

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP
February 6, 2013
Meeting Room A**

<u>Present:</u>	Norman Needleman	Members of the Press
	Joel Marzi	Audience Members
	Stacia Libby	James Francis
	Kelly Sterner	

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 5:50 pm

Public Comment: None

BUDGET REVIEWS:

Park & Recreation Page 22

Rick Audet & Mary Ellen Barnes presented. Mr. Audet reported that most of the requests are staying the same, and some are decreasing like the lifeguard line item. The mowing will decrease because one park will now be maintained by public works. There is a decrease in their budget request by .47% less than last year.

Mr. Marzi inquired what the water increase is from and what it is used for. Mr. Audet stated that the water is used in the irrigation system and they will be investigating to see if there is a leak in one of the irrigation pipes. There was discussion regarding the new trees that were installed this year also required additional irrigation.

There was discussion on the Special Revenue Fund which is where Mary Ellen gets paid from. It is a fully self-supporting Park & Recreation activities fund for camps, basketball and a variety of other activities. The reserve is about \$53,000. Mr. Needleman stated that everyone can participate in these programs, and nobody is ever turned away. There are scholarships available

Park & Recreation Sinking Funds Page 54 – Mr. Needleman reported that this sinking fund will be kept flat this year because the tennis court and Playscape will be replaced with grant funds this spring.

Visiting Nurses (VNA) Page 46

Susan Maxwell is the new director of VNA. Ms. Maxwell reported their census is starting to increase. They recently hired a marketing director. They are increasing their educational health programs.

Mr. Marzi inquired about home visits. Ms. Maxwell reported that all home visits are being serviced at a loss. The cost for a visit is approximately \$140 and the reimbursement is \$94. Mr. Needleman stated that since this is a local service used by Essex residents he would like to support the VNA.

Fire Department Page 33

Mr. Ron Senn reported. The sinking fund is a way to build funds needed for equipment that needs replacing. Costs continue to rise. It is over \$2,000 for a set of turnout gear. The Fire Department Sinking Fund was placed at \$125,000.

The Fire Department's operating budget request was \$307,700. The Board of Selectmen agreed to place the original request in the budget.

Mr. Senn reported he would have a firm number on the radio system to include with the capital project which would include multiple repeater sites. There are two options. One would be to use Microwave or the internet.

Estuary Transit Page 40

Joe Comerford and Peter Bierrie reported. They are the public 9 town transit. They go from Clinton to Old Lyme, Killingworth, Chester, and now into Haddam. All routes start in Old Saybrook. There is a route that goes up to Middletown that stops in Essex. There is a Demand Response Service which is a point to point service that requires a one day advanced reservation. The fare is currently \$1.50. The Demand Response Trips are for people who are disabled and those cost \$3.00.

The reason for the increase in passengers is because they have raised awareness through press releases and there has been local coverage. They have increased the run times from 6:30 am to 7:45 pm. This new time covers the hours of commuters. The passengers are approximately 20% seniors and 80% non-senior.

Revenue is broken down to 8% is from Town, 6% fares, 1% from advertising on buses, the rest is all from state and federal funding. The fares have a small impact of the budget. The formula used includes factors from the population and density. Mr. Needleman is supportive of the budget request.

Mr. Comerford reported they have recently replaced 13 vehicles and 3 more are arriving. 5 are hybrid buses.

Ivoryton Library Page 53

Susan Nilsen, Elizabeth Alvord, Wendy Jaillet Presented. There have been some personnel and board changes. The Town donation represents 71% of their funding and they are always looking for ways of fund raising.

Their children's programs have increased. There is a homework program. They will be celebrating 125 years.

They do have an endowment fund, a little under \$200,000 and they reinvest all of it. It is the emergency fund. Mr. Marzi inquired if they have a sinking fund for the building. They are putting aside \$20,000.

There was discussion on the condominium that was donated to the library. It is currently being rented until the value of the property increases for a possible sale in the future.

Public Comments

Mr. Ackerman stated that he enjoys the Ivoryton Library; the building is spectacular but needs more parking.

There was further discussion on the Estuary Transit and how much other towns contributed. There was discussion regarding the \$2,008 increase.

There was discussion on the education budget and what was being presented for the school budget. Mr. Needleman stated that it was not known at this time. But based on the average daily membership Essex will be paying \$270,000 more. Mr. Needleman has requested that the education budget come in with an increase not to exceed 2%.

ADJOURNMENT at 7:38

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Lucarelli