

**TOWN OF ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**ADAMS TOWN HALL BUILDING, 1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP MINUTES 03/22/2018**

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**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Duval at 6:00 p.m. Members Blanchard, and Nowak were present as well Interim Town Administrator Cesan, and Town Accountant Beverly. Member Hoyt arrived at 6:24 p.m.

**FY2019 Budget Review:**

**Board of Health:** It was noted that trash removal budget line had gone down and the conference and meals line had been reduced. The nursing fee is high but the Board of Health has higher needs for trash removal. Legal services increased to reflect the real need within the department. Resolution is often needed in housing court and special counsel is sometimes required. Shifted line items were explained and show no real impact to the budget. Nursing fees were reduced to pay for the electronic database for infectious diseases and to contract out nursing to report it, as the Town does not see patients. An inquiry was made about the Board of Health education line reduction and it was noted that the Code Enforcement Officer is up to date on education. Actual expenditures were reviewed and the difference was notably caused by recent cases of hoarding. Items need to be hauled away, and some items may not be able to be disposed of at the compactor.

**Building Inspector:** A large increase on health insurance was noted as being individual plans instead of family plans. Workers compensation showed a significant increase. Operating expense changes were explained in regards to legal services and engineering/consulting funds to represent the money going to the appropriate budget lines. There will be no increase to the overall department budget. Funds were shown to be shifting between the Board of Health and the Building Inspector budgets. An increase in legal funds was in the event that Town Counsel was unavailable or had a conflict due to the nature of his work, which allows for outside counsel. Environmental considerations may be out of the Town Counsel expertise, and timely responses are needed for Zoning and Planning Board cases. Town by-laws for rental properties were briefly discussed and the inspection requirements. Budget numbers were discussed and a math error was noted. A summer intern could be able to create a database of rental properties from the Assessor database. It may be possible to get a grant to hire another building official to take care of these required inspections.

**Plumbing/Gas Inspector:** A requested budget amount of \$500 from the last budget of \$0 was noted. It was explained that the previous budget eliminated necessary funds for reference materials and to attend training. Norman Rolnick is both Plumbing and Gas Inspector.

**Wiring Inspector:** Similar to the Plumbing and Gas Inspector request, the amount proposed for the budget was eliminated last year and has been put back into the budget for this next fiscal year.

**Conservation Commission:** The Conservation Commission budget has been reduced slightly and it was noted the amount is for education, travel, meals and conferences for new members. If an important need surfaced there is an employee fund that could take care of education.

**Planning Board:** There was a slight reduction in the Planning Board budget. No other discussion took place on this budget.

*At 6:24 p.m. Member Hoyt entered the meeting.*

**Zoning Board:** The Zoning Board budget has decreased in advertising funds. No other discussion took place on this budget.



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**Weights & Measures:** This budget is for gas stations, and requirements for weight measuring devices. The Town has a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In comparison, if the Town had to purchase all new weights this is less expensive. This fee has not gone up in ten years.

**Historic Commission:** It was noted that this small budget went down \$75 since the original 2018 budget request. A one-time fund in the past was requested for restoration of documents.

**Agricultural Commission:** The Agricultural Commission budget proposal is decreased from the previous year. It was noted that an active Agricultural Commission opens the door for grants. Finding members willing to serve was noted as being an ongoing problem, and there is not a designated staff person for support. Agricultural Commission Member, Wayne Piaggi, requested the Board of Selectmen to look into reducing the Commission from five members to three members to be able to have a quorum. Building Commissioner Don Torrico consults with him when there are situations in town.

**Library:** The Board of Selectmen reviewed a staffing chart with proposed changes. The Children's Librarian position would return to full time and increase by one grade. The position's responsibilities were reviewed and the grade change request was outlined. It was noted that upgrades were requested in 2008 and it was hoped that the changes would go forward at this point. Education requirements for the Library positions were reviewed. Library hours and State accreditation requirements were reviewed. Past budget cuts and their impact were explained and it was noted that programming is provided by state aid. The loss of this aid and its impacts were summarized. A staff retirement and budget cuts made by the former Town Administrator were noted. It was noted that the positions will come before the Personnel Sub-Committee and the Board of Selectmen, as well as being negotiated with the union before instituting them. The library is able to offer databases that are suitable sources for student papers. An increase in usage was noted in teen and young adult computer statistics and there is free WiFi on premises. State aid is expected to be \$13,000. It was noted that the overtime budget showed a reduction. The heating system is running well and one Board of Trustees member is Master Plumber that checks on it. The Library installed a heat loss monitor to notify if building heat goes below 55 degrees. Smoke damage was paid for by the insurance company, and it did increase the cost of insurance a small amount.

**Police:** It was noted that the police cruiser is now part of the budget because a cruiser was needed each year and it is part of the tax rate. The proposed change of a Sergeant to be promoted to Lieutenant was touched on and it will be reviewed by the Personnel Sub-Committee. The duties of the Lieutenant being more administrative and less supervisory were briefly discussed. There are two retirements expected by July 1<sup>st</sup> and staff will be down five people by June 1<sup>st</sup> due to vacations. This position will help save forty hours per week, especially while officers are attending the academy. Board Members discussed the length of time the Police Department has been without this position and the strategy behind its proposal for reinstatement. The value of senior expertise to help the department and Chief was explained. Board Members noted that the officers expressed there is a need for help with day to day operations and grants. Past practices of being creative to cover shifts over the summer months were reviewed and this proposal would eliminate some overtime. A past suggestion to have officers come in from other communities as seasonal staff to fill empty shifts and provide desk coverage was given. The workload and allowable responsibilities of Reserve Officers were outlined. The past promise made by the former Town Administrator for five Reserve Officers was not fulfilled. Union requirements for staffing were briefly reviewed and the current Police staff was lauded for their flexibility to work as a team. Staffing structure and the Temporary budget line were explained. It was noted that there are only two non-union employees, and Reserve Officers. A Temporary Lieutenant would be taken out of the union.

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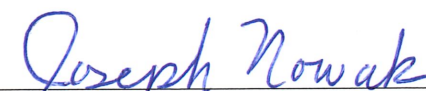
**Police Station:** There was no change from the 2018 original budget. The regionalization of dispatch services was discussed at length. Issues are being resolved, and it was noted there is a push from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to regionalize and have one dispatch center for the whole county. Challenges with the IMC software were outlined, and it was explained that it is a single user program, not designed for multi-agency usage. Radio communication and multiple agency collaboration on emergency situations were discussed. It is not possible to reverse the process at this point if the situation did not work any longer. There was brief discussion about the number of prisoners, their needs and care causing a financial impact to the Police Department. It was noted that clothing is a required cost as the Police Department at times needs to confiscate clothing for evidence and the prisoner needs proper clothing and supplies for personal hygiene before court.

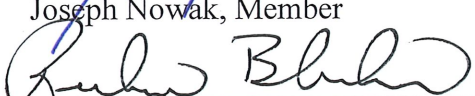
**Animal Control Officers:** It was noted that the budget has been reduced due to the semi-retirement of Dan Lefebvre from one of the Animal Control Officer positions. A newly hired person would begin at a lower rate. A suggestion for an agreement to be made with North Adams for a shared animal pound was made, and it was pointed out that North Adams has been using the Adams kennel for two years while building a new facility by McCann Technical School. The shared agreement for heat and services between the two towns were reviewed. The only issue was noted as being caused by a mouse that made a nest in the heater, causing damage. A water heater will be needed in the future.

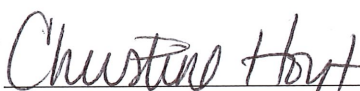
**Community Development:** It was noted that the Community Development budget is pretty much level funded. The importance of the Community Development Department was noted.

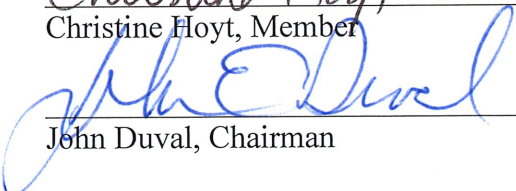
**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Hoyt, Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary

  
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Joseph Nowak, Member

  
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Richard Blanchard, Vice Chairman

  
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Christine Hoyt, Member

  
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John Duval, Chairman