

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET WORKSHOP
February 15, 2012
Meeting Room A**

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

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 5:01p.m.

BUDGET REVIEWS:

Mr. Needleman stated that we are here tonight to listen to individual presentations and at the next budget workshop meeting decisions will be made to either increase or cut anything from the budget.

Ivoryton Library

Loretta McCluskey, President, Karen Burzin, Vice-President, Jill Johnson, Treasurer and Elizabeth Alvord presented their budget. They are an important part of the community as well as a part of the Ivoryton Alliance, which helps bring visitors to the area with their Garden Tour. The library is adapting to the changing world and they are now offer e-readers which they loan and provide instruction, as well as expanding their e-books and audio book selection. They also provide computer access, language classes, and various children and adult programs. They also function as a community center and a meeting place for Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, book groups, condo associations, Land Trust, and Little League. Last year, over 26,000 visits were made to the library. They are requesting \$105,000 in town support for the library. This is a slight increase from last year's support of \$100,000. For three years, no increases to requests have been made.

Zoning Enforcement Officer

The Zoning Enforcement Officer, Joseph Budrow presented his budget with no increase.

Inland Wetlands

The Inland Wetlands Officer, Joseph Budrow presented his budget. Mr. Budrow stated the automobile expenses and part-time payroll were reduced.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Joseph Budrow presented on behalf of the ZBA. They average three applications a month. The recording clerk hours are being reduced.

Essex Ambulance

Judith Reynolds presented their budget. They are mainly funded by other avenues. The Ambulance Association is asking to continue to be reimbursed for Worker's Compensation costs.

Emergency Management

Stuart Schenck, the Deputy Director, presented their budget. The Emergency Operations Center is moving to the first floor.

Harbor Patrol

Mr. Needleman has had discussions with Jeff Going about not requiring a police officer to be on the boat. Mr. Marzi stated that the rule of having two people on the boat should be mandatory.

Police

Mr. Needleman reported that the police budget would have a cost savings by hiring two part time officers and one full time officer to replace the retired officer. The cost savings would be approximately \$22,000 in benefits. Mr. Needleman also reported on a need for a Police SUV.

Resident Trooper

Norman Needleman presented the Resident Trooper Budget. Mr. Needleman stated there are currently three full time police officers; one is out due to an injury. One police officer retired last year, we are currently in the process of filling that position. The Town of Essex currently has one resident trooper and one temporary trooper covering for the officer who is out.

Mr. Needleman's plan is to have three full time and two part time police officers, as well as one resident trooper. The officer position was posted and they are currently reviewing the resumes. The cost of reimbursement for a resident trooper is 70% plus 100% of the overtime.

Mr. Marzi inquired about the part time payroll number line item on the budget sheet. Ms. Sterner stated that is for the crossing guard who is part time. Ms. Sterner stated that these are not final trooper budget numbers, the 3% is the recommended increase suggested by the State of Connecticut.

Estuary Transit

Joseph Comerford, Executive Director, presented their budget, also known as the 9 Town Transit, a public transit provider for the 9 towns. The Town of Essex is served by two routes, one along Route 154, the other from Old Saybrook to Middletown. There is also a service called Dial-a-Ride which is door-to-door service which did over 5,000 trips last year. They are up over 60% in two years and are continuing to grow. This area has seen the most increase in service with 70% being non-seniors and 30% seniors. Their budget request is \$13,372, a 21.95% increase over last year.

Social Services – Tri Town Youth

Anne Yurasek, Todd Beardsley, Trish Maselli, Roseann Ventimiglia, and Gail Onofrio presented their budget. This is a legislative organization. They offer services to young people and parents, and offer mentoring programs. Tri-Town's goal is to have 60% of Town Funding and 40% from grants and fundraising. The current contribution is \$33,000. This year's budget request is \$49,449.

Mr. Marzi inquired what the current budget requests are from Chester and Deep River. The response was that Chester's budget request is \$28,000 and Deep River gives an in-kind donation, which is the building Tri Town uses plus \$5,000. Tri Town uses a little more than half the building.

Visiting Nurses

Priscilla Munro, Executive Director presented their budget. Visiting Nurses has been in the lower valley since 1920. They serve thirteen (13) towns. 40% of their patients come from Essex.

They are a licensed home care agency. Most of the patients are 65 and over and receive Medicare. They also provide public health services to the town, such as blood pressure and cholesterol screening services, etc. The request from the Visiting Nurses is \$60,795, the same amount since 2007.

Mr. Marzi inquired why they were not asking for an increase. Ms. Munro stated that the amount they are requesting is a fair amount. Ms. Munro also stated that some of the services are no longer being funded are providing.

Essex Library

Richard Conroy presented their budget. Mr. Conroy stated that they came in the same as last year of \$265,000. Mr. Conroy stated that a wide variety of people use the library and their services. The high point for the endowment was 3.8 million and they are down to 3.7. They are trying to raise more money for the endowment. They try to stay between the 4-5% range on their endowment. The loan is about 1.8 million with about 37 years left.

Valley Shore Emergency Communications

Paul Fazzino and Rick Darin presented their budget. The facility is located at State Police Troop F. The representatives for the Town of Essex are Paul Fazzino and Judith Reynolds.

There are two dispatchers on duty 365 days a year. The call volume has become tremendous. They have come up with a fair cost to each town and no town has been hit with a surcharge, except for operating money.

Mr. Fazzino stated that the equipment is getting outdated. Old Saybrook recently spent \$3 million for a new system, Clinton spent \$3 million and Waterford spent over \$8 million.

They have worn out what they have. Mr. Darin stated that they do not have a capital replacement plan for the equipment. They have a tower that they do get some revenue from. Some income comes from the State but that number varies year to year. This year will be \$764,000. The State looks at the grand list, population; number of calls, then calculates the Essex share, which about 12%.

There is discussion about whether the dispatch center will eventually need to move out of the State Police Troop F building.

Fire Department

1st Assistant Chief Doug Harreys and 2nd Assistant Chief Ron Senn presented their operating budget request. This year there is a 0% increase. There was discussion on the Sinking Fund, the request from the Fire Department is a \$150,000 installment. It is planned to purchase a new engine in 2014 and this type of apparatus is currently selling for around \$500,000 - \$600,000. Equipment is getting older and repairs are costly.

Public Comments

There was discussion regarding the new community center opening in Middletown and whether the Estuary Transit would provide transportation to the center. Mr. Comerford stated that he would look into this opportunity.

There was an inquiry on how arrests could be made on the Marine Patrol boat without a police officer. Mr. Needleman stated that 90% of the benefit of the boat is to have a visual presence which helps prevent speeding.

ADJOURNMENT at 7:48

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Lucarelli