

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

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

The Council met in workshop session on Thursday evening, March 22, 2018 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 6:33 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

Town Solicitor - 404

Michael A. Ursillo, Esq., Town Solicitor

Town Solicitor Ursillo noted that the budget recommendation represents a 2% increase over the current year's actual budget.

Councilman Sweeney asked to have a summary report of all pending legal matters and Town Solicitor Ursillo agreed to provide same.

Human Services - 801

Edward Carusi, Director

A discussion ensued regarding the Emergency Fund with Director Carusi explaining that this fund is one of last resort and that he typically does not use the budgeted emergency fund.

Director Carusi explained that one of his primary functions is to help persons who may be needed to navigate the many services and benefits that are available to them since obtaining these may be confusing.

Councilman Tyska asked to know if the Human Services Department was "tied in" to the elderly population with Director Carusi stating that he has much contact with the elderly population through his involvement with the emergency dialer program. He explains that he visits with the dialer program participants and tends to receive many referrals for the other services that he provides.

Town Administrator Contente noted that the Human Services office is now located in the recreation center and that it is more visible there since it was previously located in the basement of the Benjamin Church Senior Center.

Director Carusi agreed with Town Administrator Contente and noted that the move to the recreation center had a positive result.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if Director Carusi encounters continuing difficulty with the State's food stamp program with Director Carusi explaining that his department had to discover ways to "pick up the slack" when the State program failed. He informed the Council that he has been referring those who have difficulty obtaining food stamps to food pantries, churches, and other agencies and also provides supermarket "gift-cards" to assure that they are able to find what they need.

A discussion ensued regarding Director Carusi's hours and his other responsibilities working for the Recreation Department.

Councilman Tyska asked to know if Director Carusi coordinates efforts with the Senior Coordinator with Director Carusi explaining that he is beginning to collaborate with her on senior programs. He outlined several of the programs that are currently in process.

Councilwoman Parella asked for a breakdown of the Human Services served population with Director Carusi explaining that his efforts are utilized approximately 75% by families and 20% by senior citizens and a small percentage of individuals who are not seniors.

A discussion ensued regarding the dialer program with Director Carusi explaining that he installs approximately 4 new dialers per month and maintains the other many dialers also in service.

Director Carusi noted that his office has an excellent relationship with local churches, St. Mary's, St. Michael's, and the First Congregational in particular.

A discussion ensued regarding homelessness.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to place an asterisk (*) on the Emergency Fund line item so that it might consider it further at a later time. Otherwise, the Council made no changes to the recommended budget.

Human Resources - 805

Prior to consideration of this budget, Town Treasurer Goucher noted that some applicants enquired as to whether or not attendance for the workshop was necessary. She told the Council that she informed the callers that attendance was not necessary for their applications to be considered.

Emergency Dialers - S and Y
Edward Carusi, Human Services Director

A discussion ensued regarding funding the dialer program. Director Carusi noted that he has sufficient funds for the program due to donations from other sources and explained that he occasionally utilizes the Human Services "emergency fund" to purchase dialer equipment if there are shortfalls.

Council Chairman Calouro suggested that Director Carusi could return to the Council for a special appropriation for dialer equipment should there be a need to do so.

The Council agreed, by consensus, to place an asterisk (*) on the Human Resources line for Rotary (Y) so that the Council may again consider this item at a later time.

Human Resources - 805

Women's Resource Center - A
Sharon Rodrigues

Ms. Rodrigues explained that the Center serves as a Domestic Violence support center locally. She also explained that the main office is located in the City of Newport.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

East Bay Center - B
Robert Crossley

Dr. Crossley reviewed the Center's program and explained that the Center recently announced the opening of a "Recovery Center" at St. Michael's Parish House in Bristol. He explained that this is a pilot initiative in cooperation with the Bristol Health Equity Zone and that the "Grand Opening" will take place on May 2.

Dr. Crossley asked for level funding.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

East Bay Community Action Program - C
Dennis Roy

Mr. Roy thanked the Council for its past support and reviewed the program.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the Town may wish to increase funding for this program since it formerly received a larger amount from the Town.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to place an asterisk (*) on this line item so that it might be discussed further at a later time.

Benjamin Church Tenant Association - D
No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Visiting Nurse Services - E
Kara Pucciaruli

Ms. Pucciaruli explained that the agency is now known as Visiting Nurse Home and Hospice and that it is the largest non-profit skilled nursing and physical therapy agency in the area. She also explained that the agency offers a full array of services for the uninsured and underinsured.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Community String Project - F
No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Mt. Hope Wrestling Club - G
No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

King Philip Little League - H
No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Franklin Court Tenants Association - I
Claudette Sharkey

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Bristol Senior Citizens Council - J

No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Narragansett Council Boy Scouts of America - K

Adam Ballantine

Mr. Ballantine explained that the Boy Scouts is now accepting sisters of scouts to participate in its program at Bristol Pack 6. He noted that this is a pilot program

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Mosaico Community Development Corp. Sense of Pride Program - L

Diana Campbell

Amy Bratsos

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Bristol Art Museum - M

No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Harbor Lights - N

No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Cornerstone Adult Services - O

Geri Manning

Ms. Manning reported that Cornerstone provided 3,700 days of service for 19 Bristol residents last year.

Councilman Tyska asked to know if the Senior Coordinator is interacting with this agency with Ms. Manning explaining that she was not an on-site person. She added that she would be pleased to provide that information to the Council at a later date.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Samaritans - P

Denise Panichas

Ms. Panichas outlined a new program undertaken by the Samaritans. She asked for level funding

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Bristol Historical Society - Q

Katherine Zipf

Ms. Zipf outlined several of the Society's recent projects.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Coggeshall Farm Museum - R

No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Meals on Wheels - S

Heather Amaral

Ms. Amaral described the program and explained that the served population's needs are changing. She noted that Meals on Wheels tries to customize its offerings to provide healthier options and considered the diet of ethnic groups and persons with diabetes.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Art Night - T

Kendall Reiss

Ms. Reiss noted that her group collaborates with the Bristol Art Museum and that previous years' allocations were used to purchase print materials to promote the Art Night activities.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Neverland Theater

No representative present.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

East Bay Food Pantry

Karen Griffith

It is hereby noted for the record that Councilman Tyska recused himself from any discussion relating to this workshop item.

Ms. Griffith reported that 40% of the Food Pantry's clientele are Bristol residents.

The Council made no changes to this recommended budget.

Discussion

Councilman Tyska asked to know the amount of income derived from the charitable endowment.

Town Treasurer Goucher noted that the endowment yields an average of approximately \$60,000 in interest each year and that the remainder allocated through the Human Resources budget is derived from taxation.

A discussion ensued regarding possibly changing the way the Town allocates funds from its charitable endowment. Councilman Tyska suggested that the endowment interest might be distributed through a citizen committee.

Councilman Stuart noted that this was considered in the past.

Councilwoman Parella stated that she prefers that the distribution is made as part of an open, public process. She noted that the Town's contributions in the past were often used as "leverage" where the receiving agency would seek funding from other sources and use the Town's contribution as matching funds.

Community Development - 601
Tourism/Promotion line item

At this point in the meeting the Council considered the previously unresolved matter of the Tourism/Promotion line which had been marked earlier with an asterisk (*).

Jeffrey Hirsh, representing Explore Bristol provided the Council (no clerk copy) of an outline of the several news articles attributed to the work of the Lou Hammond agency. He noted that Hammond is "on hiatus" at this time and that the agency works for six months for Explore Bristol's marketing effort.

Mr. Hirsh noted that the budget amount recommended for this line is \$20,000 and that Explore Bristol is seeking \$28,000 and that his group will be able to "make it work" for \$28,000.

Councilwoman Parella stated that she believes that the Hammond program is the most valuable component of the Explore Bristol

program and that this is evidenced through the increase in meal tax.

Mr. Hirsh noted that Airbnb and Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) are also increasing.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that Convention and Visitor Bureau Representative Karen Binder reports that the City of Newport uses a private vendor to help collect taxes from Airbnb etc. and that the Town may wish to consider this in the future. He noted that the vendor takes a finder's fee as their payment.

Michael Byrnes noted that the VRBO tax is supposed to be paid to the State.

Councilman Tyska suggested that the Council might need more information prior to making a decision.

Director of Community Development Williamson noted that last year's appropriation of \$30,000 was distributed as follows:

\$20,000 - Hammond
9,000 - Events
1,000 - Contingency

She noted that there may be \$4,000 left over at the end of the year.

Director of Community Development Williamson noted that Economic Development Coordinator Vitale has some ideas for grant opportunities to supplement the Town's contribution. She also stated that Explore Bristol could derive an income from monetizing its website.

Economic Development Coordinator Vitale noted that the Explore Bristol website is very popular with over 194,000 hits.

Town Administrator Contente stated that the budget recommendation is based upon the usage of the previously allocated funds. He noted that the full funding was not used in the past two budget cycles. He explained that he believes that the \$20,000 recommended in his budget will yield a good result.

Council Chairman Calouro suggested that perhaps the Council might wish to allocate some funding from its Contingency line.

It was noted that each \$25,000 of spending results in a \$0.01 increase in the tax rate.

Councilwoman Parella stated that she does not wish for the Town to lose ground with its marketing efforts through Explore Bristol and Hammond and reminded the Council that the meal and beverage tax is increasing significantly.

Economic Development Coordinator Vitale noted that the goal of this "Tourism/Promotion" line is to secure more festivals to bring in visitors after the Fourth of July activities have concluded.

Mr. Byrnes noted that Explore Bristol employs Hammond's services for seven months.

Stuart/Parella - Voted unanimously to increase the Tourism/Promotion line to \$28,000.

Parks and Recreation - 803

Supervisors

Lifeguards

At this point in the meeting the Council considered the previously unresolved matters of the Supervisors and Lifeguards lines which had been each marked earlier with an asterisk (*).

Councilman Stuart asked to know why the salaries of the lifeguards were increased with Town Administrator Contente explaining that there is a small pool of individuals who are qualified for this position and that their duties include a good deal of responsibility.

Council Chairman Calouro suggested that the Council needed more details on this matter.

A discussion ensued regarding the supervision at the Quinta Gamelin Community Center with Councilwoman Parella observing that the Town is in need of "mature, responsible persons" for the supervisor positions and that the supervisors must assure that there is no inappropriate behavior at the center.

Town Administrator Contente noted that Mr. Carusi's hours have been adjusted and that there is supervisory coverage at the

Center each evening from 4:00 until 9:00 o'clock PM. He added that Saturday coverage is also included in the recommended budget.

Councilwoman Parella suggested that the Director and Assistant Director should stagger their hours.

Town Administrator Contente stated that they do somewhat stagger their hours and that the current plan is a definite improvement over what had been in place in earlier years.

Town Administrator Contente agreed that the supervisors should be adults and not students and that the plan includes good coverage until 9:00 o'clock PM. He agreed that there is a need to make improvements to the coverage plan for Sunday.

Council Chairman Calouro noted that further discussion was needed on the following"

Parks and Recreation - Supervisors
Human Services - Emergency Fund
Human Resources - Rotary (Emergency Dialers, etc.)
Human Resources - East Bay Community Action

Councilman Tyska suggested that the Council may wish to think about reallocation of the amount deducted from the Human Resources Emergency Fund. He also suggested that this reallocation might be decided based upon the recommendation of department heads.

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 9:20 o'clock PM.

Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk