BOARD OF SELECTMAN

BOARD OF FINANCE

SPECIAL 2015-2016 BUDGET MEETING

APRIL 16, 2015

Meeting was called to order at 5 p.m.

Present: Selectman: Mark Lyons, Richard Carey, Jay Hubelbank

Finance: Michael Jackson, Lisabeth Adams, Craig Schoon, Peter Arturi, Keith Templeton, Barbara Brown, Ted Bent

First Selectman Mark Lyon reviews the budget. Overall the budget is a little over 5% increase from last year to a total of $6,564,376. Highlights are as follows;

* 2% wage increase to town employees
* Health Benefits – Meet with Art Mulligan, Ted Bent, and Craig Schoon – it is a healthy increase but he is researching alternative. It is a 12% increase which is covered in the budget amount. We have been carrying an increase for couple of years. We are going to ask this year for employees to pay toward their deductible which they do not presently do. The employee will pay the first $250.00 deductible for individuals and $500.00 for families. This will decrease the Health Insurance deductible liability by $8,700. Per Ted Bent, this will encourage employees to look at what they spend. This is happening in the industry. Art Mulligan still has to come back with other carriers. Michael asked about maybe being self-insured. Being a small group limits the options. Michael asked about joining with other towns. Mark did know of towns in eastern Ct that did this but where large to start with. Mark said we had looked into the regional board of education but their plan would cost more and is much richer.
* Decrease in Selectman due to the personnel changes.
* Assessor increases for QDS system and web Hosting
* Tax collector requested increase for legal fees and Lexis Nexus program to track down motor vehicle that are out of state to collect back taxes This has paid for itself
* Planning commission increase due to legal review of SubDiv Regs. Did not increase the consultant.
* Inland Wetland decreased legal fees. If request for legal information it falls under this account when it goes to court it is legal litigation account. Janet Hill and Linda McGarr keep track
* Historic District Commission increase due to update on their brochure and to make sure procedure and regulation are in order.
* Housing Commission clerk is now a volunteer but a stipend is kept in.
* Town Hall has two major changes; Fuel change in rates. The I/T company that installed the server suggest that we have an I/T support for on call and monthly review and maintenance. It would go out to bid. Recommended $10,000 budget line item.
* On many of our building there has been adjustment on our heating line item due to lower of per gallon rate which is locked in.
* Increase in office is doing online payroll instead of calling it in. Increase in supplies
* Fire Marshal requested the position to be full time position and had good backup for that request but the board of selectman were not ready to make that step. Most of his job is inspection. The selectman agreed to increase the position by 4 hours a week which makes it a 3 day a week job. Also the deputy increase by 25 day just to do inspections. Michael asked if there was any statistics if the inspections save fires. Many inspections that are being done are catch up for years that were not done. He does 317 annual inspections, 9 bi annual inspections and 99 buildings that need to be done every 3 years. A question was asked if insurance policy require inspections. But not sure. Liddy said this is true to the First Cong. Church policy are required to have it done.
* Fire Department – Increase in facilities but decrease in awards due to fewer member eligible for program
* Police – Increase is mostly salary. Still up in the air about the Resident Trooper increase to 100% per state budget proposal. Town budgeted is at 70% not 100% which is presently what the town pays.. Even at 70% the resident trooper contact will possible get a 3% increase in salaries and benefits. If the state budget goes through at 100% it will be $186.000 instead of $130,235. Most of the benefits that are being paid for the state are the catch up of the police pension. Our force is a resident trooper and two police man which provide 80 hours a week of patrol time. We did do away with a part time police officer 3 years ago. It gives continuity then relying on the State police troop. By using the resident trooper system we are able to rely on the state police infrastructure. Town of New Milford was approached but the bottom line it would not be saving s. A request of data of what kind of calls the town has was requested..
* Emergency management increase is due to the contracts with LCD, and maintenance contracts on equipment
* Highway Maintenance fuel was not adjusted since price per gallon is down but gallon usage is up. The new trucks do not get better fuel mileage but are EPA compliant. Contact Services are up do to more tree work needed. Tree work is endless. We try to work with the Utilities when possible. The gravel is down because gravel was processed from the stone that was blasted up at the town garage. Winter Maintenance has been increased for winter salt and sand. We been over budgeted for the last two years
* Recycling - A fund to be created from the rebates from recycle to pay for of the recycling bins which will remove that purchase out of the general fund.
* Paramedic Service. Increase is based on a proration of Washington call volume based on other towns involved in the service. New Milford hired its own paramedic which cause their call volume down which created our proration being higher. Paramedics are dispatch per the type of call or request by our EMT.
* Visiting nurse is paid per usage on a set contract
* Parks & recreation. – They want to expand their summer program from 2, 2 week sessions to 5 one week sessions. They will increase fees by $10 and reimburse the town of that $10 which will be an estimated total of $2,000.00. Increase for the tee lighting and summer concerts/ winter fest.
* Senior Center has increase in electric and cable

Gunn Memorial Library came in with the request of 169,000 and was approved for $162,000. They are historically working toward the town supporting 33% of their operating expense which has been consisting. Michael requested that the library’s presentation that was given to the selectmen be given to them on Mondays Board of Finance meeting. If after that they may look at them coming in and presenting to the Board of Finance

* Pension estimate came in Thursday morning at $128,000 and change. They have been consistly over funding the pension which may be why the figure came in lower. Mark felt comfortable to take out $10,000 out of the budget to bring it to $150,000. The performance has been keeping up with the market. About 50-60% is in equities
* Interlocal Advisory Board is for the change to a new bubblier for Lake Waramaug
* Annual repair stayed flat except for utilities that we will for the Pavilion Hall – The Boys Club. It is a town own building and is currently being rented but not sure if that will continue. Once the Boys Club is finished with it the town will have assess what to do with it.
* Judea Cemetery asked for a large increase for its maintenance. If they cannot maintain it becomes the responsibility of the town. That is why $3,000 goes to New Preston Cemetery. Judea has an endowment that cannot be touch. The town treasurer has been approach to help with its investment. It was discussed that a review of how their endowment is to be invested
* Website/ Webmaster increase is to a hired a person to maintain the website. Presently a volunteer position
* We contract with the CWAWA in Danbury for our Social Service and the program has worked well. Its cost has gone down.
* We were approach by member of the school board headed by Michele Gorra for an after school program. It will be administer by Education Connection. The town was asked if they would budget for the shortfall. It was considered since it would help the young families. It was initially a $20,000 budget item and it was considered at $10,000 to be budgeted. At the end it was eliminated from the budget. And question is if afterschool care is a municipal function. They are going ahead to see if they have enough interest and need to let Education Connection know by the end of May.
* Economic Development coordinator is a $55,000 budget item which is a third of the budget increase. The program is a month to month process if it does not seem like it is working we can end it. Question is if it is the responsiblity of the town to provide the economic for local business. Barbara stress that much of the problem is that the rents are too high. As Michael stated that child population has declined 10-15% and that there is lack of employment. This is a northwestern CT problem. There is another 8 town organization that has been working on this for the last couple of years and they are very positive. Per Michael, New Hartford has taken an industrial approach which seems to have some success. The economic development committee should have town committee and local businesses involved in this process to see if this coordinator is working. Michael is concerned since Gorman & York is working with the 8 town committee if a good opportunity comes along which town will get it
* Legal Litigation has a decrease of $20,000 which will bring the balance to $200,000 in the fund which was the figure where it has be previously agreed.

Non recurring

Generator for Depot Fire House and the Senior Van are based on grant request. If we do not get the grant we will not be purchasing.

Police. – Radio need to be replaced since the present ones will be not be services.

Request for new vehicle. It will replace current one that has over 100,000.

A gun Safe which they do not presently have

Fire Department

Transmission for ladder #1

Fire Extrication equipment

Fire PPE and Hose replace which is annually

Parks and Rec

` Wood Safety Surfacing, Motion Detectors those records at River Walk Park, Life Guard Stand

Highway

Upper Material Storage Clearing which will create gravel which will lower gravel on general budget $100,000

Sand/ Salt Storage so can get the salt in the beginning of season $40,000

Fuel Storage Tank so they do not run out in the winter. $40,000

Highway Loader and Highway Truck replacement are balances from previously year budgets $105,000 and $110,000 respectfully

Highway plow and Wing Plow will be able to move snow higher so they will not have to contract out. $23,000 and $22,000 respectfully

Bridge Repairs to add to previous budget funds for bridges that are to be done. The town has to pay 20% of bridge repairs $300,000

Guardrails to be added to previous budget. Guard rails are $180 foot. Total $50,000

Pavement Maintenance in chip sealing

Paving & Drainage $1

Refurbish road is on going

Town Hall Painting is an estimate of painting the town hall.

Computer repair and replacement is on going to keep system upgrade. Question was raise if it should be capital or in operating. At this time they will leave it there.

Michael recommended everyone think about it and review for Monday’s Meeting. The decision to approve is for the total budget on a whole. If The Board of Finance chose not to approve it is the selectman’s decision to cut any particular line item.

Meeting adjourned 6:59

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Kennedy Gomez,

Financial Administrator