



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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BOARD OF FINANCE

JOHN P. RACHEK
Chairman

PEGGY BUSSE
DOUGLAS B. HARDING
DAVID J. OLENDER
BARRY C. PINTO
MICHAEL D. VARNEY

BUDGET HEARING MARCH 26, 2019 MINUTES

Members Present: J. Rachek-Chairman, P. Busse, D. Harding, D. Olender, B. Pinto, and M. Varney

Others Present: L. Spielman-First Selectman; F. LaPlante-Acting Finance Officer; Selectmen S. Cook, B. Ferry, D. Stavens, and R. Stomberg; J. Hollister-Human Svs Director; E. Graziani-Sr. Center Dir; D. Huguenin-P&R Director; L. Houlihan-Town Planner; J. Palombizio-Emer. Mgmt. Director; S. Phillips-Library Director; T. Webb-DPW Director; J. York-Fire Marshal; EVFD Chief J. Rich II, B. Burke, G. Feldman, B. Feldman, K. Neubecker, R. Smith, F. Weeks and D. Varney; CLFD Chief T. Seitz; EVAC President P. Hany; J. Calderon-OpenGov, Inc.; Residents C. Chamberlin, P. Dikeman and T. Palshaw.

Call to Order

Chairman John Rachek called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Budget Hearings

Board of Selectmen – Lori Spielman stated that the increases are due to the additional Town Administrator position added to this budget as well as the Four Town Fair contribution of \$5,000 becoming a line item in the budget.

Crystal Lake Fire Dept. – Chief Tim Seitz presented their budget, the net increase in this budget is \$3,530 due to preventative maintenance inspections and tires under the motor vehicle repairs. The building maintenance budget is separated from operating and it has an increase of \$500.

Ellington Volunteer Fire Dept. – Chief Jack Rich presented this budget with a net increase of 3.76% or \$10,465. He highlighted the increases. Accounts 270, 271, 274 and 355 increases

were due to budgeting a 5 year average figure and repairs and maintenance is due to aging fleet. They will be replacing 5 radios. It was noted that the membership is now at 50.

Ellington Volunteer Ambulance – Pres. Peter Hany stated that the salaries were increased at 2.5% but this is an estimate due to this being a bargaining unit contract negotiation year. They have been spending \$600 on Epi-pens and they are becoming harder to get. The EVAC contribution to the operating budget is \$81,000. They will be spending \$342,000 for capital improvements items from their charging fund; this includes pagers and tactical gear for both fire departments as well as a new ambulance. Their budget increase is 4.72%

Parks & Recreation – Dustin Huguenin, Director, stated that the increase is due to a transfer from capital improvements to the operating budget for rescue/safety materials and life guard chairs for the waterfront at Crystal Lake. They are budgeting the same for their cost revenues. There will be no change in the fees but they anticipate increased registrations.

Hall Memorial Library - Sue Phillips, Library Director, stated that the building maintenance budget is now under the Public Works Department. The increase to her 610 budget is due to contracted services for computer fees and repairs and maintenance to equipment.

Human Services – Joy Hollister, Director, stated that she has streamlined her budget with the help of the Finance Department to make it more understandable. The budget is reduced due to the custodians and building expenses being budgeted under Public Works. The Youth Services Budget is showing an increase because all charges are now being charged to their account. The salaries for the Director and Assistance Director have been moved from Human Services to Youth Services. There has been no increases given to outside agencies in this budget. The Food Pantry and Fuel Assistance has been put into their own accounts rather than the general fund as had previously been done.

Senior Center – Erin Graziani stated that they had a 12% increase in participation this year. The increase shown under Contracted Services is for the Maple Street Café; however it is offset by revenues shown elsewhere.

Registrar of Voters – Registrar Lois Timmons stated that there is a modest increase in their budget this year because it is a presidential election season. Their contracted services include Police Services and the programming of the scanners.

Planning Dept./Conservation/Economic Development/PZC/ZBA/Inland Wetlands/Design Review: Lisa Houlihan stated that there is no increase in any of the budgets for these boards.

Ethics Commission – The increase for this commission's budget is for the Board Secretary.

The Chairman then read down the list of other General Government budgets.

Felicia LaPlante told the Board that the increase in the Finance Department budget is due to a new software program they are looking at. Mr. Josh Calderon of OpenGov explained that this system will streamline the budget process and pulls the data into the public website. It is communication budget software making it more transparent to the public. There is an internal and external application that are different. Ms. Busse asked if a resident could make their own reports through this system. Mr. Calderon stated that they can only get what they see and that the reports can be generated internally only.

Public Works Department – Tim Webb showed a PowerPoint presentation. The increases in his budget are professional development and sanitary landfill. The Sanitary Landfill budget reflects the large increase due to the MIRA increased tipping fees. The 451 account is the contracted

services with All American Waste. This contract calls for a CPI increase next year. Ms. Busse asked about the Engineering account and if the costs be tracked to the different projects. Mr. Webb stated that the costs are broken down in the department's records under engineering, but not in the individual projects.

The fees for the hydrant maintenance from Connecticut Water Company are contractual and have increased.

Public Safety – The Police budget increased 4.7%, most of this is contractual for the State Troopers. It includes salaries and benefits paid 100% by the town. Mr. Rachek asked if it would be less expensive to use the constables more often than troopers. The State Troopers are under contract and it would not change the cost. Police private duty is paid for by the contractors.

Emergency Management – Lori Spielman stated that the increase in that account is for the Public Safety Director. The Board does not have to fund this position and it can be eliminated through deliberations.

John Rachek then went down the list. The Finance Office's budget may be reduced because the starting salary for a new Finance Officer would be less than the current officer that recently retired. The Ellington Volunteer Ambulance Corps building maintenance increase is from updates required by a Homeland Security review. These projects were started in this budget year and will be completed this coming year.

The Arbor Commons-Police account increased due to telephone charges that were not budgeted for last year and spent. This is a new budget line.

900 Accounts – The accounts in this section that are based on salaries will be reduced with the elimination of two new positions in this budget. Felicia LaPlante will have that figure for deliberations. The Insurance Account increase is due to high cost claims. The Town was given an estimated 20% increase for budgeting purposes; this budget is on a calendar year basis.

The Trails Committee shows a budget increase for safety markers and signage and maintenance of the trails. There was discussion regarding the concern for the public getting hurt on the trails and the liability to the Town. Felicia LaPlante will contact CIRMA for confirmation of what the Town's exposure is.

The Salary Adjustment account includes all employee increases in one account. After the bargaining unit contracts are finalized, the increases will be spread over the individual department budgets.

The total increase for the General Government budget is 3.35%.

Additional Appropriation for Acquisition of 99 Main Street

Lori Spielman told the Board that the Board of Selectmen approved this acquisition and that the Planning & Zoning Commission voted in favor of the 8-24 at their meeting last night. Ms. Busse stated that she was at the Selectmen's meeting and heard that there would be 13 parking spaces added which is equivalent to \$20,000/space. Lori Spielman stated that there may be more spaces after the septic system is removed and the Library connected to sewer. Sue Phillips, Library Director, stated that there is an obvious need for additional parking. Twice a week they need additional parking. This is an opportunity that does not come up every day. The question of whether it fits into the Plan of Conservation and Development came up. Lori Spielman stated that the PZC approved it and that is one of their criteria for approval. There are

other costs associated with the property such as demolition costs and parking lot construction costs. It was pointed out that if the Town does not purchase the property at this time, it may not have another opportunity for years. Lori Spielman stated that there are other things that can be done until the funds become available for the construction. One option is that the property could be rented out. The opportunity is there now and it would not be a losing proposition. Tom Palshaw, 120 Pinney Street, stated that if the Town decided not to use it, it could be sold and money made there also.

Felicia LaPlante stated that the funds would come out of the Undesignated Fund Balance which is used to reduce the revenue needed for next year's budget. By consensus, the Board agreed with the concept but felt they were moving blindly because they did not received any documentation or information on the project.

MOVED (PINTO) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF \$255,000 FOR THE ACQUISITION OF 99 MAIN STREET PENDING ACCEPTANCE OF THE OPTION TO BUY AGREEMENT BY THE SELLER AND FAVORABLE 8-24 BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION.

Adjournment

MOVED (HARDING) SECONDED (OLENDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Lori Smith, Recording Secretary