

Board of Selectmen's Meeting: Budget Workshop
March 7, 2020 – 8:30AM
Sanford Hall, Town Hall
155 Village Street

Present: John Foresto, Chair; Glenn Trindade, Vice Chair (8:50am); Dennis Crowley, Clerk; Maryjane White, Member.

Absent: Richard D'Innocenzo, Member.

Staff Present: Michael Boynton, Town Administrator; Allison Potter, Assistant Town Administrator; Carol Pratt, Finance Director; Dave D'Amico, Director, Department of Public Services (DPS); Peter Pelletier, Deputy Director, Department of Public Services; Police Chief Allen Tingley; Fire Chief Jeff Lynch; Deputy Chief Mike Fasolino; Richard Boucher, Director, Information Services.

At 8:35 AM Selectman Foresto called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review of Proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget

The Board reviewed the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget.

Town Administrator Boynton stated that is very similar to prior years. For this specific budget, local receipts have been increased along with excise, specifically \$100,000. New growth has been increased from \$250,000 and \$350,000 due to the Salmon development and increased permitting anticipated for both this and next year. The same amount will be left on the table this year to stabilize taxes. There are two new positions, a data position in Information Services and a Parks position. Both the Fire and Police Chiefs' as well as the Town Accountant's contracts have been renewed. Those are the major budget impacts.

Information Services (IS)

Present: Richard Boucher, Director

Director Boucher reported the budget is level service on all line-items with the exception of annual maintenance contracts due to cost increases, the addition of MUNIS permitting services, and the implementation of office 365. This line item will stabilize at \$200,000 per year. The new Network Technician position is designed to be a security officer who will be looking at all our data, specifically, what our current data elements are, where they are, what the risk is for data loss, to suggest other products to support this, and training on cyber security awareness. They will be looking for an entry level position at \$55,000. Selectman Foresto asked if the \$55,000 was a realistic salary for this position. Mr. Boucher stated he is hoping to hire from within and train that person, specifically someone we hired right out of Rhode Island Technical College. Selectman White asked why the annual software maintenance was cut from what was requested. Mr. Boynton stated due to the need to close the \$1.5 million budget gap and after revisiting this with Mr. Boucher, \$10,000 for digital scanning was dropped to adjust this line item. Selectman Crowley asked how Mr. Boucher determines the school appropriation amount. Mr. Boucher stated the majority of the computer equipment costs is the School Department's. Selectman Crowley asked how staff salaries are allocated to the school. Mr. Boucher stated he does not allocate salaries to the school. Selectman Crowley requested we ensure that the school reports all costs to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) including the

salary percentages. Ms. Pratt confirmed that equipment costs are reported to the school. Town Administrator Boynton noted a number of factors go into DESE reporting including health insurance, property and casualty insurance, DPW costs, etc., and are included in the net school spending cost. The Board requested that Finance Director Pratt confirm with Mr. Aicardi that these costs are included in DESE reporting. Mr. Boynton added there is a formula used to determine these allocation amounts. Selectman Foresto asked what was included in the \$290,000 in the capital plan. Mr. Boucher stated this includes the yearly purchase of Chromebooks for the new eighth grade students who will utilize these through their senior year. They are anticipating a five-year lifespan and this is the first year that they will follow the eighth grade students through to their senior year. As current seniors graduate, these are passed on until they meet their expected five-year lifespan. The need to purchase newer Chromebooks was driven by MCAS testing as Pearson changed their operating software and the older devices are no longer compatible. Mr. Boynton stated Mr. Boucher is purchasing these now and swapping out of the projection systems to adjust his budget requirements. Mr. Boucher explained the upgrade to Windows 10 as an additional need to upgrade devices. He reported the initial expected lifespan of the Epson devices was ten years but they are only lasting seven years so he has planned to purchase twelve additional devices. Selectman Crowley stated that Mr. Boucher used to provide the Board a three to five year look at anticipated purchases. Mr. Boucher stated he provided this to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. Selectman Crowley requested he provide this to Ms. Potter so it can be forwarded to the Board. Selectman Trindade asked if the school is making appropriate use of technology. Selectman Foresto reported yes based on his shadowing experience at the schools and suggested that Selectmen Trindade schedule a session as he was very impressed. It was confirmed that both the Middle and High Schools have touch screen technology. Mr. Boucher noted that they have an integration specialist specifically for the implementation of new technology which assists with the proper usage and implementation across the curriculum. Selectman Trindade asked who is responsible for the PA system. Mr. Boucher stated it depends on the level of the issue noting his department helps maintain what is there now and we have a service provider to fix any issues that arise.

Department of Public Works (DPS)

Present: Dave D'Amico, Director and Peter Pelletier, Deputy Director

Town Administrator Boynton stated there is an added position to deal with the Route 109 plantings, grass, etc. He noted that the work that DPW is doing is phenomenal. He also noted that a past request from the Board to show a work plan and work schedule will include items that come up that were not scheduled, for example, the Cassidy field project. He noted that we are purchasing a piece of equipment in the capital budget to assist with roadside cutting.

Selectman Foresto noted that the DPW budget general fund was reduced but Parks went up and asked if that represents the additional head count. Ms. Pratt stated that counts for fifty percent. Selectman Crowley asked why the salaries only increased \$5,000. Town Administrator Boynton stated due to reallocation of positions and the turnover of heavy equipment operators. Selectman Crowley stated that Mr. Blethen's salary is 100% in the Parks budget but he is also overseeing solid waste. Mr. D'Amico stated that is because the Board did not want to support full time employees in the solid waste budget. Town Administrator Boynton noted the new position will be reflected this coming year with one half in solid waste and one half in parks. Selectman Crowley asked if all of the salaries in solid waste are part-time. Ms. Pratt confirmed. Selectman Crowley suggested looking into moving the salaries back into the solid waste budget next year. Selectman Trindade stated his concern with recycling costs due to the volatile market and asked if any surplus will be used to address this. Mr. D'Amico confirmed.

Solid Waste: Town Administrator Boynton stated the biggest change is the 50% position. Mr. D'Amico stated, in trying to decrease overtime, they are trying to limit the number of part-time employees as they are difficult to maintain in this position and it is difficult to find part time staff with experience. Selectman Trindade asked if the property is secure. Mr. D'Amico stated it is locked up and there are security cameras. Selectman Crowley asked if the full budget will be used for trash bags. Mr. D'Amico confirmed. Selectman Crowley asked for the Town's cost per trash bag. Mr. D'Amico will provide this information to the Board. Selectman Crowley stated his concern about the increase in overhead from \$23,000 to \$48,000. Ms. Pratt stated this is the cost of the 50% position which includes indirect costs which include health insurance, retirement, property and causality insurance, etc. Selectman Trindade noted the indirect cost formula used is from the Department of Revenue. Selectman Crowley requested that Ms. Pratt provide the Board with how this cost was determined. Selectman Crowley requested that we publicize that there will be a second Hazardous Waste day. Both Selectman Trindade and Crowley want a flyer placed in the tax bills.

Water: Mr. D'Amico provided the Board with a first draft of the five-year water rates feathering plan noting that Ms. Pratt provided the back-end data and he updated the usage data. This will be discussed at the April 6th Selectmen's meeting. Town Administrator Boynton stated that the water budget is not substantially different from last year. Selectman Crowley wanted to discuss the debt. Ms. Pratt stated that will be discussed when the debt budget is reviewed. Selectman Trindade asked if Mr. D'Amico has the appropriate amount of staffing. He confirmed noting that we may want to replace the SCADA system, and may hire one additional staff member for the water treatment plant. He is also encouraging existing staff to obtain their T2 licenses. Town Administrator Boynton noted that when the new water treatment plant is on-line, higher qualified staff will be needed than we currently have.

Sewer: Selectman Crowley asked how close are we to what we estimated for the Charles River Pollution Control District. Ms. Pratt stated we are now at \$800,000 noting we overestimated. Town Administrator Boynton stated we are trending higher on flow. Selectman Trindade asked if the savings is from inflow and infiltration and if we are using less water. Mr. D'Amico stated this is due to both rainfall and reduced water consumption. Selectman Crowley stated that we talked to Franklin about purchasing additional capacity and asked about approaching Millis for capacity. Town Administrator Boynton stated they have a lot of development in the pipeline and will be using their available capacity.

Police Department

Present: Chief Allen Tingley

Town Administrator Boynton stated there is nothing substantially different in this budget and that we are maintaining a good success rate with current personnel. He reported there is one person currently in the academy and one will be going in April. Upon their graduation, we will be fully staffed. He reported there will be an assessment in May to fill the vacant Lieutenant position due to Lieutenant McSweeney's retirement. He also reported that we are doing more social work than ever and therefore need to adjust the workforce.

Chief Tingley stated we are seeing more rapid changes in the law resulting in the need for more training. He reported that due to State requirements, we needed to create a Civil Rights Officer role and a Domestic Violence Officer role. He also reported that many lawyers, etc. are requesting photos and video for specific situations which has also resulted in additional training required. Town Administrator Boynton noted that trends are differing in the District Attorney and Courts where a lot of juvenile offenses are no longer receiving jail time which has an increased impact on local law enforcement.

Selectman Trindade noted that the two officers assigned to MABA were shooting baskets with the kids and it was a good role modeling opportunity. Selectman White asked if next year has a full complement of staff. Town Administrator Boynton confirmed. Selectman Crowley asked for the total positions. Chief Tingley stated twenty-five including himself. Selectman Crowley noted that the holiday pay was over budget and asked if this would be an issue. Chief Tingley stated this gets paid out the last week in December so there will be no further hits to this line-item. Selectman Crowley asked for confirmation of the two additional vehicles requested. Chief Tingley confirmed along with one motorcycle. Selectman Trindade asked about vest upgrades and gun training. Chief Tingley stated the vests were upgraded this year and they are required to complete gun training three times per year. He stated we are meeting all of our training needs. He further reported that they are required to do forty hours of in-service training yearly and an additional sixteen hours of training to meet State mandates.

Fire Department

Present: Chief Jeff Lynch, Deputy Chief Mike Fasolino

Town Administrator Boynton stated we are transitioning to a mostly full-time department. There are no new positions in the budget and we continue to look to take advantage of grant funding. The request to move to a five staff complement per day per shift would add flexibility to how calls are managed. There is a spike in overtime due to the need to do call backs related to ambulance calls. We are running the second ambulance full-time. Once Salmon is on-line along with the other new developments, the needs will increase further, but we do not know the impact yet. Selectman Crowley asked what the benefit is of five members per shift. Town Administrator Boynton reported that if a staff member is off, they would not backfill. If they fall below three, then this adds to the overtime budget. There are currently four shifts of four staff per shift so if we add one additional staff per shift, we would need to add four total positions. Selectman Crowley stated his concern that the department will be overburdened once the Salmon memory care facility is on-line. There was further discussion on when the Salmon facility will come on-line, when we would need to hire additional staff to support the anticipated increase in workload, and the associated costs. Selectman Crowley suggested that we staff three months prior to Salmon coming on-line. Both Selectman Foresto and Trindade requested more information on when Salmon is expected to come on-line and more accurate costs to hire additional staff. Selectman Trindade asked if more vehicles would be needed if we hire four additional staff and if the command structure would need to change. Chief Lynch stated no additional vehicles would be needed nor would the command structure change. He stated that we are currently designing the trucks to fit in the station versus for functionality noting the current trucks will not fit in Station 2. It was noted that we need to reevaluate our ambulance rates. Selectman Foresto asked if this budget was or was not built on grant money. Town Administrator Boynton stated it does include grant money. Ms. Pratt added the grant funding is based on a calendar year.

Selectman Crowley asked for confirmation that the total positions are at seventeen plus his position. Chief Lynch confirmed. Selectman Foresto stated the overtime budget is \$20,000 less and still \$50,000 more than last year. Town Administrator Boynton stated that part is due to the need for call-backs for ambulance service to ensure two staff are available to operate the second ambulance. Selectman Trindade asked for a status on inspections and other parts of the job including public education. Chief Lynch stated we receive State grant funds to address public education, noting we are keeping up with inspections but he wished they were able to do more but at the current time they are getting job the done. Deputy Chief Fasolino stated we need to look at the Fire Prevention area moving forward as this is taking more and more time. Selectman Foresto asked if that is a full time job. Chief Lynch stated yes and will only increase with Salmon and the other new projects in the pipeline. Deputy Chief Fasolino

stated the need to inspect existing businesses on a yearly or twice a year basis is becoming difficult to maintain. Town Administrator Boynton stated the Advance Life Service and Basic Life Support oversight process needs to be looked at as well. Selectman Crowley asked if the false alarms and initiating of fines are still issues. Chief Lynch stated this was mostly an issue with the senior complex, so he had them change the alarm to only sound within the unit, which was how they should work and, therefore, this issue has resolved. Selectman Trindade asked for a status on carbon monoxide incident issues. Chief Lynch stated these have increased, but with a change in policy this is not impacting the budget.

General Budget Discussion

The Board reviewed the proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget.

Expense: Selectman Foresto asked for an explanation for the increase in Human Resources. Town Administrator Boynton stated that CommCan was giving \$10,000 for drug testing per the Host Community Agreement. However, the Department of Revenue requires that these funds be directed to the general fund; they cannot be allocated to a specific budget upon receipt. Ms. Pratt stated this also impacted the library budget. There was discussion regarding the Energy Manager budget line item noting that Stephanie Carlisle has taken on this role. Selectman Trindade asked about the capital expenditure for accounting. Town Administrator Boynton said this is for the implementation of an employee self-service software module in MUNIS which will decrease the impact on Human Resources personnel time.

Selectman Crowley stated his concern from the meeting with the school on their budget relative to the cost for steps and lanes as this cost is around \$500,000 each year, but they have asked for \$710,000 this year plus an additional 2% for other items. He would like to see the detail that makes up the \$710,000 and asked if the Board would want to request this detail. Selectman Trindade confirmed. Town Administrator Boynton will request this information from Mr. Aicardi. Selectman Foresto requested that we find out when the next Town and School leadership meeting is anticipated.

Selectman Crowley asked how much we are paying in the Affordable Care Act. Ms. Pratt will obtain this information. Selectman Crowley asked if the excess funds in the ambulance account would fall to free cash. Ms. Pratt stated no, that the funds would stay in the ambulance account. Selectman Crowley asked for the collection rate for ambulance service and the average cost per run. Ms. Pratt will provide that information. Town Administrator Boynton stated there are other options to fund this account. Selectman Crowley requested that Mr. Boynton provide the Board with a document of these options. Selectman Crowley reported that the school is looking to purchase two vans for transporting special needs students out of town and will be requesting this from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund at the next Finance Committee meeting. He reported that it costs \$70,000 for the transportation of one of the students and it would cost \$50,000 to purchase a van and have a van driver. Town Administrator Boynton would prefer that we buy one and lease the other as the impact of the coronavirus is not known and the reserve fund may be needed for related expenses. Selectman Trindade asked where they would store the vehicles. Mr. Boynton stated outside, probably at the high school. Selectman Crowley reported they are having a conversation with Millis on sharing the costs. Selectman Crowley asked if we are locked in at 9% for healthcare costs. Town Administrator Boynton confirmed noting the move to a new provider has been approved by the unions. He stated the HMO costs are at 14-15% but the senior plans are lower so that blends into an overall 9% increase. Selectman Crowley reported there is a school shortfall of \$114,000 and the School Department may want a warrant article at Fall Town Meeting to transfer funds for this shortfall. It was stated that the past policy of the Board has been not to do this. Selectman Crowley shared informationally that the school spent \$63,000 for ice time and

that is not a final number. Selectman Crowley asked why we are funding the overlay at \$500,000 each year. Ms. Pratt explained that NSTAR files each year with the tax appellate board and the value is \$500,000. She noted that once we settle with them, we will not have to fund this. Town Administrator Boynton stated that abatements are included in here as well. Selectman Crowley asked where these funds go once this is finally resolved. Ms. Pratt stated it goes to the general fund and flows to free cash. Town Administrator Boynton stated the overlay surplus is declared by the Board of Assessors and then it can be appropriated at Town Meeting. He reported that NSTAR has gone to the Supreme Judicial Court based on losing two of their cases with Boston and Springfield. Selectman Crowley asked what comprises the enterprise offsets and why it was increased from \$550,000 to \$600,000. Ms. Pratt explained that all indirect costs are on behalf of the three enterprise funds which include health insurance, retirement, property and casualty for the related personnel. Ms. Pratt will provide the Board with the information about how she arrived at that number.

Debt Service: Town Administrator Boynton noted that nothing was added on the municipal side and we did not add in as much as originally anticipated in water. Selectman Crowley asked for confirmation that it was pushed out one year. Ms. Pratt confirmed. Selectman Crowley stated that for the Brentwood project, we are borrowing at \$5.5 million but anticipate this will be exceeded and asked how we come up with the additional amount. Ms. Pratt explained that we do not incur the cost until the permanent borrowing, so timing may be OK. Mr. Boynton stated this assumes the \$5.5 million is permanently borrowed on July 1st and this will not occur on July 1st. Selectman Crowley asked about the \$1.8 million for Oak Grove. Ms. Pratt stated this was appropriated at last year's spring Town Meeting and we probably will not borrow all of that in Fiscal Year 2021.

Selectman Foresto asked if there is room in the budget to increase the funding of Medway Day from \$9,000 to \$15,000. Mr. Boynton confirmed. There was discussion on the unused levy funding amount and the impact on taxes.

11:08 AM Selectman White moved to adjourn. Selectman Trindade seconded. VOTE: 4-0-0

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Langley
Administrative Assistant
Town Administrator's Office