

# **Enfield Budget Committee Minutes (Approved)**

**Tuesday, October 3rd, 2017**

**DPW Building 6:30PM**

**Members present:** James Buffington, Eric Crate, Fred Cummings, Sam Eaton (Chair), Mark Eisener, Shirley Green (Vice Chair), Nancy Smith, Holly West

**Excused:** Dominic Albanese

**Absent:** Mike Diehn

**Others Present:** Ryan Aylesworth, Town Manager; Annabelle Bamforth (minutes)

## **Administrative**

Sam called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

Ryan noted that the committee had been given revenue reports in previous years that were manually compiled, due to the revenue accounting software not being user friendly in regards to exporting reports. Ryan said that in the last town he worked in, monthly revenue reports were prepared and sent electronically. He plans to send these reports electronically as well as make hard copies available.

## **Approval of minutes**

Ryan distributed copies of draft minutes of the July 31st meeting that contained changes suggested by Holly. Nancy asked how to tell what's been changed. Holly verbally went through the changes including what was added, removed, and clarified.

Sam motioned to accept the minutes of the July 31st meeting, and Shirley seconded. The minutes were approved with the changes, with Fred and Mark abstaining (absence).

James motioned to accept the minutes of the September 6th meeting, and Eric seconded.

## Discussion:

Holly said that the first paragraph of the discussion should be corrected; she clarified that she had not brought up the existence of the second set of draft minutes to the committee. Shirley noted that she, not Holly, had brought that up to the members. With that correction, the minutes were approved with James, Fred, Mark, and Sam abstaining (absence).

## **New Business**

### **Committee liaisons**

The committee reviewed last year's liaisons and went on to assign liaisons for this budget season:

- Nancy, Police department
- Holly, Library department
- James, Recreation department
- Shirley, Administration
- Eric, Department of Public Works
- Mark, Fire department
- Mike, Cemetery department
- Dominic, Building inspection and Planning & Zoning department

### **Subcommittee of regional associations**

Last year Shirley, Annabelle, and Mike were members of this subcommittee, and Shirley was the subcommittee's chair.

Shirley said she would like to be on the subcommittee again this year. Nancy said she would like to join the subcommittee. Sam suggested that Mike could keep his place on the subcommittee at this time, and if he chose not to be on this subcommittee another member would be needed.

Sam asked if Shirley would like to remain chair of this subcommittee, and Shirley confirmed. Sam asked the committee if there were any objections from the committee; there were none.

### **Assessing Software**

Fred informed the committee about items discussed at the previous evening's Board of Selectmen meeting. He explained that new assessing software at a cost of approximately \$10,000 is likely to be purchased in the future. Fred noted there would be no impact on the tax rate, as this software would be purchased by expending from the revaluation capital reserve funds which is designated for expenses like this one.

### **Huse Park Repairs**

Fred told the committee that the recreation department received its first quote for repairs to the Huse Park play structure. That estimate is just under \$5,000. Fred said he hopes to have this paid privately through donations, and added that a \$1,000 donation has already been received from Casella. Holly asked if any others have provided a quote. Ryan said the recreation director sought several quotes but only one has come in. Ryan said he would like to have the recreation director obtain at least one more quote to determine if the first quote is competitive. Holly said

that she knows of one entity that may be able to provide volunteer labor which could result in a potentially lower price.

### **Route 4A Sewer Project**

Ryan said that the sewer work on Route 4A is still being done and there are hopes that the project will be finished by November 1st. Sam asked if the patches on that road will be improved; Fred said that the entire section will be repaved.

### **BC/BOS Meetings**

Sam asked Fred about holding quarterly joint meetings with the Budget Committee and the Board of Selectmen; it was suggested to schedule one in November.

Ryan briefly noted that the town has received a grant to make improvements at the Enfield Center Town Hall and is working on requests for proposals (RFPs).

### **2017 and 2018 Budget**

Ryan updated the committee on budget expenditures; there's about 30% left unexpended with 25% of the year left to go. There are expenses yet to be paid such as longevity, sick day payouts, and an extra pay period in December. He said it appears the budget is in good shape but he doesn't anticipate a large buffer.

Ryan noted that for revenues, tax collection is on pace with 97% collected on the first bill; the town is also slightly ahead on vehicle registrations. He added that 3rd quarter water/sewer bills are going out next week.

Ryan discussed liaison assignments and said that he has talked to Sam about wanting to join the liaison meetings this year.

Sam asked Ryan when the budget requests would be finished. Ryan said there are some stragglers but most have been handed in and that data is being submitted now. He said his goal is to have a full budget ready by the next meeting. Sam asked Ryan to let him know when the budgets are ready.

Ryan said he has been in contact with Bob Cusick to discuss plans for CIP. He added that the CIP meetings have been infrequent, due in part to one member being out of the country. Most departments have submitted their capital item requests.

Eric asked if there are any large projects in the works. Fred noted the upcoming replacement of a fire truck.

Sam told Ryan that the committee has requested a breakdown of the DPW's road maintenance strategy in the past but has not received one. Mark said that the committee had been told about the department's plans; Sam clarified that he had asked for a detailed list.

### **Sewer**

Ryan said that he has talked to Jim about the sewer deficit and future plans for the sewer, and that the suggestion of a sewer station has been brought up. He explained that the cost would be in the \$15 million range to set that up. He said that he and Jim have discussed funding sources such as federal grants and that about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the cost could be covered by those funds. Ryan said that since there are not a lot of systems currently being built, Enfield might stand out in terms of securing those funds.

There was discussion regarding potential benefits and concerns regarding the implementation of a station in Enfield.

Fred pointed out that a large portion of sewer costs largely go to Lebanon, like with the town's ambulance costs; the town is at their mercy. He noted that Enfield having its own system could offset the costs of being tied to Lebanon.

Ryan said that Lebanon reserves some of its capacity for Enfield and that as the city of Lebanon grows, there are concerns about the future. Ryan emphasized that this is merely an idea at this time but an idea that should be looked at.

Shirley asked what will happen to property owners who have not hooked up on Route 4. Ryan said that a connection requirement letter went out a few weeks ago to all property owners (19 properties) within 300 feet of the line who are without a connection or waiver. The letter requires the owners to prove they have a state-approved septic system or begin the process of connection. Ryan explained to the committee that the sewer line on Route 4A is different than the line on Route 4; adding users on 4A is more difficult because of the differences between these lines. On Route 4A, there are only 6 points of connection which requires property owners to "cluster" together via an agreement to join that line. Ryan said that the town attorney noticed that there is not a distinction between these two sewer lines and there are plans to update the town's sewer ordinance for clarification.

Ryan discussed plans to have a new updated sewer rate structure in place. Sam asked if it's known how much the overages are, year-over-year. Sam went on to note fixed costs and variable costs and asked how much of the deficit is due to the varying costs. Sam added that he was concerned about the varying costs and that the deficit may fester if the town gets into the habit of undercharging, even if at a slower rate. He said he was aware that the deficit can't be wiped immediately, but the deficit's growth can be stopped while also chipping away at the deficit.

Holly asked about the current status of the town's plan to address the sewer deficit. Ryan said the town is in the exploratory phase, developing various ideas. Holly said she would like to see thorough estimates related to the town's plans.

Ryan noted that the goal is to wipe the sewer deficit in five years. Ryan added that there are water and sewer consultants available that have helped towns establish strategies and set rates that are sustainable.

Holly said that communication with residents would be important so that they can make necessary preparations.

In an informal poll, it was found that the majority of budget committee members are interested in having a consultant help the town with sewer rates.

Ryan told the committee about a property owner on Route 4 who received the recent connection requirement letter. She presented a paper trail of communication about obtaining a waiver, showing that she had an approved system in place. It appeared that her emails ultimately went unanswered, and she never received a waiver but also never received a bill. The matter will be taken up by the Board of Selectmen.

### **Other business**

Nancy asked if the solid waste contract is up. Sam said from looking at the contract, it appears that there is an automatic renewal in 2018 unless one party is in default, which doesn't appear to be the case.

Holly said the town should make an effort to show residents a breakdown of solid waste collection costs. She suggested revisiting pay-as-you-throw in the future.

Sam said that he wants to know how many businesses are using residential totes.

### **Next meeting**

The committee agreed to wait to meet until the budget is fully complete; the next meeting is scheduled for October 17th at 6:30 PM at the Public Works Facility.

### **Adjournment**

Mark moved to adjourn, Nancy seconded; meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.