

ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE (EBC) MINUTES

Thursday, October 25, 2012
DPW BUILDING 6:00PM

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

Excused: Fred Cummings

Others Present: Steve Schneider (Town Manager)

The meeting opened at 6:05PM

Administrative:

A motion to approve the October 3, 2012 minutes was made by Janet Shepard and seconded by Gayle Hulva. There were amendments to correct the spelling of names and to clarify requests to add new personnel in the coming year. The minutes were approved as amended.

New Business:

Projected 2012 Town Revenue: Steve Schneider discussed the projected non-property tax revenue for this year and pointed out that final amounts for the various sources will not be available until January. We can expect a reduction in the amount that the Town receives for the highway block grant. Our revenue from the NH rooms and meals taxes should be the similar to recent years. The motor vehicles registrations have been trending higher so far this year with an increase of 7% to date. Property tax revenue is 96% collected so far this year. Overall, Town revenues for 2012 are expected to be on track with projections.

The Town has a couple of pieces of property they have been reluctant to put on the market because of the poor real estate market. When the Town obtains a piece of property for back taxes it can sell it to recover that money. If it sells it within three years it can keep the amount of taxes owed plus an additional 10%. If it sells it after that time, the Town can keep the whole amount of the selling price. There are different factors to be considered when deciding to place the property for sale. For instance, if the property is unoccupied, there would be incentive to sell earlier than later to avoid maintenance costs.

A handout was given listing the amounts in the various capital reserve funds and the general trust funds. After the beginning of the year the Town will determine whether anything from these funds will be spent. Some of the trust funds are well over 100 years old and have balances that may never be utilized for the specific reason that the fund was established. A mechanism is being explored whereby some of the funds may be used for a general Town purpose as long as the original intention the trust is honored.

Property valuation for the whole town has gone up about four million dollars (about 1%) in the last year. \$1,000,000 in valuation equates to approximately \$17,000 in tax revenue for the Town. The Route 4 water and sewer project will likely enhance the valuation of the T.I.F. district. T.I.F. district revenue is being used to pay the debt service for the bonding of the Route 4 project.

The school district will likely propose again a renovation project for the high school next year. We have already seen the impact of the new county jail in tax bills from last June.

The tax rate for the Town has not been officially set yet by the State which will happen soon. The goal is to keep the Town tax rate as projected at the March 2012 Town Meeting (\$6.05/\$1000 property valuation).

Review of the Draft FY2013 Spending Plan:

Steve Schneider presented an initial draft general fund budget for 2013. This budget includes a proposed 2% merit increase for employees. Raises for individual employees would range from 0% - 2%. Projected costs for employee healthcare insurance overall should remain fairly stable over last year. The insurance provider (NH Local Government Center) has lost a lawsuit to the State because of over-retention of funds from municipal contributions. The LGC is appealing part of that ruling but is currently refunding the Town 6% from last year which will offset some of the expected increase in health insurance premiums for 2013. More money from the LGC may follow depending how the appeal comes out.

There are lawsuits concerning the reductions in the state contributions to towns' employee retirement funds that have occurred over the past few years. The 2013 budget reflects the highest amount for the Town's responsibility to the employee retirement fund in the face of the reductions in state contributions.

There is less funding for elections built into the 2013 budget since there will

be no primary election next year. We will be investigating a tax for utility poles so they will need to be valued. Funding for revaluation has been increased accordingly. There are no numbers yet from the Regional Associations regarding requests for funding. We will discuss these requests at our December 13th meeting after the RA subcommittee meets for their recommendations.

The Board of Selectmen may go to Town Meeting with another proposal for a full-time ambulance squad. F.A.S.T. members are now paid for on-call hours to cover the evening, night and weekend calls. As a result, participation to cover these hours by our members has improved. It is anticipated that the cost for paid on-call time will be offset by the revenue from the soft-billing for ambulance service that has recently been initiated. There was an inquiry whether there has been an improvement in response time but that information is not available.

No changes in personnel staffing for DPW are anticipated and only minor equipment requests have been made so far.

Discussions have taken place with Northeast Waste services and 6 options for changes in services have been presented to the Board of Selectmen having varying potential effects on the budget. More information is being requested comparing surrounding communities and the amount they spend per capita for trash removal and recycling.

The capital plan for 2013 is being developed by the CIP committee. There are a number of infrastructure projects being discussed but no major new pieces of equipment have been requested for 2013. However, one police cruiser is scheduled to be replaced.

Public Comment: None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm. The next meeting is on November 8, 2012 (6:00 PM at the DPW building)