

ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2011
DPW Building 8:30AM

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

Others: Steve Schneider (Town Manager), David Crate (Fire Chief), Jim Taylor (DPW Manager), Richard Martin (Ambulance), Bob Cusick (CIP)

Excused: Gayle Hulva

Meeting was called to order at 8:35

Administrative:

A motion to approve the draft of the November 17th minutes was made by Shirley Green and seconded by Lori Saladino. Janet Shepard mentioned that she was excused from that meeting and not present. That is to be corrected and the motion to approve was unanimous.

New Business:

4220: Fire Department (requested amount adjusted to \$118,290 from original Oct. 28 request, \$114,490) Chief Crate explained the current request for their budget. It has changed some from the original request for several reasons:

Line 630 for Repairs and Service was increased from \$2500 to \$5500 for hose, ladder, and pump testing that is required for ISO(Insurance Services Organization) rating.

Line 636 for Diesel Fuel had an increase of \$800 from \$1400 to \$2200. They have overspent last years' budget because of rising fuel costs.

Line 740 for New Equipment was explained (Unchanged request of \$45,000). \$40,000 of this was to purchase (2) personnel transports; however, the CIP has approved \$20,000 for one of these vehicles (used) and the amount would be considered under that plan. \$5000 is for miscellaneous hoses to be available if needed.

There is also a request for \$3800 to add four telescopic floodlights to the portable generator. It was identified from a recent situation that it would be beneficial as a way of providing lighting when needed in an emergency.

Line 560 for dues to belong to the Northwestern Regional HAZMAT organization. As a member, Enfield may be able to borrow equipment from other member towns instead of purchasing. There is a big increase this year (from \$500 to \$3000). The dues were reduced a few years ago when the economy began to suffer and they are looking to recover some of that this year.

Line 114 (Training \$500) Doug mentioned that during the analysis of Enfield's ISO rating by the CIP Committee, this one line item has the potential to impact the Town's rating with the least amount of money spent; therefore, it may be an area in the budget not to be reduced.

4215 Ambulance (requested amount, \$137,685): There was a lengthy discussion since the selectmen have agreed to move forward on soft billing for ambulance service. It is currently anticipated that there will be a cutover date of April 1, 2012 to the new system. It is projected that this will provide revenue to the town between \$120,000 and \$140,000 per year. The selectmen did not want to move forward with this plan unless it increased the quality of service to Enfield. Selectmen are considering quality of care, timeliness of care and revenue third on that list. There is an increase in personnel (line 110) to \$71,785 to cover (2) fulltime employees for nine months of 2012. The cost of benefits (~ \$35,000/year/employee) will appear in another section of the budget. They plan to cover with (1) paramedic and (1) intermediate level responder during the day shift. An additional amount would also be requested to pay staff On Call during nights and weekends. Currently they are paid to go on a call but not paid to be 'On Call'. Paying Enfield personnel to be On Call is anticipated to be important in improving service responses at night and on weekends. Steve met with the ambulance personnel for about 45 minutes earlier this week. Overall he felt the plan was supported by the FAST squad.

Currently, they have left line 830, mutual aid from Lebanon (\$45,000) in the budget during the transition; however, that amount should decrease as the plan moves forward takes over 24/7. Lebanon currently covers Monday through Friday from 6:00am to 6:00pm.

It was brought to our attention that several of the other line items (supplies) are likely to increase since there will be more coverage by Enfield.

There is a theory that the cost will be offset by the revenue from soft billing; however, there is concern that this project could ultimately be a money pit if projected revenues come up short. Will the money really be there this year? It was suggested that the billing should have been started years ago to set

this up, as it takes about 12 months for a town switching over to billing to understand the true level of money that will come in.

The Town doesn't have to vote for this plan to happen: it is up to the Board of Selectmen. They do not envision this will ever be anything beyond soft billing (i.e., hard billing). There have been talks with some contractors (ComStar and Certified Ambulance Group) to provide the billing service. Soft billing means that individuals using the ambulance service will be billed, but uninsured individuals or those who cannot otherwise afford to pay would not be required to pay, as opposed to hard billing.

The Budget Committee did request that Steve Schneider make a full presentation at the next Committee meeting detailing the costs and projected revenue for this proposal that would include a 24/7 fully staffed department as well as outlining how it is thought that service will be improved under the proposed plan.

Department of Public Works: Jim Taylor from the DPW presented the budget for several different accounts.

4331 and 4326: Water/Sewer Departments (requested amounts combined, \$613,193). Funding is largely the same as last year except there is some additional money requested to address aging infrastructure. Within their budget there is \$20,000 to be placed in capital reserve as it was for the last two years. There is a two and a half mile section of water main that is being served by 100-year old pipe that is being evaluated. The billing of water and sewer customers offsets the appropriations for these two departments.

4316: Street Lighting (requested amount \$20,000) was decreased by \$4000 to reflect the new LED lights that were installed during the spring. The energy committee received grant money to purchase the lights.

4311 Highway Administration (Requested amount \$540,786): This request is level funded except for about \$12000 for salary increases. The department has 13 fulltime and two part time employees. The part time salary amount is for a retiree that still works a couple of days a week training his replacement. This will eventually be phased out completely. The employees' time is split between highway and water/sewer. There is a total of 2.8% increase for salaries: 2% for merit increases and 0.8% for longevity increases. Line 345, weather forecasting, pays for a more advanced kind of radar that is used to predict when to get people out plowing the roads and when to apply product. DPW looks closely at Lockehaven, Choate or Ibey and George Hill Roads during the storms. This gives a good indication of what is going on for the

rest of the roads in town.

4312 Highways and Streets (Requested amount \$509,200). There is an increase for fuel and they are spending a lot of money to repair some aging vehicles that are beyond their useful life; however, they need to make it through this winter. Savings from the repair of the small tractor that was replaced last year should be reflected in next year's budget. There is a capital request to replace (2) 2003 Ford 550's. It is anticipated that they will try to upgrade to a sturdier truck such as an International that should last longer. They are approximately \$150,000 each. This capital request is included in the CIP plan (see below). Line 310 (Survey and Engineering) may change if the plan to move forward on the reconstruction of Jones Hill Road happens. That engineering cost (\$20,000) will either appear here or in the CIP plan. There are also still costs associated with Irene being evaluated and some may eventually be reimbursed by FEMA.

4321 Sanitation Administration (Amount requested \$81,941) This request is level funded over 2011 except for the proposed 2% merit increase in salaries.

4323 and 4324 Solid Waste Collection and Disposal (Amount requested \$502,441) Line 490 MSW contracts will not go down for this budget but may want to look at some other options to save disposal costs next year. Jim Taylor lives in Plainfield where they have zero-sort recycling and it works out pretty well. The effect of zero-sort recycling decreases tipping fees since there will be less going to the landfill.

4194 General Government Buildings(Amount requested \$155,850) This is also largely level funded with the exception of an increase for heating oil and propane, and increases in maintenance/repairs for the Community Building and Whitney Hall. The Community Building is in use almost every day.

Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Committee: Bob Cusick gave an explanation of the long term (15 year) capital plan for Enfield that the CIP has come up with to deal with infrastructure and equipment needs as well as a financing plan that will smooth out large fluctuations in the Town tax rate year-to-year. He also explained the process the committee used to come up with the plan. They believe a replacement schedule needs to be looked at over a 15 year span: they do not believe that a six year plan gives you the whole picture. Their plan includes all the vehicles for the DPW, Fire, the salt shed construction and Jones Hill Road. The CIP wants to establish the plan in 2012, then build it into the budget the following years. The long term plan will be reviewed every year and adjusted as needed. The CIP plan will be presented to public at a public hearing before Town Meeting.

Old Business: None

Public Comment: None

Meeting adjourned 11:53.

Next meeting December 15, 2011 6:00pm at the DPW.