

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Town Hall Council Chambers

May 19, 2009- Tuesday

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairperson
Michael Molisse
Arthur Mathews
Ed Harrington

Not Present: Patrick O'Connor

Also Present: Maureen Duffy, Town Auditor
James Wilson, Chief Financial Officer
Michael Gallagher, Dir. Administrative and
Community Services
George Lane, Town Solicitor
Cindy DePina, Director of Human Resources

Recording Secretary: Diane T. Hachey

Chairman Kenneth DiFazio called the Budget/Management Committee meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Mr. Wilson had two issues to update the committee:

- Last Thursday the Fire Chief indicated that headquarters would be closed for five years. The Mayor has sole and exclusive jurisdiction over the department-although the town operates under a "strong chief". The Mayor wishes to convey that the Chief spoke out of turn and the station will be reopened during the former part of fiscal 2010, and staffed with both an engine and ladder.
- This passed Monday the state issued a memorandum from the Department of Education and Department of Revenue for fiscal year 2009. There are further 9C cuts effective May 31 in the amount of 2.55 million (to the Town of Weymouth). The Superintendant of Schools is applying for a grant within the next week, but will not know if we have been approved until June 15- which is dangerously close to the end of the fiscal year should we be required to make reductions in the budget. Mr. Wilson confirmed that the stimulus package will be utilized to backfill the gap in the budget. Mary Jo Livingstone will update the Budget/Management Committee during her scheduled June 2, 2009 meeting.

Councilor Mathews asked if the School Committee and/or the Superintendant have been approached by Administration regarding Councilor DiFazio's prior suggestion for a wage

freeze. Mr. Wilson confirmed that the School Committee has been regularly meeting and are discussing all viable options.

Review and Discussion on the Department of Administrative Services inclusive of: Emergency Management Services, Human Resources, Town Solicitor, Information Technology and Town Hall Maintenance.

Emergency Management Services

Mr. Gallagher noted that there are no changes to this budget with the exception of an adjustment to the stipend received by the Emergency Management Coordinator.

Human Resources

Mr. Gallagher, in conjunction with Ms. DePina, stated that this budget is level funded and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) last year was \$2,000 but has since been eliminated for 2010 as we are covered under a contract for free EAP services.

Drug and alcohol testing will soon be implemented such that when an accident occurs, during work hours in a town car, the individual will be subject to testing at a local hospital.

There was discussion surrounding salary increases, the format of the grade/salary system for employees, and the review/evaluation process. Mr. Gallagher and Ms. DePina have developed a working list of items they wish to accomplish, of which these subjects are included.

The “training” line item for \$2,500 represents training sessions attended by Human Resource personnel. “In-state mileage” represents reimbursement to Human Resources staff for traveling associated with the GIC enrollment. The “dues/memberships” line item represents books, magazines and publications which are deemed necessary to keep the town in compliance with law. Additionally the “conference registration” line item is needed for staff to attend meetings and conferences for compliance issues.

Councilor DiFazio asked about the status of the overtime issue relative to the School Department’s Director of Maintenance position. Maureen Duffy had previously conducted an audit on this subject.

Ms. DePina is researching the situation and Councilor DiFazio requested a memorandum addressing the final disposition of the situation.

Ms. Duffy’s questions which were not answered by the presentation were addressed. Why the benefit of education reimbursement for fiscal 2010 in the amount of \$9,000, given the poor past participation from staff (\$3,929 in fiscal 2007 and \$5,414 in fiscal 2008)? Mr. Gallagher stated that this is one of the few benefits afforded the non-union staff and is done in an effort to encourage furthering of employee careers. It is difficult to forecast this line item as it changes from year to year and he feels comfortable funding \$9,000 for this line item for fiscal year 2010.

Advertising expenditures are proposed at \$14,000 when \$1,025 was expended in fiscal 2009

and due to the market advertising may not be necessary.

Mr. Gallagher noted that this line item was reduced by \$1,000 and he stressed the importance of the need to advertise when key employees leave.

Why is the “miscellaneous expense” line item was increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 when \$400 has been expensed in fiscal year 200? Mr. Gallagher plans on purchasing a copy machine for the department as they do not possess one and many confidential documents require copying.

A discussion ensued concerning the Council’s authority as it relates to recommendations of reductions to the proposed budget.

Councilor Harrington stated that he would like to decrease the “education reimbursement” and “dues and memberships” line items within the Human Resources budget.

Mr. Wilson noted that the Council can only make a dollar recommendation to decrease a certain department. The Council does not have the authority for specific line item reductions. The Department Head has sole jurisdiction over line items within its budget.

In this instance, Ms. DePina would consult with Mr. Gallagher and make the determination as to the specific line item to be reduced.

Councilor Mathews suggested that the Committee wait for filing of the supplemental budget before exploring these options. Situations may change between now and then.

Town Solicitor

George Lane presented with Mr. Gallagher and stated that the “salary” line item encompasses both the Solicitor and Paralegal’s salaries. Special Counsel is funded considerably higher than funds expended because it is difficult to forecast legal cases which may occur. This figure was based upon the past 3-4 years of expenditures. The Solicitor cautioned the Committee that legal situations arise quickly and funds are immediately necessary to begin expensive litigation proceedings.

The “real estate and takings” line item represents rendering of legal opinions and legal services for the town (eminent domain, deeds etc.) and contract reviewing.

Ms. Duffy’s questions which were not answered by the presentation were addressed. The “Judgements and Damages” line item is budgeted in fiscal 2010 for \$48k yet there was no expense in 2009.

Mr. Lane noted that the exposure on workmen’s compensation cases are calculated and stressed the importance of availability of these funds in order to draw from in case of workmen’s compensation situations.

Information Technology

Mr. Gallagher noted that a percentage of his salary is charged to Information Technology and a percentage is charged to Administrative Services.

The Munis support line item represents funding needed for support over and above what is contracted in the Munis contract. This line item is utilized when Munis is updated.

Councilor Harrington suggests an in- house standard for all departments for posting of meetings and agendas to the website calendar. Mr. Gallagher offered to address this issue at the department head meeting later this week.

Ms. Duffy's questions which were not answered by the presentation were addressed.

Computer software is budgeted at \$100k but less than \$10k was expended in 2009.

Mr. Gallagher noted that all contracts need to be rewritten to be within the fiscal year. He has re-negotiated contracts so they are in line to the end on June 30. Munis is \$70k per year for support and the remainder is for GIS. The Munis contract is being held back due to outstanding issues.

What services are charged to the "other professional services" line item for \$57k? Mr. Gallagher noted that Tom Rose who is contracted for website support, another consultant for data base support services and specialized reporting, and third party support are all charged to this line item.

Why is the computer maintenance contract budgeted for \$48k when only \$11,000 was expended in 2009?

Mr. Gallagher noted that they have re-negotiated all contracts to fit within the confines of the fiscal year and as a result many contracts are still outstanding and need to be paid .

What does the Internet expense represent? Mr. Gallagher stated that this is the internet connectivity via a service provider, in addition to spam filtering.

Of the \$24k budgeted in 2009 only \$4,666 has been expensed- why budget \$24K in 2010-are you expecting future expenses? Mr. Gallagher said they are not anticipating any additional expenses in this area.

Town Hall Maintenance

Mr. Gallagher stated that there is a minimal overtime budget for anticipated overtime. Additionally, the clothing allowance is contractual.

Ms. Duffy's questions which were not answered by the presentation were addressed.

Are the utility expenses for Town Hall only? Mr. Gallagher confirmed that these expenses represent the teen center, town hall, McCulloch and the Hollis Street building.

Why did oil heat and electricity items under utilities change while all others remain constant? It was stated that utilities remained the same.

Administrative Services

Councilor Mathews stated that it is understandable why a portion of Mr. Gallagher's salary is split between two departments, but questions why the Assistant to the Mayor's salary is split 40% to administration and 60% to the Mayor's Department. Mr. Wilson confirmed that her responsibilities are split between the Mayor's constituent services issues, legal coverage, and coverage for the switchboard.

At 9:10 PM, there being no further business, Councilor Mathews made a MOTION to ADJOURN the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Molisse. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Diane T. Hachey-Recording Secretary

Approved by:
Ken DiFazio, Chairman of the Budget/Management Committee