1. BET Budget Comm. Dept. Reviews Day 2 Documents

Documents:

SUB_TO_APP_BET_BUDGET_DEPT_REVIEWS_DAY_2_02-04-16.PDF
APPROVED_BET_BUDGET_DEPT_REVIEW_DAY_2_02-04-16.PDF
Mr. Lash called the meeting to order at 9:06 A.M. He welcomed the audience and suggested that presenters opening remarks include an overview of accomplishments as well as a look forward into the goals and objectives for their department's upcoming fiscal year.

**SPEAKERS**

First Selectman Tesei introduced the conversation about Greenwich Fire Service requesting the Budget Committee add four (4) FT firefighters to staff. He referred to discussions with IAFF 1042 on their concern about a greater degree of protection for their members and life and property of Greenwich residents.

**Fire Department**

The Fire Department budget was presented by Chief Siecienski, Assistant Fire Chief Robert Kick and Deputy Training Chief Larry Roberts. Chief Siecienski provided an overview of current
year accomplishments and reported that no fatalities occurred during the year’s work. He added that Greenwich is the most alarm monitored community in the country. He noted that in the Town review by ISO, there had been a 15% improvement in the department’s scores which should lead to a reduction in residential fire insurance premiums; he announced a new Goal of joining the 2% of fire departments nationally that were ranked Class 2. To accomplish that Goal, additional staffing and an additional fire station location are needed. Bob Kick commented that ISO is strictly a property preservation, not life safety rating.

Capital Budget - Assistant Chief Kick highlighted the value of additional staffing. A handout was distributed showing a model for hiring 16 additional firefighters over the next four years. The Committee compared the new model to the one offered in the previous year, questioned cost efficiencies in overtime expenditure and supportive fire-site assistance available from the fire department volunteers. Mr. Lash requested an analysis of personnel at fire sites of structure fires.

Northwest Fire House – The Committee asked Chief Siecienski to have a 5-mile radius map of the proposed location of the new firehouse that would include properties and population to be served; an additional map of the area within five miles of the Round Hill fire station and a copy of the ISO report should also be sent to the Budget Committee; Chief Siecienski was asked to return to interpret the maps at the February 17th Public Safety Buildings Day meeting. Mr. Lash also suggested that new BET members see the fire videos presented in the previous year.

Parks & Recreation Department

Mr. Siciliano provided an overview of how level service would only increase his departmental budget by 1.7% for the coming year, whereas adding the new fiscal year’s three initiatives, (new departmental line item of Risk contribution; summer police coverage for enforcement at beaches; the impact of the HR study required equity adjustments to GMEA salaries) would mean an overall 2.7% increase to the annual departmental budget that appears in the current budget. He characterized the $10,888,513 operating budget as reflecting conservative demand with a moderate increase of revenue projections associated with beach, marine and harbor facilities that generated $2,818,696 in FY15 and were expected to be $2,661,960 budgeted for FY16. A 3.3% increase for temporary staffing expenses was attributed to competitive pay needed to offset features offered at private local country clubs.

Operations Budget - The Committee asked for a time-of-day vehicle traffic study to be done at the entrance to Greenwich Point. The Committee asked to see that the Williams Street field adjacent to the New Lebanon School’s be prioritized in the Parks & Recreation Operational Plan. They asked how the school landscape plan was being implemented.

Byram Park & Pool – The Committee asked about the progress and changes taking place and whether conditions for release of funds in March/April were being met. Revenue potential sources were reviewed and it was learned that no concessionaire had yet committed to the new facility. It was urged that the ball field, tennis courts and lighting be refreshed to make them consistent with other upgrades taking place throughout the park. Mr. Siciliano was asked to return with additional information about the admission policy being developed for the Byram Pool and corresponding information on possible changes to staffing requirements. It was noted that meetings to discuss Byram Park and Pool access policy would need to take place with the Law Department and the Office of the First Selectman and an operational plan be developed for delivery for the next Release of Conditions discussion in March or April Budget Committee.
meeting. Mr. Siciliano updated the Committee on the progress of preparation of the Junior League fundraising effort for their contribution to building the Park’s pool.

**Capital Budget** - The Committee asked for a cost/benefit analysis of the removal of current carpet, installation and maintenance of new turf at Cardinal Stadium as well as possible installation of turf at the middle school fields. The Committee asked the schedule for replanting of trees at Greenwich High School, and moving the expense of the Tree Risk Assessment program into the Operations Budget rather than the Capital Budget. A fuller explanation for the installation of air conditioning equipment at the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink was requested; use or return to the General Fund of the balance of the Risk funds from the Hamilton Avenue field and garage; and justification for heating equipment for the Platform tennis court was also discussed.

**Law Department**

**Operations Budget** - Mr. Fox describe the Law Department staffing as five full-time and 2 part-time employees, each with heavy caseloads. He commented that typically on an annual basis 343 claims, 135-150 contracts and a multitude of opinions, advice and counseling were provided to the Office of the First Selectman, the BET and various departments. A 1.9% increase was proposed for the Law Department’s operating budget. Fees for outside counsel expertise, opinions, defense in cases with multiple claimants or lawsuits by attorneys was planned to be $915,000 in the coming year. Mr. Fox said that he had considered hiring an additional full-time attorney but felt the variety of expertise was necessary to obtain the outcomes. The Law Department recommended the Budget Committee approve an increased allocation to the Risk Management Fund of a total of $1,000,000 given the pending litigation and possible settlement costs.

**Department of Social Services**

Dr. Barry presented an overview of his department and characterized it as a case-work agency with a network of community partnerships as referral and contract resources. Dr. Barry thought the future direction of the department would be to focus attention on the Town’s youth population, particularly the 0-3 year old population, and support clients’ medical, dental and mental health issues.

**Operations Budget** - The agency interviewed and assessed clients, possibly providing emergency funds, and thereafter worked as case managers in conjunction with agencies to which clients were referred. Its objective was to provide short term solutions for basic human needs to get through crises but its long-term client solutions are helping clients to develop goal and plan timeframes for their accomplishment by being actively involved in directing clients to education, training and employment. The agency’s budget is $3.2 million and has a full time staff of 20, which has decreased over the past several years.

Dr. Barry suggested that the Town be more supportively engaged with youth at risk through the First Selectman’s Youth Commission, and its programs and supporting its Youth Services Coordinator, Jenny Byxbee. He recommended consideration of the new arrangement for the Youth Services Coordinator and associated programs, formerly housed at the United Way Under this arrangement, the Youth Services Coordinator salary was split among the State, the Town and the United Way, with benefits and overhead paid by the United Way. Program dollars in the amount of $10,000 was added to the FY 16 budget by the BET last year. The Committee requested a one-page summary for the Youth Services Coordinator transitional year of how it
plans to serve the community, the budget it would require and how it would measure its outcomes to help define the Town’s role.

The Committee added an interview with TAG to discuss its budgets for its February 17, 2016 Departmental Review Day #4.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

____________________________________
Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

____________________________________
James A. Lash, Chairman

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