



Enfield Budget Committee
Public Works Facility, 74 Lockehaven Rd, Enfield, New Hampshire
Meeting Minutes January 16, 2018 6:30 PM (Draft)

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

Excused: Fred Cummings, Mike Diehn

Absent:

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

I. Call To Order

Sam called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes

Shirley motioned to approve the minutes of the January 2nd meeting; James seconded.

Discussion:

No additions or corrections were presented.

The minutes were approved unanimously with the exception of James, who abstained due to absence from the previous meeting.

III. New Business - Review of Revised Budget

Ryan gave the committee an overview of the budget, which is currently reflecting an estimated town tax of \$7.56; he referred the committee to the revenue side, explaining that the decrease in

projected non-property tax revenue (NPTR) is what's largely driving the tax rate increase. He noted that over the last several years, the town had seen some benefit of the sale of town properties, and said that this type of revenue is not a sustainable source.

Ryan noted a considerable amount (\$1M) raised from revenue from motor vehicle registrations and said that his estimate for this year is lower than last year. He acknowledged that the numbers from 2011-present have increased steadily and it's rare for this number to go down, but it has happened and has made a more conservative estimate for 2018.

Ryan noted the recent adjustment in the recreation wage line which was previously budgeted \$35,000 but needed to be increased to \$58,181 due to the ending of a grant that was covering the regional recreation director's salary. Sam noted that this line in the budget should have showed the actual cost of her salary while illustrating the offset in the town's revenue budget, which is how items like this are normally accounted.

Ryan explained that Katy is both the Town of Enfield recreation director and the regional recreation coordinator. He said that Canaan contributes about \$7,500 to the regional coordination personnel expense. Sam asked why Canaan's contribution is the same while Enfield's is increasing. Ryan said that Canaan's position on this is that Enfield collects revenue from the regional recreation program while Canaan does not.

Ryan discussed a recently proposed revolving recreation fund and explained that there needs to be enough revenue coming in to fully cover the cost of the program. Sam asked why Enfield can't split the revenue with cCanaan and have them contribute more. Ryan said that a percentage agreement could be struck and split accordingly, but this would likely be less advantageous than the current situation.

Ryan noted that another squeeze on the tax rate is the extra nickel added to CIP. Sam noted that this nickel sometimes makes it tough when trying to level the budget. Dominic asked if this is an automatic increase every year. Sam explained that the town put some money left over from the debt service to the DPW building to establish the CIP reserve, and the town approved the CIP program that would add a nickel every year. Dominic asked if this could be discussed further when reviewing CIP items. Sam added that this plan was approved at town meeting, but it does need to be approved by voters each year.

Ryan discussed a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) agreement with Shaker Museum; he is unsure of their total tax commitment, but there is a recognition that some of the museum's revenue comes from unrelated sources, like hosting weddings, that are not related to the museum's mission, so this money went toward making PILOT payments. Nancy noted that

technically some taxes should be paid as some money pulled in is outside of the organization's mission. She added that the museum should appear before the committee, like when EVA would come in and present. Holly noted that Visions for Creative Housing Solutions used to pay about \$2K in PILOT but she believes that they may be requesting an abatement instead. Ryan said he wasn't sure and added that most nonprofits are supposed to fill out the proper paperwork in the spring. Holly asked him to check on it, as an abatement may possibly remove more from the revenue side.

The committee agreed to make notes and revisit the budget request page by page at the next meeting; Ryan offered to share his own notes for this meeting.

Moderators: Ryan said he discovered that the town pays much more for its moderators than other towns and suggested discussing this expense, which essentially ends up being about \$150/hr for each moderator. Dominic asked if the Board of Selectmen was approached to discuss; Ryan confirmed and said the Board did not indicate interest.

Franchise fees: the Enfield channel requested an increase in funding from \$24K to \$30K for two reasons: one is that their own costs have increased, and the other is that they've said they're allotted half of the total (which has risen to about \$60K collected total).

Overlay: Ryan noted this has not budgeted in the past, but is part of current practice. Overlay covers property owners appealing their tax assessments. Ryan said most towns just take it out of their fund balance.

GIS: GIS is new assessing software, estimated at about \$3K to build out more features. Dominic noted that this is a big investment in software. Ryan noted that this is more for residents so that they can obtain their assessment data online.

Legal defense and aid: this line has dropped; Ryan said the town is still embroiled in the ZBA/Foley case but it's almost over.

Ryan pointed out some changes to health, dental and workman's compensation. Regarding health and dental, the new heavy equipment operator had a more expensive plan. Sam asked what employees contribute; Ryan said it's 95-5 (town-employee) split. Sam said he has talked to other towns nearby and their numbers are closer to 80-20. Ryan said he has spoken with town officials about this as well. Sam pointed out employees have an HRA on top of their plans. Ryan said the HRA is a \$15K fund to pay for certain expenses; he discovered there was no cap and an unfunded liability risk. Ryan said the the cap is now \$1500, as we're in year 3 or 4; he said no employee has more than that accrued, so no one loses what they've accrued. Ryan noted a

number of employees are getting closer to retirement, so a reserve for this fund has been recommended.

Sam suggested discussing the \$4K cost of maintaining Mascoma Lakeside Park. Mark said Fred had noted maintenance needed to be done regardless of ownership. Ryan said this money was moved from part of the DPW budget and placed here to properly reflect the expense.

Police budget: Ryan said he bumped the vehicle line from \$11K to \$12K, based on the last CIP meeting during which a request for a cruiser is being recommended to be delayed another year. Ryan noted that the chief is comfortable with this; Sam said it was a test to see the viability of leasing police cars for one extra year.

Ryan told the committee that Fred had approached him with concerns about the ambulance department; Ryan said that Fred told him that Enfield is not fielding many calls and the town is heavily relying on Lebanon which comes at a higher cost; Ryan said that Fred had proposed moving to a fulltime town ambulance this year.

Ryan said he spent a day researching the feasibility of this, and that he also checked with the rest of the Board of Selectmen, who shared Ryan's concern about this cost significantly increasing the budget. Ryan noted that Fred's request also included moving to hard-billing. Ryan said that a decision should be made, but more research is necessary. He suggested that there be discussion with the Fast squad to address the issues with calls. Committee members agreed that there should be a discussion about the feasibility of having a full-time ambulance department.

Holly pointed out that Fred attended very few budget committee meetings this season, and added that it was important for the committee to have a liaison that would attend meetings regularly.

James motioned that the budget committee select a Board of Selectmen liaison for the budget committee that would be able to regularly attend these meetings; Nancy seconded the motion, and the committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Ryan said that he increased the ambulance personnel line a bit to encourage on-call responses and reduce Lebanon calls.

Holly said that this issue has been brought up for a few consecutive years, but no actions or detailed plans have been brought forward, and she noted that it would be irresponsible to move the town to a full-time ambulance without a detailed plan.

The committee discussed benefits of having their own ambulance, including being able to provide for nearby areas and towns like Eastman. Ryan said that Lebanon has taken on a lot of additional towns in recent years, and the community continues to age.

Library: Ryan said he'd asked Melissa to look at what's been spent on substitutes to obtain accurate numbers, which was found to be about 11 hours; that line is adjusted down to 12 hours from 15.

CIP items: Ryan discussed a proposal to replace the basketball court and hoops, a cost of about \$42K for that. Ryan said he believes that much of this cost could be covered by non-municipal sources, and added that about \$15K was put in from CIP and that he has recruited Katy to find the remainder from private sources.

Ryan pointed out the proposal for code locks at the community building, which has the ability to remotely issue, change and revoke digital keycodes for building renters; this system costs \$6K. Ryan said that the Lions club has indicated interest in paying for half, but the club needs to put it to a vote.

Ryan said that \$20K is in the budget for strategic governance; he told the committee that Saturday, January 27th at 9:30 is the date of the presentation from the Center for Strategic Governance. The Center will present the process, and then move into master planning. Holly asked if they could discuss the ambulance situation with the Center. Ryan confirmed. Ryan said the presentation is free and allows town officials and board & committee members to determine whether this will be a good fit.

Ryan shared the cost for the replacement software for fund accounting, utilities and bill pay which is about \$61K and reflects services from two companies. Sam asked if the water and sewer departments would cover a percentage; Ryan said he will check on that.

Dominic pointed out that the town tax rate has gone up \$1 within 4 years, which he said some may not be concerned about but that he feels it's a big deal. He said the increase along with sewer users getting hit with the deficit surcharge this year is significant and he's thinking of ways to help reduce the impact.

Holly pointed out that if strategic governance is pursued, some officials may come to recognize actions that could be taken more efficiently, perhaps leading to overall savings. Sam added that CIP is there to help absorb some large projects.

Sam suggested an additional meeting to develop the budget committee's narrative for the town meeting and report; the committee agreed to meet on January 30th at 6:30 pm.

Public Comment:

none

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 23rd, 6:30 PM

Sam closed the meeting at 8:50 PM.