

Board of Finance Public Budget Hearing #3
Wednesday, March 16, 2022
7:30 pm
Via Webex

A recording of this meeting can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-e_1_0x9hSY

FINAL MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lori Charlton-Chair, John Mitola-Vice Chair, Sheila Marmion-Secretary, Craig Curley, Christopher DeWitt, Mary LeClerc, Kevin Starke, Jack Testani, James Walsh

OTHERS PRESENT: Sands Cleary-Health Director, Julie DeMarco-Director of Health and Human Services, Scott Jarzombek-Town Librarian, Jan Fisher-Deputy Town Librarian, Shawn Reed-Chief Building Official, John Marsilio-Interim DPW Director, John Cottell-Assistant DPW Director, Bill Hurley-Engineering Manager, John Bodie-WPCA Superintendent, Anthony Calabrese-Parks & Recreation Director, Jared Schmitt-CFO, Frank Magneri-Budget Director, FairTV, members of the public

1. Call to Order

Chair Lori Charlton called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Charlton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Discussion on the Following Budgets:

Health and Welfare:

6010 Health page 180 \$3,215,972

Health Director Sands Cleary presented his budget:

Revenue: All categories are within a three-year average. Stable through the pandemic and should continue in that direction.

Christopher DeWitt asked about restaurants closing during Covid and if that decreased revenue. Mr. Cleary said some did close but most remained open and new restaurants came in.

Expenses, page 180: Mr. Cleary is asking for a 0.8% increase over the FY 22 budget. Largely due to contractual wage increases and gasoline and diesel increased costs. He moved \$2,000 from the Fees and Professional Services line item to the Overtime line item as they have been going over on that in the last couple of years and shifted from Fees & Professional Services had some surplus over the last few years. He is confident that when activity starts back up as we come out of the pandemic, we will stay within the budget of those areas.

Sheila Marmion asked about the Health Educator line and if it was eliminated. Mr. Cleary said the position has been changed to an Assistant Director position as part of the reorganization in the Town. Responsibilities have been shifted. There is no net increase, just a change in title and more responsibility.

Chair Lori Charlton asked about the Motor Vehicle Fuel & Lube line that appears repeatedly in the budget wondered about the formula that Finance gave him to use to calculate the costs. Mr.

Cleary said he was given the gallons his department used in previous years and the price that has been bid out for the future. Frank Magneri, Budget Director said they take the gallons used in prior years and multiply it by the projected rate given to them by Purchasing Director, Gerald Foley. Mr. Magneri will reach out to Mr. Foley to see if the rate has changed or not.

James Walsh asked if the nurses got reimbursed for miles or if they drove Town cars. Mr. Cleary said nurses work at the schools, and they don't have to travel for work. There is a handful of nurses who cover a few schools part time, and they will get reimbursed. That comes out of Travel & Meetings as well as for staff going to trainings. The fuel line item is for the fuel he and the inspectors use during a normal workday in the Town cars.

Jack Testani asked about the fuel and Travel & Meetings as well and the difference between them. Mr. Cleary said the Fuel line item is for the gas used in the Town cars during the workday that he and his inspectors use. The Travel & Meetings is for meetings, trainings, and school to school travel for nurses using their own cars. They are required to reimburse them for work travel. No one was travelling during Covid, but trainings are starting up again.

Many of the BOF members thanked Mr. Cleary and his department for all they did for the Town during the last two years.

6050 Human and Social Services page 184 \$734,552

Human and Social Services Director Julie DeMarco presented her budget.

Her budget is mostly about continuity and consistency as it is mostly flat except for Fuel & Lube and a couple of PT and FT positions that had been changed. She is asking for the Senior Center Director and Social Services Coordinator to become FT positions. Both are critical positions. The Bigelow Center has grown from 2,000 members five years ago to more than 5,500 members now. Of those members 3,300 are active and participate in 4-6 classes per year. She is combining a PT Program Director and PT Senior Center Director. The FT person would also provide consistency. There are 6 PT Social Workers. There has been an increase in need in the seniors in the last few years, even before Covid hit. She needs to have someone there all day to answer people's calls for help and the residents will know who that person is and feel comfortable. They also do suicide prevention and other mental health programs.

Christopher DeWitt commented that the Social Services Coordinator also helps with Veteran programs. Mr. DeWitt is also Commander of one of the American Legion posts and is desperately trying to get a Service Officer to help Ms. DeMarco and her team.

James Walsh is in support of the FT positions as he sees the Senior Center thriving.

Sheila Marmion asked if Ms. DeMarco will continue to offer Zoom classes and will they be part of the Town's hybrid technology. Ms. DeMarco will take a survey with the seniors to see what they want to do. Ms. DeMarco feels the seniors need to have socialization. Ms. Marmion asked about renovations to the current center or if there is a new Senior Center in the plan. The ARPA funded work and the Waterfall work for the patio is out for bid and should coming together soon.

Renovations or considering a new building will be looked into next year. Ms. Marmion asked if there was a ten-year plan for the center. Ms. DeMarco said she has a five-year plan, and she will send it to Ms. Marmion.

John Mitola asked about the membership. Ms. DeMarco said anyone 50 and older can join. It is free right now but there is a waiver that everyone has to sign and become members so they know who is there. The Human Services commission is looking at a change to charge the out-of-towners a fee. They have not confirmed but possibly \$25.00.

Jack Testani asked about printing, binding, and photography line. Lifelong learners have classes and that is the line item for sending the brochures and announcements.

Chair Lori Charlton asked about grants for services that are provided by the Senior Center. Ms. DeMarco said they do receive donations from the United Way for programs. They also ask for donations for lunch. They also receive money from HUD.

There was no public comment.

Culture and Recreation:

7010 Library-Main Branch page 190 \$2,581,841

Town Librarian Scott Jarzombek and Deputy Town Librarian Jan Fisher presented their budget. Revenue: Mr. Jarzombek said the revenue is tied to how much they are open and what services they can provide. The majority of revenue is from meeting room use. They were cautious in their projection because they weren't sure how comfortable people would be using spaces. The other revenue generator is fines. As non-digital circulation returns, they will see an increase in fines as well. In some ways digital circulation hurts them as you can't return a digital book late. They are looking into other ways for expanding revenue.

Chair Lori Charlton asked about the Invested Funds. Ms. Fisher said the money is a schedule from the renovation in 2005. The Library Board made a commitment to the Town to pay that money back and they are in the last year of the agreement. The funds come out of the library Investment Funds. James Walsh asked if the library is getting back to full capacity. Mr. Jarzombek said circulation has surpassed the two previous years and is already above the three-year average, close to pre-Covid times. Visits are trending over 200% and demand for programming has grown. Saturday is the busiest day, and they are operating at half the hours they typically would. The increase in usage is at both libraries. Donations from the library Friends group funds the classes so they do not have to charge participants.

Expenses page 191:

Sheila Marmion asked what percentage of their Materials budget is devoted to digital vs traditional books, tapes, and videos. Mr. Jarzombek stated that although 42% is digital, he wanted everyone to be aware that digital books are very expensive as they don't own them but have to pay licensing fees. Adults prefer this but parents and children prefer physical books. Ms. Fisher said 50% of that Materials budget is for physical books, but they have two libraries to cover. DVDs have dropped but the library does provide streaming services. There is a law coming out, HB 131, trying to reduce the cost of ebooks.

7011 Library – Fairfield Woods Branch page 194 \$1,193,083

Town Librarian Scott Jarzombek and Deputy Town Librarian Jan Fisher presented this budget. The Fairfield woods branch is vibrant and coming back full steam. Mr. Jarzombek suggested having one budget for both libraries going forward. Digital purchases are not separated and it's the same staff going back and forth performing the same services.

Craig Curley asked why Fees & Professional Services are down \$30,000 from last year. Mr. Jarzombek said they asked to have someone for in-house cleaning during the day when people are there, and incidents can happen.

Mr. Walsh asked if there were ideas on raising revenue. Mr. Jarzombek stated they are looking into passports and notary services for evenings and weekends.

Mr. Jarzombek said his budget is standard for libraries in the state and in the area. They are the second highest for ebook circulation and the materials line is a combination of both libraries.

Mr. Walsh asked if out of town members get charged for membership. Ms. Fisher said there are 30,000 card holders and 6,000 are non-residents. During Covid they were only allowed to have town residents, but if they start charging out of town residents, they could lose state funding.

There was no public comment.

Public Works:

5050 Building page 172 \$728,379

James Walsh recused himself from this budget.

Chief Building Official Shawn Reed went over his budget. There were no significant changes to Revenue. There were three changes to line items.

Christopher DeWitt asked if Building Permits were still expected to be high next year. Mr. Reed said yes that there are talks of a new SHU building.

Mr. Reed said there were changes in expenses because the permits are completely online and they had to add monthly cell service for the iPads purchased for Inspectors. The Education line went up so 5 Inspectors could take monthly electrical classes online as they are all licensed in electrical.

Clothing & Dry Goods increased because the state issued a new code cycle as of October 1st and they need to purchase new books.

Mr. DeWitt asked if they still had counter hours. Mr. Reed said the hours are the same and they have a Kiosk in the hall in case someone needs help doing a permit. The hours haven't changed but Building is the only department that is totally online.

Jack Testani asked why Printing, Binding & Photography was down significantly. Mr. Reed said they can access everything on the iPads.

6070 Solid Waste and Recycling page 187 \$4,677,279

Assistant DPW Director John Cottell presented this budget.

The Revenue is based on a three-year average. It is consistent on all lines.

Craig Curley asked why the scale weighing decreased in projection from last year. Mr. Cottell said he went with a conservative number. Mr. Curley asked for more information at a later date.

Mr. Walsh said all the numbers were down which prompted a discussion on revenue and recycling which included the Interim DPW Director John Marsilio who explained the issues they have when estimating for the budget.

Mr. Cottell went through the expenses that were up. In Fees & Professional Services, Hazardous Waste is up \$15,000 due to an increase in the contractual services with the Hazardous Waste company and they need to hire a Police Officer for the annual Haz Waste collection. They also hire a Special Officer on Saturdays at the Transfer Station. The Waste Disposal tip fee is based on the CPI which is jumping up. There were other expenses including Maintenance & Repair for the 40-year-old transfer building which is deteriorating: stairs rotted, drains not working, and exposed rebar. There is money to replace the roof, but they need an upgrade in electrical and get bathrooms working properly. The damage is from the roof leak. There was a discussion with Mr. Marsilio about the building.

5011 Public Works Administration page 162 \$379,925

Interim DPW Director John Marsilio went through this budget.

The Admin budget is small as it consists of Mr. Marsilio, Mr. Cottell, an Admin Assistant and a PT clerk. The DPW Finance person role was transferred to the Finance Department. That position was recommended by the DPW audit. CFO Jared Schmitt added that it was transferred to Finance to track transaction in DPW, and they want to expand it to other departments that have heavy capital projects. More project management was needed also, but they haven't hired the person yet.

5030 Public Works Operations page 165 \$11,930,701

Assistant DPW Director John Cottell presented this budget.

Some Personnel & Expenses have been transferred to Parks & Recreation in their Parks Department budget which created a decrease in salaries. There was an increase in communication to add GPS to fleet and equipment. Educational Membership went up for Transfer Technology classes out of

UCONN and Public Works Academy for fundamental training. Clothing and Dry Goods increased to be sure reflective clothing met OSHA requirements for job sites. The BOS added \$200,000 to Capital Asphalt Paving. There was a discussion about the DPW budget and Capital Outlay, supply chain issues and replacing old unsafe vehicles. There was also a fairly long but informative discussion about paving and funding.

Mr. Walsh asked about contracted services and wondered if it was cheaper to hire outside to do work or use DPW workers. Mr. Marsilio said some outside services work with DPW for tree cutting/trimming and grass cutting. Parks & Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese said it is worth using outside sources for mowing and the RFP that went out broke the job down by location. Chair Lori Charlton said she recalled that through the DPW audit, analysis on outside services was recommended. She asked if it had been done and if so, the BOF would like to see the report.

5070 Engineering page 176 \$838,584

Engineering Manager Bill Hurley presented his budget.

There were significant changes and increases to the budget. There are three dozen grants and upcoming projects which required a reorganization within the department to meet demands of the projects. Fees and Professional Services increased because of wastewater testing and traffic signal management and repairs which was transferred from DPW operations. There were also roadway and subbased samples, permit fees, software fees, design revisions DEEP mandates. The Motor Vehicle Fuel went up based on the formula sent from Finance. A communication increase was a mobile phone upgrade. Legal Ads and Public Notices increased due to posting requirements when getting a grant.

Christopher DeWitt asked about the personnel changes. Mr. Hurley said that in fiscal year 2022 did not have an Assistant Engineering Manager in the budget but it is proposed in fiscal year 2023. There is also a Project Manager added for fiscal year 2023. Two drafting positions were eliminated as part of the reorganization and because of grants and high technical projects. Mr. DeWitt supports the added positions.

Mr. Walsh asked about a traffic signal management plan and if it was ARPA funded. Mr Hurley said they are related. He has to get inventory of traffic lights and there will be safety improvements. They are hiring a consultant with the ARPA funds to see what lights need replacement.

Mr. Testani asked if the Town would receive a LOSIP grant. Mr. Hurley said the Town will receive the LOTSIP (Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program) for the bridge project and it will pay for 85% of the total cost.

4070 Street Lighting page 152 \$503,800

Interim DPW Director John Marsilio said this budget is based on a the number of street lights and the tariff set by PURA (Public Utilities Regulatory Authority). It doesn't change until UI (United Illuminating) requests a change and the Town can dispute the tariff.

13013010 WPCA page 242 \$6,865,733

WPCA Superintendent John Bodie presented this budget.

There is 16% increase part of which was for payroll and health. They are also paying the Town back \$153,000 for engineering services last year. They put money in contingency for increases and are adding a Project Manager. There is \$336,944 for bond interest and principal. The WPCA is a self-supporting department and sets the sewer use rate to take into account the upcoming expenses. Mr. Bodie set his projected fees based on what taxes have been collected this year.

There was no public comment.

Culture and Recreation:

7030 Penfield Pavilion Complex page 198 \$236,922

Parks & Rec. Director Anthony Calabrese presented this budget.

There is a decrease in Revenue for the Penfield Pavilion rentals and concession due to the pavilion closing October 31st. This created an increase at the Jacky Durrell pavilion. Expenses increased for seasonal and PT payroll with the \$2.00 per hour minimum wage increase. There is a slight increase with Penfield payroll since they are closing. Both Mr. Curley and Chair Charlton were confused with the payroll numbers as they seemed higher than last year. They discussed this issue and the pending closure of Penfield Pavilion.

7050 Parks and Recreation page 201 \$3,663,635

Parks & Rec. Director Anthony Calabrese presented this budget.

The Revenue items are swim lessons, programs, tennis and field rentals and miscellaneous. The only increase in Expenses was in Contracted Property Services for the Christmas Tree Lights as the cost went up.

7070 Waterfront page 205 \$542,249

Parks & Rec. Director Anthony Calabrese presented this budget.

Revenue items: beach stickers, beach parking, beach concession (Jennings), out-of-town beach stickers cost \$250 and daily parking prices are \$40 on weekdays and \$50 on weekends/holidays. The Expenses went up in payroll for Lifeguards, parking attendants and Lake Mohegan staff. There was a decrease in capital outlay.

Jack Testani asked about the overall improvement update at Lake Mohegan. Mr. Calabrese said they put out an RFP to their short list for design and went with a company called Race. They are working on the construction RFP. Race knows the timeline and thinks it will be done for Memorial Day opening.

7090 Marina page 211 \$316,122

Parks & Rec. Director Anthony Calabrese presented this budget.

Revenue items: boat slips, storage, summer storage, boat racks at Jennings, Penfield and Ye Yacht Club, gas dock and concession. There is a decrease in expenses due to a reduction in Capital Outlay for security cameras that are moving forward. Seasonal payroll is up due to minimum wage increase.

7080 Parks Department page 207 \$1,867,317

This is a brand new department that has been separated from DPW and added to Parks & Recreation. John Cottell and Anthony Calabrese did their best to estimate the budget. There are nine FT employees, and a Supervisor of Parks & Recreation on all the jobs around town. There will also be seasonal payroll for garbage and bathrooms at the beaches. Contracted Services for properties around Townhall and fields. There is a small Capital Outlay for tools.

Chair Lori Charlton was notified that the Webex was going to end shortly. It was decided that any BOF member who needed additional information regarding the following budgets could email Anthony Calabrese directly.

7111 Carl Dickman Golf Course page 215 \$311,938

7113 H. Smith Richardson Golf Course page 218 \$1,611,565

4. Adjourn

James Walsh made a motion to adjourn. Craig Curley seconded the motion.
The meeting adjourned at 12:20am.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary