

RTM Budget Hearing
Tuesday, April 3, 2012
McKinley School Cafeteria

Present: Peter Ambrose, David Becker, Chris Brogan, Thomas Conley, Heather Dean, Bill Domeika, Hank Ference, Josh Garskof, Julie Gottlieb, Leigh Hannum, Kevin Hoffkins, Allen Marks, Sheila Marmion, Chris McAleese, Tom McCarthy, Mary McCullough, John Mitola, Eric Newman, Joe Palmer, Marc Patten, Carol Pontrelli, Carolyn Richmond, Jeff Steele, Hal Schwartz, Ann Stamler, Jay Wolk

Temporary Chair: Peter Ambrose
Temporary Secretary: Ann Stamler

RTM Moderator Jeff Steele explained that at the four scheduled hearings, department representatives will give a brief presentation about their budget request for fiscal year 2012-2013, following which RTM members will have an opportunity to pose questions.

Public Works Administration (5011)
Rich White, Director of Public Works

This budget request is an increase of 1.84% over FY12. Most of the increase is in Communications (55300), which includes cell phones, which are controlled by IT.

Discussion:

51150 Work Attendance Bonus – This increase is based on current year attendance.

52100 Health Insurance Actives – This decrease is due to changes that are presented in Supporting Documents.

54150 Motor Vehicle Fuel and Lub, 54310 Maint/Repair of Equipment, 54330 Automotive Maint/Repair - The munis report dated 4/3/12 shows \$0 expense this year. Expenses will be charged before end of the fiscal year. 51170 Minutes also shows \$0 expense– RW will check this.

(During this discussion Paul Hiller distributed Munis reports dated 4/3/12. He explained that his department had mistakenly generated reports for the prior year, and so the current year reports were not available before the meeting.)

Public Works Operations (5030)
Rich White, Director of Public Works

This budget request is an increase of 5%. Capital-Asphalt (57002) increases \$1,000,000 as part of 3 year plan to fold paving into operations instead of bonding this annual expense. If this increase is removed, the budget increase becomes a decrease of almost 2%. Contracted Property Svc (54010) includes tree trimming and removal, snow removal, and soccer field maintenance.

Discussion:

54130 Utilities-Electric – This decrease is due to favorable generation rates and energy saving projects.

57000 Capital - BOF cuts changed this line from a 25% increase to a 28% decrease. The tree bucket truck was a backup. Losing this funding will not impact the department's ability to provide service.

54320 Maint/Repair of Bldg/Ground – This increase is for items explained in the budget narrative under “Infrastructure & Services.”

57002 Capital-Asphalt – This increase will help the department catch up, but paving does not last 20 years as “advertised,” so much of the work is supporting the paving and extending its life.

53200 Fees and Professional Svc - Discussion of services included

51010/51030 Regular Payroll/Part-Time Payroll – The department currently has three vacancies. It has introduced a new weekend shift, consisting of entry level laborers working all weekends for two years, which is more cost effective than using overtime, and is limited to two years to prevent burn-out. The union agreed in good faith to this program, and the department feels a strong commitment to the laborers who have already been serving to maintain the funding. It saves the town money.

Building (5050)

Jim Gilleran, Building Inspector

The only budget increases are for employee-related contractual expenses.

Discussion:

51010 Regular Payroll –Permits are down. Large new projects such as Whole Foods provided a spike last year.

Engineering (5070)

Rich White, Director of Public Works

This budget is down 2.97%.

Discussion:

51070 Seasonal Payroll – This line is for student employment during the summer. Students help with surveys.

Street Lights (4070)

Rich White, Director of Public Works

This budget request is down 14% due to better rates for purchase of electricity.

Discussion:

Has the Town looked into using LED lights? Yes – they are funded through grants which are paid back through the savings achieved. The street lights opposite Burr Homestead have the distinctive coloring of LED lights.

Who is responsible for replacing lights at the Metro Train Station? The State DOT. Fairfield only maintains the lights on the bridge it owns.

Solid Waste (6070)

Michael Zembruski, Director of Solid Waste and Recycling

No presentation

Discussion:

53200 Fees and Professional Svc – An increase of \$80,000 is due to increased trash fees.

Water Pollution Control Authority (13013010)

Rich White, Director of Public Works

Even with additions by the BOS and BOF, this department budget is down.

No discussion

Legal Services (1270)

Stanton Lesser, Town Attorney

No presentation

Discussion:

53200 Fees and Professional Svc – The BOF reduced this line by \$163,000, to the level of the prior year. The department is dealing with five labor contracts, two of which should be concluded by the end of FY12. Attorney Lesser believes the department can function with this cut.

Other issues: Attorney Lesser is not averse to using of alternative fees. He is certain the Assistant Town Attorney satisfies the definition of a contractor and not an employee. Fees to arbitrators come from Miscellaneous Contingency (2010). The Town considered a change in the model of legal services, determining that it is not large enough to sustain staff attorneys for its diverse needs. Town work will not overwhelm Attorney Lesser's practice.

First Selectman's Office (1010)

Michael Tetreau, First Selectman

No presentation

Discussion:

51010 Regular Payroll – Non- union employees follow THEA for the level of their contribution to health insurance. New employees if hired will follow the THEA contract.

52100 Health Insurance Actives – This line in all departments is based on salary levels and whether an employee chooses a stipend or coverage.

Town Clerk (1030)

Betsy Browne, Town Clerk

No presentation

Discussion:

42311 Recording Fees (Revenue) - Recording fees are increasing.

Registrar of Voters (1070)

Roger Autuori, Republican Registrar of Voters

Matthew Waggoner, Democratic Registrar of Voters

This budget is down 1.43% in a national election year, which usually has an increase.

Discussion:

This budget reflects the current State and RTM districts. If the RTM does not approve a new redistricting plan, based on several variables the cost will be between \$25,000 and \$200,000 dollars.

51010 Regular Payroll – Registrar Autuori has filed an appeal with the Town Clerk of the BOF's decision on a 0 salary increase in CY 2013.

Zoning Board of Appeals (1090)

Joe Devonshuk, Planning Director

No presentation

No discussion

Town Plan and Zoning (1110)

Joe Devonshuk, Planning Director

No presentation

No discussion

Probate Court (1130)
Paul Hiller, Chief Fiscal Officer

The Town is required to provide space and pay operating expenses for this office.

Discussion:

56100 Printing Binding Photo – This line has decreased as a result of digitizing historic records.

Historic District Commission (1210)
Paul Hiller, Chief Fiscal Officer

No presentation

Discussion:

51170 Secretarial Services – There is no policy across departments regarding secretarial services.

Conservation Commission (1230)
Thomas Steinke, Conservation Director

No presentation

Discussion:

53310 Rental and Storage – The increase in this request is for equipment for scheduled projects that is not available for loan from other Town departments.

54320 Maint/Repair of Bldg/Grounds – The increase in this request is for repairs to the Hoyden's Hill barn.

Shellfish Commission (1250)
Thomas Steinke, Conservation Director

No presentation

Discussion:

53200 Fees and Professional Services – The increased request for FY 12 was for a sanitary survey project that did not happen.

There are many lines with small budgets and no change this year. Does this suggest the Commission's work might be accomplished through another department? The Town's permit for a shellfish program depends on conducting the sanitary survey.

Miscellaneous Contingency (2010)
Paul Hiller, Chief Fiscal Officer

No presentation

Discussion:

58010 Contingency – The Chief Fiscal Officer will provide a breakdown of YTD expenses in FY 12.

Community and Economic Development (1350)
Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development

The major change in this request is for employee related costs, due to moving staff from grant funding to the General Fund.

Discussion:

53310 Rental and Storage – This line is for use of a garage. It drops to 0 in FY13 because final payment on the space will be made before the end of FY12, and there will be no further payments. We will continue to use the space.

53200 Fees and Professional Svc – The increase in this request is in anticipation of costs for “Celebrate Fairfield.” The \$10,000 increase will be funded by closing out the Town’s grant to Fairfield Arts Center, which closed this year.

Harbor Management Commission (1370)
Mary VonConta, Chairman

This request is unchanged except for 53200, Fees and Professional Svc, which is to pay for non-staff services. There are two major projects, dredging the channel into Southport Harbor, and repairing harbor structures.

No discussion

Land Acquisition Commission (1390)
Letitia Ferguson, Commission Member

Funding for this budget was eliminated by the BOF. The Commission is working on redefining its mission to clarify its role. If parcels are acquired by the Town, the Commission will need to request funds from the Town for necessary services.

Discussion:

The commission will not appeal the BOF’s decision this year.