Board of Selectmen
On-Line Via Zoom & YouTube Live
February 20, 2021
Special Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Govert; C. Quinn; R. Smith
Also Present: D. Angersola; E. Bader; W. Denya; C. Halliday; R. Miller; B. O'Mara; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski, and other members of the public via virtual media

1. First Selectman Smith called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. 2021-2022 General Budget Review Workshop

   A. Culture & Recreation

      1. Lakes Association: Mr. Miller introduced the Lakes Association members present and provided an overview of the Association's challenges and goals. He stated that the budget request for FY 2021-2022 is for 50% of anticipated expenditures and the lakes would cover the balance. He confirmed that they continually seek out grant support and that, even though the lakes do not all have the same expenses, the funds provided by the Town are split equally among them.

         Mr. Miller reviewed several of the Lakes Association projects, including a watershed management plan, mapping, and treatments for aquatic weeds. There was a general discussion regarding the EcoHarvester that was purchased by the Moodus Reservoir group.

         The group discussed invasive aquatic plants and Mr. Smith recommended requiring the organizers of scheduled events to provide an on-site boat launch monitor. Ms. Govert agreed to relay Mr. Denya's suggestion that DMV include a notice with boat registrations advising owners of the risks of transferring invasive aquatic plants between rivers and lakes.

         There was a general discussion about re-purposing unallocated funds from the Lakes Association's Operating budget and Ms. Varricchio stated she would bring their request to the Board of Finance that a policy to carry funds forward in this budget be established.

         Mr. Miller reviewed the Association's capital requests which include funding to construct a bio-detention basin at Lake Hayward, for the balance due on the EcoHarvester and to purchase a dump trailer for same, and reconstruction of the dam at Lake Hayward east spillway. There was a general discussion regarding fund-raising for the EcoHarvester and lobbying for legislative support for the state to provide funds for the reconstruction of the Lake Hayward dam.

   B. General Government Budgets

      1. Assessor: Ms. Varricchio reviewed the Assessor's operating budget and noted that the only significant changes were in salaries & wages, which includes a placeholder for a 2.75% increase, and a $6,100.00 decrease in the mapping budget line. She stated that she would confirm the change in the mapping budget with the Assessor.

Ms. Varricchio reviewed the department's capital request of $385,000.00 for the scheduled revaluation projects and noted that this is a project that recurs every 5-years ($135,000 statistical revaluation and $250,000 full revaluation) and the Town reserves funding for it.

2. Collector of Revenue: Ms. Varricchio reviewed the operating budget for the Collector of Revenue and noted that it is largely unchanged from FY 2021-2022. She reviewed tax revenue and confirmed that projected revenue is down 1% ($790.00) from FY 2020-2021. The Board briefly discussed the state's PILOT program.

3. Elections/Registrars: Ms. Varricchio reviewed the operating budget for this department and noted that the only change was the placeholder of 2.75% for an increase in the salaries & wages line.

   Ms. Varricchio advised that she had included a capital request of $20k for voting machines due to the age of the existing machines. She stated that the Registrar had requested a printer/copier for her office and Ms. Zemienieski noted that, if the request is approved, it will impact the Central Services line in the Municipal Office Complex budget rather than the Registrar's budget.

4. Agriculture Commission: This agenda item was not discussed.

5. Board of Assessment Appeals: Ms. Varricchio reviewed this Board's operating budget and noted that no significant changes had been made.

6. Conservation Commission: Ms. Varricchio called the Board's attention to the operating budget for the Conservation Commission and stated that the CCA Adjustment line needs to be corrected to reflect a transfer to the Special Revenue fund. The Conservation Commission budget overall was reduced.

C. Public Safety Budgets

1. Building Department: Ms. Varricchio reviewed this department's operating budget and noted a slight increase (2.8%) from FY 202-2021. She noted that revenue projections for the department remained flat.

2. Regional Animal Control: Ms. Varricchio stated that she had not completed the Regional Animal Control's Operating budget in time for today's meeting; however, the transfer into this budget from the General Fund remains unchanged at $50k.
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D. Selectmen's Capital Budget Review: Mr. Angersola reviewed the Selectmen's Capital Budget, including the Facility and Grounds vehicle replacement program, window replacement projects at the Grange Hall and the Town Meeting Hall, a well for the community gardens at the Harris Property, resealing the MOC parking lot, security upgrades and an expansion of the video conferencing system at the Municipal Office Complex, and a new phone system for the MOC.

   There was a general discussion regarding the security upgrades at the MOC and Mr. Angersola responded to several questions from the Board. Ms. Zemienieski stated that the MOC phone system had been transferred from the former Town Office Building and is approximately 8 years old. She noted that they are looking at a Cisco system that would be compatible with the Board of Education's phone system.

The Board took a break at 11:15 a.m. and the meeting resumed at 11:27 a.m.

E. Other Budget Items: Ms. Zemienieski reviewed the upcoming meeting schedules with Ms. Varricchio and the Board. Ms. Varricchio confirmed that she would provide the Board with a complete budget binder prior to their deliberations.

   Mr. Smith provided a synopsis of some of the Public Works Capital requests, including accelerating their vehicle rotation schedule for some trucks from every 10 years to every 7 years, the removal of dead/diseased tree project, and a proposed on-going 10-year plan of road maintenance.

3. Public Comment: There were no public comments submitted to the meeting.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made Mr. Smith by seconded by Ms. Govert, to adjourn the meeting at 11:46 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Govert, Secretary