



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

MICHAEL J. PURCARO
Chairman

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DAVID J. OLENDER
Vice Chairmen

BOARD OF FINANCE

PEGGY A. BUSSE
JAMES F. FAY
DOUGLAS B. HARDING
BARRY C. PINTO

BUDGET HEARING

March 27, 2023

MINUTES

Members Present: Michael Purcaro -Chair, David Olender, Peggy Busse via zoom, James Fay, Douglas Harding via zoom.

Members Absent: Barry Pinto

Others Present: Tiffany Pignataro – Finance Officer/Treasurer, Dustin Huguenin - Recreation Director, Kevin Barrett – Recreation Coordinator, Lori Spielman – First Selectman, LouAnn Cannella – Human Resources Coordinator, John Turner – Board of Selectmen, Tom Modzelewski – Public Works Superintendent of Operations, Robert Smith – Deputy Chief via zoom, Aaron Fliss – Director of Technology, John Rainaldi – Town Assessor, Ann Marie Conti – Tax Collector, Donna Hosey – Town Clerk, Lisa Houlihan – Town Planner, Sue Philips – Hall Memorial Library Director, Rebecca Stack – Human Services Director, Kristen Harp – Youth Services Director, Sheila Grady – Senior Center Director, Ken Radziwon – Department of Public Works Director, Ray Martin – Building Official, Brian Santa – Sergeant, Resident State Troopers’ Supervisor, Jim York – Fire Marshal, Walter Lee – Emergency & Risk Management Director, Pete Hany – EVAC President, Jay Rich – EVFD Chief, Lois Timms-Ferrarra – Democratic Registrar of Voters, Julia Connor – Communications Coordinator via zoom, Timothy Seitz – CLFD Chief.

Call to Order

Chairman Michael Purcaro called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

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Citizen’s Forum

None came forward.

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Budget Workshop

Dustin Huguenin – Recreation:

Mr. Huguenin gave an update on the department. They are proposing to increase their camp offerings; including meals, transportation for field trips, etc.

Lori Spielman – Charter Revision/Town Communications/Website:

Mr. Purcaro asked about Paylocity. He asked if there was another town we can work with or another department for better leverage. The Selectman stated new employee physicals have gone up. Mrs. Cannella took an average of 5 years and every time there is a turnover, they have to do a physical.

John Rainaldi – Tax Assessor:

Mr. Rainaldi stated the goal is to approve community outreach, there are a lot of tax relief programs out there. Mr. Rainaldi has been joining Human Services, the Senior Center, etc. to get the word out there about the incentives the town offers. Mr. Rainaldi stated the one line that stands out is the \$21,000 for personal property audits. He stated generally you will save money by doing these. The town has not done an audit since 2015. He proposed to quarterly update our town website map costing \$500. Mr. Fay asked about the increase in motor vehicles. Mr. Rainaldi stated the pricing is dictated to us.

Ann Marie Conti – Tax Collector:

Mrs. Conti was happy to announce the collection rate is up to 98.8%.

Tiffany Pignataro – Finance Officer:

Mrs. Pignataro stated their department accomplished getting audits filed on time, this past year the audit had no deficiencies. She stated this goes hand and hand with the work they are doing with the Board of Education. They have enhanced their support and availability from two days a week to four days a week. They have a significant amount of capital projects, which come with bidding requirements, etc. The Finance Department's goals are to go to automated payments, they are still doing check payments for every purchase made. They are working towards a paperless system and keeping things on locked drives vs. on paper files. Mr. Fliss stated they are identifying savings and places they can save costs with the schools.

Donna Hosey – Town Clerk:

Mrs. Hosey stated her main increase is for professional development. She stated she hired an assistant that must go to the required training. She stated she had to go up in costs due to the office having four printers; including the cost of ink/toner/acid-free paper.

Tiffany Pignataro – Town Counsel/Probate Court:

Mrs. Pignataro stated there is an increase year over year due to ongoing legal issues.

Lisa Houlihan – Town Planner/Planning Boards:

Mrs. Houlihan gave an overview of the department. She stated the increase in the town planner account is due to a salary increase, other accounts have gone down overall.

Tiffany Pignataro – Permanent Building/Miscellaneous:

The only increase is the cost of a recording secretary. This is assuming they have additional meetings, as the Windermere project gets rolling, etc. **AD HOC:** Flat funded year over year they are looking to buy a tripod, wireless speaker, and flags. **Beautification Unification:** Mrs. Pignataro stated the committee is proposing for an increase for the Halloween and holiday lighting contest. **Salary Adjustment Account:** Decrease of \$8,000 compared to the adjusted rates. **Employee Education and Development:** Provides funding for training and development; this is a charter requirement.

Tiffany Pignataro – Debt Services:

Mrs. Pignataro stated year over year principal and interest are flat. She said there are ups and downs in terms of what they are able to level out. Emphasis on mill rate stabilization fund for when debt starts rolling in on projects they would have the ability to not come back for an appropriation in the following year. This will be a great way to start saving up for our future; helping to save money on interest.

Tiffany Pignataro – Fixed Chargers:

Social security tax: Mr. Purcaro asked if we could migrate part-time and seasonal employees over to a different plan. **Insurance:** We have switched to a state partnership. She stated we saw a reduction in CMERs with two retirements. **Insurance Reimbursement Claims:** Mrs. Pignataro stated they looked at a 5-year trend. Mr. Purcaro asked why it is more than double its increase. He asked if they could look at decreasing the budget.

Sue Philips – Library:

Mrs. Philips gave an overview of the department. She stated they have three major additions: salary, programming, and their online calendar program where the public can book rooms. They need a new system due to the current one being outdated.

Rebecca Stack – Human Services

Mrs. Stack stated the department strives to meet the need of our community. They would like to example the house and variety of food at their food bank. Looking at professional development opportunities this was a decrease since there are more virtual cost-effective options.

Kristen Harp – Director of Human Service:

Mrs. Harp gave an overview of the department; their goal is to increase program services. She would like to make the program coordinator full-time to offer the community more programs. As well as expand their unified programs; adding 8 weeks to run the program for a full year. This will in exchange bring in revenue since more programs will be running.

Ken Radziwon – Public Fire/Public Works/Town Properties/Demolition:

Mr. Radziwon gave an overview of the department. Mr. Purcaro asked him to look into the water costs; look and make sure all 180 fire hydrants are working. Mr. Purcaro asked about the supply of salt and if we will see a decrease due to a mild winter. Mr. Modzelewski said no because there was an increase in tons.

Shelia Grady – Senior Center:

Mrs. Grady gave an overview of the senior center. The department's goal is to increase participation. They want to expand the nutrition program. One increase in the budget is the hope to increase the café manager's time from 15 hours to 18 hours. As well as expand transportation opportunities, bringing members to grocery shopping, errands, etc. She stated their revenue has dramatically increased due to more drivers and the café. A fitness center is in the process with ARPA.

Ray Martin – Building:

Mr. Martin stated there was a decrease in dues and subscriptions because he does not use the subscription anymore.

Brian Santa – Police/Special Duty/ DARE:

Sgt. Santa stated they have active shooting training scheduled for this upcoming year. Twice a year they have annual maintenance on the cars; lights, switches, etc. They have installed a new body cam system. For special duty, they don't know what projects will look like. DARE: Mr. Purcaro asked where the \$1500 goes. Sgt. Santa stated it allows them to buy books, backpacks, etc. for the students. Animal Control: uniforms and clothing increase. Sgt. Santa stated there is no set dress code and he would like to enforce one.

Jim York – Fire Marshal:

Mr. York gave a review of the department. He stated smoke alarms that are now 10 years or older are now mandatory to replace. They are using an iCloud inspection program on iPads; they are trying to use technology as much as they can. He stated the Windermere Project will take a great amount of their time since it is a phased project.

Walter Lee – Emergency 911/Preemption/Emergency Service Committee:

Mr. Lee stated they have training that they must provide to the staff. He stated a few DPW workers went to OSHA training after hurting their backs. Their goal is to make sure supervisors are receiving disciplinary training; our labor attorney will be coming in and holding training. They as well plan to provide personal safety training to supervisors and then to all staff; teaching them how to be safe in the office environment. Additional cost for animal control; they will be dispatched through the same system.

Pete Hany – EVAC:

Mr. Hany stated the third-party electric and gas increase is budgeted at the Eversource rate. Building repairs; they have budgeted for new carpet which was covered by ARPA. Professional Development: they have added their annual banquet to the budget.

Tim Seitz – CLFD

Mr. Seitz stated the most significant item is trying to itemize physicals. He would like to update battery-powered flashlights and update them to battery-powered LED, replacing thermal cameras from 2005. Mr. Olender asked if he could split up purchasing the flashlights.

Jay Rich – EVFD

Mr. Rich gave an overview of the department. Mr. Olender asked him to look through banquet costs. The chief stated they have talked to EVAC and CLFD about combining their annual banquets. They are proposing to upgrade their on-scene portable light, switching to battery-operated.

Lois Timms-Ferrarra – Registrars/Referendum

Mr. Timms-Ferrarra stated we may have up to 14 days of early election which she included in the budget. They are hoping to have their voter machines upgraded. She stated they do anticipate state funding to help with this increase. The biggest increase is the part-time workers for the elections. Moderators will need training on new equipment as well.

Adjournment

MOVED FAY SECONDED OLENDER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Elizabeth Phelps, Recording Secretary