

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
April 25, 2011 - Monday**

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

Also Present: Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer
Franklin Fryer, Town Clerk
Kathy Deree, Assistant Town Clerk
Michael Gallagher, Director of Admin. & Community Svcs
James Clarke, Director, Planning and Development
Walter Flynn, Chairman, Community Preservation Comm.
Victor Pap, Councilor

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

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

Review/Discuss General Government Budgets with Chief Financial Officer and Applicable Department Heads

A motion was made by Councilor Smart to take the Town Clerk's budget review out of order and was seconded by Councilor Mathews. Unanimously voted.

11 025G - Town Clerk – Councilor Mathews thanked Franklin Fryer, Town Clerk for coming before the committee on his vacation time. Councilor Mathews requested that the Town Clerk's office review the budget and personnel over the last several years, as well as the extraordinary items in the upcoming budget. All departments were requested to submit level service budgets and it was noted that the Mayor intends to open the town hall on Wednesdays in the near future. If this happens, the Town Clerk's office will be in need of a part time employee who will have to be factored into a supplemental appropriation.

Kathy Deree, Assistant Town Clerk, provided supporting back up as requested by council. As of today, there are three full-time employees and one part-time employee. In 2000, there were six full time employees. On Wednesdays when town hall is closed, the Town Clerk's office must catch up on work that can't get done during the rest of the week.

There will be an additional election in the upcoming year, and the ten year redistricting implemented. The Town Clerk's office must work with the state to redraw district lines and update and notify voters. The state is mandating municipalities implement a vital statistic program. It will be generated by SS Hospital and implemented by the Clerk's office. Councilor Mathews noted that any changes resulting from the Charter Review process will be implemented through the Town Clerk's office.

Auditor Swanson noted that he has reviewed the Town Clerk's budget.

Salary increases in the Town Clerk's budget include step increases, the third election and a 4% increase for non-union employees.

11 025A - Town Council

Councilor Mathews noted the Town Council budget is level funded, as requested by the Mayor. He noted for the record that this budget includes no salary increases for any town councilor. There are step increases for the town council staff -- 4% increase for non union employees. Auditor Swanson is at the same rate as last year and averages 18 hours per week. Diane Hachey is full time; Barbara Campbell averages 30 hours per week. The department will be looking to replace the copy machine. The current copier has broken down 23 times in a 15 month period. When the existing agreement expires at the end of the year, it will be replaced. He intends to have Diane Hachey and Auditor Swanson speak with Solicitor Lane to determine if the contract can be terminated earlier.

Councilor Pap noted that the Councilors no longer receive stipends for postage and miscellaneous expenses continue to be incurred by them.

Councilor Mathews also noted that the pricing of the annual audit was not set until after the prior year's budget was submitted. It is the same price as it was with the firm of Connor & Drew.

Mayor's Office

Michael Gallagher reviewed the Mayor's Office budget. It is level serviced also. The salary line item increase is only the 4% increase for two of the employees and a longevity payment for one of them. There are two full time and one part time secretarial positions. The Mayor's salary is set by Charter and ordinance and there is no salary increase for that position. WeyBra line item is increased to cover 50% of the \$24,509 retirement cost of the program. He also noted the park line item in constituent services is the town's share of the cost of WeyBra (Pond Meadow Park), and includes salaries of the park rangers and operating costs of the entity. The fire/motor vehicle/insurance line item was also questioned by Auditor Swanson. The insurance policies for the town are included in this item. Providers seek the best pricing at the request of the town.

Municipal Finance

Mr. McKinney reviewed the Municipal Finance budget. In general, the budget has decreased. There are some non-union 4% increases and step increases. \$75,000 for Medical reimbursement expense is the cost owed (6% of what is collected) to the third

party biller for Medicare. There are software maintenance contracts included, estimated reevaluation contract costs (assessment- third of three year contract). No changes other than step increases to treasurer/collector/procurement. Bond prep fees are paid to US Bank and are a conservative estimate. Lock box services is through Century Bank for mailed in bill payments. It is being reviewed to see if there are better rates. It does not include school billings. \$14,000 budgeted for professional services include consultant fees; there are currently none working for the town. Two consultants were hired after Mr. Wilson left. The number of personnel has not changed in the last year and there are no unfilled positions at the current time. One recent retirement has been filled from the callback list.

Planning and Development

Jim Clarke reviewed the budget with Walter Flynn and Mr. McKinney. Mr. Clarke noted that the salary line items are in flux, but the balance of the budget is flat. He reviewed the salaries for the department including any adjustments (hours, longevity, steps, and non-union increases) and the funding sources used by the department. He will provide a breakout of funding for the committee which indicates block grant and redevelopment authority breakdown. During this discussion, Councilor Pap left.

Licensing and Inspections

Mr. McKinney reviewed and noted that salaries are down slightly; expenses are flat. Salaries are up in Building Inspection/Zoning. Some salaries are being split between departments. There is also an allowance for part-time electrical inspectors paid on a per diem basis. There was a brief discussion of inspectors and the need for per diem workers. The structure of the department has changed with the reductions in staff over the last several years.

Community Preservation Committee

Walter Flynn reviewed the CPC budget. The DOR establishes the percentage of reimbursement to the town based on the balance in the Community Preservation Trust account and is applied to the prior year's 1% town surtax. Allocation of expenditures, penalties and interest is based on historical data for the town. He reviewed the derivation of the Reserve Fund. Miscellaneous expenses include legal notices, appraisals, deed restrictions and other expenses which do not come under other categories. These costs will be borne in the contracts drafted going forward. The current reimbursement rate is at about 25-25% (when first started it was 100%) and is reflective of the state of the housing market. The funds in the Community Preservation Trust are derived from fees paid to the Registry of Deeds. Senate Bill 90 would mandate a minimum of 75% match by increasing fees at the Registry of Deeds. Projects currently under consideration by the CPC include an area of the Back River Trail, Cemetery Commission to refurbish the stones at Elmwood Cemetery, the Abigail Adams House (inclusive of the Smith headstones at North Cemetery). Chairman DiFazio asked about the project to extend the trail from the south end of Great Esker Park from the base along the trail to the landfill, past the animal shelter. The pathway and some small trails are included. The incinerator was briefly discussed. Mr. Clarke reported that an application has been submitted to the EPA requesting funding for an asbestos study. There are no plans to put a wind turbine in

the area, nor are there any specific plans for the incinerator. MBTA cleanup must be completed before the boat launch ramp project can go forward. Mr. Flynn noted he approached the new Library Director about proposals regarding the plan for the interior of the Fogg Library. Councilor Mathews noted that \$450,000 of Host Community Agreement funds are to be set aside if the funds come to fruition for the Fogg Library. The library is not open at this time, and reuse is still under consideration in order to plan for renovations. Councilor Smart asked if there is still a steering committee. Mr. Clarke responded that the steering committee has completed its work and submitted its report which is on file. A determination is underway for plans for lawn restoration on the grounds of the Fogg Library. Chairman DiFazio asked if there are any plans for the Iron Hill Dam area and the Herring Run. Mr. Clarke responded that there is nothing at the present except the landfill portion. Parking is an issue along Great Esker. Chairman DiFazio noted the poor condition of the walkways on the trail. Mr. Clarke responded that this is included in the Master Plan.

CDBG/Block Grant

Mr. Clarke reviewed a printout provided to the committee. It indicated how the salaries are allocated to CDBG and the Block Grant. He reviewed the HOME, Redevelopment Authority and Conservation funds. There is a shift in salaries in anticipation of a potential cut in the Block Grant. It will need to be revisited and is a best estimate. He noted the Principal Planner will retire and his retirement costs are budgeted. Councilor Mathews asked if Mr. Clarke is comfortable with the percent of the salary for the Conservation Commissioner allocation with the reduction in the number of building permits issued in the town. Mr. Clarke noted that he is not comfortable with the town having to increase fees to cover a salary.

Capital Improvement Plan 2012-2016

Mr. Flynn reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan. Nothing substantive has changed in the plan. Proposals have been scrutinized. There are concerns with public safety and public works and specialized vehicle needs. It was not the recommendation of the committee to fund the seven vehicles recently requested for the police department.

The plan has been prioritized, but nothing has been funded for a number of years. There is nothing emergent. The administration has taken a frugal approach and is using creative solutions to address issues as they occur.

Councilor Mathews also reviewed the run times of the police and fire vehicles. Chairman DiFazio asked if any further plan is contemplated with regard to Legion Field. Mr. Flynn noted the consultant is reviewing the project. Mr. Clarke noted the contract for the recent work approved by the Council and it is expected to be completed this summer.

Councilor O'Connor noted that Senator Hedlund has filed a bill, attached to Senate Bill 90, as a part of the Municipal Relief Act. Last year it was rejected from the Conference Committee. It would take the monetary component away from Senate Bill 90. It will allow the correction to the Community Preservation Act which will add the use of the word "rehabilitation" to the recreational aspect of the act, which will allow the use of

funds from the CPC for the rehabilitation of Legion Field. It passed the House unanimously, and the coalition is holding up the bill to get a 75% guaranteed set aside.

Scott Bois reported that a preconstruction meeting is scheduled with the contractor for the demolition of the water treatment plant, which includes ,as an alternate, the demolition of the stands at Legion Field. Chairman DiFazio asked that a summary from the meeting be provided through Diane Hachey to the committee.

Adjournment

At 8:15 PM, there being no further business, Councilor 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, Chairman