

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP
February 20, 2013
Meeting Room A**

<u>Present:</u>	Norman Needleman Joel Marzi Stacia Libby Kelly Sterner	Members of the Press Audience Members
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Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm

Public Comment: None

BUDGET REVIEWS:

Tri Town Youth Services

Gail Onofrio and Jeff Smith presented. Youth Service Bureaus were formed in order to address the needs of at-risk youth. Some programs they have are juvenile justice, mental health services, child welfare, parent education, youth development, some community outreach, and a high on life week. Their current request is \$50,635. Approximately 60% of their budget comes from the surrounding local Towns.

Mr. Marzi inquired how many families from Essex use their services. Ms. Onofrio did not have specific numbers but stated the newsletter goes to every household in Essex. They do not track the number of families. Their programs are for the whole community.

Water Pollution Control Authority Page 47

Susan Malan presented. There was a request for funding placed in the budget for a wastewater management plan. There was discussion on looking at how to restructure the dump. There were significant expenses in shipping. It is anticipated that in 2013-2014 will be the year of demolition. There was discussion in closing the landfill and the need for funding. There was discussion on whether you'd need a final covering over the closed landfill.

Mr. Marzi inquired about the waste water management plan. Ms. Malan stated that the last time it was updated was several years ago and they would like a fresh set of eyes. They have no idea of the cost to do such a study. There was discussion on whether there are granting opportunities to cover the cost of doing this type of study. Mr. Needleman agreed that we need to do a study, but first we would need to determine how much the study would cost and when the study would be done.

Under the Legal Services budget, they are asking for \$30,000. There was discussion on updating the ordinance.

Sanitary Waste Commission Page 44

Susan Malan presented. The request is for \$1300 with no increase. There was discussion that the ordinance needs to be changed and updated.

Emergency 9-1-1 Page 32**Valley Shore Emergency Communications, Inc.**

Mr. Needleman stated the budget request for \$103,559 from Valley Shore Emergency Communications Center is based on a formula that is used to determine each Town's share. There was discussion on the possibility if other towns join, this number could be reduced.

Rick Darin and Paul Fazzino presented. The console system lease is a long term lease with about \$220,000 remaining, but the console has been deemed outdated and they are unable to obtain spare parts even though it is only 6 years old. The revenue generated from the cell tower at the Killingworth site has significantly decreased. Last year they received \$344,000 from the State and they do not have any final numbers yet from the state for this year, nor have they been informed of whether the funding has been cut.

There was discussion on the pension plan. They currently have a defined benefit pension plan and are looking to move to a defined contribution plan.

Essex Ambulance Page 28

The Worker's Compensation insurance rate increased.

Social Services Page 45

There was discussion on what service each program provides to the Town of Essex. Mr. Marzi suggested cutting some of the programs that don't directly serve Essex residents.

Mr. Needleman stated that he strongly recommended keeping Tri Town Youth Services and the Estuary Council of Seniors Club. He also suggested considering increasing the Estuary Council of Seniors Club by at least 3% or up to \$34,000. The club reported that they interacted with approximately 318 Essex residents and they also do meals on wheels.

There was discussion on Community Renewal Team. They did a lot with Essex Court with the 205 Essex residents and they also help to administer fuel assistance.

The Literacy Volunteers help with English and reading tutoring and they reported they assisted 10 Essex residents.

The Shoreline Soup Kitchens served over 2009 meals in Town.

The Community Health Center reported they interfaced with 93 residents on a sliding scale.

The Middlesex Behavioral Health assisted approximately 62 residents.

There was discussion on The Connection and The Eddy Shelter which are both larger organizations. Mr. Marzi stated that he felt some of these services could be completely taken out or cuts could be made.

Mr. Needleman stated that many small towns do not have a social services department and all of the combined mentioned programs above are approximately \$16,000 in the budget. These different programs help provide services and meet the needs of Essex residents. Mr. Marzi stated there are some towns that do nothing and Essex does more and contributes more than Towns that are three times larger than Essex.

Fringe Benefits B11

Mr. Needleman stated that he is comfortable with the retirement contribution number that the actuary recommended. Unemployment compensation dropped by \$10,000 because our experience has been down. Mr. Needleman suggested dropping this down even further.

Legal Services - Tax Appeals – Page 13

There was discussion on whether the amount budgeted under tax appeals could be reduced from \$15,000 down to \$5,000.

Public Comments

John Ackerman inquired further about the Social Services programs and contributions. He felt that the funds being donated on behalf of the Town should be made as a personal donation, not a Town mandated donation. Mr. Ackerman was in favor of the waste water management plan.

Walter Schieferdecker agreed with Mr. Ackerman on the Social Services donations suggestion. He also suggested that the Selectmen consider elimination of any further acquisition of open space at this time because of the reduced tax revenue. Mr. Needleman suggested reducing the open space sinking fund from \$5000 down to \$1,000 especially since the Town recently received a significant check that was placed into the open space sinking fund.

Mr. Marzi stated the budget is currently at an approximate 1.6% increase at this time.

ADJOURNMENT at 7:38

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Lucarelli