Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
February 19, 2022
Via YouTube
Special Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: I; Haines; E. Dill; T. Govert
Also Present: D. Angersola; D. Dill; C. Varricchio; L. Zemienieski, and other members of the public via virtual media

1. First Selectman Haines called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 9:24 a.m. and the attendees said the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Zemienieski advised that the meeting was being recorded but it was not being broadcast live because of technical issues.

2. 2022-2023 General Budget Review Workshop

   A. Shared Services: Ms. Varricchio provided an overview of the Shared Services operating budget and noted it was down $13,198.00 (1%) over FY2021-2022. She provided information on several budget lines and noted that carrying the BOE's technology expense in the Shared Services budget helps the BOE with the state's minimum budget requirements. In response to a question from Mr. Dill, she confirmed that the budget lines in the Shared Services operating budget are not duplicated in either the Town's or the BOE's budgets. There was a general discussion regarding where the salary for the new Human Resource professional will reside.

   B. Interfund Transfers: Ms. Varricchio provided an explanation of how the Interfund Transfers budget is used. She noted that the increase of $191,157.00 (32%) in Capital Projects Savings is a combination of $91,157.00 of retired Town debt and a $100,000.00 transfer from the Education budget line which was made in anticipation of the approval of the High School Athletics Complex project. In response to a question raised by Ms. Haines, she confirmed that the Fire Apparatus budget includes all of the Fire Department's Capital requests.

      Ms. Varricchio stated that she has included a placeholder of $857,410.00 in the FY2022-2923 Transfer to Capital Projects (General Fund) line, which is level with the previous fiscal year, pending the BOS and BOF review of the Capital Improvements budget.

      Ms. Varricchio reviewed the Revenues by Source budget and advised that the BOF policies state that the undesignated fund balance should be 8%-15% of the Town's budget. She noted that at the close of FY2019-2020 it was 16.9% and at the close of FY2020-2021 it was 16.8%. She reviewed several funds included in the budget.

      Ms. Varricchio noted that the Town's Grand List is up 3.15%, primarily due to the increase in the value of automobiles. There was a brief discussion regarding the state's consideration of a statewide motor vehicle property tax and Ms. Varricchio advised that she feels the Town would lose revenue if the state enacts the legislation.

   C. Budget Review, Discussion & Deliberation: Ms. Varricchio noted that there is currently an overall increase in the Town's Operating Budget of approximately $200k (+1.3%).

      1. General Government Budgets: The following General Government budgets were reviewed:

- Board of Selectmen operating and revenue: No changes were made to the BOS operating budget. Ms. Varricchio noted that the state has backed off of its promise to make significant MRSA payments to towns and cities and she suggested eliminating the projected $136,107.00 from Revenues. The Selectmen agreed with her recommendation.

- Board of Finance operating budget: In response to a question from Ms. Haines, Ms. Varricchio provided an explanation for the Contingency budget line. No changes were made to this budget.

- Finance Office operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Assessor operating and revenue: No changes were made to this budget.

- Board of Assessment Appeals operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Collector of Revenue operating and revenue: No changes were made to this budget.

- Legal Services operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Town Clerk operating and revenue: No changes were made to this budget.

- Registrars of Voters/Elections operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Land Use operating and revenue: Mr. Dill recommended that the WPCA budget lines should be moved under the Public Works budget. There were no changes made to the Land Use budgets at this time.

- Zoning Board of Appeals operating and revenue: No changes were made to this budget.

- Regional Probate Courts operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Insurance (Risk Management): No changes were made to this budget.

- Town Office Building operating budget: In response to a comment from Mr. Dill, there was a general discussion regarding eliminating the expense for cleaning, heating, and water from vacant Town-owned buildings. The Selectmen agreed to revisit this issue in a subsequent meeting. No changes were made to the budget at this time.

- Historic District Commission operating and revenue: No changes were made to this budget.

- Conservation Commission operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Shared Services operating budget: There was a general discussion regarding whether or not the projected salary for the Finance Director is realistic. Ms. Haines noted that she needs to resolve with the BOE whether or not the Finance Director and Human Resources positions will continue to be shared services. No changes were made to this budget at this time.

- Town Meeting Hall operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- River House/Annex operating budget: The Selectmen agreed to revisit the issue of eliminating cleaning, heating, and water expenses from this budget in a subsequent meeting. No changes were made to the budget at this time.

- Grange Hall operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Millington School House operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Open Space Committee operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Municipal Office Complex/Central Services operating budget: Ms. Haines complimented the janitorial staff on the quality of their work at the MOC. Mr. Angersola stated that the custodian budget could be reduced by $1,950.00 because Firehouse No. 1 no longer uses the cleaning services; he stated he would see if there are any other reductions that can be made to the custodian budget. No other changes were made to the budget at this time.

- Agriculture Commission operating budget: There was a general discussion regarding allocating the requested $5,000 for Technical Services (Grant Writer). Ms. Varricchio agreed to take it out of the budget but noted that if it is later determined that a grant writer for the proposed farmers' market pavilion project was required, the funds could be gotten from the Contingency budget. Ms. Zemienieski stated that she would be posting openings for a recording secretary and it was noted that, if a recording secretary for the Ag Commission is hired, appropriate funding would be added to the budget. No other changes were made to this budget at this time.

- Economic Development Commission operating budget: Ms. Haines voiced her support for economic development. Ms. Zemienieski stated that she will clarify whether or not EDC is carrying the membership dues for CT Main Street in their budget. No changes were made to this budget.

2. Public Safety Budgets: The following Public Safety budgets were reviewed:

- Police Officers operating budget: Ms. Haines stated that, in view of the fact that the Police Department has two highly qualified individuals they would like to hire to fill a vacant position, as well as anticipated retirements from the force, she supports RST Hawes recommendation to hire both applicants, increasing the number of full-time Town police officers to six. Ms. Varricchio noted that approximately $100k would be added to the budget, including fringe benefits.

  The Selectmen agreed to revisit the request to add one full-time officer in a discussion about all the new staffing requests at a subsequent meeting. No changes were made to this budget at this time.

- Resident State Trooper operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Fire Department operating budget: The Selectmen reviewed the department's budget request and briefly discussed the significant increase (175.4%) in Overtime. It was noted that the Emergency Management Services (EMS) project had supplied radios to all Public

Safety departments and that EMS covers the maintenance/replacement expense for them in their budget. Ms. Haines stated she would clarify whether or not this line item in the Fire Department's operating budget is a duplication. Ms. Varricchio stated she would remove the duplicate expense of public education materials from this budget since it is covered in the Fire Marshal's budget.

There was a general discussion regarding the budget line for Fire Ponds and Mr. Angersola provided more information about this item. In response to his recommendation, Ms. Varricchio stated she would look into establishing a non-lapsing account for Fire Ponds.

Ms. Varricchio noted that the increase in Salaries & Wages was primarily due to EMT staffing. Ms. Haines requested separate lines for firefighters and EMT Salaries & Wages.

There were no other changes made to this budget at this time.

- Emergency Management Services/911 Services operating and revenue: No changes were made to this budget.

- Paramedic Services operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Building Department operating and revenue: In response to her recommendation to increase the department's Revenue budget, Ms. Varricchio, agreed to the Selectmen's request to speak with the Building Official regarding what would be realistic. No changes were made to this budget at this time.

- Regional Animal Control operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Fire Marshal operating and revenue: Fire Marshal Angersola confirmed that supplies for public education are carried in his budget and could be eliminated from the Fire Department's operating budget. No changes were made to this budget.

3. Public Works Budgets: The following Public Works budgets were reviewed:

- General Highways operating and revenue: In response to a question raised by Mr. Dill, Mr. Angersola stated he would research whether or not all of the Town's propane supply can be rolled into one contract. There was a general discussion regarding the quantity of back-up repair parts that are kept on the Public Works shelves which are expensed to the Other Supplies (Garage Supplies) budget line; Ms. Varricchio stated she would follow-up with Superintendent Hedler to clarify. No changes were made to this budget.

- Snow Removal operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

- Transfer Station operating and revenue: In response to a request for additional information, Ms. Varricchio stated she would get a breakdown of the Refuse Removal budget line. No changes were made to this budget.

- Tree Care and Removal operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.

4. Health and Social Services Budgets: The following Health and Social Services budgets were reviewed:

   - Youth & Family Services: No changes were made to this budget.
   - Early Childhood Counsel: No changes were made to this budget.
   - Health Inspection (Chatham Health District): No changes were made to this budget.
   - Senior Services operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.
   - Human Services operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.
   - Cemeteries operating and revenue: No changes were made to this budget.

5. Culture and Recreation Budgets: The following Culture and Recreation Budgets were reviewed:

   - East Haddam Public Library System operating and revenue: Mr. Dill noted that IT is researching the Telephone/Cell Phone expense and it may be reduced. No changes were made to this budget.
   - Recreation operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.
   - Town Greens, Grounds, and Fields operating budget: No changes were made to this budget.
   - Lakes Association operating budget: There was a general discussion about the best approach to the distribution of funds for this budget. The Selectmen agreed with Ms. Varricchio's suggestion to move the budget to the BOF with the requested amounts and recommend they establish a policy for any surplus funding remaining at the end of the fiscal year.

   Ms. Varricchio provided the Selectmen with an overview of the Education operating and revenue budgets, Debt Service, and Revenues. She advised that she had included a placeholder of an amount level with the FY2021-2022 figure in the Transfer to Capital Projects (General Fund) budget line in the Interfund Transfers budget.

   The Selectmen reviewed the Fringe Benefits operating budget and no changes were made to the budget. Ms. Varricchio advised that she will update this budget according to any staffing changes agreed upon by the Selectmen.

   There was a general discussion regarding the appropriate level of funding for the planned Redevelopment Agency. The Selectmen agreed to postpone their discussion of the Agency's operating budget until their next workshop so that they can research the matter further.

6. Capital Budgets: Ms. Varricchio suggested that the most efficient way to review Capital requests was in conjunction with the Board of Finance. The Selectmen agreed with her recommendation.

D. Other Budget Items: Ms. Varricchio and the Selectmen discussed allocations for federal American Rescue Plan grant funds. Ms. Varricchio recommended allocating some of the funds for grant match purposes. She responded to several questions from the Board.

Ms. Varricchio stated she would provide a document outlining the impact on the budget from the proposed staffing changes.

3. Public Comment: There was no public comment discussed at the meeting.

4. Potential Budget Resolution: This agenda item was postponed.

5. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss Mr. Dill made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Dill, Secretary