

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

**Thursday, January 9, 2014  
DPW BUILDING 6:00PM**

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

**Others Present:** Steve Schneider (Town Manager)

**Excused:** Lori Saladino

The meeting opened at 6:08 PM.

### **Administrative:**

A motion to approve the draft December 19, 2013 minutes was made by Gayle Hulva and seconded by Shirley Green. The minutes were approved with a few minor corrections.

### **New Business:**

#### **Discussion of 2013 Revenues and Projected 2014 Revenues**

Steve Schneider distributed a spreadsheet listing the Town non-property tax revenues for 2013 and the projections for 2014. The 2013 revenue numbers are probably 95-98% complete but may be adjusted if additional revenue from last year is settled. The 2013 actual revenue number is about \$2.72M which includes about \$273K for water and sewer (offset equally by costs), various capital fund transfers and LT loans received. Some of the key revenue figures are (2014 projections): Interest/Penalties Delinquent Taxes, \$106K (\$120K); Motor Vehicle Registrations, \$793K (\$805K); Building Permits, \$13K (\$14K); Franchise Fees Collected (Comcast), \$51K (\$38K); Rooms and Meals Tax from NH, \$205K (\$205K); Highway Block Grant from NH, \$122K (\$120K); Ambulance Reimbursement, \$33K (\$35K); Recycling Revenue, \$17K (\$7.5K); Recreation Fees Collected, \$16K (\$17.5K); Sale/Lease of Municipal Property, \$7.2K (\$30K); Insurance Dividends/Reimbursements, \$68K (\$45K); Transfers from Capital Reserve Funds, \$163K (\$137K).

Of note, the steady trend of higher revenues from Motor Vehicle Registrations and Building Permit Fees over the past few years is considered to be an indicator of improving household incomes as people buy new cars and make home improvements. These revenues, however, still have not quite matched the high water mark before the recession 7 years ago. Half of the Comcast Franchise Fee collected goes to the support Channel 8 programming. Revenue from the state in 2014 will be roughly the same as 2013, but the Town has been shouldering more and more of the burden as the state shifts costs to the Town (loss of Shared Revenue Grant, loss of State contribution to employee retirement plan). The ambulance revenue from reimbursed insurance claims stands at about 60% of the total possible. This is a 'soft' billing form of collection and 60% may be the level that can be expected in the future. The reimbursements, however, are more than enough to cover the cost for the new policy of 'On-Call' payments to F.A.S.T. squad members. The drop in the projected revenue for 2014 from recycling is due to a reduction in recycled materials being dropped off at the transfer station after the new curbside pickup program was started. It is expected that 2 parcels of undeveloped land totaling about 7 acres will be sold in 2014 and bring in at least \$30,000. The \$45K medical insurance premium reimbursement in 2014 from the LGC will be the last one to the Town. Overall, there will be no major improvement in Town revenue in 2014 over 2013.

#### **Discussion of Selected Line Items in 2014 Draft Spending Plan:**

**Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee Recommendations:** At the last EBC meeting on Dec 19, the CIP committee presented its recommendations for capital projects to be funded in 2014. All projects relate to the purchase of vehicles through leasing programs. Two DPW 1-ton pickup trucks (1997 and 1999 F-350s) that are also used as lightweight snow plows are recommended for replacement. In addition, a 2009 Sterling 6-wheel dump

truck/plow is also recommended for replacement. Despite being relatively new, it has been realized that unfortunately it is significantly undersized for the plowing it is being tasked with. Last year, this truck cost the Town \$13K in repairs, notably a back-end replacement that took it out of use for 3 weeks during the snow season. It is recommended that a heavier duty International 6-wheeler be leased/purchased (~\$175K); part of that cost will be offset upon resale of the Sterling. This request was initially made last year by DPW but was postponed to 2014. One new police cruiser will be leased as per the replacement schedule. Two future infrastructure projects that the CIP is currently supporting are improvements in the boat launch and parking lot, and replacement of the culverts under Lovejoy Brook Road. These projects will be undertaken in 2015 at the earliest and the only funding requested for 2014 is \$10K for engineering study for the boat launch parking lot.

Enfield Village Association (EVA): EVA has asked for a \$3K increase in funding from the Town to \$12K for 2014 to help fund approximately half the salary for the hiring of an office clerk. The new clerk's position would take over some of the more routine activities that would free up the business administrator for other activities. It was discussed that EVA is involved with 3 areas of activity: enhancement of Enfield's quality of life, rehabilitation of the downtown area, and business development. It was noted that the funding from the Town is used to support the QOL and business development activities and that the accounting for the rehabilitation of the downtown (e.g., Greeley House) is kept separate. Doug Pettibone commented that, while the EBC strongly supports the activities of EVA, this is quite a large mission for such a small group of mostly volunteers, and wondered whether its mission should concentrate on one or two of the three core activities. Also, it was noted that EVA probably could enhance its fundraising activities through more widespread general appeals and grant writing (such as applying for a HUD or other renewal grant for the historic Greeley House) which was done for the Main Street building rehab. The EBC approved a portion (\$1000) of the increased request. Accordingly, a motion was made by Paul Mirski, seconded by Shirley Green and approved by a margin of 6 for and 3 against, 1 abstention.

Firefighter Salaries: Firefighters who go out on fire calls get paid an hourly wage for their time. The Fire Department has requested a raise in their salaries since there have been none since sometime in the 1990s. Steve Schneider did a survey of current firefighter salaries in NH towns of similar size to Enfield. It was found that, on average, our firefighters get paid about 4% less than their counterparts in other towns. A motion was made by Sam Eaton and seconded by Mirski to provide funding for a 4% raise in the salary line item, or from about \$31K to \$32.2K. The motion was approved 8 for, 0 against, with one abstention.

Regional Recreation Director: Schneider is recommending to the EBC that, because of the great success of the regional recreation program jointly sponsored by Enfield and Canaan, the number of hours worked by the director be expanded at a cost of \$5K from both towns. Canaan has agreed in principle to support this expansion financially. In 2013, funding for the director's salary came from a Dartmouth Hospital program called HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living). For 2014 and 2015 the funding from HEAL will be reduced from \$18K to \$15K. There is no commitment for funding beyond 2015. Concern was raised by Eaton and others that this program could become an unfunded program after 2015, and that the Town would then need to support it entirely at that time. Schneider responded that part of the director's responsibility is to secure continued grant funding for the future but nothing is guaranteed. There was agreement that all efforts should be made for grants to support the director's salary. The EBC acknowledges the success of the regional program and supports the increase in salary line item from \$34K to \$39K. Schneider hopes the program will eventually include all towns within the Mascoma district.

Monied Warrant Articles: At this point, it appears that the only warrant articles that the EBC will have to weigh-in on for Town Meeting are those related to the CIP plan and the budget itself. No one was aware of any additional petitioned warrant articles requesting appropriations from the Town.

Old Business: None

Public Comment: None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 PM. There are 3 more scheduled EBC meetings in January (all Thursdays @ 6:00PM, DPW Bldg.) where adjustments in the spending plan will be discussed further and relevant warrant articles considered. The meeting next week on Jan. 16 will discuss adjustments recommended by Schneider to meet our target of no more than a 2% increase in the tax rate. The Public Hearing for the proposed 2014 municipal budget will take place on Wed. Feb 5.

