



**TOWN OF HARTFORD
SELECTBOARD BUDGET
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

Thursday, December 1, 2016 at 6:00 P.M.

Hartford Town Hall
171 Bridge Street
White River Junction, Vermont 05001

Present: Richard Grassi, Selectboard Chair; Rebecca White, Selectboard Vice-Chair; Simon Dennis, Selectboard Member; Dennis Brown, Selectboard Member; Mike Morris, Selectboard Member; Leo Pullar, Town Manager; Eliza LeBrun, Executive Assistant; Scott Cooney, Fire Chief; Phillip Kasten, Police Chief; Tad Nunez, Parks & Recreation Director; Dawn Pullar.

Absent: Sandra Mariotti, Selectboard Clerk; Alan Johnson, Selectboard Member.

I. Call to Order Selectboard Meeting and Pledge of Allegiance

Selectboard Chair, Richard Grassi called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Police Chief Phil Kasten led the pledge.

II. Order of Agenda

Selectboard Chair, Richard Grassi asked the Selectboard to consider reviewing the Parks and Recreation budget first and then the Fire Department as Selectboard member Mariotti would not be in until after 8pm and could not participate in the Fire Department review. The Selectboard agreed to the reorganization.

III. Selectboard

Selectboard member, Dennis Brown mentioned that the Fairview Terrace cost quoted in the Valley News was very high and incorrect.

Mr. Brown requested that if any future budget meetings are canceled, that the meetings be shifted to the next scheduled budget date.

Town Manager Pullar explained to the Selectboard his recommended procedure for the budget review. Mr. Pullar asked that the Selectboard refrain from approving or making motions regarding specific things in the budget until the entire budget has been reviewed and department heads have had the opportunity to give their presentations. Mr. Pullar encouraged the Selectboard to comment and ask questions so that he and the department heads would have an opportunity to rework and perhaps reintroduce information.

Selectboard member, Simon Dennis asked if the Town was removing one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) from the overall budget and is there a strategy?

Town Manager Pullar clarified that nine hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$950,000.00) was the amount the Town needed to try to "find" in the budget. Mr. Pullar has recommendations and all of

the department heads have laid out their budgets to show what are fixed and what are flexible costs.

Selectboard Chair, Richard Grassi asked how much higher the presented budget was over last year. Town Manager, Leo Pullar informed Mr. Grassi that the presented budget is actually three hundred eighty thousand dollars (\$380,000.00) less than last year. However, the issue comes with regard to revenues. Last year 1.2 million dollars was moved internally into the operating budget, then it appears that the Town paid themselves the 1.2 million dollars again, effectively overestimating the revenue. Mr. Pullar and Ms. Ostrout the Finance Director are working hard to figure this out, they are concerned about cash flow in this fiscal year.

Selectboard member, Mike Morris stated that the public may think that money is missing. Mr. Pullar stated that he does not believe that any money is missing, neither does Ms. Ostrout the Finance Director or Ms. Donaldson the previous Interim Finance Director. If Mr. Pullar believed money to be missing he would immediately call the Selectboard and the Attorney General. The Finance Director and Mr. Pullar are frustrated as they feel that the auditing firm should have caught this. Mr. Pullar said that this would be a clunky budget process this year but by the end of it, we should have a budget that sets the Town up for moving forward. At this time the Purchase Policy is being rewritten and finance is trying to get a better handle on just how much money is needed to run this Town. These will be completed before the budget is finalized.

Selectboard member, Dennis Brown said he felt that there was a shell game before and that the Town is no longer doing this which will make next year so much easier.

Everyone agreed that a new auditing firm should be chosen next year and Mr. Pullar has already had discussions with the president of the current firm regarding this for next year.

Selectboard Chair, Richard Grassi wants the Selectboard to make sure that they do not level fund a budget this year and end up having to buy more next year because they put off a purchase.

Selectboard member, Simon Dennis asked what strategy should be used when the Selectboard is discussing the budget. Is it better to talk about money or goods and services? Mr. Pullar felt it was important to do a little of both and that the presentations should help to illustrate what a dollar will buy in services.

IV. Budget Workshop:

1. Recreation (511-516/521/524/527-528/530)

Parks and Recreation Director, Tad Nunez presented an organizational chart outlining the positions and relationships within the Parks and Recreation department. The sub-departments within Parks and Recreation were identified as 511 thru 515 as Administration, 516 – Pool, 521 – Youth Activities, 527 – Maxfield and 524 – as the West Hartford Community Center and Library. Town Cemeteries are also the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation department for general upkeep. Mr. Nunez was able to show that wages make up 49% of the budget. Mr. Nunez was also able to show the projects which are planned for the coming year. The costs of these projects did not reflect a reduction based on program fees. The projects shown are the area with the most room for change, however this is still a decrease over last year. Mr. Nunez noted that there would be no capital purchase in this year as they are using the “what we need” not “what we want” motto.

Acct.	Description	Amount
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511-0000	Replacement of one computer	\$ 1,400.00
512-0000	Pool gutter replacements	\$ 2,500.00
514-0000	Athletic Goals & Job Box	\$ 4,000.00
516-0000	Annual fireworks display (fireworks, police/fire/park staff coverage and supplies)	\$ 18,000.00
521-0000	Athletic field & Park maintenance	\$ 14,000.00
527-0000	Athletic field maintenance	\$ 10,000.00
527-0000	Chalk liner & tarp weights	\$ 1,100.00
528-0000	Install electricity to maintenance building	\$ 2,000.00

Selectboard Vice-Chair, Rebecca White had two (2) concerns. The first was a general statement about the Pool. Perhaps the Selectboard needs to think about no longer offering the Pool as Maxfield was a huge investment for the Town. The second concern was about the use of Volunteers as the Contract Services within Adult Programs seemed so high.

Mr. Nunez answered that he liked the idea of possibly phasing out the Pool, but the Town did just invest a lot into the Pump House and Field House renovations. Also, the increase in Contract Services within the Adult Programs is specifically due to a change with the Fair Labor Standards Act no longer requiring officials and coaches to be counted as employees. Mr. Nunez also noted that these costs were paid in full by program costs. Currently the Parks and Recreation revenues are not reflected in the presentation.

There was discussion about the Pool among the Selectboard members. Specifically, how the Pool was being attended, the physical layout and the fact that few people complained when the Pool was shut for renovations. There was also discussion about duplication of services with the Upper Valley Aquatic Center. The Selectboard was also interested in whether or not the department ever broke even in services versus fees. Several programs do pay for themselves, including Ventures. Mr. Nunez pointed out that the programs were never designed to be money makers.

The Selectboard recognized that the Fourth of July project cost was very high. Mr. Nunez pointed out that they use revenues and corporate sponsors to offset much of the cost.

2. Fire (221)

Fire Chief, Scott Cooney presented an organizational chart outlining the positions and relationships within the Fire department. Chief Cooney pointed out the elimination of GL code 10-231 as the Fire department is one agency, this may make the 10-221 Budget appear high. Chief Cooney was able to identify 73% of his budget as wages. Selectboard Chair, Richard Grassi noted that overtime was down eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000.00) due to adding one new Firefighter, but still seemed high. Chief Cooney explained the need for coverage and call back time for all emergency calls due to minimum safety requirements for station coverage. In an effort to reduce this, the department has implemented a wait for investigation of calls prior to calling staff in for coverage. Chief Cooney also presented a list of projects which he is requesting funding for this year.

Acct.	Description	Amount
315-0000	VTC Burn Building	\$2,500
318-0000	Staff Physicals	\$18,000
318-0000	UVAC Fitness Trainer	\$6,200
320-0100	Portable Radios (5)	\$15,000
320-0100	Mobile Radio	\$3,500

321-0100	Reseal Apparatus Floor	\$11,000
321-0100	Replace Doors	\$8,000
321-0100	LED Lighting Upgrade	\$5,500
321-0100	Commercial Ice Maker	\$3,500
321-0100	Fitness Room Air Exchange	\$3,000
330-0000	Mobile Data Terminal	\$5,000
331-0000	Treadmill	\$6,000
331-0200	Rescue Jacks	\$7,250
331-0500	½ Lifepak 15 Defibrillator	\$16,000
331-0700	Replace 1 Ton Utility Truck	\$77,400

Discussion was held regarding specifically listed items and explanations for the need and alternative options. Specifically mentioned were the Employee Physicals and Health and Fitness benefits. These are to maintain safety and wellness as well as to prevent serious injury to employees and the public.

Currently the exterior doors of the building have rotted, quotes are being received. Selectboard member, Mike Morris asked if alternate material has been considered that may last longer.

There is no ice maker in any of the Town Offices. Currently highway, police, fire and all other staff must either freeze water bottles to keep them cold or drink room temperature water while working.

The Weight Room on the second floor of the Public Safety building is the hottest room in the building due to its location above the boiler. Currently there is no temperature control in this room although it was recommended by the Energy Audit. This room also has 3 treadmills which are shared between the Fire and Police departments, they would like to replace the oldest one.

The cost of the Defibrillator (diagnostic machine) is a replacement for the current unit. The cost is based on a trade in and would be purchased very close to the end of the fiscal year so that half of the cost would be in FY17 and half in FY18. Selectboard member Morris asked if Chief Cooney had considered leasing.

The Utility Truck in Fire has had the battery replaced twice in the last 12 months.

Selectboard member Brown asked why there was not a grant for the Radios being requested. Chief Cooney stated that the department had chosen to apply for a grant for breathing apparatus instead this year. Selectboard member Morris noted that the Police department had just purchased dual band radios, why is the Fire department not looking at those as well? Currently, the Police can hear the Fire calls, but cannot communicate with them.

It was noted that the Property and Liability amounts for all departments have been moved to a single GL code in Fund 10.

Chief Cooney noted that overall the Fire budget has increased \$26,000 over last year.

Selectboard Chair Grassi noted that Travel/Meals/Lodging/Education seem high. Town Manager Pullar noted that the Town is looking into online training thru VLCT as well as

working on implementing a policy and procedure to limit and require trip assessments and reports from staff.

Fuel costs, telephone usage and tracking as well as uniform costs were discussed.

Selectboard Chair Grassi asked for clarification on why the Fire Department had to pay the Water Department for the water it uses. Town Manager Pullar stated that this is something that they are looking into as it looks odd to pay ourselves, there may be an alternative way to track this. Selectboard member Dennis asked if it is really double tapping the voters. Mr. Pullar said although it may appear that way as it is unclear why the Fire department has to pay for water and hydrants that the voters have already paid for.

3. Police (211/212/216/217)

Chief Kasten presented an organizational chart outlining the positions and relationships within the Police department. Chief Kasten pointed out that although the Emergency Communications Center is within the same union and same space as the Police department, it is important to keep the budgets separate. The Police Department budget did absorb the Animal Control and School Resource positions. Chief Kasten was able to identify 79% of his budget as wages. Currently the department has 2 vacant positions and they are looking to absorb one of the positions to provide an increase in salaries to staff. Chief Kasten also presented a list of projects which he is requesting funding for this year.

Acct.	Description	Amount
320-0100	8 Portable Radio(s)	\$41,731
321-0100	Replace Exterior Door & Frame	\$4,500
321-0100	Replace Worn Stair Tread(s)	\$3,500
321-0100	Paint/Seal Sally Port	\$3,500
330-0000	Jet Scanner	\$5,120
330-0000	Geo Fence Software	\$3,700
331-0000	2 Replacement Patrol Vehicle(s)	\$66,010
331-0000	Carbine Replacement	\$2,800
331-0000	6 Breaching Tool Kit(s)	\$1,200
331-0000	21 Handgun Mounted Lights	\$4,725
331-0000	7 Body Camera(s)	\$7,600
331-0100	Locker Room Renovation	\$45,691
331-0200	HVAC Integration	\$44,252

4. Communications (271)

Chief Kasten presented an organizational chart outlining the positions and relationships within the Emergency Communications Center. Chief Kasten was able to identify 90% of this budget as wages. Chief Kasten also presented a list of projects which he is requesting funding for this year.

Acct.	Description	Amount
315-0100	Customer Service Training	\$1,840
318-0100	Flooring Cleaning & Repair	\$600
331-0100	Computer Replacement	\$3,500
331-0100	Build-Out of 3 rd 911 Console	\$3,000
330-0000	Refrigerator with Filtered Water	\$998

When questioned about the need for a 3rd 911 console, Chief Kasten pointed out that there

are times when multiple calls come in at once and only having 2 consoles causes' calls to be rerouted to other 911 centers that may not be local to incidents.

V. **Future Selectboard Meeting/Workshop Date(s):**

Selectboard Chair, Richard Grassi stated the plan was to continue to review the budget and wait to make a motion at the end of the review process allowing the Town Manager time to make his recommendations. Please forward questions to Town Manager, Leo Pullar in advance so that he can share these with department heads so that they can be addressed during the budget workshop meetings. Selectboard Chair Grassi said it is the bottom line that concerns the voters after the Selectboard discussed ways to make recommendations for reviewing lines in broader questions.

Selectboard member Brown noted that he was impressed that the budget was for worst case scenario.

On Tuesday, December 13, 2016 the Selectboard will review the Town Clerk, Selectboard s and Commissions, Administration and Legal lines in the budget.

Selectboard members Morris, ^{Brown} ~~Dennis~~, and Grassi would like to visit the highway department prior to that department's presentation on December 22, 2016.

The Selectboard added Tuesday, December 27, 2016 as a "Snow Day".

VI. **Adjournment (Mot. Req.)**

Selectboard member, Mike Morris made a motion to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 10:25pm. Selectboard member Dennis seconded the motion. 4 Selectboard members voted in favor, 0 Selectboard members were opposed, 0 Selectboard members abstained. The motion passed.

Sandra Mariotti
Sandra Mariotti, Selectboard Clerk

Needs to be approved.