

PRESENT: Calouro, Sweeney, Tyska, Parella, and Stuart

ALSO PRESENT: Steven Contente, Town Administrator  
Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

The Council met in workshop session on Monday evening, March 19, 2018 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 6:35 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

Prior to the commencement of this evening's agenda, Council Chairman Calouro suggested that the Council might wish to arrange a workshop with the Benjamin Church Senior Center board for Friday, March 23, 2018 beginning at 7:45 o'clock PM, immediately following the budget workshop scheduled for the same evening.

The Clerk agreed to contact the parties and Council Chairman Calouro agreed to determine the availability of legal counsel for the Town.

#### **Town Administrator Overview**

Town Administrator Contente noted that the proposed budget is \$56,288,920 which represents an overall increase of 3.61%. He explained that the proposed budget would result in an increase to the tax rate of \$0.48 and that the current tax rate of \$14.92 per \$1000 of assessed valuation will increase to \$15.40.

Town Administrator Contente noted that of this increase \$0.40 is attributable to the school budget as approved by the Bristol Warren Regional Joint Finance Committee and the remaining \$0.08 is attributable to the municipal budget increase and that budget increase is attributable to increases in debt service. He added that more than one half of the increase in debt service is attributable to the Town's borrowing to cover the school district litigation judgement.

Town Administrator Contente also explained that the Sewer Use Fee will increase by \$10 per year per residential unit from \$469 to \$479. He explained that this increase is attributable to the Town's borrowing to improve and repair its wastewater system infrastructure.

Town Administrator Contente explained that he presents a good and fair budget and thanked Town Treasurer Goucher and Carol Mello for their help in preparing same.

Council Chairman Calouro noted his concern for budget scheduling as it relates to the Joint Finance Committee and suggested that the Council should take these into consideration when it sets next year's budget schedule.

**702 - Animal Control**  
**Josue Canario, Chief of Police**

Police Chief Canario announced that Animal Control Supervisor Dyanne Gibree is retiring and that there are plans to hire a replacement.

A discussion ensued regarding this position and salary with Town Administrator Contente explaining that the Animal Control Supervisor is on call 24 hours per day.

Police Chief Canario noted that the position carries a considerable amount of work and that he plans to staff it with a person suitable to take over for Ms. Gibree.

Councilman Stuart observed that the department has done a good job managing its utility costs.

A discussion ensued regarding the Animal Control vehicle with Police Chief Canario explaining that the vehicle is well-maintained but that it is "getting tired" and may need replacement in a year or two.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if there is any resolution on the previously discussed plan to contract services to other towns.

Police Chief Canario explained that there have been ongoing discussions and that he would like the new Animal Control Supervisor to be involved in any decision concerning this matter.

Council Chairman Calouro stated that he would be interested to learn about ideas for better utilization of the facility.

Councilman Tyska asked to know if there were any "surprises" on the horizon with Police Chief Canario explaining that the State can always surprise the communities with new regulations but that he was not aware of anything to cause concern at this time.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Police Department - 701**  
**Josue Canario, Chief of Police**

Police Chief Canario reviewed the number of calls experienced by the Department and explained that the number tends to fluctuate from year to year.

A discussion ensued regarding the redistribution of payroll taxes into the individual department budgets from the former "fixed charges" budget. Town Treasurer Goucher explained that this change was initiated with last year's budget and that the change was initiated by the State to make departmental costs more "transparent."

A discussion ensued regarding the police pensions with Town Treasurer Goucher explaining that the local pension fund is now closed since there are no new members. She explained that there are 42 persons collecting pensions from the local plan and that the cost should begin to decline over time.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if the \$100,000 spent on police for 4<sup>th</sup> of July and other special activities was included in the budget with Police Chief Canario explaining that it is included.

Police Chief Canario explained that the police department is also increasing its school patrols.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know if the police station lighting was converted to LED with Police Chief Canario responding affirmatively.

A discussion ensued regarding police responsibilities at Roger Williams University.

A discussion ensued regarding the 911 system with Police Chief Canario explaining that the Town's dispatchers are well-equipped to handle emergency calls.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Harbor Patrol - 703**  
**Gregg Marsili, Harbormaster**

Harbormaster Marsili noted an increase in transient revenue.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know why there was a reduction in the seasonal employee line item with Harbormaster Marsili explaining that he reduced this line to offset increases elsewhere. He added that he should be able to operate adequately with the amount proposed for seasonal employees.

Councilman Tyska suggested that the Council would like to see more detail concerning the revenue "profit centers." He asked to know if it would be appropriate to increase the dock rates for season slips.

Harbormaster Marsili noted that rates were adjusted two years ago and that it was time to examine these.

Councilman Tyska suggested that the mooring rates were competitive with other areas and asked to know if a comparison of dock rates might be available.

Harbormaster Marsili noted that the current rate is \$48 per foot and it should probably be \$55 per foot to be competitive with other similar facilities nearby. He added that the transient mooring fees are affordable but suggested that the Town may wish to offer discounts for those using the mooring for multiple weeks. He noted that Newport is at \$10 and the Town charges \$3.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know the appropriate time to raise the rates with Harbormaster Marsili suggesting that this would be best done during the month of September.

Harbormaster Marsili announced that the Providence/Newport passenger ferry will make three stops in Bristol on the Fourth of July.

A discussion ensued regarding the ferry with Town Administrator Contente noting that the ferry stops will likely lessen some of the traffic and road congestion that the Town experiences on the Fourth of July.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Community Development - 601**  
**Diane M. Williamson, Director**

Director of Community Development Williamson reported that her department is doing well with projects this year with Council Chairman Calouro reminding the Council that Director of Community Development Williamson was instrumental in the Town's

receipt of a \$1.8 million grant for the Tanyard Brook Phase II project.

Councilman Sweeney asked about the line item for Tourism/Promotion with Director of Community Development Williamson explaining that the goal is to get the program to be self-sustainable. She explained that there are \$2500 each budgeted for the Black Ships Festival and the British Motorcar Festival.

A discussion ensued about the Tourism/Promotion line item with Councilwoman Parella stating that the Lou Hammond public relations services appear to be of great value to the Town's marketing efforts.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that an asterisk (\*) might be placed on the Tourism/Promotion line so that the Council would consider it during its further budget deliberations.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know about the recent increases in meals tax with Town Treasurer Goucher explaining that the meals tax increased from \$500,000 to \$553,000.

Councilwoman Parella noted that "Hammond translates into revenue" and that it is not always desirable to ask businesses to provide more and more to support this effort.

A discussion ensued regarding Town trees with Town Administrator Contente explaining that the Town's "canopy" is maturing and that there will be a continuing need to replace and replant decaying tree stock.

Director of Community Development Williamson noted that the Town's "America the Beautiful" funding is now being directed toward maintenance and planning rather than planting.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget with the exception of the Tourism/Promotion line.

**Building Inspection - 602**

**Richard Pimenta, Building Official**

Building Official Pimenta explained that there is a new residence hall planned for Roger Williams University. He also reported that the new e-permitting has been a success and that some customers are served via a kiosk at 9 Court Street.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Town Administrator - 402**  
**Steven Contente, Town Administrator**

Town Administrator Contente explained that he is in the process of renegotiating three (3) contracts and that the Labor and Negotiations line is used for this purpose.

Councilman Stuart asked to have a listing of all of the employees who receive buyback in lieu of health insurance benefits. Town Treasurer Goucher agreed to provide this.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the Town Administrator's salary might be adjusted for future years. Town Administrator Contente stated that he was not looking for an increase.

The Clerk explained the ordinance process for adjusting the Town Administrator and Town Council salaries.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Municipal Observances - 806**  
**Steven Contente - Town Administrator**

It was noted for the record that the Fourth of July Celebration allotment will be discussed at another time.

Councilman Stuart asked to know if the holiday lighting was to be expanded with Town Administrator Contente explaining that the Wood Street circuit is old and frayed to bare wires and in need of replacement. He noted that the \$500 increase will allow for a small area of Wood Street to be lit this year.

Town Administrator Contente also explained that the Town's bucket truck was determined to be unsafe last year and that a new one is on order with delivery expected in August.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know if the Last Night Concert continued to operate at a deficit.

Town Administrator Contente reported that the concert is very expensive and that he is looking at ways to economize. A discussion ensued concerning a breakdown of the costs. It was noted that the White Foundation pays for the orchestra and that the Town is responsible for all of the other costs of the concert.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Finance Department - 501**

**Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer**

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that the cost of the Town wide revaluation was less than originally thought and will represent some savings.

Town Treasurer Goucher also noted an increase in licensing fees for some of the computer software.

Council Chairman Calouro stated that he would like to have the revaluation information appear on the Town website.

A discussion ensued about possibly moving more of the cash transactions handled at the departmental level to be relocated to the Treasurer's office.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Debt Service - 502**

**Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer**

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that the debt service for the school district litigation will cost \$180,000 in this budget.

A discussion ensued regarding bond ratings and interest rates.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Fixed Charges - 503**

**Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer**

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that the cost of health insurance (\$700,000) was an estimate.

A discussion ensued regarding other insurance costs with Town Treasurer Goucher explaining that the Town's cost of insurance is increasing due to worker's compensation claims resulting from rubbish pickup.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Civic Services - 605**

**Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer**

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that this budget page is "historical only" since all budget lines have been distributed to other departments.

**Town Hall Complex - 504**

**Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer**

Town Administrator Contente reported that the State DOT will be renting two rooms at the Reynolds School at fair market value.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if there has been any further consideration about installing parking meters in the leased parking lots.

Town Administrator Contente noted that he has been speaking with Harbormaster Marsili about the lots adjacent to the waterfront and that some of these may be repurposed. He added that he has been speaking with the property owner and that he is looking for a long term solution to the waterfront parking problem.

Councilman Sweeney asked about the Building Maintenance line with Town Treasurer Goucher explaining that this line supports maintenance projects at 9 and 10 Court Street and occasionally the Senior Center. She added that most departmental budgets contain some type of building maintenance lines.

Councilwoman Parella asked about the Statehouse Lease reduction with Town Administrator Contente explaining that the Town now leases the 200 X 200 lot on the Town Common owned by the Statehouse foundation. He added that a portion of the baseball field on the Town Common occupies this private land.

Council Chairman Calouro noted the hydrant rental line with Town Administrator Contente explaining that the Town is planning to renegotiate its payment in lieu of taxes agreement with the Water Authority.

Councilman Sweeney asked about the increase in the line for website and e-mail support with Town Treasurer Goucher explaining that the e-mail support is antiquated and needs to be upgraded.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Municipal Court - 407**

**Louis P. Cirillo - Administrator/Clerk**

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Town Clerk - 403**

**Louis P. Cirillo - Town Clerk**

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

**Town Council - 401**

A discussion ensued regarding the Town Council Contingency line. The Clerk explained that he prepares this budget for the Council and typically sets the Contingency line with an arbitrary amount of \$10,000 based upon past years' experience. He noted that the Council will decide on its Contingency amount based upon its anticipated needs.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Stuart and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 9:03 o'clock PM.

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Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk