase of the part-time secretary position to a full-time position. In this budget, she requested an additional 5 hours a week to the position and will find ways to generate additional revenue to pay for the position. The Nature Center needs clerical help and 20 percent of the time can be spent in that capacity. The Nature Center Director will raise 20 percent of the cost of the additional salary. The work load has increased dramatically because of additional programs and the collection of the fees. There will be training for the new computer software for on-line registration and credit card payment in May with the hopes of being on-line by the end of the year. These additional hours will be helpful in the process.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the increase in hours would make this position eligible for benefits.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that this position already receives benefits. There would be a minimal increase to benefits. It would be an increase of about \$5,265.

Councilor Drake said that everyone has been asking for additional clerical help. Since the Town is already paying benefits for this position, it may be a good place to use this person as a full-time position shared by other departments. She could work 30 hours in the Recreation Department and the other 7.5 hours in a clerical position in another Department.

Councilor Kotkin asked if there was any union restriction prohibiting a Secretary I to work in more than one Department, or be used as a floater.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that a new floater position could be created as a new position.

Councilor Drake suggested that the person could spend the additional hours in the Clerk's Office on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Councilor Cascio said that it is a consistent budget. He asked about the maintenance portion of the budget. He asked how the construction at the Community Center will affect the custodial staff there.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation said that she anticipates the construction will begin in September in the gymnasium, preschool room, and back storage room. Even with the rooms coming off-line, the programs will still be run so there will be a need for custodians.

Councilor Cascio asked if the fencing of the fields was in the Parks Maintenance Budget and if other fencing options were being looked into.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that:

- She had some fencing in the budget for next year for ball fields. Most of the time, fencing projects are combined and put in the Capital Improvements Program.
- The standard fencing being used in the parks is with mesh over it, green or black vinyl. The strength and grade of the fence depends on where it is being put up.

Councilor Cascio asked how the Dog Park and Skate Park impacted her workload.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that the Department loves the new facilities. The Skate Park is

not too big a deal. At the Dog Park, residents are very good about cleaning up after their dogs. An additional barrel was put at the Dog Park. Over a weekend, the garbage cans are overflowing. The Department has to watch and see about trash removal, especially during the spring when more people are using the Dog Park. Volunteers have been great with the Dog Park.

Councilor Cascio asked if the staff has thought of a plan for when the Town doesn't have volunteers to assist with fundraising and maintenance. He asked if funds were being budgeted somewhere. He asked if in the future, residents could purchase a dog pass, similar to a pool pass, to use the dog park.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that she has received requests for dog parties at the Dog Park, but she is not ready to rent it out yet.

Councilor Cascio asked if the Park and Recreation Department was responsible for the renovation of the fields at Wethersfield High School.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that it was a grey area. In the past, the Parks and Recreation Department never dealt with the high school football field renovation. Any time the Town has done renovations to the ball fields, it has been out of bond packages.

Councilor Cascio asked who would paint the fence around Cottone Field. He has asked for that to be done for the past five years.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that painting the fence would be in the Physical Services budget.

Chairperson Adil asked what heavy duty flooring was to be used in Town Hall. He said the floor in the snack bar run by the Jaycees was always in need of repair.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that it was an epoxy. She said that there are so many new products on the market for flooring for outdoor spaces.

Councilor Cascio asked if there are any major projects at the Solomon Welles House that the Town Council should be aware of.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that the roof, boiler and sewers have been replaced. There are general household repairs that may need to be made. The parking lot is an issue.

Chairperson Adil asked if the roads ripped up by Physical Services could be used in the parking lot as an interim solution.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that she doesn't know, but would ask Mike Turner, Director of Public Works.

Councilor Forrest asked how the removal of the Nature Center from the Community Center, creating rooms for rental, impacted the rental fees of the Community Center.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that she is estimating about \$40,000 in revenue at the Community Center for next year. She is in the process of evaluating a fee for the former Nature Center room. The Community Center is booking its rooms at the same level. The rental revenue will not increase significantly with the addition of this room. Rates are tied into the custodians' salaries and are raised as the custodians' contract and salary are raised. She said that since the Town Hall is under renovation and lost all of its conference rooms, the Community Center allows for one free monthly rental to Town groups to make up for the loss of free Town Hall meeting space.

Councilor Kotkin said that the electricity and natural gas budget increases are about 10 percent in the Recreation and Parks budget. The Board of Education budget is showing 30 percent increases. He would like the Town Manager to speak with the Superintendent to find out why those rates are so high.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that CCROG gave the Town the figures for utilities. She thought those figures were given to the Board of Education. She said that she would look into it.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that every year a list of Capital Improvement Projects is created. The approved projects are: the basketball court at Greenfield. It can't be fixed. It needs to be ripped up and a new court installed and \$30,000 for the Community Center renovations to the east wing. The money is to move the pre-school to the west wing. It is the Town's contribution to the Keene Foundation project.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that there is a concern with the Keene Foundation Committee that there may be a funding gap. The project may be short about \$50,000. The Committee wants to know if the Town Council will be willing to help and if so should the Committee wait and see what the gap is and then ask the Town Council for the funding.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation said that the funding will be needed next year. The project is anticipated to begin in September and be completed in about 6 months. The Architect is concerned with possible hazardous material removal and replacement of windows, especially in the gymnasium which would require additional funds.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that a possible funding source may be the State funding for windows. At some point, the Town Council will have to fill the gap, if it is committed to that, through the Capital budget or through the State grant money for windows.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation said that \$40,000 was budgeted last year for the Wethersfield High School tennis courts. It was a \$35,000 job and the balance was going to the repair of other tennis courts in Town. The cracks were opened up and repaired with a warranty. During the winter, the cracks opened up larger than the contractor anticipated. New cracks also appeared that are not warranted. The contractor said that he has never seen that kind of underground movement. He thinks that there is not a stable base under the tennis courts. The Town is going to be pouring money into the tennis courts. He thinks he will probably be back every year for the next five years to fix the cracks. It will be another \$2,600 to fix the new cracks. She has not committed the other money for tennis court repairs and thinks it should be used for the additional crack repairs. She warned that this is a stopgap measure.

Chairperson Adil said that some time down the road the Town is planning on replacing the tennis courts. He asked what was the time frame for the tennis courts.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that Town staff has hoped to get five years out of the repairs but she is not sure if that will happen. In the 10 year Capital Improvement Plan, she has the tennis courts scheduled for repair in about 5 years.

Chairperson Adil said that the tennis court renovations may be able to be included in the High School renovation projects.

Councilor Kotkin said that last year, the Recreation and Parks Department requested money for the replacement of the Highcrest Little League Field fence and this year the request is not in the budget.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that \$8,000 is in the Parks Maintenance Budget for the fence at both the Highcrest and Mill Woods Little League Fields. Little League will contribute an additional \$6,000 for the projects.

Chairperson Adil asked if the advertising on the fence has been implemented.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that neighbors have requested an informational meeting before the issue goes to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a formal hearing. She is trying to coordinate a night when the Little League representatives can attend a meeting. The Town has already lost advertising for the spring season because of when Planning and Zoning could hear the application.

A discussion ensued concerning the advertising on the fence at Mill Woods.

Kathy Bagley said the advertising revenue was projected at about \$5,000 for each of the fields; Mill Woods, Highcrest and Greenfield.

Chairperson Adil said that the Planning and Zoning Commission has cost the Town \$15,000 in revenue and asked that a letter be written to them concerning this issue.

Councilor Drake said that a public hearing needs to be held. He said that he would not be happy with a CITGO sign posted in a field if it abutted his backyard. The Town has to let the public talk about this issue.

Chairperson Adil said that people have had the opportunity to speak and that it is the same few people who criticized the Cottone Field plans.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, discussed the fees for the Recreation and Parks programs. She said some fees have been changed. Every year she evaluates the fees and tries to make changes based on many different factors.

Chairperson Adil said that he appreciates all of Kathy Bagley's hard work.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town Council asked the Recreation and Parks Department to work on a fee schedule for the Show Mobile to stop the waivers.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, presented a fee schedule for the Show Mobile.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the final issues for Kathy Bagley to discuss are a fee policy for Cottone Field and a schedule for maintenance of Cottone Field.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that the fee policy would be based on priorities. Priority One - The Board of Education for PE classes and practices. There is no staff required and no fees. Priority Two - If there is a school game on the field a maintenance person would be hired at an overtime rate for the field. Priority Three - The Town's youth sports leagues would use the fields. A maintenance person would be needed for games only or games and practices. Private Rental Charges - A charge of \$50 an hour plus the maintenance salary. This is a first pass of recommendations. Over a given year the overtime budget will be about \$29,000.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that now only 5 home games are budgeted at \$3,000 each. This is an area that needs to be looked at.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that there have been issues of security and following the rules of the field. A maintenance person will make sure rules are followed, gates are opened, and trash is removed. She said that she is trying to determine the best way to maintain the field.

Councilor Walsh asked if a maintenance person is needed for practices or only games.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that the need is greatest at games where there is more trash and a larger group of spectators. Last fall, the High School custodians covered High School games for security but the Town was still responsible for garbage. It was removed the following day.

Councilor Walsh asked why the school custodian didn't remove the garbage if he is already there.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it is an unspoken rule that the Town is responsible for the outside of the schools.

Chairperson Adil said that perhaps the Town Council should address this past practice.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that if the Town Council accepts this proposal, a maintenance

person will be put on all the time. The question is who will pay for this. The proposal before the Town Council is a working document, more input is needed. She suggested removing practices from the proposal so a maintenance person could be put on for only the games. The big decision is who will pay for this position.

Councilor Drake asked if Adult Leagues use the field and if it the proposal should not refer to youth leagues but rather sports leagues.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she agrees with Kathy Bagley that a maintenance person should be used for games. For practices, the leagues will have to be responsible for the fields.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, said that based on past usage, for soccer in the spring the cost would be about \$10,000. In the fall it would be about \$7,000 for youth groups and \$4,000 for Board of Education activities. The proposal is not meant to charge back these costs to the groups but represents the cost to the Town. She said that she is getting requests for private use of the field for summer camps. She would like to know if she can use the \$50 an hour fee for these camps.

Councilor Drake asked if that would cover all of the Town's costs.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation said that the rental fee would be \$50 an hour plus the cost of the maintenance person as the Town deemed one necessary.

Councilor Drake said that \$50 will not maintain the field should something happen to it. He said that if profit making organizations are using a premier field and camp prices have gone up, the fee should be higher.

Kathy Bagley, Director of Parks and Recreation, in response to the Councilor's questions, said that she is talking about two camps this summer. If the Town feels that it is short changing itself, the fees can be raised. The fee can be reviewed again at the end of the summer. Rocky Hill does not lock its field and no staff is used. Berlin has no staff assigned to the field. Rocky Hill charges \$125 per hour plus staff cost. Berlin rents it for \$65 for 2 hours and \$125 for all day. They require a deposit for the key to unlock the field.

Councilors agreed with the private group fee of \$50 an hour plus the cost of the maintenance person.

POLICE DEPARTMENT - C-32 (p.74)

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that Police Chief Jim Cetran and Lieutenant David Scales were at the meeting. She asked the Chief to highlight any changes or new initiatives.

James Cetran, Police Chief, said that he was looking for two new things that the Town Manager cut out of his budget; mobile video recorders and a seventh sergeant position. The union has agreed to pay for one mobile video recorder, funds from the Asset Forfeiture account can pay for one, and he had requested that the Town pay for three. Half of the marked cars would have the mobile video recorder, MVD. The video recorders are important. The State has them on all marked cars. It may also help in any litigation. These units are all digital and record down to a hard drive. It is an easily managed system. He said he would like to get a unit in every marked car. He had hoped to have this done next year by sharing the cost.

Councilor Montinieri asked how many vehicles this included.

Chief Cetran said that there are 10 marked cars. These units cost \$5,000 each.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that this year's private duty money is way above what she had ever thought. Another possibility is to use that money to pay for these units. It would be a contingency transfer.

Councilor Drake asked if the Police Department collected more money from private duty work.

Chief Cetrean said that the Town budget \$120,000 in private duty. The budget is already at the \$200,000 mark. What happens is all of that money comes out of the budget to pay for the officers. When the contractors pay, it goes back to the general fund.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that Lisa Hancock, Finance Director can do an analysis of the money.

Councilor Kirsche asked if these units have an anticipated shelf life.

Chief Cetran said that they are DVR machines. They don't have a shelf life. They would be a great help with internal affairs investigations when a criminal complains that an officer said or did something. The complaint would still have to be investigated but it will lighten the load of the commanders and sergeants.

Councilor Kotkin asked if these are commonly used with little complaints.

Chief Cetran said that all State police cars have them, as well as Newington Police. It is a form of insurance for the officers. The officers know that they are being videotaped.

Councilor Kotkin asked if these units made the Police Department a better risk for insurance.

Councilor Drake said that he thought the cars already had these units in them. He said that this is chump change in the budget.

Lieutenant Scales said that at one time insurance companies supplied these units to Police Departments. They no longer do, but they understand the importance of having the units in the Police cars.

Councilor Drake said that he saw in the Town Manager's management report that the Town can no longer buy blue Crown Victorias.

Chief Cetran said that they are no longer available. Most departments are going to black and white cars. That isn't beneficial to the Town because most of the cars are run through the detective bureau first. The cars last longer and stay in better shape doing this.

Councilor Drake said that he read an article that said the Crown Victoria is still the best police cruiser. It has a large trunk and is rear wheel drive. The Impala is too small.

Chief Cetran said that the Police Department can use whatever it wants for cruisers. The Dodge cruisers are very nice. If you start changing models you run into repair issues. The Town has a lot of parts for the Crown Victorias. Also, the Police Department did better than it anticipated with the insurance company for the two lost vehicles. The Department is short \$1,400 to purchase the new cruiser.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that \$1,400 for the new cruiser will be on the May Council agenda.

Chief Cetran said that he would like to use a hiring process that he has always been against in the past. The Department wants to do a certified only process for a vacancy that the Department will have. If a written test doesn't have to be given, the Town will save \$2,000. The new hire will not go to the academy but will take an abbreviated FTO program and be on the road a lot sooner. If the other hiring process is used, the new hire wouldn't be on the road for 12 months. It won't cost the Town anything additional to use this process.

Chairperson Adil asked if anyone had any objections to this hiring process.

Councilor Cascio asked if there was another safety net that the employment has to be in another Town before the employee can switch.

Chief Cetran said that when a new recruit leaves the Police Academy, he or she has to stay with the community for two years or have the Police Chief's signature. Larger departments were pulling people away from smaller communities because of better salaries and the smaller communities were getting killed because they were sending the people

through the academy just to have them leave.

Chairperson Adil said that he doesn't see any objections to using this employment method.

Chief Cetran handed out information to justify the creation of a seventh police sergeant position. He said that currently, the Town has seven sergeants because one is assigned to the MidState Narcotics Division. He has gone after drug dealers and their assets. Wethersfield is the host of the Regional Narcotics Taskforce. Without this supervisor, the lieutenant is in charge of the detective division on a part-time basis, mostly at an overtime rate. It is too much time on the Lieutenant. This is the number one item on the Town Manager's priority list.

Chairperson Adil asked if the Town received any money for the MidState Task Force.

Chief Cetran said that the Town received a portion of any assets seized in the drug arrests. He said each Town has to bring in manpower. Technically speaking, that unit should have a Sergeant. When the Task Force was housed in Newington, they provided the Sergeant.

Councilor Kotkin said that this is the first priority on the Town Manager's list of additions to the budget. He asked if the \$77,000 was gross or overtime.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it was a new position with benefits.

Chief Cetran said that the overtime savings would probably be between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the asset forfeiture money could be used to purchase needed items.

Chief Cetran said that every single firearm has been paid for through Asset Forfeiture accounts since the mid-1980's. All of the Patrol bicycles, honor guard uniforms, surveillance equipment, and other things have been purchased through this money, never through the budget.

Councilor Forrest said that in the Town Manager's list, is it two new positions or one position.

Chief Cetran said that the money is for one new position of a patrol officer plus the salary difference to bring an officer up to sergeant.

Councilor Forrest asked if the budget could be changed by \$67,000 to reflect the addition of the position minus the anticipated lowering of the overtime account.

Chief Cetran said that it is difficult to anticipate overtime. At the end of the year, if there is an additional \$10,000 the Town can take it. But to not budget the money and then need it would be difficult. He said that he is only requesting one new person. He said Newington has gotten three more officers this year and will have 5 more officers than Wethersfield. Our crime rate is about the same, although Wethersfield has more violent crime and Newington has more property crime. Newington has to fill every shift, they have no minimum. Their overtime budget is \$1,200,000.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the last time the Police Department requested additional officers was in 1993.

Councilor Forrest asked for information on vandalism surveillance cameras. He asked him to elaborate on the anti-vandalism camera concept.

Chief Cetran said that he has a camera in a watch box on order. He said that it is very hard to get these cameras. It is a box that is attached to a pole. It downloads images to a hard drive. It runs by battery so it is self-contained. It helps to direct patrols. The other aspect is to create a lesson plan to teach high school kids the true cost of vandalism. The camera costs only \$1,050. The Police Department has a camera similar to the camera used during the renovation of Cottone Field but it needs a power source and needs to be within 300 feet of an internet source.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that it came to her attention that because crossing guards are in the Town budget they can collect unemployment over the summer. If they were in the Board of Education budget, they can't. She asked the Town Council to consider moving the money to the Board budget. She said that the Police Department will still supervise them. She said that she spoke with Dr. Proctor and he had no problem with this request as long as the Police continue to supervise the crossing guards.

Councilor Montinieri asked if this would cause hiring problems.

Chief Cetran said that this is something new to the Town of Wethersfield. Other Towns have done this.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that additional buy money is needed for the drugs.

Chief Cetran said that all of the other Towns are contributing \$2,000 a year for buy money. Wethersfield is only contributing \$1,500.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Chief has requested 5 new police cruisers. She cut it back to 4 vehicles this year. On page 216, there is the replacement for an animal control vehicle, too.

Chief Cetran said that to cut a police cruiser from the budget for the animal control vehicle is tough. The animal control vehicle is needed, too.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Police Department is getting 4 police cruisers and an animal control vehicle.

Chief Cetran said that he is then happy.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said the only other issue is that the Town is seriously considering a regional animal shelter with Newington and Rocky Hill. She said that she received a proposal from the Protectors of Animals that says that they would rather the Town not join a regional animal shelter and that they would build the Town a new facility. She feels it is a better idea to have a regional facility to share staff.

Councilor Drake asked why the Protectors of Animals did not want the Town to form a regional dog pound.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that if the Protectors of Animals build the pound, it will be theirs and they can fill it with other animals.

Councilor Cascio said that if the Town gets rid of the current pound and builds a new one, it will have to go through a process. It is a service that the community has come to rely on. He asked where it would be located.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the dogs would be brought to Newington and the Wethersfield dog wardens would still be used. Wethersfield keeps the dogs at the Wethersfield pound much longer than other Towns. She asked if the Town Council was interested in having the Town look into a regional dog pound.

Councilor Cascio said that this discussion came up before and the Town Council didn't see any benefit in closing the Town pound.

Chief Cetran said that CT K-9 can charge the Town \$8.50 per day per dog. The Town can charge up to \$15.00 per day per dog. There is a positive fund that pays for medical bills for dogs that get sick during their stay. One of the Animal Control Officers doesn't like the facility and says it is dirty and animals contract kennel cough while there. Newington got rid of their pound and uses CT K-9. So does Hartford. The Humane Society is also willing to do it for Wethersfield. It is a cleaner facility but they want \$15 per day for small dogs and \$25 per day for large dogs. It would create a negative fund balance.

Councilor Cascio asked who would be responsible for bringing the dog to Newington if the Dog Warden was not on duty.

Chief Cetran said that sharing staff is the good part of a regional dog pound. Newington has one full-time dog warden

and Wethersfield has two part-time dog wardens for nights and weekends. Two shifts every day could be covered. Police officers will not be involved in dog issues. The Wethersfield and Newington dog wardens are not happy about this proposal.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that at this point she needs to know if the Town Council is interested in her pursuing a regional dog pound.

Councilor Cascio asked if there was any cost savings.

Chairperson Adil said that the Town Council should refer this to the Public Safety Committee for review.

LIBRARY - C-61 (p.173)

Greg Curtin, Chairperson of the Library Board, thanked the Town Manager, Chairperson Adil and the Town Council on their support in the past and continued support of the Library. He also thanked Deputy Mayor Fortunato for all of her support as liaison during the past year and also for her work with the Friends of the Library. He said that because of the renovation and smaller space of the current Library, he would like to discuss what the Library has been doing since October 2006. He said that:

- Library staff has been providing regular service seven days a week for 57 hours a week. They have served about 21,000 people.
- Borrow Services - There were 283 new borrowers. Loans are about 96,000 people. 483 books, DVD's and other materials were delivered to home-bound residents. 10,000 information requests were answered. 6,500 loans were processed. 115,000 books and other materials were checked in. 4,500 new items were ordered. 7,680 catalogue items were processed.
- The Library had a regional author appearance.
- It published 6 monthly newsletters and several press releases.
- Programming - There have been 12 adult book discussions, 6 writer's workshops, 155 children's programs, the beginning of a summer adult scholarly reading series, and the summer reading program for children.
- Office Management is on-going.
- Staff Development - 41 members have attended continuing education workshops
- Community Relations - The Director has attended meetings with outside organizations.

Due to the limited space, tasks that were normally easy to do have become much more difficult. The Library staff has been working as if the Town had a regular, full-size Library. The Children's Library is very important to the residents. It provides pre-school programs, supports the school system's summer reading program, and has its own summer reading program. New services have been added, including Friday afternoon hours. Additional website services were created and more museum passes are available. Also, Library staff is scheduled to assist the Town Clerk's office for 24 hours a month.

Paul Courchaine, Library Board member said he would like to discuss some of the more significant items in the Library budget. He said the proposed budget is \$1,703,367. The first major increase is in personnel costs. The increase is due to the new contract. Healthcare has an anticipated increase. The difference in training reflects the new union agreements' tuition reimbursement fund. The programs increase reflects an increase in both children and adult programs. The office supplies account shows a decrease. The books account has an increase and it represents \$5.30 per capita spending. The IT request shows an increase for 2 additional computers for the children's room and replacement of 4 dated computers. The assumption the Board made in the budget planning process was that the Library would be moving into its new space in 2008. It does not reflect the impact that might occur relative to using the Library for swing space.

Chairperson Adil said that the cost benefit analysis has not been completed, yet. No one should be telling people that the Library is not going to be opening for 15 months.

Paul Courchaine said that the head of the Building Committee attended the last Library Board meeting and gave the

Board the 15 month date.

Chairperson Adil said that the renovations should be complete in 15 months. If the project starts in the next few months, it should be complete by mid-2008.

Councilor Cascio said that we approved the Town Council minutes with the date January 2009 for completion of the project.

Chairperson Adil said that the Building Committee Chairperson may have been giving the worst case scenario for a date for all renovations to be completed. Until the cost benefit analysis is complete, discussing dates is premature.

Councilor Kotkin said that if the Library Board is operating under the assumption that the Library will return to its full space in mid 2008 and that doesn't happen what impact will that have on the budget.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director said that the Town Manager, in putting together her budget, assumed that the Library will be in its temporary quarters for six months. In putting the budget together, the Town Manager assumed that all current vacant positions in the Library will remain vacant for the first six months. It is about \$10,000 in savings per month. The custodial budget was figured for two months in temporary quarters and the office budget assumed six months in temporary quarters.

Councilor Montinieri asked why the difference between two and six months for some of the budget items.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director said that when the Library Board started working on the budget, they were under the impression that the Library would be moving in the fall.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she overlooked the custodial budget when she refigured the budgets for a six month period in the smaller space.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director said that the custodial hours will have to increase once the Library moves to the new space. Custodial services are contracted out with the Town.

Councilor Montinieri asked when new staff would need to be hired.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director said that she would like to have new positions filled a month before the Library opens so that the people can be trained. Most of the vacancies are in the Children's Library and those people need to be comfortable enough that they can be left in the Children's Department by themselves.

Councilor Montinieri asked for a clarification of Mr. Courchaine's comment that the Library budget increase was one tenth of one percent.

Paul Courchaine said that the Library budget represents a one tenth of one percent increase in the Town's budget overall.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the percentage increase of the Library budget is 12.85 percent.

Councilor Forrest said that over the last three years, including this proposal, the Library budget has increased by 65 percent. The Town has put a lot of resources into the Library. What are residents going to see for a 65 percent increase in the budget.

Greg Curtin said that staff salary increases have been very dramatic with the union contracts. Also, there has been a great growth in the number of people who use the Library. The Library has grown into a vibrant place since he started on the Library Board in 1999. The resources have allowed the Library to be where it should be.

Councilor Forrest said that he agrees that the Library has become a great place but since 2005 what are the improvements from the dollars the Town has spent.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director said that the only significant increase in staff is the staff the Library hasn't hired yet in the current budget. The positions are being carried over to the 2007-2008 budget. Another increase is for the improved book budget due to an increase in circulation.

Councilor Drake said that he is concerned with this budget because it is a little bit of a fallacy as \$140,000 is delayed being spent the Library would be 8 or 9 percent higher. If the Library were up and running now, it would be an increase of 8 or 9 percent on top of the 12 percent. This is a pretty heavy increase. He also said that if the Library Board wanted, it could easily find \$10,000 in its budget to move to the book budget.

Councilor Kotkin said that the original budget is \$1,513,095 and the projected budget is \$50,000 more.

Paul Courchaine said that the new projected figure for salaries is not \$928,310 but \$819,052. That includes the negotiated salary increase.

Councilor Kotkin asked where in the book can he find the number of people employed by the Library.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director said that she has a summary of the vacant positions.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that she would get the Town Council the list of positions in the Library.

Councilor Kotkin asked if the positions on tab four of the Library budget will be above and beyond the 23.79 people in the Town budget.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director said that it includes those positions. There are 3 vacancies and 5 new positions for the children's room. The Library accrued a surplus of about \$100,000 because these positions were not filled. The union increase, retroactive to July 1st, will use up about \$50,000 of that money.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the Town Council has not approved this union contract yet. These are proposed figures.

Councilor Kotkin said that the budget for next year is based on the Library being back into their space by January 2008, half way through the fiscal year and the main difference between the two budgets is six months. He asked if that included money for the new hires starting a month ahead of them.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the budget difference is the six months. The Town Manager's budget does not allow new hires to start before January 2008.

Councilor Kotkin said that one of the weaknesses in Town for many years was the Library. He is thrilled with all the work that has been done with the Library. He would feel awful if the renovation project impacted that. It is not going to look good to residents to see a 12 percent budget increase for nothing. What additional information will the Town Council have between now and budget adoption.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that the budget must be passed by May 15th. The Town Council will have to go with what the contractor gives for a schedule. That is why it is so important for the Town Council to decide whether the Town offices will move.

Councilor Kotkin said that he sees two problems - the Town Council could under fund the Library and it would be short staffed or the Town Council could over-fund the Library and then it doesn't open until January 2009 and the tax payers are hit with an over 13 percent increase for the Library budget.

Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager said that last year, the Town Council approved the staff and there was a reserve at the end. The Library has a huge liability. It has an employee who is grandfathered in and will receive payment for accumulated sick and vacation pay at retirement. It is a huge sum. The surplus has been going to off-set that liability.

Councilor Cascio said that of the 13 percent budget increase what is contractual. The Town is not receiving services or

books but contractual obligations for these salaries. The Library has been very diligent in preparing the Town Council on the renovations of the Library. The Library doesn't only function on Town dollars. It also functions on bequests and funds from the Friends of the Library. The Town is very lucky to have such a good Friends of the Library group and benefactors. If the Town didn't have that, it would be facing a much larger budget.

Councilor Montinieri said he would like to get some input from the Library Board on their feelings with the Kronenberg contractors coming on board. The Town Council is going to be on a very tight time frame. Having sat on the Building Committee as its liaison, the Committee has looked at certain features of this contractor with respect to flex space, and that Town Hall will move to the Library moving Departments into the Library space. He said that he feels it is extremely remote because the amount of payback is virtually nil and it doesn't take into consideration the cost of the move. The net difference may not even be anything. He thinks it is safe to say that the Building Committee is going to be very aggressive about getting the Library back into its space. There will be issues with moving Town staff around. Everyone will be better off by getting the Library open in its new space.

Councilor Forrest said that C-64 describes what the FTE's are for the Library. Tab 4, shows the vacant and deferred positions. All of these positions were in the 2006-2007 budget but were not filled. Added together those positions would be about 3 FTE's for a total of 23.79. The proposed budget for the 2007-2008 have no changes in the FTE. In the 2005-2006 budget, it goes down .5 FTE. He doesn't understand how three new positions are in the budget, yet it only represents a .5 FTE increase.

Laurel Goodgion, Library Director, said that she would have to look at the numbers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:55 p.m., Councilor Forrest moved "**TO ADJOURN TO THE NEXT BUDGET WORKSHOP ON THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2007**" seconded by Councilor Kirsche. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores Sassano
Town Clerk

As approved by vote of Council on May 7, 2007