

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
May 24, 2011 - Tuesday**

Present: Ken DiFazio, Chairperson
Patrick O'Connor, Vice Chairperson
Arthur Mathews, Council President
Michael Smart, Councilor

Not Present: Michael Molisse, Councilor

Also Present: George Lane, Town Solicitor
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
Michael Gallagher, Dir.Comm. & Administrative Services
Michael Doyle, Director, Parks & Recreation

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chairman Kenneth DiFazio called the Budget/Management Committee meeting to order at 6:45PM.

Review and discuss the Department of Administrative Services Budget in conjunction with Chief Financial Officer and applicable Department Heads inclusive of:

Civil Defense

Human Resources

Town Solicitor

Information Services

Town Building Services

Parks and Recreation

Deliberate the following measures:

11 025J-Administrative Services

Michael Gallagher reported that he received a list of questions from the Town Auditor to which he responded prior to the meeting. He provided an overview of the budget; it represents half of his salary and a part time administrative employee who works in the Mayor's office. The total budget has been significantly reduced since 2008, and included the elimination of the receptionist position. Supplies are split with this office and the IT budget.

11 025U-Civil Defense

Mr. Gallagher reported that this budget contains only two items; a stipend for the Emergency Management Coordinator and for \$500 for necessary expenses such as batteries, etc ; there are 37 volunteers in this department. This year \$3500 has been added which will be reimbursed by the state for certain expenses incurred by the Town for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) of which Mr. Mulveyhill is chair. This

can subsidize recording secretary services for the meetings. There is no funding source for the position of Civil Defense Director. Homeland Security funding is not available because Weymouth does not directly border the City of Boston. Vice Chairperson O'Connor asked what vehicles are associated with the department. Mr. Gallagher responded that there are two vehicles, one of which is used to plow town lots in winter. The other vehicle is a command vehicle. Upkeep and costs are provided by the DPW. It's possible one of the forest trucks being retired by the Fire Department could be put to future use by Civil Defense.

11 025K-Human Resources

Mr. Gallagher noted the Director of Human Resources was involved in an auto accident a few days ago and was unable to attend to provide her input. Mr. Gallagher reported that the department consists of three individuals; the director, someone brought in from the public sector to handle the GIC aspect, and a clerical/HR person. The department is handling more of its own Workers Compensation and other voluntary enhancement programs. There is a line item for staff training to keep them current on the constantly changing rules and regulations. Conference fees are paid for MMA primarily. The miscellaneous expense line item in the budget is for a rented printer/scanner/copier. An advertising expense line item was added and there are costs associated with various dues and memberships.

Councilor Smart asked what the educational reimbursement line item is used for; Mr. Gallagher responded that it is for non-union employees who further their education. Reimbursement towards a degree program is provided for half of the cost of a class up to a maximum of \$500. There are a number of participants, including the HR director. It is not contractually obligated by the town. Councilor Smart reported that the Council gave up its MMA conference dues during budgetary constraints and that is why he is questioning these costs.

11 025E Town Solicitor

The budget is broken down into four components; management and administration, litigation and claims, labor relations, and real estate taking. The Special Counsel line item covers areas outside the scope of the normal duties. The town ordinance breaks out the duties of the Solicitor. Invoices are presented for services in Special Counsel. Auditor Swanson asked what meetings might be outside of the scope of the duties laid out in the ordinance.

Councilor Smart asked if Counselor Curran was paid from Special Counsel for the work on the Ordinance Review Committee. Mr. Gallagher responded in the affirmative. Councilor Smart asked if there is a negotiated prevailing rate for these services. Mr. Gallagher responded in the affirmative. Councilor Mathews asked if the town is still aggressively pursuing real estate takings. Solicitor Lane responded that they are as long as there is money to be made or it serves to improve a neighborhood.

Councilor Mathews asked about a particular vacant property. Councilor Mathews noted that he likes seeing special counsel funds spent on eliminating this type of blight.

Mr. Gallagher then reviewed litigation and claims; this is an estimate because it is largely unknown. The town does not know what it could be hit with; unused funds fall to free cash at the end of the fiscal year. There was a brief discussion of the balance in this line item and what could be left at the end of the year.

He then reviewed the Labor Relations, which pays services to Joseph Emerson for contract negotiations.

He then reviewed real estate takings. All costs associated with takings come from this line item. This year has had a less active approach. The new CFO has considered publication of the names of tax scofflaws on the website and this approach has been successful without actually publishing it yet. The threat has made many people come forward and the list will be posted at a later date.

11 025F-Information Services

Mr. Gallagher reported that this budget is broken down into applications, infrastructure and support. The town auditor requested a list of the contracts paid in this budget. The largest contractor is for the MUNIS software support contract. There was a brief discussion of the number of cities and towns which use MUNIS and the program's capabilities and ease of use. It's an expensive program to run and the modules are pricey, as is the maintenance. A huge upgrade must be done in October to the application and sublayers. There was also a brief discussion of the problems with the website and the upgrade required.

Councilor Mathews noted that it has been a nightmare tracking the content and how it is posted to the website. There are many complaints about the way minutes are posted to various committees. They discussed what costs might be involved with changing the system to something that is easier to maneuver. Chairman DiFazio noted that perhaps the role of IT director needs to be expanded from a half time position.

Mr. Gallagher noted that certain processes should be automated that aren't, and the website does not make any money from it; it's strictly informational. There was a brief discussion of whether other towns use their website to generate revenue or allow sponsorship. The question was asked if a "contribute" button could be implemented. Mr. Gallagher responded that this was done when the library was recently raising funds. Councilor O'Connor asked if online bill payer's email addresses are captured, and Mr. Gallagher responded that the online payment option on Weymouth's site directs them to a third party. Other software contracts were briefly discussed, including the GIS software.

Councilor Mathews reported that he had the opportunity to confer with the town GIS staff with the upcoming pole relocation project and attested to the thoroughness of the system. Mr. Gallagher reported on the goals for the department over the next several years.

He then reviewed the utility expense line. He is constantly reviewing ways to reduce the costs and outlined some of the changes that were made. Computer supplies were

underfunded this year; out of it, shared devices are paid for such as toner, repair kits, memory. Some of the utility expense savings are going into this line item for next year.

Mr. Gallagher reported that the change in salary reflects lane changes and a 4% increase that the Mayor granted to all non union personnel.

11 025I-Town Building Maintenance

The budget covers four buildings- Town Hall, McCulloch, the Teen Center and Hollis Street. All expenses associated with the operation of these buildings are included here. Hollis Street has only electricity for the town carpenter's workshop and a block heater for the civil defense truck.

Chairman DiFazio asked the total maintenance costs to run Town Hall. He reviewed run rates for the buildings and estimated based on these. Alarm services are contracted out to Atlas. They monitor the burglar alarm only (WFD monitors the fire alarm, although Atlas tests the system for them). He has had conversations with the fire department to see if the burglar alarm component can be incorporated into the town system.

The Comcast account and the phone system was discussed. Mr. Gallagher noted that the current system is woefully inadequate and they are in the process of looking to combine with the school department and complete a town wide replacement.

11 025S-Parks and Recreation

Mike Doyle reviewed this budget with Mr. Gallagher. This is a lean budget which supports one full time director, an assistant , and one part time nonunion position. Revenue from fees for programs the department offers sustains the rest of the paid staff and is outside of this budget. There are three supervisory positions during the summer. There was a brief explanation of programs offered by the department which includes programs at Lane Beach, Great Esker Park, Exceptional Needs programs, and Parks and Playgrounds. The Teen Center, Youth and Family Services, Parks and Recreation are all housed at the Teen Center building. The department shares a leased copier in the building.

There was a discussion about the use of the town fields by organizations. Chairman DiFazio reported that it is time to have a roundtable discussion regarding the use of the fields and the fees, and more efficient use of the fields by all of the parties, including the high school. He has spoken with many people concerning this issue. There are many more organized sports available to the youth in town. Rental fees go to the DPW and are used to cover the cost of field maintenance. Mr. Gallagher noted that he has had a similar discussion with the Mayor. A one- time user fee is paid by the sport organization for seasonal use of the fields. There should be a fee structure designed to bring in enough revenue to cover the costs to maintain the fields so they are in better condition than they currently are-- yet without pricing the town out of the market to rental groups. Fields other than the high school are in deplorable condition. The fields in town are used all year round and are not allowed time to rejuvenate. School department fields are under the jurisdiction of the school department and are shut down at the end of the school year

for routine maintenance. There was also a discussion of the condition of the turf field at the high school, which is now ten years old and in need of maintenance. Multiuse fields contribute to the condition of the fields; other than at the high school fields which are not dedicated to a single sport. The total program needs some sustainability. Councilor Mathews addressed the Host Community Agreement \$500,000 per year for five years for the use of the town to purchase equipment for the DPW and staff appropriately to maintain fields. There are no town run organizations other than the school department. Weymouth has the lowest priced fee schedule of the towns on the south shore as related to field user fees.

Adjournment

At 8:45 PM, there being no further business, Vice Chairman O'Connor made a MOTION to ADJOURN the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Smart. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Kenneth DiFazio as Chair of the Budget/Management Committee