

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
11 RYE STREET
EAST WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT**

MINUTES OF SPECIAL-BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING

Saturday, March 3, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.

Members Present: Denise Menard, Alan Baker, Dale Nelson, Richard P. Pippin, and James C. Richards
Members Absent: None
Others: Kathleen Pippin and Catherine Cabral
Press: None

I. Call to Order

First Selectwoman Denise Menad called the Special-Budget Workshop Meeting to Order at 9:40 a.m., in the East Windsor Town Hall.

II. Attendance

Denise Menard, First Selectwoman
Alan Baker, Deputy First Selectman
Dale Nelson, Selectwoman
Richard P. Pippin, Jr., Selectman
James C. Richards, Selectman

III. Budget Discussions

Ms. Menard first wanted to discuss the recommendations from the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee from their last meeting of February 29, 2012. Three members were missing from that meeting, who are actually present today. She indicated projects were discussed and in a document dated March 2, 2012 entitled "Commission Recommendations CIP 2012-2013 Projects Ranking Sheet" which she gave to Mr. Richard P. Pippin, Ms. Dale Nelson, and Ms. Kathleen Pippin for their review. In that document, it is being requested 2.15% of last year's budget or \$711,620. She asked if those members were in agreement. It was the general consensus of all three CIP members were in agreement with the recommendations from the other CIP members from the meeting on Wednesday, February 29, 2012. Ms. Menard indicated that the school maintenance was discussed and she has met with the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Teresa N. Kane and asked if any of the projects requested with the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee could be absorbed within the Board of Education's operating budget under building maintenance.

Ms. Cabral indicated the figures from the CIP have been added to the preliminary budget builder document. Ms. Menard indicated there were additional informational sheets that she has recently received and wanted to give to the Board Members before they begin. The documents were from the IT Department (8425), Public Works (3180), and Warehouse Point Fire District's audit (2150).

Ms. Menard first discussed the IT Department (8425) budget which has an increase due to the increase in purchased services. As for service contracts, additional contracts have been rolled into the IT Department from other departments in an attempt to try to bring all of the IT expenses in one place. Software upgrades have an increase; however, the equipment line has been decreased due to the fact that CIP will be funding most of the equipment purchases for this coming year. Ms. Menard indicated that the IT Department is a shared service with the Board of Education and it has been working; however, there is a need in the Town side for an IT tech to help departments with computer problems and so forth. There is a plan in place and an employee from the middle school will be working on the Town side in the next few weeks.

A discussion was held regarding the shared service of an employee, IT equipment which is constantly changing and the costs associated with same. The discussion continued regarding the software costs and some of the costs associates with other departments, such as the software increases for the police department. It was questioned if this was accounted for twice in both the police department and IT. Ms. Cabral indicated she would double check and get back to the Board.

The Board remembers reviewed the budget line by line. Ms. Menard explained the increases requested and indicated the equipment line which would include the new services for the police department/senior center and town hall will be paid through CIP. She also commented that the communications line really is a fixed cost from Cox Communications which is the internet provider for the Town. Ms. Menard indicated with the computer refresh it will bring all computers up to date. The different software which is presently running is Windows 2003, XP, 2007. The request for IT is \$180,930.

Mr. Baker indicated that once the new equipment is put into place, the less power will be used. Ms. Menard remarked she understands this is a lot of information to absorb, but the audit which was done in 2009, indicated this type of upgrade has been in need for a few years. If something should go wrong, it could cause many problems. She did mention it is not the fault of the prior IT Department because they were just following instructions given to them by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance in an attempt to keep costs low. Ms. Cabral wanted to recap the discussion by indicating the budget now with the additional \$13,800 would be \$194,730. It was thought it should be reduced to \$180,930 and again noted to check with the police department.

- **Selectmen Budget (1010)**

Ms. Menard indicated she would like to start at the beginning, beginning with the Selectmen's Budget (1010). She indicated the only increase was to the recording secretary line due to the increase of meetings which has been required. Ms. Menard indicated usually this line is under budget. Mr. Baker began speaking about the recording secretary salaries and the specific amount of information that is being transcribed for the meetings. He inquired how the skill level and payment is determined. Ms. Menard commented that Ms. Laurie Whitten has done some research on the topic and she will get copies of the Board Members for their review. Some recording secretaries take very complex, legal minutes while other recording secretaries' minutes are not required to be so detailed. Ms. Menard indicated she would bring that information to the next meeting. It was noted that the travel line has increased due to the fact the line was moved from Town Property Department, in the gas and oil line. All in all, the budget requested has a 3.23% increase.

A brief discussion was held and it was asked if any changes should be made. No changes were to the proposal.

- **Town Counsel & Legal (1015)**

Ms. Menard indicated that this category is unpredictable. This current year three bargaining units; Police, Supervisors, and Clerical contracts are all being negotiated and the negotiations could cascade into next year. In addition, the number of lawsuits can never be estimated and the new tax collector has expressed interest in collecting delinquent taxes and the possibility of using legal services in attempt to collect same. It was also mentioned that the Assessor's Office is now doing the revaluation which could also cause the legal expenses to rise.

A brief discussion was held. It was ultimately decided that there would be no changes to the Town Counsel and Legal (1015).

- **Town Auditor (1020)**

Ms. Menard indicated that the cost of the Town Audit was decreased approximately \$3,340.00. A new auditor has been hired and the contract runs for three years.

No change was made to the Town Auditor (1020).

- **Treasurer's Office (1025)**

Ms. Cabral indicated her budget has a slight increase in salary due to contractual obligations and purchased services has increased due to the contractual obligation with the payroll company, ADP. It was asked when the contract expires and maybe when

the contract does expire, the Town can look around for prices of other payroll companies. Ms. Cabral indicated that every year they try to look for a new company, but due to the upgrade on software, the cost of changing companies is costly. Hopefully, when the new IT equipment and servers are done, the computers will be able to upgrade software and change payroll companies.

A brief discussion was held about the upcoming upgrades to the computer system and keep the line this year but in the year 2014, shop around.

No change was made to the Treasurer (1025).

- **Town Clerk (1030)**

Ms. Menard indicated the feeling from the presentation of the Town Clerk's budget, was that the overtime line funding should be taken out. Ms. Cabral indicated if they cut that line out of the budget and put it at zero, if overtime is needed, the Town Clerk will have to go in front of the Board of Finance for the funds. It was the general consensus to make the overtime line \$0.00; the other increase is longevity and that is contractual. The only deduction from the proposal was \$278 out of the overtime line. Ms. Cabral indicated that would make the total budget proposal \$119,950. All were in agreement.

- **Assessor (1035)**

Ms. Menard indicated the overtime line had \$10.00 to keep the line open. Mr. Richard's suggested elimination of the IT line due to the IT budget was being merged into one department. Mr. Baker indicated \$16,776 is contractual obligation and is under professional services. The discussion went back and forth. Ms. Cabral indicated the IT budget here is for the licenses paid and expenses for the revaluation, laptop purchase, copier charges and postage. All were in agreement no changes would be made to the Assessor (1025).

- **Tax Collector (1040)**

Ms. Menard indicated there is a concern about not having enough money for the envelopes used at the Tax Collector's Office. The cost of the envelopes comes from the supplies line. Other increases in the advertising and postage lines were requested. Ms. Menard indicated the increases being requested is to continue collecting those delinquent tax bills since 1995 which is estimated at \$900,000 with additional \$200,000 in interest. She believes to increase the budget approximately \$1,900 in order to collect such a large sum of monies is well worth the cost. Ms. Cabral added that the combining of bills to the same taxpayer has been implemented to cut on the postage costs.

A discussion was held regarding notifying taxpayers and the legalities of notifying those taxpayers by regular mail or email.

There were no changes made to the Tax Collector (1040).

- **Tax Relief Elderly (1042)**

Ms. Cabral indicated the Board of Finance has recommended funding this line. Tax Relief for the Elderly Ordinance was put in place two years ago and the line has not been funded. It is recommended by the State and Ms. Carol Madore, Assessor, has helped recommend the line. She has recommended the line be funded at \$8,080.00 for senior/handicap tax relief. Ms. Menard asked what the Board would recommend. Mr. Richard's commented that the line would become self-funded once it gets started. Ms. Cabral indicated a lien can be placed on the property on the land records and before the property can be transferred, the lien would have to be paid off.

A brief discussion was held and it was decided to revisit the Tax Relief Elderly (1042) again.

- **Assessment Board of Appeals (1045)**

It is expected there will be more appeals to be heard during the upcoming year due to the checking on permits that were issued and never signed off upon and the revaluation and more clerical work will be required. Due to this anticipation, the budget has increased approximately \$2,750.00.

A discussion was held and a question wondering if a fee is paid for the appeal process, the actual number of meetings the recording secretary will be required and the part-time clerical increase. It was ultimately decided to reduce the requested budget by \$2,250 and make the request for Assessment Board of Appeals (1045) in the amount of \$3,150.

- **Registrars (1050)**

This budget request is an increase of \$4,497 over last year's budget. It was mentioned that the budget may be too low considering all of the referendums, primaries and election that is coming in the next year. The breakdown of districts also has an additional cost.

A discussion was held and regarding the proposed budget and it was decided not to change the requested budget for the Registrars (1050).

- **Probate Court (1055)**

Ms. Menard indicated that this is for the Probate Court which in the past was South Windsor and East Windsor combined. The State changes have combined three towns, South Windsor, East Windsor, and Windsor. The Town of South Windsor hosts the Probate Court. The cost is very reasonable at \$4,000. Recently, the Probate Judge for

our District, Judge Brian Griffin passed away. There will be a special election to elect a new Judge.

After some discussions, no changes were made to Probate Court (1055).

- **Pension Fund (1065)**

The only line funded is the supplies line of \$10.00; the costs of the recording secretary are paid by the advisors. No change in Pension Fund (1065).

- **Advertising and Printing (1070)**

Ms. Cabral indicated the costs from these lines have been moved to Town Property.

- **Town Property (1085)**

It was explained that the full time salary line and longevity is unchanged, along with many other lines within this budget. The other lines were discussed briefly. It was mentioned the gas and oil lines and postage are posted to the responsible departments and at the next meeting, that information will be made available to the Board Members. A question regarding facilities repairs and what exactly that line was used for. It was explained the facilities repairs, for example, the upgrading at the Senior Center for the new office furniture. This year it was though maybe the kitchen in the Town Hall be revamped a little. Ms. Cabral indicated the line has a broad name so a project can be the Town Hall, Annex, or Senior Center. No changes were made to Town Property (1085).

- **Building Committee (1086)**

There is an increase in the postage line of the building committee, although many notices are being sent electronically. It was noted that there are not that many meetings taking place and postage could be cut \$50.00. The recording secretary they had is no longer doing the minutes and there are usually four meetings per year.

It was agreed to have the budget \$690 total for the Building Committee (1086).

- **EDC (1115)**

The EDC is not looking for an increase in their budget. It was noted all the money that is spent for this Commission, is spent wisely. The EDC was very instrumental with the North Road Sewer Project. It was agreed that no change would be made to the EDC (1115).

- **ZBA (1120)**

This budget requested was no change from last year. Conference and training was not spent last year. It was reminded that there are new members on this Board and training should be done. Mr. Baker indicated when he was a new member of the Board he paid for the training out of his own pocket. It was suggested decreasing the conference and training line by \$500. A discussion regarding the number of meetings and the cost of the recording secretary was held. It was decided that six meetings a year at \$100 per meeting, it should be budgeted at \$600.

The new total now for the ZBA (1120) is \$1150.

- **Planning and Zoning (1123)**

Mr. Baker indicated he believes that the new members should have training. I agree \$100 should be funded in that line. Ms. Nelson indicated two new members are on the Board and she would agree with funding training for two members. It was the general consensus to fund the training line. It was also discussed the office supplies and Ms. Cabral reminded everyone that new name tags had to be ordered. It was agreed to increase the budget at \$3,050, increasing the training line by \$100.

- **Planning (1124)**

The Planning budget is not requesting an increase. It was asked about printing/photo line which only \$34.00 has only expended. It was suggested to decrease this line by \$200. A discussion was held regarding having photographs printed on the color jet within the office, if prints needed to be produced for a presentation or for a Court matter.

After the discussion, it was agreed to decrease the photos line by \$200; therefore, the bottom line budget requested is \$197,925 for Planning (1124).

- **Building Department (1125)**

The increases discussed were the increase in the part-time hours from 15 hours per week to 19 hours per week and vehicle maintenance, in particular the cost of the tires. A concern of no maintenance cost to date has been noted; however, the year before \$3,000 was expended on vehicle maintenance. The other lines which was concerning was conference and training and professional services. It was indicated that a part-time contractor has to be used when the building inspector is on vacation. The contractor has to be certified with the state and insured.

A brief discussion was held. It was agreed to allow the part-time hours to be increased to 19 hours per week due to the understaffing in the office; however, cuts of \$200 from vehicle maintenance and \$400 from conference and training.

It was agreed the Building Department (1125) budget would be \$136,825.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz
Recording Secretary