Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
February 18, 2022
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: I. Haines; E. Dill; T. Govert
Also Present: E. Blaschik; R. Funk; L. Zemienieski; and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Haines called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. 2023-2024 General Budget Review Workshop

   A. **Shared Services:** There was a $123,523.00 (9%) increase in the Shared Services operating budget. First Selectman Haines reported that she had met with representatives of the Boards of Education and Finance to discuss the Board of Education's business manager position and they agreed to keep the salary for that position in the Shared Services budget. She provided clarification for the $85,840.00 increase in the Wages & Salary line. Mr. Funk noted that the Human Resources position had been moved from the Board of Finance contingency fund to the Shared Services budget. There was a general discussion regarding moving some of the technology expenses to specific departmental operating budgets and it was noted that the Board of Education has no increase to its technology budget line. Mr. Funk agreed to increase the Conference budget line to $750.00.

   B. **Board of Finance:** There was a $76,609.00 (34%) decrease in the Board of Finance's operating budget. Mr. Funk reported that he needed to update the Contingency transfer line which will result in a further decrease in the budget. There were no changes made to this budget.

   C. **Finance Office:** There was a $2,496.00 (3.4%) increase in the Finance Office operating budget. Ms. Haines identified a small error in the Conference budget line and Mr. Funk agreed to correct it. There were no additional changes noted for this budget.

   D. **Fringe Benefits:** There was a $224,756.00 (17.8%) increase in the Fringe Benefits budget. The increase was attributed to several factors. Mr. Funk noted that more employees are opting in for insurance coverage rather than taking the stipend and, although the full cost for the IT professionals and the Board of Education business manager are carried in the Shared Services budget, the cost of their fringe benefits did not previously appear to be included in this budget and that was corrected this year. Mr. Funk added that he created this budget assuming a maximum increase of 8.4% in the Health, Dental, and Life Insurance premiums. He noted, however, that the actual increase could be less when he receives the final numbers.

   E. **Interfund Transfers:** Mr. Funk advised that the Interfund Transfers cannot be finalized until he discusses the Capital Projects Savings account with the Town's financial advisor. There was a general discussion about several revenue funds that benefit the Town's education programs and it was noted that the benefit of such funds is unique to East Haddam. Further discussion of this budget was postponed.

F. **Agriculture Commission:** Ms. Haines reported that no budget had been submitted for this Commission. It was agreed to reduce the Legal line to $250.00 and the Conference line to $0.00.

G. **Regional Animal Control:** There was no increase/decrease in the Regional Animal Control operating budget. Ms. Zemienieski provided an overview of the history of the regionalization of this function. There was a general discussion regarding the need to install an air-conditioning unit at the pound.

H. **State Budget Review:** Mr. Funk distributed a document that provided an overview of his estimates of revenues by source. He advised that he is not anticipating any changes in Intergovernmental Revenues. There was a general discussion regarding increases and decreases to the Town budget.

I. Budget Review, Discussion & Deliberation

1. General Government Budgets: The following operating budgets were considered:

- Economic Development: Ms. Haines reported that the $12,000 in FY2023 Purchased Professional Services will be expended and that the Chairman has requested an additional $12,000 in capital be added to the Commission's FY2024 budget.

- Redevelopment Agency: The Board agreed to move the $15,000 Legal Services expense to the Legal budget. They also agreed to add the following budget lines to the Redevelopment Agency's operating budget: Advertising - $1,500.00, Purchased Services - $26,000.00, and Clerical - $3,200.00.

- Conservation Commission: Mr. Funk confirmed that there is a balance of $45,000.00 in the Conservation Commission's Special Revenue Fund. Consequently, the Board agreed to eliminate the proposed FY2024 $15,500.00 transfer to the Special Revenue Fund.

- Land Use: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Zoning Board of Appeals: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Open Space Commission: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Historic District Commission: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Town Clerk: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Assessor: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Collector of Revenue: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Registrar of Voters: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Building Department: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Regional Animal Control: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Youth & Family Services: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Town Meeting Hall: There were no changes made to this budget.

- River House: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Grange Hall: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Millington School House: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Municipal Office Complex: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Board of Selectmen: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Legal Services: Mr. Funk noted that he would update this budget to include the Redevelopment Agency's legal expenses.

- Insurance/Risk Management: There were no changes made to this budget. Ms. Zemienieski reiterated that this budget was created based on an estimated maximum increase in insurance premiums, but she expects it will go down once the Town receives the actual premium charges for FY2024.

2. Public Safety Budgets: The following operating budgets were considered:

   - Fire Department: Ms. Haines reiterated that it had been challenging to develop the Fire Department's budget since the situation with the Ambulance Association is in flux resulting in an increase in the Fire Department's response to medical calls. Mr. Dill expressed concern about the Uniforms budget line and questioned whether or not the Town should be underwriting the cost of Class A uniforms. Mr. Funk confirmed that, of the $15,000.00 budgeted for uniforms in FY2023, $5,268.00 had been expensed. Ms. Haines agreed to look into the request to increase the Uniforms budget line and her findings are reported below in these minutes.

   - Fire Marshal: There were no changes made to this budget.

   - Police Department: It was noted that the Board had agreed to reduce the Cell Phone budget line in their February 14th budget workshop meeting. No other changes were made to this budget.

3. Public Works Budgets: The following operating budgets were considered:

   - General Highways: There were no changes made to this budget.

   - Snow & Ice Control: There were no changes made to this budget.

   - Transfer Station: There were no changes made to this budget.

4. Health and Social Services Budgets: The following operating budget was considered:

- Paramedic Services: There were no changes made to this budget.

5. Culture and Recreation Budgets: The following operating budgets were considered:

   - East Haddam Public Library System: Ms. Haines reiterated that a new Library Director had just been hired. She stated that she had provided the Director with a copy of the proposed FY2024 budget and would like to give her some time to review and comment on it. She noted that she expected to get the Director's feedback before the budget is moved forward for the Board of Finance's consideration. Consequently, discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

   - Senior Services: There were no changes made to this budget.

   - Town Office Building: There were no changes made to this budget. Ms. Haines stated she would speak with WPCA Chairman Lord and discuss whether or not the Water Pollution Control Authority would waive the sewer fee for this property since it is currently not in use.

The Board recessed for a lunch at 11:33 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 12:55 p.m.

Mr. Funk distributed documents reflecting the Town's operating budget as it stands after any previously agreed to changes were made. He noted that, excluding the Board of Education budget and assuming no changes to the Capital budget or Fund Transfers, there is a 2.3% increase in the Town's budget.

Ms. Haines confirmed that the Fire Department's Uniforms budget line is for Class A uniforms for the firefighters. She stated that the Fire Chief had informed her that he had surveyed several surrounding towns regarding their policy on purchasing firefighter's uniforms and they all funded the cost of Class A uniforms for their staff. Based on the fact that the department has only spent slightly over one-third of their budget for uniforms this fiscal year, the Board agreed to reduce the FY2024 amount to $12,000.00.

- Cemeteries: Ms. Zemienieski provided an overview of the budget's $10,000 maintenance program. It was noted that the Cemetery Committee is also requesting a special revenue fund be set up with $13,000 in FY2024 and an additional $5,000 to be added annually to survey each cemetery. They also requested $3,000 for maintenance projects such as cleaning, repairing and/or replacing headstones or markers of historical importance. There was a general discussion regarding how to set up the Cemetery Committee budget and special revenue fund. The Board agreed to support the Cemetery Committee's budget requests.

- Town Green, Grounds & Fields: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Board of Assessment Appeals: There were no changes made to this budget.

Public Safety Budgets – (continued)

- Emergency Management/911 Services: There were no changes made to this budget.

Public Works Budgets: The Public Works Budgets were discussed earlier in the meeting and those discussions are reported on in the minutes above.

Health and Social Services Budgets – (continued)

- Chatham Health District Services: It was noted that a $5,000 increase was projected in this budget; however, Ms. Zemienieski advised that the CHD will not vote on their FY2024 fees until February 21st. There were no changes made to this budget.

- Human Services: There were no changes made to this budget. Ms. Zemienieski recommended considering using funds from the Town's opioid settlement to increase this budget in FY2024.

Culture and Recreation Budgets – (continued)

- Recreation Commission: There were no changes made to this budget.

- Lakes Association: The Board agreed to recommend that the Board of Finance approve the requested $7,300.00 increase in the Lakes Association operating budget. There was a brief discussion regarding the need to update the Board of Finance's policy for this entity to accommodate its request to roll-over unexpended funds at the end of any fiscal year into a special revenue fund, with the Board of Finance's approval.

6. Capital Budgets

Ms. Haines reiterated that she would like to use a portion of the ARPA funds to pay for some of the one-time capital request items. Mr. Funk provided the Board with a prioritized list of the Town's and Board of Education's capital requests. The Board agreed to recommend to the Board of Finance the following capital requests be financed with ARPA funds in the noted amounts:

Board of Education Capital Requests:

- Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School Exterior Basketball Court - $6,000.00
- Nathan Hale-Ray High School ADA Softball Field Design and Related Work - $5,000.00
- Nathan Hale-Ray High School Fire Panel Upgrade - $65,000.00
- Nathan Hale-Ray High School PA System - $15,000.00
- Nathan Hale-Ray High School Stage Lighting - $250,000.00
- Nathan Hale-Ray High School Tech Ed Building - $58,820.00
- NHRHS Softball Field Scoreboard - $12,000.00
- Nathan Hale-Ray High School Athletic Complex Equipment - $100,000.00
- Elementary School Generator - $61,160.00
- Elementary School Fire Alarm - $46,000.00
- System-Wide Back-up Server - $15,000.00

Town Capital Requests:

- Rathbun Library Window Replacement - $35,000.00
- Town Meeting Hall Window Replacements - $68,000.00
- Grange Hall Window Replacements - $30,000.00
- Grange Hall Back Wall Rot Repair - $10,000.00

- Library Network Rebuild - $14,000.00
- Land Use/EDC Moodus Center Conceptual Master Plan Study - $55,000.00
- EDC Bike/Walking Path - $12,000.00
- Redevelopment Agency Grant Writer - $50,000.00
- Redevelopment Agency Tax Incremental Financing Services - $60,000.00
- Rec Commission Complementary Climbing/Sliding Structure for Town Beach - $20,000.00
- Rec Commission Electricity to Nichols Field - $14,280.00
- Heritage Park Walking Track Lighting - $40,000.00
- Public Works John Deere 544 Loader - $220,000.00

3. Public Comment

   Mr. Blaschik objected to replacing the Town Meeting Hall's historic windows. He noted that the building is not heated nor air conditioned and he feels the existing window panes are historical and should be re-glazed rather than replaced. Ms. Haines stated that she would ask Facilities Director Angersola about the project to ascertain whether the replacement windows would be historically accurate.

4. Potential Budget Resolution

   The Board created a preliminary draft motion to move the Town's budget forward for the Board of Finance's consideration.

5. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Govert to adjourn the meeting at 3:07p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary