

Enfield Budget Committee MINUTES (Draft)

Thursday December 1, 2016 DPW Building 6:00PM

Members present: Sam Eaton (chair), Nancy Smith, Annabelle Bamforth, Shirley Green (vice chair), James Buffington, Holly West,

Excused: Mark Eisener, Janet Shepard, Fred Cummings

Absent: Mike Diehn

Others Present: Steve Schneider (town manager)

Administrative: Sam called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Approval of minutes:

Holly made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 17 meeting. Nancy seconded.

Annabelle noted that she realized that she'd mistakenly written "biannual" instead of "biennial" regarding hose testing at the fire department. The minutes were approved with that change.

New Business:

Budget Review:

The committee was given an updated budget. Steve said this latest budget should have everything including capital items.

Regarding tentative capital items, Steve said that they currently include items such as public works equipment (including a roller, excavator, trailer, etc.), two furnaces for the fire department, a roof for the Union St. fire station, and painting and chimney work at Whitney Hall. There are financing details still pending.

Other improvements include paving at Huse Park and town hall. Steve said he has asked the leasing company about the possibility of financing for those projects.

Steve said that the hard numbers of the CIP projects will be known before town meeting. There was some discussion regarding the capital improvement fund's growth; the committee recognized that it may be possible in the future to pay for some items with cash rather than using financing. Steve noted that the CIP fund has been rising and has been doing well in serving its intended purpose.

Changes have been made in some of the department's line items following presentations from the departments. Regionals have also been included in the budget.

Steve went on to discuss health insurance costs for personnel. The request for 2017 currently stands at \$644,343, a 15% increase over \$560,000 budgeted for 2016. Steve said that the actual amount spent as of today with one month left is \$517,446. Steve said he will look into the details of the cost center for 2016, as well as take look at past years' numbers, and try to come up with a new number. He noted that the town will go out to bid next summer and added that he has been keeping an eye on the pending Cadillac tax due to take effect in 2018.

Steve said prescription costs and deductibles need to be addressed. He said that one step in doing this was moving to a higher prescription co-pay; it was \$1-5 previously and has moved up to approximately \$10-20.

Steve went on to say that he met last week with the executive director of the current plan's insurance agency. He said that he asked about the Cadillac tax impact and the director indicated that she was not confident that its enactment will be definite. Steve acknowledged that the town still needs to address costs. There are 33 full-time town employees and 23 of those currently use the town's insurance. Sam noted that this equaled to between \$24,000 and \$25,000 per employee taking the insurance based on the 2016 budget number.

Steve brought up the health center in Canaan which is scheduled to open in the future. If that model ends up being successful and if the center's proposed costs were to ultimately be realistic, the town could look at the center as an option for health care for town employees; the center may have the potential to change how the town provides benefits if the insurer would consider it. Steve acknowledged that there may be difficulty regarding how employees might respond to going to a different health center or changing doctors.

Steve noted that the worker's compensation line is still the worst-case scenario; the town has a new unemployment provider.

Public Comment: none

Other business:

Steve went on to advise the budget committee to take a look at the new budget numbers and think about ideas and suggestions for the department cost centers between now and the next meeting.

Nancy suggested including the overlay number, which covers tax abatements, in the budget. Steve agreed.

Steve shared the results of the recent tax-deeded property auction. It was very busy and all of the properties were sold. Steve estimated that all told, the auction amounted to about \$194,000 in sales. However, Steve noted that two properties sold for more than the tax amounts that were owed and the difference, totaling about \$50,000, went back to previous owners.

Steve spoke to the committee regarding how meetings might proceed in the future in light of his resignation. He said he had been asked to remain manager through June 1. He told the committee that there may be times when Alisa may be present in his place. He encouraged the committee to be part of the selection committee for the new town manager as it's an opportunity for members to share perspectives.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 8th at 6:00 p.m.

Budget Committee minutes taken and submitted by Annabelle Bamforth.