

ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE
November 10, 2011
DPW Building – 6:00 PM

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

Excused: Fred Cummings

Administration: Steve Schneider (Town Manager)

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

1. Approval of October 27, 2011 Draft Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Gayle Hulva, seconded by Shirley Green to approve the minutes from October 27, 2011. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

NEW BUSINESS:

2012 Budget Process

A handout was given concerning the 2012 Enfield Budget Process. There was a comparison between the 2011 final budget and the 2012 draft budget from the October 27, 2011 meeting. It included appropriations, expected revenue and adjustments and the expected amount needed to be raised from property taxes. The tax rate for 2011 has been set at \$5.95 per \$1000 property valuation and in order to achieve that rate for 2012 we must reduce the draft budget by \$250,000.

CIP Committee: Other items of consideration in the process will include information coming from the CIP whose goal is to plan for capital expenditures over the next 5 years in a way that will ultimately keep the tax rate from having large fluctuations year to year.

Cable Franchise Fee: The town receives revenue from a franchise fee from the cable company (Comcast) based on income they receive from their lines going through the Town's right of way. Traditionally, that money has gone into

the General Fund; however, Enfield's Channel 8 Board has requested to have access to some of this revenue to provide more enhanced services through the Town's local access Cable TV on Channel 8. The Board of Selectmen has agreed to split this revenue at 50%; therefore the anticipated revenue for the General Fund from those fees will be reduced by about \$20,000.

FastRoads Fiber Optic: FastRoads was the sub-recipient of a 70/30 grant to provide fiber high speed communication to Enfield and area communities including the homes surrounding Crystal Lake/Boys Camp Road. They would not be a service provider; however, they would provide the infrastructure for services that could be provided directly to the home.

Enfield Ambulance Billing: The issue of billing through insurance reimbursements for ambulance service is still being considered and researched by the Board of Selectmen. There are several points that have to be researched for cause and effect on the budget before a direction can be decided.

Detailed Review of Spending Requests:

4441 and 4442: Human Services (Amount Requested \$51,250): Diane Heed was present to answer questions concerning the portions of the Town budget she is involved with. There was quite a bit of discussion concerning the changes in welfare budgeting for not only the Town and State government but also for the regional associations that are experiencing lower donations and more requests for help. Two of the more costly line items in her budget request are for providing rent (\$15000) and heating fuel (\$5000) for those Enfield residents in need. The request for heating fuel is higher than last year primarily in anticipation of higher cost per gallon and more requests because of the economy. This line item is subsidized by the Enfield Fuel Assistance Program that relies on private donations.. There was a discussion about the need to reactivate the drive for private funding for fuel assistance.

4100s: Administration, Planning, Zoning and Cemeteries: Steve Schneider reviewed this spending category.

4130: Executive (Amount requested \$190,128): The slight increase over 2011 reflects the proposed 2% merit increase in employee salaries. The salary increase adds about \$40,000 total to the draft budget.

4155: Personnel Administration (Amount requested \$975,297): There is a projected 12% increase in employee health insurance premiums for the current insurance plan amounting to an increase of \$70,000 over 2011.

Employees contribute 5% to the cost of their coverage. The Town is looking at other coverage options that would provide similar benefits to employees without having as much of an impact on the tax rate. Another significant increase over 2011 (\$50,000) is budgeted to pay for the employee retirement plan that the State no longer supports. These two items account for about ½ of the total proposed budget increase for 2012.

4150: Financial Administration (Amount requested \$192,136): Tax mapping (\$4000) was discussed because it appears to have been under spent for 2010 and 2011. It was explained that the amount spent depends on the number of changes that are made to the maps during the year. It is a multi-layered system with various types of information included on them. These Town maps are generally not available to the public because of privacy considerations of individual property owners.

There were comments that had to deal with the line items of Repairs and Services (\$13,200) that appear under several different spending areas that are associated with copies being made for several different departments. There is an accounting for the cost of one copier being used by each department according to usage. This amount also includes any software upgrades that are needed.

4131: Technology (Amount requested \$13,200): An accounting change has taken place for a computer for the library to move it from the library budget into the technology budget which is reflected by an overall change of \$500 from the budgeted amount from 2011 from \$12,700 to \$13,200.

4140: Elections and Registrations (Amount requested \$77,853): This category is up about \$8000 for 2012 because there are additional elections (e.g., the Primary) and the Town is responsible for those costs.

4152: Revaluation (Amount requested \$40,200): This area has an increased budget to focus on a detailed assessment of utility-owned property within the Town limits. The theory is that one company owns the utility pole; however, there are several companies that use that pole and there is a value to the other companies using that access for income. With a better knowledge of the utilities' properties, the Town is in a better position to tax that value.

4153: Legal (Amount requested \$13,500): There is no change over 2011. The Town uses this legal service sparingly and takes advantage of free legal service whenever possible.

4191 Planning (Amount requested \$70,827): Enfield does not currently have a

full time planner and has used contracted services in some situations. The line item for dues (\$7200) was questioned and explained that most of this amount goes to the Regional Planning Commission which is used as a resource for several things including hazardous waste management and planning advice. This resource is a big benefit since we currently do not have a full time planner. The Town may fill the position in 2012.

4192: Zoning (Amount requested (\$1700): No change from 2011.

4194: Government Buildings (Amount requested \$155,850): This item will be discussed along with DPW at a future meeting.

4195: Cemeteries (Amount requested \$6150). The most notable jump is for tree removal (\$3900) from the Purmort and Shaker cemeteries. The Town has been told in the past that if the trees that overhang the Shaker cemetery are removed, the museum would accept maintenance responsibilities for that cemetery. This possible arrangement will be re-confirmed with the museum.

We are penciling in December 5, 2011 to attend the Board of Selectman's meeting. The CIP is scheduled to present their Capital Plan and the Budget Committee members are requested to attend. That meeting will take place at the DPW building at 6:00pm.

Our next meeting is November 17, 2011 at 6:00pm at the DPW Building. It will cover Police, Culture and Recreation (Parks, Library etc) and EVA.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

OTHER BUSINESS: None

ADJOURN: 7:50pm