

Board of Selectmen reviews First Selectman's Budget
February 11, 2014

Present: First Selectman Gayle Weinstein; Selectman David Muller; Town Administrator Tom Landry; Administrative Assistant Judy DeVito; Finance Director Rick Darling; Department heads; residents and members of the press.

This meeting was recorded and videotaped. The tapes are available in the Selectmen's office. The meetings are available for viewing online via the Town's website.

Ms. Weinstein called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

Pledge of Allegiance- Ms. Weinstein led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board of Selectmen review First Selectman's Budget- Power Point presentation is attached to the minutes.

Administration and Finance- Wage contingency is a place holder. Union Contracts have not been negotiated so last year they put in some dollar amounts and this year they doubled it.

General Administration- Health Insurance has a percentage change year over year of 5% but the differential between the projected increase and the First Selectman's request is greater than that. Mr. Landry said renewal rates are driven by the claims rates and our claims just keep going up. Our insurance company gave us a renewal indication of 25% rate increase and after having conversations the rate came down to over 23% so we are going to market. This year, we will have to dip into to the insurance reserve fund that was established many years ago. The budget includes funding for an 18% increase, and we are planning on funding the difference through the reserve fund. Contractual services are increasing because they are getting a cleaning service for the Police Department.

Mr. Muller asked about the Tree Warden. Ms. Weinstein has been having conversations with the surrounding communities so it is a work in progress.

Information Systems- Ms. Weinstein said she would like to add elected and appointed officials to the Town's email system. Should an FOI request come in she wants to be sure that the officials personal email are protected and that the Town can easily access requested information. In the Operating Budget the new phone system is neutral for the Town's side and a decrease for the school side. Sharon and Eric are still working on it.

Elections/Registrars- There is a big increase in this budget and it's due to the State elections this year and the many unfunded mandates that have been put upon that department.

Land Use Department- Ms. Weinstein is proposing an increase in the Land Use Directors hours of 3 hours a week and an increase of the Building Inspector hours of 3 ½ hours per week which equates to half day on Fridays. This increase is offset by an increase in revenue.

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Volunteer Fire Department- Ms. Weinstein said she is thankful to the Weston Volunteer Fire Department for agreeing to offset Capital costs next year by approximately \$600,000. We are going to pay for repairs to vehicles and equipment above what is budgeted for.

Fire Marshal- The increase in subscriptions is due to an increase in cost for the code books.

Police Services- Ms. Weinstein said that one of the goals with this year's budget was to determine the appropriate amount for overtime. Chief Troxell said they have always tried to budget overtime under ideal conditions. This year they tried to average the overtime over the last 2 years and what they are projecting for this year and they came out with a much higher number. They then adjusted the storm overtime down based on what they get back from FEMA grants. Mr. Landry said they had two different approaches but came up around the same number.

Ms. Weinstein said that they are spending over \$100,000 for Mile of Safety and they have to start talking about how they can be more creative or inventive. Sgt. Ferullo said that they plan for ideal conditions. The day shift is usually a Sergeant and two patrolmen. If there is nothing going on, you can take one of the patrolman or a Sergeant and you put them at the school for the day. However, in October when they had the larceny, they couldn't put someone on regular time on Mile of Safety, so it's been mostly overtime hours.

Ms. Weinstein said contractual services is up because they need increase IT service support. Also they will be getting cleaning services.

Public Works- Ms. Weinstein thanked the highway department for all their hard work.

Solid Waste- We are moving to single stream recycling as of July 1, 2014. Mr. Lametta is meeting with the Sustainability Committee to get the word out.

Westport/Weston Health District- They are proposing an increase to restore one staff member to full time.

Human Services- There is an increase in Meals on Wheels. There are less people taking advantage of that service but we are paying more for the people that we actually have to cover.

Senior Services- Mr. Muller asked where we are in the process of replacing the Dial-a-Ride Van. Before getting a new vehicle, there will be debate as to if we need a van or a smaller vehicle.

Ms. Weinstein said if the schools say they are not using the multi-purpose room next year, our next MOU might have in there that we have to cover all the energy costs for that.

Public Library- Ms. Sanborn said that the Library Board is controlling the money that was bequested to them by Mr. Vitale. The Board is trying to continue the tradition of the Library Board trying to use gift money to augment what they can do for the Library without replacing Town Budget items. They have decided to survey the Town residents to get their input. The Board has planned a public forum where people can come and share their thoughts with a professional facilitator. They will collect the information and create a priority list. Because they are a Municipal Library there are constrained per legal counsel's advice on how the money can be invested.

Ms. Weinstein said that Karen Tartaka, Library Director, did ask for a new position, a part-time Library Information Services person to help her. She said that given the constraints on the budget she could not approve it at this time. She felt it was important to put \$5,000 back in their book budget. The Library Board has agreed to use their bequest for the good of the community by investing in a space needs assessment and making upgrades to the Library that the community feels is warranted.

Recreation Department- Ms. Weinstein said that the Enterprise Fund was very strong. They tapped into it for \$30,000 to offset this budget, \$10,000 to offset irrigation and \$12,000 to offset pool cleaning.

Parks and Fields Budget- This budget is increasing 4.2%. The reason is that the Board of Education has given us a substantial increase in the contractual services. We pay 30% towards the field maintenance. There are two seasonal workers that will now end on November 29th. The other thing that was put upon us is \$4,200 to cover the cost of the lights at the soccer field. The Town is going to pass that cost on to the end users.

Middle School Pool- The lifeguard costs in this budget are strictly for academic use, so it turns out that the Town is actually are paying 60 % for the academic courses. Lifeguards for Town use are paid through the Enterprise Fund. We are offsetting the Town's share of the pool painting cost with the enterprise fund.

Capital Budget-Vehicle sinking fund: Funding requests total \$341,000, but because we have a nice balance, the request is for \$300,000. Singing Oaks and Hidden Spring need to be re-milled. We will use the remaining funds from the State Road Aid as well as the additional \$125,000 that we will get from the State in the next fiscal year but we will need an additional \$85,000. Police technology requests total \$21,745, \$7,500 for six mobile data terminals, \$6,045 for a photocopier and \$8,200 for Communications Center dispatch software upgrade. Attached to the minutes is a complete list of the Capital items.

At 9:00pm Ms. Weinstein adjourned the meeting

Respectfully Submitted
Judy M. DeVito
Administrative Assistant
Approved 2/24/14