



THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE JOINT BOARD OF FINANCE / BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2020

A Joint Board of Finance/Board of Selectmen Meeting for the Town of Woodbridge was held in the Central Meeting Room at the Town Hall, Woodbridge, Connecticut on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:00 pm

BOF PRESENT: Chairman, Matthew Giglietti; Vice Chairman, Paul Kuriakose; Susan Jacobs Tom Handler; Tom Kenefick; Ellen Scalettar

BOS PRESENT: First Selectmen, Beth Heller; Deputy First Selectman, Mica Cardozo; Joseph Crisco; Joseph Dey; Dwight Rowland; Sandy Stein

ALSO PRESENT: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance, Anthony Genovese; Budget Analyst/Payroll & Benefits Administrator, Karen Crosby

Chairman of the Board of Finance, Matthew Giglietti, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Matt gave Tom Kenefick a few moments. Tom informed the Board members that Tim Smith, the Orange Fire Marshal, passed away in a motor vehicle accident on Sunday. Tom asked for a moment of silence in Tim's memory.

First Selectman, Beth Heller, notified the Boards that due to a technical error, the meeting date for the Board of Selectmen to make their budget recommendations to the Board of Finance was left off the list of Board of Selectmen meetings for 2020. They have now scheduled this meeting for Tuesday, February 18th.

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent Jennifer Byars presented the FY21 Proposed Budget (the presentation is attached). Finance Director, Terry Lumas, was also in attendance.

Tom Kenefick and Susan Jacobs left the meeting at 6:35 pm

Dr. Byars presented a budget of \$51,507,492 (3.95% increase) with the Woodbridge portion being \$15,985,182, an increase of 6.8%.

Deputy First Selectman, Mica Cardozo asked about personnel. Dr. Byars stated that the number is pretty flat.

Finance Board Member, Ellen Scalettar asked without the mandates, contract increases, and debt service; have they calculated what the increase is in the remaining budget.

Dr. Byars stated that to calculate the dollar amount of the mandates would be hard to calculate. They could calculate the rest.

Tom Handler asked about the SRO officers. There are other schools that are looking not to use an SRO, but security personnel instead.

Dr. Byars stated that the models she has seen is the school security officers are overseen by the Town police department. Amity has three towns involved. The police department is overseeing the security personnel. North Branford is one of the models. The lead security officer has the town police radios. Amity does not have the same flexibility as a town. Dr. Byars stated that it is as simple as who oversees the gun licensing and the necessary training. For a regional district it is not as feasible as a regional district.

Sandy Stein stated that there is an increase of 5.14% in FY21-22. Terry Lumas stated that would be the first year that the new debt would be impacting the budget. Then the old debt starts to fall off. That year is making assumptions that medical benefits would have a 10% increase.

Tom Handler asked about the IT personnel increase. Dr. Byars stated that currently we have devices for each of our students. In each school we have one technician in each school. Next year they are adding 9th and 10th grade for devices and they will need another person. They are also looking to create a student-run help desk. That new person would be there to oversee the students on that help desk. The devices are leased three years at a time.

Ellen Scalettar asked about the DERG and if Amity was still in DERG B and asked for some statistics.

Mica Cardozo asked what the impact would be if the proposed budget is not approved. Dr. Byars stated that the technology piece would be affected. Last September their network came within two hours of going down. They would have lost the Power School program that they use to communicate with parents, their phones, their door locks, emergency messenger, wi-fi boosters. Everything that they use to maintain the schools and keep the students safe would have been lost. All of their technology is all in one basket and it is breaking. They now realize they need to keep two baskets to have the level of quality that they need. Other requests such as the SRO and social worker will have an effect on the students. Technology is their biggest safety concern now.

ASSESSOR

Matt introduced Betsy Quist, who is making her final presentation as she is retiring in August.

Tony Genovese stated that he passed out a summary of the budget requests so far and the preliminary Grand List amount.

The expenditure requests are 6.25%.

Tony stated that the salary increases are for two years because we had contracts that were not settled. For one of those years, there is a corresponding decrease in Contingency.

Betsy presented a budget request of \$178,379 an increase of 4.88% all being salary related.

Sandy Stein asked if the plotter in the Assessor's office is different than the one in the Building Department.

Betsy stated that the one in the Assessor's office does everything – it scans and copies and the Building Department plotter just copies.

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

Betsy Quist presented a budget request of \$2,000 a decrease of 13.04%.

Betsy reported that the Grand List numbers were run today and there is a \$43,000,000 decrease in the grand list. The median house value went from \$425,000 down to about \$409,000. Betsy will attend the Board of Selectmen meeting on February 12th to do a more in-depth review. There were some increases in house value. The houses under \$300,000 literally 32% went down in value. Betsy stated that no other Towns are seeing an increase, unless you are an Oxford with a lot of continuous building. When you get to that 40 mills and you are living in a house with \$28,000 to \$30,000 in taxes it doesn't look that good to move into. Those houses lost about 10%. So a \$1,000,000 house is now selling or \$800,000.

Sandy stated that she attended a Housing forum sponsored by TEAM and they shared with the group between 2008 and 2017 in Connecticut 152 of 169 municipalities saw a real decline in their Grand List. Betsy stated that especially with the dynamics of Woodbridge. We have 175 houses greater than 5,000 square feet. Over one third of our homes are large. The wave of the future is smaller homes.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

There was no one in attendance and Tony will try to get someone for the next meeting.

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Adam Parsons presented a budget of \$274,581 which represents an increase of 8.09%, 5.37% of the increase is due to salaries.

Requesting an increase in Part Time Seasonal due to the low starting rate he couldn't get anyone for the starting rate of \$15, so he wants to raise the rate to \$20 per hour. Adam is also requesting \$4,000 for mulch at the Pease Playground. The Parks Department is responsible for taking care of town grounds and ball fields. The ballfields are located at Acorn Hill, Center Road Fields, West River, Woodbridge Athletic Fields on Pease Road, the Tennis Courts on Center Road, also takes care of the town grounds.

The ice rink on the Center Road Tennis Courts is now open.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Brad Parsons presented a budget of \$435,143 which is an increase of .78% all salary related. The Building Maintenance Department is responsible for: Public Works Building, Town Hall, Thomas Darling House, South School, Center Building, Library, Old Firehouse, and New Firehouse when needed, and gives assistance at Beecher Road School.

POOL AND GYM

Brad presented a budget request of \$89,553 which is a 3.83% all salary related. This budget is for the operation of the pool and a part time custodian. The staff for the pool is in the Recreation budget. The Dectron is working fine. It is on the Beecher Building Management system.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tony Genovese presented a budget request of \$626,233 which is a 5.72% decrease. The decrease is the elimination of the Gant Writer position. Beth stated that the current staff has stepped up to take over those duties.

Matt stated there have been a number of positions that have not been filled. Tony stated that if you go back five years there have been about 8-10 positions that have not been filled or went from full time to part time. Tony stated that there is another this year in public works.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Tony presented a budget of \$255,700 which is a decrease of 2.33%. The Town bid insurance last year and it came in favorably for the Town.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Tony presented a requested budget of \$177,721 which is an increase of 40.34%. Tony stated that last year we used Amity as our IT consultants and for a number of reasons many of which Dr. Byars mentioned tonight. The IT department has their share of work this year. In order for them to continue to work with us next year, their amount went from \$28,000 to about \$130,000. They would have to add personnel in order to accommodate the Town and the Police Departments. The Town has investigated to get quotes from other IT companies. After doing research we got a quote for \$80,000 for the whole Town (Town, Police and Fire Department). There is approximately \$10,000 in the Fire budget and this budget includes the Town and Police. The company would have someone certified to do Police work and would relieve the sergeant from the IT work at the PD. Tony would still like to use the Amity Director of IT as a consultant for questions and strategy. Also use him for a second opinion from time to time.

Tony reported that part of this budget is in the Telephone Communications line for off-site data storage and internet service at the Transfer Station due to the scale. The computer line is increased because last year the request was eliminated and we are adding funds for the computer replacement program.

The Fire Department has their IT in their budget request. Tony will move funds to the Police budget from the IT budget for the Police IT portion. It will be easier to track their use and cost. Ellen questioned putting the funds in the PD budget. Tony stated that if it is in their budget they see the expenditures and need to use those funds appropriately. They can track their use.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Tony presented a budget request of \$262,809 which represents an increase of 1.98% which is all salary related. Banking fees are fees the Town pays for all transactions.

GOVERNMENT ACCESS TELEVISION

Pua Ford presented a requested budget of \$27,429, an increase of \$10.97%.

Pua reported that they record as much as they can of meetings – gavel to gavel. They record Town Meetings, Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Woodbridge Board of Education, and Land Use Departments. They have added Conservation Commission, Economic Development, and CUPOP. They then want to cover Police and Fire Commission.

Pua introduced Tobenna Nwangwu, second in command on the commission and also serves on the Economic Development Commission.

Pua reported that Human Services has not been recorded because a while ago a commission member stated that they were glad that they don't get recorded because they get a little silly at times.

Live broadcasts are for meetings in the Main Meeting Room of Town Hall. One of her objectives is to find the wi-fi in the Center Gym in order to broadcast the Preliminary Budget Hearing and Annual Town Meeting.

When Pua started here she was told that she would only be needed as a coordinator to oversee students. She has heard that Orange will be paying students from the Amity Video Program \$18.00 per hour at a minimum of two hours. We pay a minimum of one hour. She doesn't know if that will affect the number of people we get for our program.

Beth asked about the Goals for 2020 and the item of replacing the Coordinator in the next three years. Pua would like to keep working and bring someone else in to learn this bit by bit but no institution should depend on one person.

Mica asked about the Conference line increase. Pua stated that the conference is in Chicago.

Matt stated that the next meeting is on Thursday and the first item on the agenda is an audit review by Scott Bassett from RSM. If there are any questions, bring them in for Scott.

Tony stated that we will try to have Conservation and EDC attend the Thursday meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Crosby

Karen Crosby
Budget Analyst
Payroll & Benefits Administrator