

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP
February 8, 2014
Meeting Room A**

Present: Norman Needleman
Stacia Libby
Bruce Glowac
Kelly Sterner

Members of the Press
Audience Members
James Francis
Mary-Louise Polo

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm

Mr. Needleman opened the meeting thanking everyone who is involved with the budget process.

Public Comment: None

BUDGET REVIEWS:

Expenditures

Based on the initial requests and adjustments that were made there is currently a 3.06% increase in spending projected at this time. The major drivers can be identified on the summary page. Most department requests include only small dollar changes with several showing decreases. The aggregate requests results in 3% increase.

Public Comment – None

Kelly Sterner mentioned the original budget requests totaled \$7,433,676 which was an increase of \$466,000 or 6.9% over the current fiscal year. After the First Selectman's review, the budget was reduced to \$7,181,000.

Registrars for Elections Budget – B5

John Heiser reported the increases were anticipated due to Region 4 budget referendum, and November is the state wide election, then in August the Primaries. Thus an increase for the Part Time / Poll Worker category and an increase in printing cost for absentee ballots. In the past, the state paid for the tabulator machines, now Towns are responsible for the maintenance of the machines. There are 5 machines at a cost of \$200 per machine, thus the increase of \$1,000 in equipment maintenance line. Moderators must be recertified every 2 years. There has been an increase in responsibilities of the registrars that require more hours and more paperwork.

Tree Committee – B25

Augie Pampel asked for an increase to allow the Town to go after more grant money that requires matching funds. Norman Needleman reported that Northeast Utilities has started an aggressive plan to trim trees and there is a new state mandated process of a requirement of notifying homeowners of the clearing. The Tree Warden must send out

certified letters and attend any hearings, etc. The responsibilities of the Tree Warden have increased significantly.

Highway Department – B48

There has been significant spending on tree maintenance. The Tree Warden works closely with CL&P. The Tree Warden must be involved in private and Town property notifications. Letters go out from CL&P to homeowners, then homeowners must respond to both the Tree Warden and CL&P, then Tree Warden must send a letter of opinion in regards to the tree. Then if the Tree Warden sides with the property owners, then there is a hearing. It is a very involved process, verbal, letters, and hearings. The project is called ETT – Enhanced Tree Trimming which is an aggressive 8' from side to side and up trimming, which is a major pruning. The Tree Warden activity has increased. The Tree Warden's salary has been stagnant at approximately \$2500 per year for the last 17 years. The salary would gradually be adjusted to \$7500 per year by the additional of \$2500 per year. This increase reflects the amount of work involved for the next several years.

Economic Development – B20

Lon Seidman presented. The EDC consultant has been included in the budget for \$12,000 per year. Printing services line was increased for the literature. The consultant helps someone who wants to start a business in Essex. The consultant assists new businesses with the process, especially going through the health, zoning, and planning departments.

Emergency Management – B31

William Buckridge presented. Additional money in the budget for the Emergency Management Director position due to the amount of hours involved and the training requirements that are necessary for this position keep increasing.

Sanitary Waste Commission – B44

There is a decrease of \$500 for part time payroll and a decrease of \$200 for conferences.

Water Pollution Control Authority–B47, Legal – B13, Sinking Funds B54

Susan Malan requested an increase of \$10,000 in the legal budget for WPCA to provide for potential legal issues. There was a request to add \$100,000 into the Sinking Fund account for the Waste Water Management Plan. \$20,000 was added for now and possibly increasing the Sinking Funds later in the budget process. The Plan would determine what are the risks and what the Town could do to manage growth. Essex has a sewer avoidance ordinance but the small plant technology is improving and may be something the Town may be interested in.

Fire Department – B33

Steve Olsen presented. Worker's Compensation increased. Professional fees and business expenses have also increased. Materials are needed for the training facility. The fire department built the training facility and the fire department would like funding in order to provide adequate training at the facility. The Fire Department is requesting funding for administrative help. The administrative assistant would handle the necessary and required paperwork and would keep training records in order. There are no paid employees at this time. This newly created position would be a subcontractor position. A job description is being created. The ideal candidate is someone who is already working in another fire

department. A new truck will be purchased in 2016. Having the two fire stations, one in Essex and one in Ivoryton, allows for quick response time, especially during storms when one station may not be easily accessible.

Sinking Fund – Fire Department B54

Steve Olsen reported that the cost for the current ladder truck was \$150,000; then another \$60,000 was put into the truck. The next fire truck will be a pumper truck. There was discussion of possibly waiting and purchasing two trucks at the same time for a cost savings, or possibly refurbish the 1994 truck.

Selectmen – B1

Payroll includes a 3% increase for full time staff and the two Selectmen. The First Selectman's salary would remain flat.

Assessor – B2

The supplemental payroll decreased.

Central Services – B3

There may be some further adjustments to the telephone line item. It may be reduced further when the conversion to the new system is finalized. Mr. Needleman stated until that time to increase the phone line to \$11,000. The heating fuel line was reduced, but it is hard to judge the savings with the new boiler at this time.

Probate Court – B6

Probate Court will remain flat this year.

Tax Collector – B7

There is 3% payroll increase plus a step increase.

Town Clerk – B8

Last year the budget was for two part time clerks and now it is one full time position.

Finance Department – B9

There is 3% payroll increase plus a step increase. The elected official stipend also decreased when the Director of Finance assumed more of the responsibilities.

Zoning Enforcement Agent – B10

There is 3% payroll increase.

Fringe Benefits – B11

There is a 2% total overall increase. The part time payroll line is for a consultant.

General Insurance – B12

This is an estimate. Do not have the numbers yet for Worker's Compensation.

Legal Services – B13

The tax appeals will most likely increase due to this being a revaluation year. Keep sinking fund request for revaluation the same. No other changes.

Public Restrooms – B14

Automatic locks were installed on the Main Street Restrooms, adjustment has been made.

Technology – B15

Remained flat.

Board of Assessment Appeals – B16

Remained flat.

Board of Finance – B17

Remained flat.

Clean Energy Task Force – B18

Remained flat.

Conservation Commission – B19

Remained flat.

IWWC Commission – B21

Printing Services was reduced. A 2.16% decrease.

Park & Recreation – B22

The Park & Recreation Commission will be presenting at a later budget workshop.

Planning Commission – B24

There was a slight increase on the fees to CME.

Zoning Board of Appeals B26

There has been a reduction in fees for a total of a 10.94% decrease.

Zoning Department - B27

There was an increase in the Full Time Payroll due to additional hours for administrative assistance.

Ambulance Association – B28

There was a decrease for workers compensation insurance.

Animal Control – B29

Remained flat.

Building Department – B30

There was a reduction in full time payroll and an increase in part time payroll. There was an increase due to additional administrative assistant hours needed for this department.

Emergency 9–1–1 – B32

The numbers have not been reported yet. They will available in April.

Harbor Patrol – B35

There was a small increase for fuel.

Police Services – B36

The salary adjustments and step increases are contractual adjustments.

Resident Trooper – B38

The numbers have not been reported yet. They will be available in April.

Water – B39

The increase represents minor additions to the Essex public fire system.

Estuary Transit – B40

There is a slight increase due to the addition of one bus line and ridership is increasing.

Health Department – B41

There is a slight increase in the full time and part time payroll and a step increase.

Transfer Station and Recycling – B42

There is an overall reduction in costs.

Water Pollution Control Authority WPCA – B47

There is a slight decrease.

Highway Department – B48

The salary adjustments and step increases are contractual adjustments.

Town Garage – B50

There is a slight decrease.

Interest on Debt – B51

There is not as much savings this year as last year.

Principal - B52

Remained flat.

Capital & Sinking Funds – B54

Park and Recreation Sinking Fund will increase over the next several years with a goal to get to \$50,000. The Municipal Property Sinking Fund also has been increased in order to finalize the town hall property improvements.

ADJOURNMENT at 4:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Lucarelli