

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

 55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187

 ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT
 06029-0187

 TEL 860-870-3100
 FAX 860-870-3102

 www.ellington-ct.gov

DAVID E. STAVENS Deputy First Selectman

JAMISON J. BOUCHER MARY B. CARDIN JAMES M. PRICHARD RONALD F. STOMBERG JOHN W. TURNER

LORI L. SPIELMAN First Selectman

BOARD OF SELECTMEN Monday, March 4, 2024 Nicholas J. DiCorleto, Jr. Meeting Hall and via ZOOM Conferencing

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. ROLL CALL

<u>Selectmen Present</u>: Lori Spielman, David Stavens, Mary Cardin, James Prichard, John Turner, Ronald Stomberg, Jamison Boucher

<u>Town Staff Present</u>: Matthew Reed, Town Administrator; Tiffany Pignataro, Finance Officer/ Treasurer; John Rainaldi, Assessor; Walter Lee, Emergency & Risk Management Director; Rebecca Stack, Human Services Director; Tom Modzelewski, Director, Perry Dikeman, Mechanic II, Department of Public Works (DPW); Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner; Sheila Grady, Senior Center Director; Dustin Huguenin, Recreation Director; *LouAnn Cannella, Human Resources Coordinator; *James York, Fire Marshal; Sue Phillips, Hall Memorial Library Director; *Sgt. Brian Santa, Resident State Troopers' Supervisor; *Kristen Harp, Youth Services Director; Lois Timms-Ferrara, Democratic Registrar of Voters

<u>Emergency Service Agency Representatives Present</u>: Peter Hany, Sr., President, Bruce Hoffman, Vice President, Nicole Caron, Deputy Chief, Ed Landsberg, Alisa Smith, Ellington Volunteer Ambulance Corps (EVAC); Timothy Seitz, Chief, Crystal Lake Fire Department (CLFD); Jack Rich II, Chief, Ellington Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD)

<u>Other Elected Officials Present</u>: Douglas Harding, Chairman, *Logan Johnson, Board of Finance (BOF); Jennifer Dzen, Chairman, Steven Viens, Board of Education (BOE); *Mary Blanchette, Chairman, Library Board of Trustees

*Attended via ZOOM

- III. PUBLIC COMMENT [this portion shall not exceed 30 minutes unless extended by majority vote of the Board]: There was no public comment.
- IV. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Budget FY 2024-2025

First Selectman Spielman turned the meeting over to Ms. Pignataro to present the proposed budget for fiscal year 2024-2025. Ms. Pignataro shared a PowerPoint presentation [ATTACHED] and pointed out that since the Town filed the Grand List within the deadline once again this year, she was able to

provide the BOS with a complete budget picture, including forecasted and budgeted revenues. She covered the major changes for each main line item, sharing both the dollar amounts and percentages of the requested increases or decreases; these details can be found in the attached presentation. The proposed FY 2024-2025 budget includes a continuation of funding for essential local government services as well as proposed expansions and staffing updates that will move the Town forward in terms of growth, development and overall sustainability. She also touched upon the Town's improved credit rating, which will save taxpayer dollars in the form of interest for upcoming projects. She shared the components of the "budget building" process and the FY 2024-25 budget highlights, including a proposed increase of 2.9 to the mill rate. She outlined the overall revenue and expenditure numbers, as well as the projections to the Town's fund balance. She shared that since the BOS passed the Fund Balance Policy, huge strides have been made towards the target of 10% of budgeted annual expenditures.

The proposed revenue budget line reflects a 6.34% increase, totaling \$71,534,676; this includes property taxes, state and federal grants, investment earnings, and other income sources. The proposed expenditures budget, not including BOE or capital outlay, brings a 6.36% increase, totaling \$22,863,710.

Ms. Pignataro shared that a significant number of staffing requests came in this year, falling under EVAC, EVFD, and DPW; these were not included within the proposed budget, but Ms. Pignataro felt that it was important to share these requests with the BOS.

Ms. Cardin asked for clarification between the unassigned fund balance and the stabilization fund that falls under Debt Services; Ms. Pignataro stated that these funds are earmarked for known costs, while the unassigned fund balance is a general pool that is not designated for specific purposes. Brief discussion was held on if the proposed efforts are sufficient to cover future needs of the Town.

Ms. Pignataro spoke to the fluctuation of the Salary Adjustment account due to the process that occurs during employee evaluations and subsequent raises. This line item also includes \$50,000 to fund future public safety initiatives to help advance the Town's long-range planning. Ms. Cardin asked what these funds would potentially be used toward; Ms. Pignataro shared that it may go towards any future public safety position(s). Mr. Stomberg stated that it is nice to put that funding away for the future, but that the \$50,000 may not be sufficient for the plans that may unfold. Mr. Reed commented that conversations have taken place with emergency service personnel. He stated that before any related proposals move forward, there need to be very clear agreements in place between the Town and these agencies. Mr. Turner shared his support for the approach that Mr. Reed had verbalized; there are supervision concerns, current contract requirements, and Human Resources considerations, and this is a start in the direction that the Town may choose to go in.

Ms. Cardin asked Ms. Pignataro about the reductions under Other Income; Ms. Pignataro stated that one of the biggest drivers is within the Town Clerk's Office, due to less real estate activity, as well as a settling of the Grand List.

Mr. Modzelewski took over and presented the proposed Public Works Budget, sharing an overview and some highlights of the proposal.

He noted that the Sanitary Recycling account had a proposed 26.09% increase due to processing fees not being budgeted for the previous year. Ms. Cardin asked the reason why these had not been

Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting March 4, 2024

included in last year's budget; Mr. Modzelewski stated that he was not involved in the department's budget development the previous year, but efforts are being made to rectify this shortfall.

It was confirmed that the JJ Keller – Federal/CT Labor Law Posters within the BOS budget covered all Town buildings.

Discussion was held on the differences between the Center Fire (EVFD) and CLFD budget requests, specifically the required physicals for members and related OSHA guideline changes. A discrepancy in the number of total EVFD members was also brought up; Chief Rich commented that one of these discrepancies was a typo and that there are 28 current members, but he is optimistically anticipating adding two more to come to 30 total. It was noted that the cadets are not included in this count. Ms. Pignataro will work to quantify any fluctuations that appear and will present any updated figures to the BOF during deliberations.

Discussion was held on the differences in custodial services between EVFD and CLFD, and the agencies were urged to remain in communication to pursue any cost-saving opportunities.

Mr. Hany confirmed that while ambulance drivers can use the Suburban, others drive their personal vehicle and get reimbursed for travel. In regard to the EVAC Motor Vehicle Repair item, Mr. Turner expressed that he is a firm believer in looking at 5-year averages for this kind of thing, as it gives a better picture of where the requested numbers come from; he stated that he would like to see this data in the future. Mr. Turner also asked for confirmation that the EVAC Medical Supplies line also covered the fire departments; Mr. Hany confirmed this.

Ms. Cardin asked about Animal Control submitting reports like those received from the other departments. Mr. Turner and Sgt. Santa shared some details of the current transition of Animal Control coming under the supervision of the Resident State Troopers Office and stated that once a system is identified to allow for better interfacing with the current setup, it will be easier to create and share such reports. Brief discussion was also held about the different alarm systems throughout Town buildings.

Ms. Cardin asked about the number of Ellington residents served by the Hockanum Valley Community Council, as well as the total number of rides taken by residents. Ms. Stack stated that while she did not have access to these reports now, she would be able to provide more clarified data to the BOS within her next departmental report. It was noted that this line item was a decrease from the \$30,000 it had been in the past, due to the Senior Center recently increasing in-house transportation services. This item is also offset by a DOT grant.

Mr. Turner commented on the Health District line item, noting that the population number has increased which will affect these calculations. Ms. Pignataro will confirm this information with the North Central District Health Department and will ensure that the increase is reflected appropriately.

Ms. Cardin asked a general question of if there was a list of services that are currently shared between two or more departments, as she is curious if the Town is taking advantage of bundling services within a single contract. Ms. Pignataro stated that there are ongoing discussions between departments in efforts to pool resources and gain purchasing power. Mr. Modzelewski added that a new HVAC Mechanical Services Contract was recently entered into which includes the emergency services buildings, and that a new electrical rates bundle also includes the BOE, which the Town continues to work with in shared services efforts.

Ms. Pignataro acknowledged that there are still some moving parts within the budget; she will make updates as awaited estimates come in and will provide the most accurate projections for the BOF deliberations.

MOVED (TURNER), SECONDED (STAVENS) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN TOWN BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025, AS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN, A GRAND TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$22,863,710.00.

It was noted that this grand total did not include capital outlay items or the BOE budget.

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (TURNER), SECONDED (BOUCHER) AND PASS UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE 2024-2025 BUDGET MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AT 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Connor

Lori Spielman

Julia Connor, Recording Secretary

Lori Spielman, First Selectman



Town of Ellington BOS Budget Presentation

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

MARCH 4, 2024

TIFFANY PIGNATARO, CPA, MBA, FINANCE OFFICER/TREASURER



Budget Overview

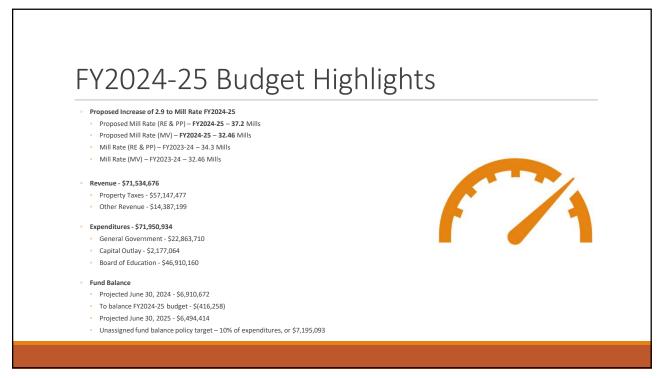
- Continuation of funding for the essential local government services that our residents rely upon
- Proposed expansions of current services, as well as staffing changes that would continue to move the Town forward in terms of growth, development and overall sustainability of our community with regards to public safety initiatives
- Increased efforts of mill rate stabilization
- Difficult current economic conditions
- Minimum wage increases
- Increased costs of goods and services
- Improved credit rating with Moody's of "Aa2"
 - Budget puts an emphasis on continuing these forward strides, maintaining fiscal health, and building of operational reserves
 - Will save a significant amount of taxpayer dollars in the form of interest for upcoming bonding for Windermere School Renovation Project, BOE HVAC Project, and the Comprehensive Athletic Lighting Project

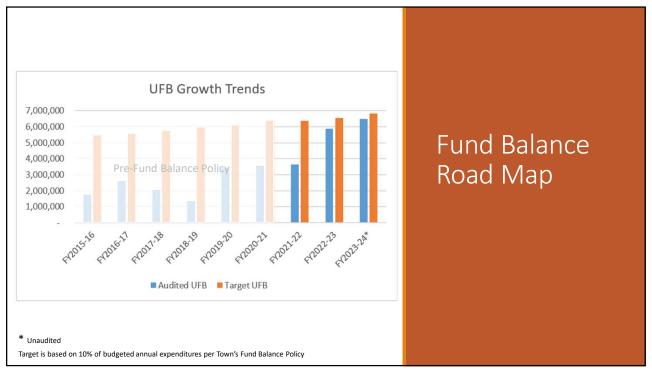


- Challenges department heads to think from the ground up and utilize historical trends to predict future revenues and expenditures
- Focuses on cost-effectiveness, relevance and improved savings
- Encourages forward-thinking strategic goals and initiatives
- Results in financial transparency, identification of strategic priorities and creation of a platform for evaluation and optimization of Town resources
- Reflects a comprehensive plan for moving Ellington forward, allowing the Board of Finance to prioritize budget proposals based upon value-add to the Ellington community

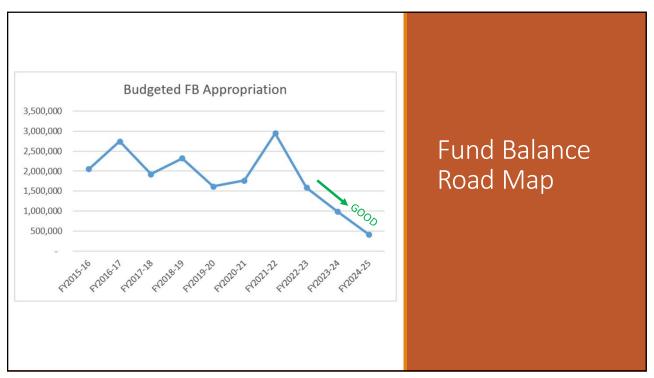


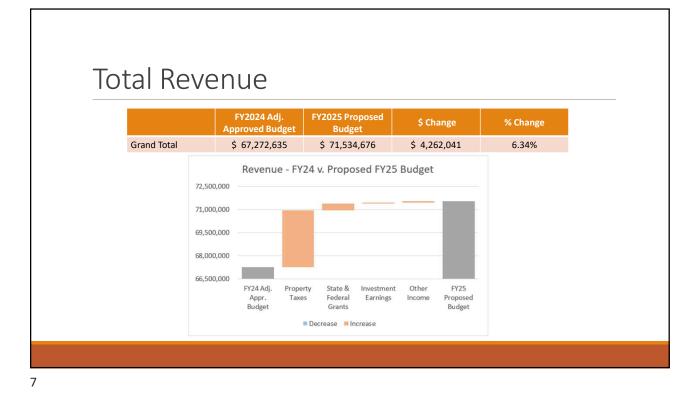
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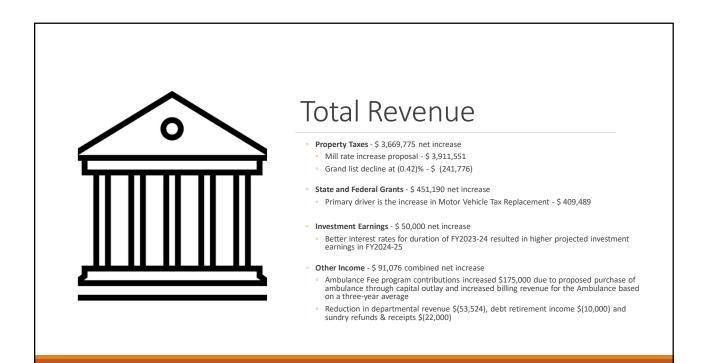


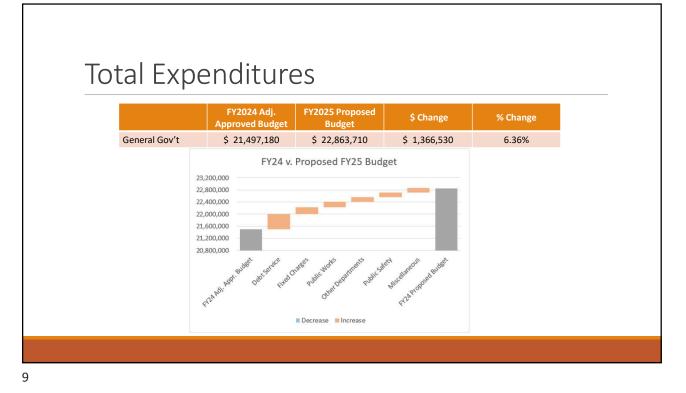












Requested Staffing Not Included

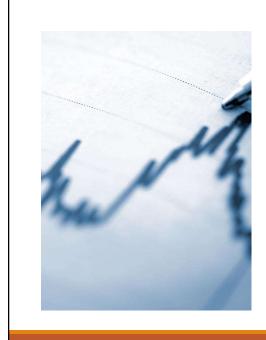
Department	Position	FTE	Estimated Salary	Estimated Benefits
EVAC	EMT/Ambulance Driver	1.0	49,920	46,243
EVAC	EMT/Ambulance Driver	1.0	49,920	46,243
EVAC	EMT/Ambulance Driver	1.0	49,920	46,243
EVAC	EMT/Ambulance Driver	1.0	49,920	46,243
EVFD	Part Time Firefighter	0.5	26,000	1,989
EVFD	Part Time Firefighter	0.5	26,000	1,989
EVFD	Part Time Firefighter	0.5	26,000	1,989
EVFD	Part Time Firefighter	0.5	26,000	1,989
EVFD	Part Time Firefighter	0.5	26,000	1,989
EVFD	Part Time Firefighter	0.5	26,000	1,989
DPW	Grant/Project Manager	1.0	100,000	55,954
Total			455,680	252,862



General Government

\$37,267 or 1.61% net increase

- Board of Selectmen \$ 198,927 or 40.70% net increase
 - Reclassifying costs related to IT services from Finance Office budget to Board of Selectmen budget – increase of \$212,375
 - $^{\rm o}$ Reduction in salary related to First Selectman being part-time for a full year (43,528)
- Finance Officer \$ (150,270) or (24.71)% net decrease
 - Reclassifying costs related to IT services from Finance Office budget to Board of Selectmen budget decrease of (184,841)
 - Increase in contracted services for arbitrage calculation, bidding and contract portal subscription, and bank fees
- Town Counsel \$ (10,000) or (6.90)% net decrease
 - Decrease in anticipation of lower costs associated with upcoming union negotiations



Boards & Agencies

\$5,464 or 4.24% net increase

- Registrars & Electors \$ 5,464 or 7.0% net increase
- Increase in the projected turnout with the November 2024 Presidential election



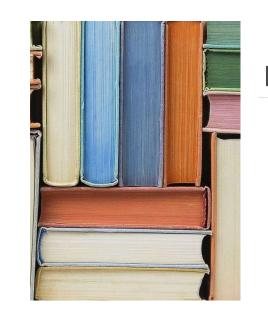
Public Safety \$156,379 or 4.50% net increase

- Center Fire \$ 9,931 or 4.76% net increase
 - Increase in uniform requests year over year \$12,800 offset by reduction in parttime hours needed for reporting and record keeping - \$(5,700)
- Police \$ 56,272 or 4.53% net increase
 Increase in uniforms of \$27,245 and MPTC Training time for Police Accountability requirements \$15,348
- EVAC \$ 111,322 or 27.97% net increase
 Increase of \$100,000 for part-time labor to eliminate usage of contracted temporary labor
- ESIP \$ (14,000) or (8.75)% net decrease
 - Reduction based on historical usage/earnings under ESIP program



Recreation \$39,493 or 5.27% net increase

- Parks & Rec Administration \$ 20,599 or 7.20% net increase
 Conversion of part-time Program Assistant to full time Programs and Events Specialist - \$16,792
- Summer Playgrounds \$ 12,819 or 8.34% net increase
 Minimum wage increases and expansion of Pre-K camp offset by slight reduction in contracted services
- Waterfront \$ 5,525 or 6.82% net increase
 - · Minimum wage increases and addition of one extra beach week



Library \$8,762 or 1.12% net increase

Books - \$ 10,000 or 13.33% net increase
 Increases funding to where it was in FY2022-23 budget

15



Human Services

\$7,196 or 0.79% net increase

- Senior Center \$ 15,596 4.96% net increase
 - Includes the addition of the Senior Center breakfast program \$1,820
 - $\circ~$ Proposed air conditioning project for the Senior Center Kitchen \$10,500 (with proposed \$4,600 of incentives to offset the cost)



Debt Service \$501,549 or 18.90% net increase

• Principal and Interest Fluctuations

- Budget proposal includes \$725,000 in stabilization efforts
- Mill rate stabilization fund is a way to save for future rising debt costs that will result from Windermere School Project, Comprehensive Lighting Project and School HVAC Project that have passed at referendum
- Overall debt is anticipated to grow from current levels an estimated \$1.2m in FY2025-26 and another \$1.1m in FY2026-27 and then remain at those levels for several fiscal years due to the three above mentioned projects



Fixed Charges

\$226,078 or 6.39% net increase

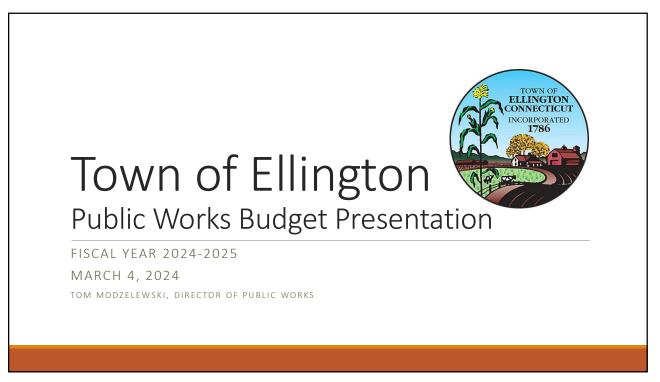
- Insurance \$ 230,713 or 8.07% net increase
 - $^\circ~$ Increase on projected health and dental rates from the State for the upcoming year of 5%
 - Increase in payroll tax and related benefits for the added benefit eligible positions/staffing changes proposed throughout the budget



Miscellaneous

\$145,166 or 19.80% net increase

- Salary Adjustment \$ 18,186 net increase from prior year approved unadjusted budget
 - Budgeted raises proposed in accordance with the Town's Personnel Rules for nonunion Town staff
 - Includes Town Hall Union employees due to July 1st contract negotiations
 - Includes \$50,000 to fund future public safety initiatives to help advance the Town's long-range public safety planning



2024-2025 Budget Highlights

The Public Works Department has formulated a budget that outlines essential allocations for the maintenance of our infrastructure and equipment, as well as necessary improvements. These financial provisions are crucial to ensuring the ongoing safety and enhancement of our fleet, facilities, playing fields, and parks.

• Payroll Accounts increased by \$2,428 or 0%.

•410/415/420/425/430/435/449/440 Accounts decreased by \$46,928 or 3.59%.

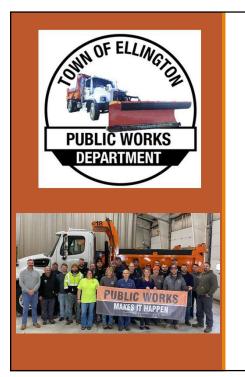
•450 Accounts increased by \$192,603 or 11.6%

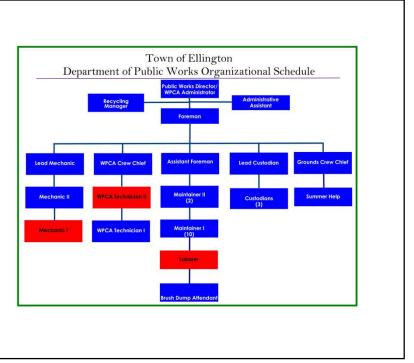
•321/470/480 Accounts increased by \$38,000 or 6%.

•800 Accounts increased by \$55,050 or 10.8%.

21

Budget Overview The Public Works Department consists of: A staff of 25 employees. Oversight of the community's 100 miles of roadway (96 Paved, 4.5 Unimproved). Oversight of four (4) public parks, five (5) school athletic areas containing 17 baseball/softball fields, 14 multi-use fields, a running track, 2 grandstands, eight (8) trail networks, a community garden, a public beach and 160 +/- acres of open space. Ten (10) facilities are maintained by the Public Works Department. Hoffman Road Brush/Material Center. Recycling Center & Swap Shop 155 + Equipment Assets 1000's of public trees





23

410 Accounts General Town Maintenance

\$85,370 or 3.47% net decrease

This account funds:

- All salaries, overtime, employee contractual benefits (uniforms, meals, and longevity)
- Contracted services and contract work
- o Crystal Lake Cemetery care
- $_{\odot}$ Office supplies, construction materials, technical supplies and the Tree Warden's funds
- Equipment rental & professional development

Net decrease is due to the removal of the LOTCIP expenditures and the moving of the contracted dumpster services to the 450 account. This account includes the addition of a full-time laborer. A Grant/Project Manager positions was requested but not included in the proposed budget.



Proposed Budget \$2,372,506

415 Account New Equipment

\$15,000 increase or 150%

This account funds:

 New equipment supports the Department in replacing small power tools, chainsaws, and weed whackers (to name a few items) along with other hand tools needed.

• We are requesting a stand-on blower this year to assist with fall and spring clean-up efforts. This unit will also be used during paving operations for cleaning prior to surface application. Proposed Budget \$25,000



420 Account Equipment Maintenance

\$14,000 or 4.95% net increase

This account funds:

 Repairs of all the Town's rolling stock, trucks, cars and heavy equipment except ambulances and fire trucks. This Account has been historically overspent by a 5-year average of \$12,500. Additionally, parts & supplies costs have gone up significantly.

oIncludes the Police vehicle boat repair account of \$5,000.

- oGas and diesel are included in this account for:
- Fire Apparatus (Not reimbursed \$4,943.24)
- Police Cruisers (Not reimbursed \$12,134.92)
- o BOE (Reimbursed \$16K +/-)
- Ambulances (Not reimbursed \$13,275.20)
- All pool cars (Not reimbursed \$6,133.40)
- WPCA (Not reimbursed \$3,661.46)
- Total unreimbursed: \$40,148.22

Proposed Budget \$297,000



425 Account Town Garage Maintenance

Proposed Budget \$72,300

\$150 increase or 0.21%

This account funds:

• Daily expenses of telephone, electricity, water and heat repairs and maintenance for the DPW complex.



27

430 Account Street Signage

Net neutral budget from the previous fiscal year.

This account funds:

•The purchasing of street signs and other regulatory signs, stop, yield and others are made with this account.

Proposed Budget \$10,000



435 Account Ground Maintenance BOE and Town Parks

Proposed Budget \$125,000

\$15,000 or 13.64% increase

This account funds:

- oPlaying field maintenance and lining
- oLawn treatments at the parks and schools pavilion cleaning
- oGeneral repairs at the Crystal Lake Beach
- Irrigation services required at both the parks and schools.

 Increase due to seed & paint price increases. Additionally, we have added \$5,000 for an expected electrical increase with the addition of the athletic field lighting.



29

439 Account Town-Aid – Winter

Increase of \$1,580 or .61%

- This account funds:
- oThe purchasing of 2,000 tons of treated road salt.
- o200 tons of straight road salt.
- o100 tons of sand.
- o4-6 pallets of sidewalk deicer.
- o2,500 gallons of liquid deicer.
- Contractor to remove snow at the schools & CLFD. • Used for plowing only.
- oIncrease due to salt price increase.

Proposed Budget \$258,790



440 Account Town Road Aid-Materials

Proposed Budget \$275,000

Net neutral budget from the previous fiscal year

This account funds:

 Roadway maintenance, rehabilitation and reconstruction, as necessary.

•The striping of Town roads.

• Double yellow center lines.

Stop barsCrosswalks

oCatch basin cleaning per MS4 requirements.

oMS4 outfall monitoring & testing.

oAsphalt for patching & paving.



31

450 Account Sanitary Landfill

\$17,890 or net increase of 2.65%

This account funds:

- •The cost to dispose of the annual tonnage of municipal solid waste
 - $_{\odot}\,$ The cost to dispose increased \$112.48 per ton
 - $_{\odot}\,$ Anticipated tonnage of 5,000 tons

oBulky waste tipping fees of \$100/ton @ 550 tons

oTown Building & Condominium dumping fees

 Increase due to AAW increase in tipping fees and contractual increase.

Proposed Budget \$693,100

451 Account Proposed Budget \$731,384 Municipal Solid/Bulky Waste Curbside Collection

\$52,009 or a 7.66% net increase

This account funds:

oThe cost to provide the curbside pickup for 5,175 homes @ \$10.94 homes per month.

oThe cost for the Town's dumpster services.

olncrease due to the addition of the dumpster service to this account and the contractual increase.



33



456 Account Proposed Budget \$19,876 Household Hazardous Waste

\$(1,696) or a (7.86)% net decrease

This account funds:

•Ellington will be joining the CREOC organization and terminating the agreement with Mid-NEROC.

• We anticipate a savings due to the lower operating costs of the organization.

• This new group will also provide a closer service to the Town of Ellington with annual events in Manchester, Somers and Stafford instead of Willington.



35

470 Account Street Lighting



Proposed Budget \$85,000

\$3,000 or a 3.66% increase

This account funds:

- All Streetlights within the Town.
- All traffic lights within the Town.
- All other metered lighting for (rotary).

480 Account Engineering & Inspections



\$35,000 Increase or 33.33%

This account funds:

oJ.R. Russo, the Town Engineer, for work performed in plan review, plan design and inspections of various projects.

Proposed Budget \$140,000

- oJ.R. Russo has been instrumental in managing grant funded projects throughout Town.
- oJ.R. Russo aids the Department of Public Works and the Planning and Zoning Department.
- •We have added in the annual MS4 storm water discharge monitoring, testing and reporting by CMG, the Town's environmental consultant.
- •CMG also handles the issues related to contaminated wells in Town.

37

321 Account Fire Protection Hydrants

Net Neutral Budget proposed.

This account funds:

• The installation, maintenance & monthly cost of all fire hydrants in Town.

Proposed Budget: \$444,400



800 Accounts Town Buildings

Proposed Budget: \$650,589

\$55,050 increase or 10.8%

The Public Works Department also manages various Town Properties that are funded under the 800 code that include: •Town Hall •Arbor Commons (Human Services, Parks & Recreation and Police Facilities) •Pinney House •Hall Memorial Library •Senior Center •Old Crystal Lake School House •Increase to electric and heating fuel costs • New energy contract with BP Energy increase of 5%

oIncrease to telephone service costs

oHall Memorial Library Building Repairs & Maintenance account is increased by \$20,000 for the amount of repairs needed to maintain this facility.

 Senior Center Repairs and Maintenance accounts are also increasing by \$5,000 due to aging kitchen equipment.



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