

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

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

The Council met in workshop session on Tuesday evening, March 20, 2018 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 6:36 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

Prior to the commencement of the consideration of the listed departmental budget requests, Council Chairman Calouro announced that the Council appreciates the effort of everyone who worked together to present an overall lean budget.

Public Works - 603

Kevin McBride, Director

Public Works Director McBride appeared before the Council and offered to address and questions regarding the budget request. He noted that the Town Administrator's recommended budget is the result of his discussion with the Town Administrator. He added that he determines his budget recommendations based upon a six-year look-back. He also added that he believes the budget narratives provided are self-explanatory.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know if the recommended increase in street signs was atypical with Public Works Director McBride explaining that his current budget is in deficit due to the passage of a parking restriction ordinance. He noted that this ordinance required the purchase of 120 signs which were not previously considered or budgeted.

Public Works Director McBride also explained that the newly designed street signs cost \$100 each and that there is a need to replace many of the Town's "reflective" stop signs, etc., since these have become badly faded over time.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if the budget includes trimming the bushes and branches which block stop signs, etc.

Public Works Director McBride noted that the trimming is completed as part of the regular personnel budget.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know if the amount requested by the Town Administrator was sufficient to fulfill next year's goal for signage with Public Works Director McBride responding

that the amount recommended by the Town Administrator was a best effort estimate based upon current knowledge.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that the budget considers \$5000 less for tires than the previously approved budget with Public Works Director McBride explaining that there are less runs to the central landfill in Johnston and also that the planned new vehicles will be supplied with new tires.

Councilwoman Parella asked about snow and ice with Public Works Director McBride explaining that this year's budget is already \$50,000 in deficit and that a budget of \$190,000 would be more realistic based upon his six year look-back. He noted that he also tries to stockpile salt in the off-season since salt can sometimes become unavailable during periods of bad weather.

Town Administrator Contente noted that he attempted to balance the budget to offset those lines which were increased.

Town Administrator Contente also noted that he would like to assure that the Town does not cut-corners in clearing sidewalks and intersections after a winter storm since not doing so can result in a safety hazard.

Councilman Stuart noted that he is aware that the Department of Public Works is in need of new equipment and that this should be addressed in the capital spending plan.

Town Administrator Contente agreed with Councilman Stuart and noted that he would like to have a replacement plan in place to determine departmental needs and methodically replace equipment over time. He reported that the newest vehicle is from 2013 and that the capital plan includes four new vehicles for this year.

Councilwoman Parella stated that the Council shares Town Administrator Contente's concern about thirty year old vehicles.

Peter Hewett of 11 Wendy Drive asked to know about the previously discussed \$100 street signs and for a determination concerning whether these are needed or wanted.

Town Administrator Contente explained that the Council adopted a plan to consolidate its sign program and that this includes a more uniform design. He added that the Town currently has many different sign designs in place.

Councilman Stuart explained that the Council agreed to a certain type of sign design to help "brand" the Town and that the accepted design is "antique" red, white and blue to recognize the Town's patriotic image.

Councilman Stuart explained that the original cost associated with this sign program was "astronomical" and that the Town has endeavored to change to a more economical version of the signs.

A discussion ensued regarding street lights with Public Works Director McBride commenting that the repair program is excellent with the repair company reacting to light outages within 48 hours.

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that the cost for street lights was previously \$300,000 per year and that this year's proposed budget is \$100,000 and right on track.

A further discussion ensued regarding the street lights.

Town Administrator Contente noted that the replacement life of the light fixtures is 15 years and that the Council may wish to put money aside to plan for the time when the lights will be replaced.

Councilman Sweeney asked about the transfer station with Public Works Director McBride noting that the State will impose tipping fee increased effective July 1.

A discussion ensued regarding the collection of commercial trash with Council Chairman Calouro suggesting that the Council should maintain an open dialogue concerning commercial trash.

Councilwoman Parella noted that some of the smaller "commercial" establishments may not produce enough rubbish to warrant the use of a commercial dumpster. She cited the small C & R Mercantile store on High Street as an example.

Public Works Director McBride noted that elderly taxpayers are subsidizing the trash removal from some established businesses and other businesses pay for their own rubbish removal.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the matter might be discussed with the merchants association.

Council Chairman Calouro agreed that there is a need to be fair and consistent with Town policies.

Councilman Stuart asked to know about grounds maintenance with Town Administrator Contente explaining that this is the landscaping contract.

Mr. Hewett asked to know if this same contract is utilized for sports fields with Public Works Director McBride explaining that this does cover the athletic fields and that there is no change from the previous scope of work.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Water Pollution Control - 604

Jose DaSilva, Superintendent

Water Pollution Control Superintendent DaSilva reported that there are no major changes in the budget recommendation versus last year's adopted budget.

Councilman Stuart asked to know the status of the RBC replacement project with Water Pollution Control Superintendent DaSilva reporting that 16 of the 24 units have been replaced.

A discussion ensued with Water Pollution Control Superintendent DaSilva explaining that the Town has made excellent progress with this project and that it plans to ask the State if it can delay its plan to replace four (4) units this year. He noted that the delay will save money and that the four unit replacement project cost is approximately \$1 million.

Town Administrator Contente outlined several improvement projects which will be completed this year including a line improvement in Fairveiw Drive.

Council Chairman Calouro explained that this Fairveiw Drive line will help mitigate the flooding that occurs at the treatment plant during significant storm events.

Councilman Sweeney noted that the pickup truck is old with Water Pollution Control Superintendent DaSilva explaining that the department's mechanics keep this truck in operation.

Town Administrator Contente explained that next year's focus will be to replace the water jet truck.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Compost - 606

Jose DaSilva, Superintendent

Council Chairman Calouro observed that the only increase listed on this budget was a salary adjustment.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Enterprise Fund - 607

Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that if the Town adds more units in determining its tax rolls, the proposed \$10 increase to the sewer fee may go down.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Municipal Observances - 807 - Fourth of July Line only

Frances C. O'Donnell, General Chairman

A discussion ensued regarding the cost of hay bales used for the annual Orange Crate Derby.

Town Administrator Contente suggested that the Fraternal Order of Police may be willing to pay for the cost of renting the hay bales and further suggested that Ms. O'Donnell might contact Joseph Diniz and Adam Clifford.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Rogers Free Library - 802

Joan Prescott, Librarian

Ms. Prescott reported that the "jury's still out" on the success of the recent Sunday openings. She further reported that recent Sunday openings brought 125, 139, and 199 visitors respectively and that volunteers are recording attendance at the door. She noted that the most popular materials for Sunday library visitors are video CDs.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know about the Computer replacement line with Ms. Prescott responding that the budget considers five new computers.

Councilwoman Parella noted that the Council has made progress at raising the salaries of the professional librarians during the past few years.

Ms. Prescott agreed that progress has been made and that she would like to see salaries raised further. She noted her goal to have the salaries reach those of school librarians which are known to be \$75,000 per year.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Parks and Recreation 803

Sarah Klein, Director

Walter Burke, Outgoing Director

Recreation Director Burke reported that program revenue is increasing.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if the department employs sufficient staff to cover the building during times when programs are ongoing. She stated that she wished to be assured that the building always has someone in place who is "in charge."

Recreation Director Burke stated that the budget considers this.

Recreation Director Klein reported that the department employed a college student as a supervisor who recently left employment at the community center. She added that Edward Carusi works three days per week during the off hours.

Councilwoman Parella emphasized the need to have supervisory coverage all times to deal with emergencies, etc.

Town Administrator Contente noted that there are funds in the budget to pay for this supervision.

Councilwoman Parella asked about coverage on Sunday with Recreation Director Klein explaining that Sunday programs are quite small.

Councilman Sweeney asked lifeguard coverage with Recreation Director Klein responding that he budget considers some salary increases and also additional coverage hours.

The Council agreed by consensus to place asterisks (*) on the Supervisor and Lifeguard lines.

Councilman Sweeney asked to know if the community center continues to see growth.

Recreation Director Klein reported that there was a very strong period of growth in recreation programs when the Quinta-Gamelin Recreation Center opened but that growth has slowed over time. She added that the department plans to add programs.

Recreation Director Burke noted that he has been negotiating with the Department of Environmental Management to obtain more field space at Colt State Park.

Councilwoman Parella asked about the ad-hoc committee working on the idea of an aquatic center.

Recreation Director Burke noted that the group has been meeting but there is nothing included in this year's budget request for an aquatic center.

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 9:00 o'clock PM.

Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk