

**Minutes of the
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Wednesday, March 4, 2020 @6:00 p.m.
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

First Selectwoman Catherine Iino called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:02 pm. In attendance were Selectman Lou Annino, Jr., Selectman Eileen Blewett. Visitors: Finance Director Regina Regolo, Wayne Linsley, Richard Bauer, Todd Hajek, & Richard Darin (Darin arrived at 7 pm)

Annino moved the approval of the regular meeting minutes for Monday, February 24, 2020 and the special meeting minutes for Wednesday, February 26, 2020. Second by Blewett. Motion approved unanimously.

The board resumed the review of the operating budget. Iino reported that Regolo adjusted the "Spot Paving & Curbing" request to reflect the movement of two more significant road projects, Emanuel Church Road and Center Roast Meat Hill Road, described as sectional overlays, to the capital budget. The current draft also reflects the \$1,000 reduction in the Library Association's request that had been discussed at an earlier meeting. Iino recommended that the Building Official salary line be reduced to \$35,000 (\$8,177) to more accurately reflect the current staffing. Board asked Regolo to remove adjustments for highway department new hire.

Iino pointed out that the Joint Committee on Compensation recommended that the First Selectman, Finance Director, and the Administrative Assistant positions adjustments be made to bring them to the median for comparable towns over time. Blewett asked about the differences between the 2% and 2.5% reflected in the current draft 20/21 budget. Iino restated the board's intention to adjust nonunion salaries, excluding elected officials, to provide a 2% cost-of-living adjustment. However, because the Administrative Assistant position is comparable to some union positions, we recommend a 2.5 percent increase for that line.

Blewett asked Iino and Annino to describe the process by which the Joint Commission on Compensation determined the median. Iino explained that the committee relied heavily upon the CCM salary survey information and that benefits were not taken into consideration but the hours worked per week were. Annino stated the first time around the committee reviewed the updated job descriptions. Blewett asked that the process be revisited in the future to take into account the position's total compensation including benefits.

Blewett asked about the proposed increase in Board of Elections budget. lino explained it reflects the national election year needs and the increased training requirements imposed by the State of Connecticut.

With regard to the annual transfer to the capital reserves, the draft reflects \$1,000,000 or approximately the 1.5 mil - the limit as described in the town charter. lino has reached out to the town attorney to confirm her interpretation of another clause that appears to permit additional capital funding opportunities using the general fund balance.

The 5% increase for the Assistant Assessor position includes both the union annual increase and movement on step on her anniversary date. lino went on to explain that there may be a reorganization of the department mid-year when the current assistant receives her certification but the overall assessor budget can accommodate this potential shift.

Blewett inquired about the small percentage increases outlined in the draft for the tax collector and the town clerk. lino explained that the tax collector's compensation had changed mid-year FY 19/20. There is no planned increase in her compensation for FY 20/21. The town clerk has asked for a cost-of-living increase of 2% in January 2021.

Annino asked about town engineer expenses year-to-date. lino replied that we had spent in excess of \$60,000 but that much of those expenses were related to the Sept 2018 flood, for which we expect partial reimbursement from FEMA. Annino asked if the \$30,000 budget for FY20/21 would be adequate, excluding future contingencies. lino and Regolo believe so.

lino recommended the reduction in the Building official salary line by \$8,177, given current staffing.

The medical insurance line reflects a 3.5% rate increase and a recent change in enrollment.

The selectmen asked for a narrative explaining the increase in the Information Technology budget. Regolo provided the budget breakdown from our IT consultants.

The board is waiting a formal proposal from the fire commissioners for increased funding for the Fire Marshal position. At the moment, the draft FY21 budget reflects the \$25,000 figure that had been mentioned at earlier Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen meetings. Rick

Darin said that he would deliver the job description, job posting, estimated hours based upon the number of inspectables in town, and the NFPA standards. He would include the salary survey information as well.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the estimated cost of adding an additional full time person to the Highway Department and the corresponding offset in outside contracting and other expenses. The board did not believe it had sufficient information to support the hire. Annino recommended that the board add funding for a consultant to review current operations and recommend a structured maintenance program. He added that if the recommendation included additional staff, the decision could be made midyear.

There was a brief discussion about the Killingworth Recreation request. Board approved the budget, with the understanding that it allows for some contingencies.

The draft operating budget for FY 20/21 stands at \$5,635,540, an increase of 5.9% or \$314,068 over the 19/20 budget. The proposed increase in the Transfer to Capital of \$180,000 represents the majority.

The board resumed the review of the capital requests for FY20/21. There were no suggested changes to the fire company's requests. lino was unable to secure an independent evaluation of the current pay loader however; she did have an estimated trade-in value of \$25,000 thereby reducing the total estimated cost down to \$128,000. The board decided to push the Upgrade to the Guard Rail mower to FY 22/22.

lino withdrew the request to add the two triple-chip seal capital projects discussed at the last meeting.

At an earlier meeting, the board had removed P&R's request for \$5,000 in repairs to the Sheldon Pavilion. That expense will be covered by the town's FY20 operating repair line.

The board eliminated the Parmelee Farm capital requests for the Stone Wall Repairs, John Deere Tractor & Backhoe, and the 4x4 Gator Utility vehicle. The board agreed that if Parmelee elects to use their activities funds for the stone wall project and/or the 4x4 Gator purchase, they would support that decision. In light of the board of selectmen's decision not to approve the capital requests for the Parmelee Farm in FY 20/21, the board reaffirmed its position to support the request for additional \$3,000 in operating funds.

The total proposed capital budget for FY 20/21 is \$2,507,820.

lino will draft the supporting narratives for approval at the meeting scheduled for Monday, March 9th.

Annino reiterated the selectmen's willingness to return to the Board of Finance later in the fiscal year with the results of the highway department's evaluation and to request a possible shift in budgetary funds in order to make any recommended changes.

There was a brief discussion regarding the highway department fleet of vehicles.

lino moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Annino and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Regina Regolo
Acting Recording Secretary