

**Enfield Budget Committee (EBC) MINUTES (Approved)- Thursday, December 10, 2015 DPW Building
6:30PM**

Members present: Sam Eaton (chairman), Shirley Green (vice chair), Janet Shepard, Mike Diehn, Annabelle Bamforth, Mark Eisener, Steve Schneider (town manager) David Stewart, James Buffington

Excused: Holly West, Fred Cummings (ex-officio)

Others present: none

Administrative: Janet made motion to approve the December 3 minutes. Mike seconded.

Discussion of minutes: The committee made no suggestions for corrections, and the minutes were approved.

New Business:

Steve presented the town tax rate review. The current Enfield property valuation is \$523,850,007. The current tax rate of \$6.60 brings \$3,457,410 in property tax revenue. The tax rate table Steve presented shows how property tax revenue could increase or decrease depending on the amount the tax rate is raised or lowered. For example, if the tax rate was to be increased from the current \$6.60 to \$6.80, \$3,562,180 would be raised. Steve estimated that about \$5,200 in property tax revenue is raised for each penny increase of the tax rate. These numbers are based on the "status quo" or current valuation.

Discussion turned to proposed Capital Improvement purchases. Steve said the proposed purchases include 2 police cruisers, 1 truck, 2 truck bodies, the Boys Camp Road Bridge, and the boat launch. Steve said the proposed boat launch began as simply a ramp, but the issue of the current parking lot was raised. The boat launch quote is \$20,000 less than previously estimated. Steve said a bidder has been asked for a quote on the boat ramp only with no parking lot.

Mike asked what is wrong with the current parking lot. Steve and Sam agreed there's nothing structurally wrong with it. Sam noted that right now it is difficult for police to issue tickets for cars improperly parked there. Steve said that cases have been thrown out by judges due to the fact that there are no parking lines at the launch.

Steve said these items would be financed. He received a quote from Mascoma Savings Bank for 3% financing. The cruisers would be financed for 5 years and the truck and truck bodies would be financed for 10. The truck is estimated to cost \$100-105,000. Steve pointed out that the town mounting its own truck bodies will save some money. The Boys Camp Bridge is estimated at \$150,000. The state would have assisted in paying for a bridge, but that agreement would have forced the town to build a much larger, longer bridge for nearly \$1 million. Steve said the bridge proposed by state was far too big for the road.

Financing for the above proposed projects will come out of CIP fund, which means there will be no impact on the tax rate. Steve said that CIP is going to make its presentation next Thursday.

David asked about the amount of the boat launch bid. Steve responded \$148,000 for both the launch and paving. Steve noted that the town already invested some money in engineering for the project.

David began discussing the upcoming proposal from the library trustees seeking town funding for a new library. David asked for clarification of how much money has been raised from private donors following the 2008 town vote to appropriate \$400,000 for the library. Steve confirmed that \$400,000 was raised from the town and added that \$150,000 had been pledged by TIF. Shirley told David that she did not have all the numbers in front of her during this meeting.

David expressed concern that the library trustees were returning for more town funding. David said that he had recalled, at selectman's meetings which preceded the town vote in 2008, a now-former library trustee had stated that the trustees wouldn't go back to the town. Steve said that no matter what was said at the time, the trustees are making another request regardless and now is the time to consider the merits of the project.

Steve said that at this point, the "lion's share" of what is requested from each department is in front of the committee. Mike asked Steve how comfortable is he with the non-property tax revenue sheet, noting that the property tax sheet appears more reliable than the non-property tax revenue sheet. Steve acknowledged that non-property tax revenue estimates can be off some years.

Mike said that it would be a good idea to try to level fund if possible to help balance the rising of taxes elsewhere including the school tax rate. Sam agreed and added that in the years that he has been on the committee, members have been chipping away at the budget to keep the rate low. Sam said that while it becomes more difficult every year, level funding could be possible and it's worth making an effort to keep the town tax rate level.

Sam discussed the idea of having one less truck in the town fleet rather than buying another truck since last year the town had one less truck. Steve clarified that the town did not have one less truck last year; the town was using an older truck.

Steve mentioned the possibility of declining to continue the filling of some positions at DPW currently held by employees who are close to retirement.

Steve said that if the committee has additional questions for any of the departments, Steve could direct members to department heads to gain more information.

James asked what the potential cost savings would be for using one less plow truck during a storm. Steve responded that James's question was one that Jim Taylor could answer.

Public comment: none

Other Business: none

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

