

**Enfield Budget Committee (EBC) MINUTES (Approved)- Thursday, January 14, 2016 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, Fred Cummings, James Buffington

**Excused:** Holly West

**Others present:**

**Administrative:** Sam called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Discussion of minutes:

Janet made a motion to approve the January 7 minutes. Shirley seconded. Fred said that “Keene” needed to be changed to “Canaan” regarding the police salary discussion. Earlier in the day, Holly sent over a clarification to Annabelle regarding the electricity discussion. Janet noted that the date should read 2016. The minutes were approved with the changes.

**New Business:**

The committee went over drafts of proposed warrant articles. There were four articles in all.

**Library request for town funding:** Steve said the \$2.5 million number was approved by trustees and said he was unsure if the number has changed. Steve explained that the intent of the article is to appropriate funds. Mike asked if someone could offer an amendment to change the dollar amount at town meeting. Steve said yes. Steve clarified that only the dollar amount is from the library trustees and the rest of the words are those of the town. Steve said the wording should be changed to “up to” in the article. He added that there will be an estimated tax impact available in time for the budget hearing.

If financing was to be based on the Route 4 project, which was paid for with a 28-year loan, the library could add about \$26,000 a year in debt service. It’s been estimated the tax impact based on the above number would be about \$50/year on a \$100,000 house and \$75 for a \$250,000 house. The dollar amounts discussed by the committee were a very rough estimate of possible tax impacts, and Steve said that currently the tax impact is unknown.

During discussion of warrant articles and the purchasing process, Sam asked why contracts between the town and companies follow a separate type of process; rather than go before the town for a vote, contracts are handled by the select board and town manager. Steve answered that it’s statutory. Steve explained that a town manager has the authority to make such executive decisions, while a town administrator would have to gain approval from town departments.

**Lakeview sewer:** Steve said the dollar amount would actually be closer to \$2 million. The town is not loaning or providing town funds, but is planning to act as a fiscal agent for Lakeview to repair their

sewer system. Steve said that Lakeview has about 130 units; each condominium unit would pay for their share of the project cost through property taxes.

Lakeview is committed to paying the full cost of the sewer repairs; it needs to go to town meeting for approval. Steve discussed the “betterment assessment” in which each Lakeview unit would have a bill from the tax collector for their share of the cost. That bill would be sent for the length of the bond.

Sam asked what would happen if there is another recession and units go into foreclosure. Steve said that the town would get that money from the bank in charge of the foreclosure.

Steve pointed out that out of Lakeview’s 16 on-site systems, 4 have failed and the other 12 are close to failing.

Annabelle asked if it’s common for the town to assist developments with financing. Steve said that the town has done some work with people in Lower Shaker Village, but the situation with Lakeview is a little different.

Steve clarified that the town would own the sewer pipe on Route 4-A.

Mike brought up the individual liens on the units, also noting that a recession could be devastating for those properties. The committee asked what would happen if residents of Lakeview failed to pay their share of the cost. Steve said that the Lakeview Association would be responsible for anything not paid for by the unit owners.

Steve noted that Lakeview is a low-to-moderate income housing area, a rare commodity in the Upper Valley. James asked if this project would affect town credit negatively. Steve said it would lower total borrowing power by a small amount but not affect its credit rating.

The Lakeview project would begin this summer if approved.

Long-term lease of equipment: Steve noted that this year marks the first “batch” of CIP cruisers being replaced. He clarified that the cruisers are a 4-year lease, not 7. The loan would pay off the cruisers in the first 4 years, and the remainder would be paid for in the 3 following years.

James asked if the proposed truck will last 7 years. Steve said that Jim Taylor expected the truck to last for 10.

Bridge and boat launch: The bridge cost is \$150,000 and the boat launch is also \$150,000, which would be paid for with a 15-year loan. The proposed boat launch would pave the parking lot and fix the launch. The parking lot portion is \$50,000. Fred said he’d like the parking lot to be bundled with everything else now, rather than splitting up the two and asking for paving later when the cost would likely be more. So far, \$20,000 has been invested in implementing this project. James asked why the two projects were bundled. Steve said that a combined loan provides for a cheaper rate. James said he was concerned that people might reject the project as a whole if they disagreed with a portion of these projects.

Sam asked if the old hotel property on the other side of Shaker Bridge could ever be used for a boat launch. Fred said that area is only useful for canoes.

Dave asked if there's been interest in the town's offering of boat registration at town hall. Steve noted that the town received \$6,900 from boat registrations. It's becoming well known.

Mark asked what the state would do if the Boys Camp Bridge project didn't pass. Steve said he was unsure. The state can technically step in any time like they did with the Shaker Bridge.

Steve offered more discussion of the town tax rate. The current rate is \$6.60/\$1,000. The current property tax valuation is about \$5.23 million and change. Adding +.25% to the valuation would total \$525,159,632 in property tax revenue. The committee pursued further discussion about what the tax rate could be if the town kept spending the same, and what the tax rate could be if new spending is approved.

There was also discussion of increasing difficulty in making cuts every year. Fred noted it gets harder every year. Sam said he's been talking to CIP about shifting some of the money to fund the roads.

Police: Sam said he had a meeting with Chief Crate. Sam said that he was informed by Crate that over the last couple of years, surrounding towns started paying their officers quite a bit more than in Enfield. Sam noted that Crate has expressed vigilance regarding paying Enfield's officers well. Enfield currently starts pay between \$19-21 for patrol officers. The pay is \$24.44 in Canaan, and Hanover pays even more. To stay competitive, Sam said that Crate plans to raise the pay to \$25/hr. to start. Sam said that Crate has not hired anyone yet.

Sam said he'd like to see taking the \$481K salary line and dropping it by \$13,000 as to properly reflect what will be spent on that particular line. Fred said he's not comfortable with that because the line fluctuation won't look good. Fred said he wants to keep the line as if the town was paying a full force because at some point the town will fulfill those 3 openings. Sam disagreed and said the line should reflect what is actually spent. Steve noted that the "new hire" line is not expected to increase because two contenders are already certified.

**Public comment:**

**Other Business:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.