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

Documents:

SUB_TO_APP_BET_BUDGET_DEPT_REVIEW_DAY_2_MINUTES_02-05-15.PDF
APPROVED_BET_BUDGET_DEPT_REVIEW_DAY_2_MINUTES_02-05-15.PDF
Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M. He welcomed the audience and suggested 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**

**Police Department** – Chief Heavey began his remarks by stating the department’s objective of reaching full strength (155 policemen) and reducing overtime in FY16. He noted that the force was now 149 policemen with 6 candidates awaiting seats for the 6-month training at the state’s academy followed by a 12-week field training period; Chief Heavey indicated if other Fairfield County communities were training new recruits a temporary regional academy might be established. He emphasized the urgency for accomplishing the training based on 46 policemen currently eligible for retirement and 40 policemen with less than 5 years on the force.

**Operations Budget** – The Committee asked why salaries were budgeted to increase 3.5% rather than according to BET’s guidelines; contractual agreements, step increases and the upward adjustment of dispatcher compensation were cited as primary reasons. The Committee
then reviewed standby, overtime, holiday pay, extra qualification, and temporary expenses; equipment costs; data processing; retirement payout liability; and the request for a new staff position to schedule extra-duty assignments which totaled 33,099 hours during the previous calendar year. With this last subject there was considerable discussion about extra fees charged to users of extra-duty services and how this would offset the new position’s salary and benefits. Ms. Kiernan asked about the role of the Youth Services Coordinator, who manages the Juvenile Review Board. Chief Heavey stated that he supported the increase for this work and would favor making this a full-time town position.

Capital Budget - The Committee reviewed requests for dive team equipment, FARO laser scanners, and long range acoustical devices. They asked Chief Heavey if the Capital Budget could be trimmed. His response was that these items either replaced old equipment or enhanced current services.

First Selectman Tesei spoke in support of the Police, Fire and EMS services and how they contributed to the town’s quality of life. Regarding the Fire Department’s request for additional personnel, he commented that the BET, RTM and neighborhood associations looked to this investment in additional staffing as an insurance policy for the town, life and property. He suggested that all information had been gathered and encouraged the Committee to make a favorable decision.

Fire Department – The Fire Department budget was presented by Chief Siecienski, Assistant Fire Chief Robert Kick and Deputy Training Chief Larry Roberts. Chief Siecienski began by noting that the fire department had responded to 3,700 incidents during the year with both career and volunteer firefighters. He reported that it was the department’s ninth year without a fire fatality.

Operations Budget – The Fire Department request for hiring 9 additional firefighters in FY16 and an additional 8 in FY16 was presented with its deployment plan. Mr. Johnson began the questioning by reminding everyone that a similar plan for adding firefighters last year was turned down by 9 of the 12 members of the BET. He asked what had changed since last year’s proposal. Mr. Ramer supported the Department’s plan but in the interest of gaining consensus among the BET proposed a test for a 3-person engine model in Byram and Sound Beach for one year as a possible alternative option that would phase new staffing in over the next two years. Ms. Kiernan voiced concern about the substantial gap in service in the northwest of Greenwich and the low priority given to the northwest station in the capital budget. This led a discussion of land acquisition cost, water issues, insurance ratings, number of structural fires and response times. Mr. Mason commented that progress on the FY15 BET request for Memorandum of Understanding to integrate volunteer firefighter manpower into the department’s capacity had been slow.

The Committee also discussed a request for four new Captain positions in order to promote four Lieutenants. The Chief responded that he needed better supervision on the Tower Truck. Discussion continued on how the truck was currently supervised and the additional costs involved in promoting four Lieutenants and then four firefighters into the vacant Lieutenant positions.

The Committee reviewed other operating expenses including salary costs, travel expenses, water service cost and questioned if some expenses belonged in the operating or capital budget. Criteria for volunteer firefighter healthcare benefits were reviewed as a component of recruitment, retention and fundraising.
Ms. Kiernan asked for observations on the conversion to TOG’s ADP payroll system. The Fire Department had fewer issues than other departments.

**Capital Budget** – The Fire Department’s request for 20 thermal energy cameras and additional personnel protective equipment was discussed. In discussing unspent appropriations from prior year, two appropriations for dry hydrants were identified.

**Department of Public Works** – The Director opened her remarks by advising the Committee that there would be no increase in the departmental budget over previous year and no addition to the head count in her FY16 departmental budget.

**Operations Budget** – Ms. Seibert commented on savings resulting from single-stream recycling. She mentioned that adjustments had been needed to accommodate stipends for highway and sewer inspectors and a building inspector’s step increase entitlement.

**Revenues** – Ms. Seibert explained that in order to institute a tipping fee, there would be a need to change TOG regulations to bring them in line with the state on solid waste. Additionally, the feasibility of instituting tipping fees and the problems of differentiating resident from commercial haulers and identifying the origin of the waste being brought to the Holly Hill site were mentioned. Mr. Ramer, Mr. Goldrick and Ms. Tarkington proposed possible pricing strategies.

Ms. Kiernan asked Ms. Seibert about DPW’s experience with the ADP payroll conversion and Ms. Seibert responded that ADP was working, but she was working with HR to streamline timekeeping for teamsters and rectify other issues.

**Capital Budget** – Ms. Seibert commented on current and prior year appropriations which DPW identified as needed for the next fiscal year explaining why they should be included. Among the projects were storm water regulatory compliance, mapping of impervious area with the Army Corps of Engineers matching funds, street and bridge maintenance unspent funds, street lighting, the Church Street storm sewer project and additional work at the MISA site. The Committee reviewed numerous new requests for the Engineering, Highway, BOE, Waste Disposal, Building & Construction and Building Inspection Divisions.

Mr. Monelli commented on the department’s ongoing projects which included Grass Island bathrooms, Senior Center renovations and other maintenance projects. He explained the Byram Park and Pool project in detail, as well as other projects involving the donation received for the restoration of the walkways, tree maintenance, planting, playground improvements and tennis court lighting. Concerning the pool project, members of the Committee asked about new building and site costs estimates, additional operating costs, soil remediation requirements, and whether the pool area could be used during the summer of 2015 or closed until the entire project was completed in 2016 or 2017.

The Committee asked for updates on other Capital projects in progress including the Eastern Civic Center, the Central Fire Station, Town Hall exterior, Montgomery Pinetum, and Binney Park’s sedimentation. Other major capital budget items reviewed included repair of the Town Hall entrance, Cos Cob Fire House aprons, annual paving, highway maintenance, bridge work, storm water drainage, Holly Hill master plan phases and soil remediation.

Mr. Feminella’s presentation on Sewer Maintenance and Improvement projects and Holly Hill sewer issues were moved to Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 12:30 P.M.
The meeting adjourned at 4:31 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

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Marc V. Johnson, Chairman

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BET Budget Committee Department Reviews FY 2016
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