

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

APRIL 7, 2021

Page 2 of 4

Purchasing: Purchasing Director Gerald Foley explained the department processes over 10,000 purchase orders along with project oversight. A junior buyer position has been added to address the increased workload. He is on the “approval chain” for the BOE as well and checks for compliance with procurement procedures with the CAO.

Assessor: Assessor Ross Murray addressed the reduction in fees & professional services because the revaluation has been implemented, but monies are there for assessment appeals. Two employees in the department took the VERIP, but he has had 2 temps assisting with the Board of Assessment Appeals and the State of CT waived the re-application for senior & disabled tax relief this year due to Covid19 which has helped to ease the workload. Discussion ensued regarding tax exempt properties and open space classifications.

Health: Health Director Sands Cleary was thanked profusely for all his department’s efforts with the pandemic. The budget remained flat. They have taken advantage of all funding opportunities to cover OT, contact tracing costs, clinic costs, etc. He clarified that his staff assisted with training at the universities for contact tracing but did not train them all as they are self sufficient. Ms. Vergara asked if the universities could be charged a health & safety user fee to which Mr. Cleary said he had never heard of such a fee.

Human Services: Julie Demarco commended the new senior center director, Brenda Steele for all her hard work since coming onboard. She explained that since the center is closed it was not the proper time to request a full-time director position. When applying for grants for vehicles they apply for specific size, ie 12-pasenger 2-wheelchair w/lift. She noted that although the building still looks like a school, it is in great shape; they have a plan in place to address their needs and are looking at possible renovations to the bathrooms for ADA compliancy and kitchen.

Public Works: DPW Director John Marsilio said that many synergies and savings along with the reorganization were found among the DPW Administration, Operations & Solid Waste & Recycling budgets. Mr. Marsilio noted that a number of the audit findings had been addressed through tightened controls and processes and they are working on implementing more of them that are intertwined among several departments.

Building: First Selectwoman Kupchick said a new Building Official will be coming onboard soon and reiterated that an administrative floater would be shared among Building, Conservation and Planning & Zoning. A part-time blight inspector has been added to address blight complaints.

Engineering: Engineering Manager Bill Hurley explained the need to replace the 2003 Dodge Caravan with a cracked frame. He explained the difference between a CAD Specialist and Senior Civil Engineer who would have not only CAD experience but also be a PE or civil engineer with GIS or construction engineering experience. The department is working on a priority list of “shovel ready” projects that would be eligible for federal funding that is forthcoming.

WPCA: Bill Norton said the budget is relatively flat. They have 2 “shovel ready” projects that could be eligible for federal funding – the east trunkline and the Metro North Crossing.

Pequot Library: The increase in funding request is due to the \$50,000 match from a benefactor who would contribute that amount if the Town does the same toward the \$1.5 million tile roof replacement. Stephanie Coakley noted that they have received funding from foundations, the NAA, and earnings from their endowment. They received a PPP loan in 2020. Dru Georgiadis suggested applying for the “Shuttered Venue Grant”.

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

APRIL 7, 2021

Page 3 of 4

Museum & History Center: Mike Jehle noted due to the pandemic the museum laid off staff and reduced operations. Town support is 4% of the operating budget and encourages others to give their financial support.

Sullivan-McKinney Elderhousing: Ruth Greco explained the budget increase was to fix the chimney and resident courtyard ADA repairs. In response to several questions, she noted that the boiler was replaced in 2010 and there are carbon monoxide detectors throughout the building.

Kennedy Center: Jeanette Allam noted the budget increase was for more employment opportunities for their clients.

Pilot House: Doreen Caruso explained that Covid19 severely impacted their operations. Their facility on Colony Street remains closed and they are opened their farm at 1230 Merwins Lane to the entire community for therapeutic opportunities. Their services have been revamped to address the increase in anxiety and depression in town.

Center for Family Justice: Mark Antonini explained there has been a 20% increase in domestic violence due to Covid19. They have received funding from FEMA.

Retirees: CFO Jared Schmitt that the BOF decreased OPEB health & retirement contributions based on the completed actuarial valuations which are included in the BOS/BOF adjustments that were emailed to the RTM today. Stephen Chykirda from Hooker & Holcombe explained that the revised numbers reflect the underfunding from last year and were recalculated.

Fund Balance: Mr. Schmitt said the fund balance is currently projected at 11.04% of the total budget. \$1.2 million will go toward the operating budget. There are significant exposures associated with the fill pile and violations including legal bills, remediation and testing costs, and consultant fees. The BOF can clarify its fund balance policy.

Debt Service: Mr. Schmitt explained the debt service budget provides for the bond and BAN payments.

Finance: Mr. Schmitt noted the addition of a part-time grant coordinator to monitor and secure grants.

IT: Dave Kelley attributed the increases to replacement of PCs and laptops, servers, printers, routers and the surveillance system as well as the licensing and software renewal costs.

While reviewing several budgets, representatives suggested projects may be eligible for federal stimulus funds/Build Back Better Infrastructure funding. The US Treasury is developing the criteria and the town administration is working with Congressman Himes' Office on the most current information as they prioritize a list of shovel ready projects.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business this evening, the meeting recessed at 10:55 PM and will reconvene tomorrow night at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING

APRIL 7, 2021

Page 4 of 4

Elizabeth P. Browne, MMC, MCTC

Town Clerk