

## ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE (EBC) MINUTES (approved 31Jan)

Thursday, January 17, 2013  
DPW BUILDING 6:00PM

**Members Present:** Annabelle Bamforth, Fred Cummings, Sam Eaton (Vice Chair), Shirley Green, Gayle Hulva, Gail Malz, Paul Mirski, Doug Pettibone (Chair), Lori Saladino, Janet Shepard

**Others Present:** Steve Schneider (Town Manager), Bob Cavalieri, Alisa Bonnette

The meeting opened at 6:02 PM.

### **Administrative:**

A motion to approve the draft December 20, 2012 minutes was made by Gayle Hulva and seconded by Janet Shepard. The minutes were approved unanimously with 3 abstentions from members not attending that meeting.

### **New Business:**

#### **Mascoma Lake Boardwalk Proposal**

Bob Cavalieri was invited to discuss his proposal for the Town to construct a pedestrian scenic boardwalk on the west side of Mascoma Lake. He has obtained the necessary signatures for a petitioned warrant article to bring this proposal to Town Meeting in March for approval. The current proposed plan is to install on the side of Route 4A away from the lake a 2600 foot long boardwalk, 6 feet wide consisting of 160 - 16 foot sections of treated lumber raised on metal poles planted in the ground. The cost estimate of the sections delivered to the site is \$72,000. DPW was asked if it could do the installation but has indicated that it will not be able to spare the manpower, so an outside contractor will be hired. Installation costs are being obtained.

Although the committee in general was interested in the project, there were a number of issues raised that should be dealt with to make it a more complete proposal. 1) need construction plans by a civil engineer for the assurance of proper installation techniques (use of concrete footings?), 2) need an estimate of annual maintenance costs and who would do it, 3) the boardwalk plans need to be compatible with the American Disability Act and need plans/cost to make it handicap accessible and safe (railings?), 4) need the formal approval of LaSalette to end the walk at their property and to become part of the project including the plans for the crosswalk, 5) need the formal approval and permitting by the state, 6) exploration of, and applying for external grants from outside groups to defray costs.

There was also the recommendation of partnering with EVA, Lion's Club or Mascoma Lake Association so that the project would have the backing and support of a Town group. These groups could help and advise on many aspects of the project including funding. Cost is also a significant hurdle in these tough economic times when we are frequently putting off Town maintenance and other projects. Getting a grant to offset the cost would be a big plus. It was also asked how much use it is expected to get by Enfield residents and Mr. Cavalieri thought there would be a lot based on the response he has gotten so far with the warrant petition. The committee thanked Mr. Cavalieri for his vision, time and initiative in working on this project so far, and look forward to further discussions about it.

#### **Updated 2013 Draft Spending Plan**

Doug Pettibone presented a handout summarizing the appropriation goal for the General Fund based on discussions throughout the budget season. The target municipal tax rate for 2013 has been to allow for an 'up to a' 2% increase over 2012 which is within our historical average of recent years. This range would represent a rate of up to \$6.14/\$1000 property valuation (2012: \$6.02/\$1000) which would raise \$3.37 million in property taxes based on a projected 2013 Town property valuation of \$549 million. Added to a projected 2013 non-property tax revenue of \$2.2 million, a total appropriation for the General Fund of \$5.49 million would be supported. It was noted that the funding of the CIP reserve fund is a little less than one-half (0.8%) of the target rate increase, so the non-capital, operating portion of the General Fund rate increase would be 1.2%.

Steve Schneider provided of list of changes in the spending plan last reviewed with the EBC on December 20, and is recommending these changes to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the EBC. These changes result in a total a reduction of \$281,466 in the draft spending requests across all departments and should meet our targeted General Fund budget:

Cost Center	Old	New	Difference
4130-Exec. Office	\$194,847	\$192,797	\$2,050
4131-Technology	\$15,700	\$26,700	(\$11,000)
4140-Elec/Reg.	\$75,463	\$74,813	\$650
4150-Fin. Admin.	\$209,767	\$204,867	\$4,900
4152-Reval.	\$40,500	\$30,000	\$10,500
4153- Legal	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$2,000
4155- Personnel Admin.	\$1,121,964	\$859,648	\$262,316
4194-Gen. Govt. Bldg.	\$185,750	\$183,750	\$2,000
4195-Cemeteries.	\$3,000	\$2,200	\$800
4196-Insurance	\$70,000	\$69,000	\$1,000
4210- Police	\$647,869	\$647,039	\$839
4215- Ambulance	\$112,400	\$105,400	\$7,000
4220- Fire	\$110,875	\$86,700	\$24,175
4299- Dispatch	\$66,300	\$65,000	\$1,300
4311- Hwy. Admin.	\$552,543	\$550,543	\$2,000
4312-Streets	\$543,700	\$552,700	(\$9,000)
4316- Street Lighting	\$18,000	\$17,000	\$1,000
4323- Solid Waste Col.	\$190,500	\$188,650	\$1,850
4441-Human Admin.	\$16,116	\$15,666	\$450
4442-Human Direct	\$21,350	\$17,350	\$4,000
4520- Parks/Rec.	\$56,588	\$44,450	\$12,138
4550- Library	\$164,348	\$153,850	\$10,498
4902- Capital Outlay	\$22,000	\$72,000	(\$50,000)
	Total:		\$281,466

The values in parentheses represent cost centers with increases. All others are reductions. The Technology line (4131) requires upgrades in the servers for the Police Department and Town Administration that had been considered a possibility but now is a certain need. DPW requires more funds to repair the boat launch (4312 Streets) that has recently come to their attention. The Capital Outlay increase of \$50,000 was expected and represents payments for the rolling stock leases started in 2012 as part of the CIP 15-year plan.

Most of the items across departments facing reductions in requests are smaller trimming of the requests to amounts that should still allow for efficient functioning of their core activities. Our largest cost center, Personnel Administration 4155, represents mostly employee benefits. This cost center had the largest reduction due to more accurate assessment of true needs now that the end-of-year spending actuals are available for 2012. The budgeted figure of \$859,648 includes a 9% rise in health care insurance premiums. 2013 is the last year of the contract with the current insurance administrator, LGC, and so the Town will go out to bid this year for new premium quotes for 2014. Reductions in Parks (4520) and Library (4550) requests were mostly due to salaries, again reflecting a more accurate projection of staffing needs in 2013. There are no plans to change the number of full or part-time positions for 2013. The reduction in the Fire (4220) request was mostly due to transfer of the cost for the new replacement thermal imager from the operation budget to the department's capital reserve fund.

A wide-ranging discussion of the Fire Department took place. Fred Cummings raised the topic of the three Fire Ward salaries who, as elected officials, each receive payments of \$363 annually to run the department. Discussion ensued recalling the presentation of the Fire Department's 2013 proposed budget by Chief Crate to the EBC on December 8, 2012 where the issue of appropriateness of the salaries was first raised. The EBC had not received the department's draft plan until the moment of the presentation and so was unable to review the plan's details in advance of the meeting as is customary with the other Town departments. This last minute situation did not allow

for as informed an analysis of the individual requests by the Fire Department that the EBC was comfortable with. Accordingly, several questions remained on the department's budget and the Chief was asked at the meeting and by follow-up email to provide to the EBC answers to these questions. To date, the Chief has not responded to the EBC on these questions. In addition, the EBC learned at the Dec 8 meeting that the Fire Wards conduct no regular business meetings on the department with advanced public notice and documentation by recorded minutes. Their meetings consist of informal discussions of 2 or more Fire Wards. The EBC became increasingly concerned about the apparent lack of transparency and accountability of the Fire Wards to the Town, and exactly what functions are performed to justify the salaries.

It was moved by Sam Eaton to eliminate the salaries of the Fire Wards and the motion was seconded by Paul Mirski. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention. Mirski further asked Steve Schneider to consult with Town Counsel whether the Town may have any liability as regards to the NH 'Right-to-Know' law pertaining to the lack of documentation of meetings and undocumented decisions made by the Fire Wards. Mirski also asked that the BOS, in the interests of fiduciary responsibility, look into the accountability of the Fire Wards as well as the suitability of the Fire Ward system for Enfield.

**Updated Warrant Articles:** Updated monied warrant articles were not available for discussion this week. They will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Old Business:** None

**Public Comment:** None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 PM. The next meeting is Thursday, Jan 24 @ 6:00PM (DPW Bldg) where the final budget will be distributed with the changes for one final review and the monied warrant articles will also be discussed. The Public Hearing for the proposed 2013 municipal budget will take place on Wed. Feb 6.