

Enfield Budget Committee Minutes (Approved)
Tuesday, October 17th, 2017
DPW Building 6:30PM

Members present: Dominic Albanese, James Buffington, Mike Diehn, Sam Eaton (Chair), Nancy Smith, Holly West

Excused: Eric Crate, Fred Cummings, Mark Eisener, Shirley Green

Absent:

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

Administrative

Sam called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Mike motioned to approve minutes of October 3rd meeting, and James seconded.

Discussion:

On page 2 in regards to the Huse Park repair estimate offers, Holly clarified that she had mentioned that there was an individual who may be able to volunteer labor which could result in a potentially lower price.

On page 5, the minutes stated that Holly had asked about the status of sewer station plan and said she would like to see thorough estimates; Holly clarified that she was requesting information about the town's plan to address the sewer deficit.

The minutes were approved with those changes; Dominic abstained due to absence from the Oct. 2 meeting.

New Business

2018 Budget Request

Ryan shared the MS-535 report, which is a general fund report for fiscal year 2016. The town's expenditures were lower than budgeted, and revenues collected were lower than budgeted. Total expenditures were reported at \$16,070,989, and total revenues collected were reported at \$16,189,493. Revenues from building inspection, licenses and fees, property taxes, and the water and sewer departments came in lower than budgeted.

James noted that in the past, the budget committee had not been provided extensive information about the water and sewer budgets. Ryan said that he does not see an issue with the budget committee reviewing the water and sewer budgets along with the rest of the budget, and members of the budget committee showed interest in more comprehensive review of these two items.

Sam noted the sewer deficit continuing to grow in 2016. He said that much of the sewer expenses are attributed to user fees, and expressed concern that the Lakeview extension may lead to increased growth of the deficit.

Ryan responded that when Lakeview residents connect to the extension, they will be paying a new rate that should be sufficient to cover expenses. Ryan added that the new rate is expected to be set before the first bills are sent out.

Ryan said that the sewer deficit stands at about \$700,000, and that the town's goal is to eliminate the deficit in 5 years, reducing it by about \$130,000 each year.

Dominic asked Ryan for information regarding the surplus from the school district. Enfield's share of the surplus is about \$500,000 and Dominic questioned how the money would be returned. Ryan said that he has not heard from the school district on this matter, and that he would like to hear back from the superintendent for further information.

Dominic said that it's important to address this issue before setting the fall tax rate.

Ryan said there were still some placeholders remaining in the budget, and that the fire department has not submitted theirs yet.

Holly noted that the fire department has been late submitting its budget for multiple years; she added that each department in town, including the fire department, is aware that budgets are due at the same time each year. Dominic offered to reach out to the department to address this. The committee acknowledged that the fire department is nearly a month late with its submission.

Sam brought up the Public Works budget, and pointed out the 2 fulltime employees requested next year for the transfer station.

Ryan asked if there historically has been 2 employees working fulltime at the transfer station. James said there has not been since the town moved to zero sort recycling. Sam said that the town had said in the past that there would be a savings at the transfer station because of the new curbside pickup program.

Ryan noted that the town pays a significant amount for curbside pickup and said he was curious if there are other towns nearby that provide this same service. He went on to explain that the town that he previously came from did not offer pickup; there was one person, who was also a town custodian, working at the transfer station 4 days, 20 hours a week. He said this town budgeted about \$115,000 a year for solid waste. Ryan added that this town has a population of around 3200 people with about 5,000 in the summer season.

Sam said that he had filed a request for all communications between the town and Casella, regarding the town's contract negotiation with Casella, and was told there was none.

Mike said it was his understanding that the town would see savings, and overall this has not happened. He noted that the town administrators may want to revisit this issue.

The committee discussed the potential merits and issues related to restructuring the town's solid waste services. Ryan said he is open to gauging public interest in making changes.

Dominic said he has heard that the contract with Casella automatically renews in 2018, which is the halfway point in the contract. James said it appears to be essentially a 10-year contract with a mid-point possibility of expiration.

The committee discussed other collection services in the area. Holly mentioned Miller, a company in Canaan, which may or may not include collection services for a town of Enfield's size; she noted that the town could request an estimate from Miller for Enfield and compare it with Casella's price.

It was noted that Beauchene is another pickup service in the area, and Waste Management may be expanding to this area.

Dominic said he would like to see DPW Director Jim Taylor consider other options for waste management.

Dominic added that the more transparency, the better, as there have been complaints in the past about how the contract was handled. Dominic said that if any other companies provide feedback, it should be in writing.

Ryan told the committee that Alisa is putting together the town calendar and would like to have the committee meeting dates published. The committee agreed on the following dates:

2017:

- October 24th
- November 7th and November 21st
- December 9th (annual Saturday meeting), December 12th and December 19th (Saturday meeting snow date: December 16th)

2018:

- January 2nd, January 16th, January 23rd
- February 6th (public hearing) (snow date: February 7th)
- February 13th (snow date: February 14th)
- March 17th (town meeting)
- August 14th
- September 11th
- First and third Tuesdays of October, November and December

Sam requested that the budget committee members meet with the heads of their assigned departments soon.

Sam adjourned the meeting at 7:56 PM.