



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 7, 2021 - 6:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

Budget Workshop

IN ATTENDANCE

Mayor Robert C. Willey
Mr. Al Silverstein
Mr. Don Abbatiello
Mr. Ron Engle
Rev. Elmer Davis
President Megan Cook

Also present was the Town Manager Mr. Don Richardson, Finance Officer Mrs. Carol Callahan, Assistant Finance Officer Charles Connelly, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

CONVENING

Council President Mrs. Cook called the workshop to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor's Opening Comments.

Mayor Willey stated he has had no questions from the council. He stated any expenditure request changes require a funding source. He stated that the council may need to meet and discuss how the American Rescue Relief money is to be spent.

Mr. Richardson discussed revenues. He stated that Highway User Funds have increased due to legislation which will show a progressive increase. He stated that there is also a state income tax increase. Mr. Richardson stated that there is a discount for early payments as well as active fire department members' discounts on Real Property taxes. Mr. Richardson discussed the Permit Department's increase in activity due to residents moving to the town. Mr. Richardson stated that there is an increase in building permit activity. He stated that the Rental Inspection Department did very few rental inspections last year due to Covid. Mr. Richardson stated there has been an increase in police grants and other police services but a decrease in parking lot revenues. Mr. Richardson discussed the possibility of modifying the Town Code for sanitation costs and the need to add personnel and operating costs. He stated this is the second year of three year contract for recycling. Mr. Richardson stated that there is an increase in interest income.

Discussion occurred regarding the combination of accounts and the reduction of accounts in the current budget.

Mr. Richardson stated that the revenues and expenditures are balanced with the budget totaling \$24,5916.18.

Mr. Richardson stated that the Town is working with a new insurance broker and hopes to realize a costs saving to broker fees. He stated that the Town will go to market for health insurance this year.

Mr. Richardson stated that the budget has a compensation increase across the board. He stated that the civilian employees and public works department will realize an increase and 3% across the board. Mr. Richardson stated that there is a 7 ¼% contribution to the pension plan, 7% to OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits).

Rev. Davis asked that cell phones for the council be included in the budget. Discussion occurred regarding the need for an increase in funds for the Town's website.

Council:

The replacement of council meeting room furniture was discussed.

Town Manager:

IT

Mr. Scott Messick, Director of IT discussed changes in personnel. He discussed the replacement of computers on a rotating schedule. He stated that the Town is proposing to migrate mail to the cloud. He stated that the system proposed has had down time of five minutes during the entire year. He discussed the encrypted cloud storage for data. Mr. Messick stated that the system proposed is approximately \$75,000 with an additional \$20,000 ongoing contract. He stated that whatever is recorded can be put uploaded on the Town's website. Mr. Messick stated there is an unlimited amount of file storage in the cloud.

Finance

At this time, there is a proposed 12% increase for health insurance. There is the OPEB funding to be considered as well as the possibility of a new hire position for Human Resources. Mr. Abbatiello asked that consideration be made for employees working on 35 hours.

There is a Capital request for a high speed scanner to eliminate some of the paper. There is a need to do a records and retention policy with MD State Archives.

Planning and Zoning

Katie Reedy was present to discuss the Planning and Zoning budget. She stated that the Operating Budget's biggest request is for professional services for the Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan updates. Discussion occurred regarding the HDC guidelines which have been estimated at \$60,000. The amount in the budget for Central Square Technologies is for software technology and is Planning and Zoning's pro rata share. Ms. Reedy stated the Planning and Zoning Department would like to have an additional person. She stated it could be a new position with a planning background. She estimated the salary to be approximately \$40,000-\$50,000 and benefits.

Police

Mr. Richardson discussed a change in employee structure. He discussed combining the part time employee at EPD and the nighttime employee at the fire department in to one full time position.

Capt. Wright and Chief Spencer were present. They distributed Easton Police Department's Annual Report.

Chief Spencer discussed the server not working. He stated the Department completely supports going to the Cloud. He stated that they want to be able to access records. Chief Spencer stated they analyzed the budget and stated that it speaks to things absolutely necessary. He stated that eight recruits are going to the Academy Class in July which will require \$25,000. Chief Spencer asked that the clothing allowance be increased by \$12,595. He suggested cutting a car from the capital budget (administration vehicle), cut \$8000 from capital for equipment for drone storage. Discussion occurred regarding a drone for the inside of buildings.

Chief Spencer asked that a records clerk be re instituted for approximately \$36,000. He stated that the eight available positions that will be filled will offset some of the overtime costs. He stated that legislation may mandate PT tests and psychiatric tests for current officers.

Fire Department:

Town Manager Mr. Richardson stated that the Operating Budget is mostly to take care of their building, He stated that there is a request to replace Engine 63 which was cut for FY2022.

President Rick Stacey, Treasurer Chris Hash, and Vice President Mike Brophy were

present.

President Rick Stacey stated that the walkable ladder is still in budget for Tower. He stated that there is still a mold issue in the kitchen.

President Stacey stated that Lt. Caldwell has contacted Rauch Engineering regarding the training facility. He stated that they need \$18,000 for site plan engineering, design and permitting. He stated that the generator will be replaced in this year's budget.

Mayor stated that new fire truck is part of the Covid relief funds.

President Stacey stated that they appreciate the Town's generosity.

Mr. Richardson stated that American Rescue Funds has not been considered preparing this budget.

Building Inspection:

Tom Diem was present and stated that nothing has been cut from the budget. He stated that the Building Department needs a copier/scanner for approximately \$3,000. He asked for an increase in communication for fees for website.

Mr. Diem stated that they are doing their best to reduce costs. He stated that he has no capital expenditures but has a 12% increase in revenue. Mr. Diem stated that building materials are becoming an issue which could decrease building by the local contractors which in turn affect the Building Department revenues. He stated that their ultimate goal is Code compliance and safety.

Adjournment

At 8:36 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the Council President adjourned the budget workshop meeting.

Kathy M. Ruf, Town