

Select Board Meeting – Budget Workshop
March 2, 2024 – 8:30 AM
Sanford Hall
155 Village Street

Present: Glenn Trindade, Chair Frank Rossi, Vice-Chair; Todd Alessandri, Clerk; Dennis Crowley, Member; Maryjane White, Member.

Staff Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Allison Potter, Assistant Town Manager; Richard Boucher, Director of Information Services; Fire Chief Jeff Lynch; Deputy Fire Chief Michael Fasolino; Deputy Fire Chief Craig Vinton; Police Chief William Kingsbury; Police Lt. Jeff Watson, Peter Pelletier, Department of Public Works (DPW) Director; Barry Smith, Water/Sewer Superintendent; Steve Carew, Parks Superintendent; Nolan Lynch, Highway Superintendent.

At 8:30 AM, Mr. Trindade called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments: There were none.

Review of Proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Operating Budget

- **Department of Public Works**
- **Fire Department**
 - **Approval: Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) with the Town of Milford for Brush Truck Transfer**
 - **Discussion/Vote: Contract with Sturgis Hauling & Restoration LLC for Antique Fire Truck (1964 Maxim Pumper) Restoration**
- **Police Department**
- **Information Services**

The Board reviewed the proposed (1) FY25 Operating Budget, (2) documentation from Chief Lynch, (3) IMA with the Town of Milford, (4) contract with Sturgis Hauling & Restoration LLC, (5) documentation from Chief Kingsbury.

Mr. Boynton offered an overview of the budget process and stated that the budget presented to the Board this morning is balanced. The Town settled contracts with the collective bargaining units. The salaries in the budget reflect the settled contracts. He stated there is a reinstatement of the Deputy Director of Public Works position being proposed for mid-way through FY25. The Town eliminated the position after the prior Deputy Director resigned, but it has proven to be a necessary administrative position and, if approved, the position would be filled in January 2025. Mr. Boynton also referenced the other added position, which is a second School Resource Officer, which would be filled towards the end of the fiscal year.

He briefly reviewed the utilization of free cash to date and what is proposed for Annual Town Meeting. He felt there would be a larger balance than the \$8,000 currently projected, assuming there is not a snow and ice deficit and a holdback of \$200,000 is not needed for other projects.

Department of Public Works

Mr. Pelletier reviewed the highlights of the proposed FY25 DPW budget. There were adjustments to the building maintenance budget due to increased inspections and added buildings. There was discussion about the tree budget, its utilization and Eversource's role in handling anything affecting wires.

There was discussion about the light sequencing on Rt 109, particularly with respect to the light at Walgreens. The Town has done what it can to address the problem without replacing the panel, which would cost at least \$300,000. The Board asked for this item to be added to the earmark list that was sent to Senator Spilka's office. It also asked for a video to be done that explains the issue for the residents.

Mr. Pelletier reviewed the enterprise budgets, including retained earnings. Water is doing fine, as is sewer. Solid waste has been over-reliant on retained earnings. Mr. Boynton stated that the Board will need to discuss that during its general budget discussion.

There was a brief discussion about the department's capital budget. Mr. Crowley asked what happens to the equipment that is being replaced. Mr. Pelletier answered that, generally, items are auctioned.

Fire Department

Chief Lynch stated that the Fire Department needs additional staff. There was discussion about the increase in calls and demand for this service that will only continue to grow. The Chief stated his appreciation for the support he has received from the Town Manager and the Select Board.

There was discussion about the utilization of ambulance receipts reserved for appropriation. This is used to both support the operating budget and to purchase new ambulances. Mr. Boynton reviewed the pending purchases.

There was additional discussion about the department's revenues and how the Town might be able to fund the staff levels needed. It was pointed out that that all municipalities are facing staffing shortages and that, even if the funds were there, they would have difficulty finding people to fill the positions. Mr. Boynton speculated that, in the future, fire departments would be regionalized.

Approval: Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) with the Town of Milford for Brush Truck Transfer

The Board reviewed the IMA.

Mr. Boynton explained that the Town of Swansea rejected the brush truck transfer, but the Town of Milford needs it, and the plan is to transfer it to Milford instead. It was noted that this benefits Medway in that, if an additional brush truck is needed, Milford can send this one to assist.

Mr. Alessandri moved that the Board rescind the November 6, 2023, vote to approve the inter-municipal agreement to transfer the brush truck to the Town of Swansea, and vote to approve the inter-municipal agreement to transfer the brush truck to the Town of Milford, as presented. Mr. Rossi seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

Discussion/Vote: Contract with Sturgis Hauling & Restoration LLC for Antique Fire Truck (1964 Maxim Pumper) Restoration

The Board reviewed the contract.

Mr. Boynton stated that Sturgis Hauling has done other fire truck restorations, including for the Town of Ashland. The owner is very good at what he does. He looks forward to having the Town's truck restored. If approved, the truck would be transferred to Connecticut in April. The contract amount is \$200,000 and requires a performance bond.

Mr. Alessandri moved that the Board approve and authorize the Chair to execute the contract with Sturgis Hauling & Restoration subject to receipt of the required performance bond. Mr. Rossi seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

Police Department

Chief Kingsbury reviewed the reallocations of the budget to better align with the expense line items. He worked with Ms. Pratt to accomplish this. He also reviewed the increases and reasons for them. Most relate to the collective bargaining agreement. There is also an increase in the department's IT budget due to increasing costs for some of these services. The Chief noted they are working to find a replacement for the Town's police/fire communications reporting system. The company no longer exists and keeping the program long-term is not an option. It was suggested that this get added to the capital request list.

Lt. Watson discussed the department's efforts with respect to certification and accreditation. The certification is state level, accreditation is federal. The department will be filing a grant application to assist with this effort.

Mr. Crowley asked whether the department could be accredited with its current space. He also asked if there is a consultant that could be identified to cost out upgrading the current station versus the cost to build new. There is no such consultant. Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects will be presenting the feasibility report for the Town Hall, Fire, and Police Departments at the Select Board meeting on Monday. Mr. Crowley was concerned about getting accurate numbers from this report. The Chief said that he is well aware of the deficiencies of the current space and can provide that information, if needed.

Information Services

Mr. Boucher reviewed his budget and the allocations to the School Dept. versus the Town. A significant portion of this budget, both operating and capital, is directed to the Schools. He discussed past staffing challenges, as well as cybersecurity efforts, which demand more and more resources. The increased expense for the Town's time management system was also addressed.

Discussion/Vote: Approval of the Capital Improvement Plan

The Board reviewed the proposed capital improvement plan.

Mr. Boynton asked the Board to vote to approve the proposed capital budget, which was presented by the Capital Improvement Planning Committee at the Board's January 16 meeting. The associated, proposed free cash expenditure is \$2.5M.

The source of funding for the dispatch console was discussed and the preference was to use overlay reserve funds for it. Additional overlay could be transferred to the capital stabilization fund.

Mr. Boynton also mentioned that the Town would like to utilize Parks revolving funds to pay for two fences, one at the Middle School baseball field and one at Kelly St softball field, and a tractor.

The Board also discussed the Hanlon field project and potential funding sources, including Community Preservation Act funds.

Mr. Alessandri moved that the Board approve the capital improvement plan as discussed. Mr. Rossi seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

General Budget Discussion

There were no materials for the Board to review.

The Board asked clarification questions about the budget and discussed the outlook in future years. The proposed FY25 budget is balanced, but there will be a challenge in FY26. The School dept. has advised that it will need a significantly larger allocation from the Town than it has historically received. There is also the imminent Tri-County School project.

Discussion/Vote: Enterprise Funds Retained Earnings and Indirect Cost Allocation

The Board reviewed the Fiscal Year 2025 Indirect Cost Allocation agreement.

The solid waste budget was discussed. Mr. Boynton stated that there has to be an increase in revenue going to this budget because the use of retained earnings is unsustainable. It would be depleted within the next two years. Mr. Crowley stated the only staff he wanted charged to this budget are those that actually work at the Recycling Center. There was further discussion about how to resolve this. The recommendation was to increase the bag fees because this ensures that the people using the service are paying for it. The full-time salaries would also be pulled from this budget and instead charged to the general fund budget.

Mr. Rossi moved that the Board approve the Fiscal Year 2025 operating and enterprise fund budgets, as discussed. Mr. Alessandri seconded. Discussion: Mr. Crowley stated he would like to revisit the debt budget at a later date. **VOTE: 5-0-0.**

Mr. Alessandri moved to approve the indirect cost allocation as discussed. Mr. Rossi seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 5-0-0.

At 1:50, Mr. Alessandri moved to adjourn. Mr. Rossi seconded. VOTE: 5-0-0.