

ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE (EBC) MINUTES (Approved)

Wednesday, November 5, 2014  
DPW BUILDING 6:00PM

**Members Present:** Annabelle Bamforth, Sam Eaton (Vice Chair), Shirley Green, Doug Pettibone (Chair), Janet Shepard, Dave Stewart

**Excused:** Fred Cummings, Mike Lorrey

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

The meeting opened at 6:06PM

**Administrative:**

Doug Pettibone noted the recent resignations of Gayle Hulva and Paul Mirski with regret and thanked them for their many years of dedicated service to the Town and Budget Committee. The Committee will miss their insights, contributions and collegiality, and wishes them the very best.

The Committee set about filling the open seats vacated by Hulva and Mirski. Sam Eaton moved to nominate Lori Saladino to fill Hulva's position (term ends March 2017), was seconded by Janet Shepard and unanimously approved by the committee. Dave Stewart moved to nominate Dan Kiley to fill Mirski's position (term ends March 2015), was seconded by Eaton and unanimously approved by the Committee. The terms for these appointments are until the end of the 2014 budget season whereupon the seats will reopen and will need to be filled at the next election in March 2015. (Post-meeting Note: Pettibone contacted both Saladino and Kiley who agreed to serve for the remainder of the 2014 budget season).

A motion to approve the draft September 3, 2014 meeting minutes was made by Shirley Green and seconded by Shepard. The motion carried and the minutes were approved without change.

**Town Revaluation:** Steve Schneider reported on the Town-wide revaluation that was recently completed. The new valuation for the Town is \$519.7 million, down about 6.4% from \$555.0 million when the last town-wide revaluation was done 5 years ago. The TIF district ran contrary to the rest of the Town and was valued at approximately 20% higher because of the water and sewer improvements that were made along Route 4. It is anticipated that the increased revenue from the higher tax base within TIF will be used to pay down the debt taken out to make those improvements. With this new valuation the municipal tax rate will be set within the next week or so.

**Review of 2013 Town Revenue:** Schneider reviewed the Town revenue numbers for 2014 to date. The numbers will not be finalized until after the end of the fiscal year on December 31. Income is generally on track for projections made at Town Meeting with higher than anticipated revenue from automobile registrations. It was suggested that this increase could reflect a continued, however modest, improvement in the local economy. Income from insurance reimbursements with the ambulance billing

program is on track to continue to pay for the 'On-Call' payment plan instituted in 2013. Parks and Recreation is seeing an increased revenue from the program fees of the enhanced activities but this new income will be used to pay for those activities. The Town has put 7 parcels of undeveloped land up for sale within the last month with a combined asking price of about \$90K. To date, there have been no offers on the properties.

**Projected 2014 Town Revenue:** The local economy is not expected to dramatically improve near-term, so revenue for 2015 is expected to be roughly the same as that for 2014. Income from the state from Rooms and Meals taxes and the Highway Block Grant are expected to be the same as 2014, about \$320K combined. It is unknown whether any of the State's new revenue from the 4-cent gas tax increase will come to Enfield. Income from collected recyclables at the transfer station will continue at the lower level, resulting from the new curbside recycling pickup program.

**Highlights of Initial 2014 Budget:** Schneider discussed highlights of the initial spending plan for 2014. He has received draft budget requests from all departments. As usual, these initial requests would project a considerably higher increase in our tax rate if left alone. The Budget Committee will review in detail these requests with Schneider and department heads over the next two months.

It is being recommended that employees receive up to a 2% merit increase. No new staff positions are being requested for 2015 and currently Enfield has 31 full-time positions. Bids on several employee health insurance plans are due soon but it is expected that the premiums will rise significantly again. Discussion ensued about the challenges facing the Town in funding future employee healthcare insurance especially with the so-called 'Cadillac Plan Tax' looming for 2018.

**Capital Improvement Program (CIP):** The CIP committee regular meetings are underway for 2015 capital requests. No police cruiser is being requested for 2015 but a new fire truck is. Bids on a new fire truck will be received in the next week or so. Replacement of some rolling stock for DPW is requested as well. The project to improve the boat launch is on hold for 2015. The final CIP recommendations will be presented to the Budget Committee on December 17.

The next EBC meeting on Thursday November 13 (6:00PM @ DPW) will review the spending requests of Administration (4100s with the exception of the regional nonprofits) and Health and Human Services (4400s) cost centers.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **New Business**

None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52.

