

## **ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE (EBC) MINUTES (Approved)**

**Thursday, November 8, 2012  
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)

The meeting opened at 6:03PM

### **Administrative:**

A motion to approve the October 25, 2012 minutes was made by Gayle Hulva and seconded by Janet Shepard. The minutes were approved as written.

### **New Business:**

It was noted that the draft budget handed out at the last meeting is incomplete and awaiting input from the Fire Department and the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Committee. The CIP committee is working on its plan and is scheduled to present its recommendation to the EBC on December 13.

**2012 Tax Rate:** Steve Schneider reviewed the tax rate that was set this week by the State. With a total Town Appropriation of a little more than \$11 million and a town valuation of about \$546 million, the overall tax rate (including town, county and schools) is \$20.3/\$1000 valuation which is a decrease of about 30 cents from last year. Most of this decrease is accounted for by the school rate. The tax rate for the Town is \$6.03/\$1000 which is 2 cents lower than projected at Town Meeting last March. The Town's undesignated fund rose about \$80,000 to \$970,000.

### **Departmental Spending Plans Reviews**

Steve Schneider reviewed in detail the various budget requests for the committee.

4130 Executive Office (2012 Budgeted, \$189,128; 2013 Request, \$194,847, up 3.0%). The bulk of the increase over last year is due to a requested (up to

a) 2% merit increase for employees, and longevity payments to employees of 10 years and longer.

4131 Technology (2012 Budgeted, \$13,200; 2013 Request, \$15,700 up 1.9%). The increase is largely due to computer hardware needs for several departments. It was noted that a replacement server for Whitney Hall may be needed if the current one fails in the next year. The \$9000 cost for this replacement has not yet appeared in the draft budget.

4140 Election and Registration (2012 Budgeted, \$77,553; 2013 Request, \$75,463, down 2.7%). Most of the reduction is due to reduced cost to run elections because there will not be a primary next year. These reductions more than offset an increase to carry the Deputy Town Clerk's position that went full-time from part-time this past year.

4150 Financial Administration (2012 Budgeted, \$196,392; 2013 Request, \$209,767, up 6.8%). The increase in this request is largely due to salary increases, tax mapping costs, postage and a required software update. A new part-time position (10 hrs/week) is planned to help out with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. This position is anticipated to last about 18 months.

4152 Revaluation (2012 Budgeted, \$30,000; 2013 Request, \$40,500, up 35%). The requested increase is made to support contracted services of an assessor to determine the property value of the utility poles sited within the Town. The valuation of these poles is on the order of \$3 million. The added cost for the assessment will be quickly paid for from tax revenues (about \$18,000/year) generated. It is noted that FairPoint is suing towns who are trying to institute these taxes. The new valuation will not be conducted until the outcome of the lawsuit is known.

4153 Legal (2012 Budgeted, \$8,000; 2013 Request, \$10,000, up 25%). It is anticipated that more legal advice may be needed in 2013 for zoning cases and funding options for capital expenditures (e.g., lease agreements). However, with further information on 2012's experience as the year comes to a close, the requested amount may be reduced.

4155 Personnel Administration (2012 Budgeted, \$890,010; 2013 Request, \$1,065,964, up 20%). This department deals with employee benefits. Virtually all areas are seeing projected increases including health insurance, FICA and medicare payments, retirement payments (the Town is now contributing 100% to the retirement fund with no longer any State contributions), workers compensation. Most of this increase (\$155,000) is due to rising costs of health insurance and worker's comp. The increase in health insurance

premium is 7% over last year. These increases will certainly be reduced because our health insurance provider (NH Local Government Center) will be providing the Town with about \$45000 in premium rebates as a result of losing a lawsuit to the State for over-retention of premium contributions by the towns. In addition, these overall numbers will likely be further reduced as the 2012 cost data is clarified at the end of the year.

4191 Planning (2012 Budgeted, \$41789; 2013 Request, \$27,890, down 33%). The requested amount for 2013 is tentative and in the end will likely be similar to the 2012 budgeted amount when it is clarified whether the Town will reinstate a full-time town planner position, replacing contracted services. It is anticipated that the Route 4 improvement project will generate additional development and therefore planning work that would justify a full-time position.

4192 Zoning (2012 Budgeted, \$1700; 2013 Request, \$2100, up 23%). General cost of doing business is higher for this unit.

4195 Cemeteries (2012 Budgeted, \$2500; 2013 Request, \$6750, up 250%). The cemetery trustees are requesting additional funds to remove a tree (cost, \$3750) from the Shaker Cemetery. They are being encouraged by the Town to use existing trust funds for this project instead of tax dollars.

4196 Insurance (2012 Budgeted, \$69,000; 2013 Request, \$70,000, up 1.4%). The increased request is due to increases in premiums.

4441 Human Services Administration (2012 Budgeted, \$24,770; 2013 Request, \$16,116, down 35%). The reduction is due to reduced salary costs for the director, due to her reducing hours in this position and taking a part-time position in DPW. The reduction in these costs will be offset by the increased salary costs in DPW, resulting from this shared full-time position.

4442 Human Services Direct (2012 Budgeted, \$24,100; 2013 Request, \$21,350, down 11%). It is anticipated that there will be a reduced need for fuel assistance based on the experience of the last two years. There is also the Enfield Fuel Assistance fund which is funded by private donations (current balance about \$6000) that can pick up any shortfalls if needed.

Fred Cummings noted that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the EBC are in general agreement of keeping any increase in the tax rate for 2013 to within the recent historical average range (2%) but of course, any increases in spending will have to be justified as usual. He also noted that the BOS is considering a new approach to collecting garbage and recycling. They are

exploring a semi-monthly curbside pickup of both recycling (zero sort) and trash among other options. This approach could save the Town significant amounts of money. They are also continuing to explore the feasibility of a full-time ambulance squad now that soft-billing and paid on-call time for the service has been instituted.

**Old Business:** None

**Public Comment:** None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm. The next meeting is on Thursday, November 15, 2012 (6:00 PM at the DPW building). The following department's draft spending plans will be reviewed: 4500s: Parks, Library, etc; 4210: Police; 4600s: EVA, etc.