

Town of Willington

Board of Selectmen
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Budget Workshop Special Meeting Minutes
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

February 16, 2022
5:00 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

First Selectwoman Wiccenski called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM with the following in attendance: Selectwoman Boritz, Selectman Bulick, Business Manager Donna Latincsics, DPW Director Troy Sposato, Human Services Director Jennie Arpin, Revenue Collector Janice Clauson, Town Clerk Robin Campbell and residents via Zoom.

Present to Speak

None.

Budget Workshop

In the current presented budget, 39% is employees and benefits, 21% is contracted work (dumpsters, IT service, maintenance contracts, plowing contractor), 3.5% is utilities and 18% is maintenance on all of the facilities (this includes maintenance included in the public works budget). These totals are 82% of the budget. The balance of the budget is supplies, including public works supplies, miscellaneous items like the annual car show and Memorial Day observance, the personal property audits from the assessor's office, training and education of staff, dues and fees for conferences, and the capital improvement program plan. The CIP budget was voted on and approved last night at the CIP Committee meeting; there will be a full presentation on the CIP request at next Tuesday night's meeting.

Selectwoman Boritz stated there are only two items that may need to be revisited, the Assessor position and moving forward increased hours and then the amount of money being moved over into the capital reserve. Selectman Bulick agreed with Selectwoman Boritz on the increase of the assessor line item and then asked for further clarification on the town clerk salary line items. First Selectwoman Wiccenski stated that the town clerk line items are to true the salaries of the actual employees working in that department.

Selectman Bulick inquired about Dept 0311-Line430 (Road Maintenance) which shows a budget total of \$25,000.00. DPW Director Sposato replied that these funds are used for the addition of metal guardrails in place of the wooden poles and then guardrail maintenance.

Discussion occurred on the DPW laborer to driver upgrade position; there is no additional staff included in this current run of the DPW budget.

Selectman Bulick inquired about Dept 0311-Line650 (Parts & Supplies) which shows a budget total of \$15,000.00 with a \$6,000.00 increase for the next fiscal year. DPW Director Sposato replied that this increase is due to the cost of vehicle parts, etc. increasing.

Selectman Bulick inquired about Dept 0311-Line730 (Equipment Purchase) which shows a budget total of \$25,000.00 with a \$10,000.00 increase for the next fiscal year. DPW Director Sposato stated that this additional funding would be for the purchase of an additional conex box but if it needs to be removed this

year, then the process can still occur without it, but it would be beneficial for the eviction process. Discussion occurred on the possibility of this item being presented to ARPA for funding.

Selectman Bulick inquired about Dept 0311-Line687 (Snow - Salt) which shows a budget total of \$125,000.00 with a \$30,000.00 increase for the next fiscal year. Discussion occurred on the road salt that is used. DPW Director Sposato stated that the regular salt works to a degree but the department used the calcium chloride treated salt with the colder weather. Both costs increased significantly again this year.

Selectman Bulick inquired about Dept 0351-Line527 (Trash Removal) which shows a budget total of \$125,000.00 with a \$20,000.00 increase for the next fiscal year. Every year this contract increases and there is a lot of trash coming through the transfer station recently.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that last Friday morning the assessor quit his job, effective immediately. The town is currently without an assessor but there is a staff member who previously worked in the office who will be assisting in this department until further notice. The work cannot effectively be done with the 8 to 10 hours a week that is budgeted as there is an increase of resident interaction and workload concerns. If the position is moved to 24 hours a week, there would be a potential cut of \$25,894.00 in the salary but still need to account for part-time benefits. There is going to be a significant amount of work that needs to be done in the weeks ahead as there is a big concern with work that was neglected that has been found in the last few days.

For the Human Services budget Dept 13-0513-300 (Transfer Out Human Services) the Human Services Director has requested a salary increase to bring the position in line with other similar towns, as well as adding the position of an assistant. First Selectwoman Wiczenski is proposing to submit a request to ARPA funding to phase in the increase of the salary increase as well as the additional position into the operating budget. This would remove \$13,934.00 from this budget and would need to be asked of ARPA for the funding. For ARPA this is a request that is based on 75% of the cost in year 1, 50% in year 2, and 25% in year 3. This does qualify for ARPA funding and there IS a need in the senior services/human services department. Discussion followed on proposing a portion of these salaries to ARPA and for the increase of the salary for the Human Services Director.

Human Services Director Arpin thanked the Board for their consideration of this request.

In the Town Office Operations budget, the line item for Dept 0181-430 (Maintenance & Misc.) Selectwoman Wiczenski had included three projects to be completed: replacing the air conditioner in the vault, the addition of lighting in the rear of the town office building, and additional security measures in the upstairs of the town office building. The lighting in the rear of the building (although incredibly necessary) and the additional security measures (the building is secure at this point, this was a recommendation) can be eliminated this year. This would remove \$7,900.00 from this department request.

Replacing the mini split in the vault is necessary; the unit is at least ten years old and it is not known how much longer it will last. Repairs were made last year but it was recommended this unit be replaced. The town documents need to be kept at a climate controlled temperature year round.

With the removal of the conex box, the reduction in the assessor salary, the reduction of the human services salary and position addition (to be requested to ARPA for funding), and the reduction in the TOB maintenance and miscellaneous line item, the current increase for this year's budget is at 9.07% which is \$335,900.00. This figure is without the insurance for the assessor position (which is estimated at \$18,295.00). With the addition of the insurance piece, the budget is now at a 9.56% increase which is \$354,195.00.

On the cover page of the budget, the capital plan represents an increase of 10% which is \$64,465.00. There are significant increases in money into the capital reserve, there's a significant decrease in capital expenditures, and a decrease in debt repayment, public works leases, and other debt repayment. This is

because of years of increase in growth but the capital plan stayed steady. The plan does cover possible school building projects; either individual projects or one school building project.

There was discussion on the assessor position again; increasing the position from 8 to 10 hours a week to an estimated 24 hours and not going to a full time position shared with another municipality.

Discussion was had on the tree maintenance budget; the emerald ash borer trees need to be removed. DPW Director Sposato stated that once the ash trees have the disease, there is about nine months before they start to fall down. This is a public safety item because the trees may fall at any time if they are not removed.

In the current proposed budget, it does not include a new laborer position for DPW. There is a need for one additional member of the DPW department as a laborer.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski reported that Revenue Collector Clauson found a small savings in the training and education budget for the Revenue Department. The assistant revenue collector will take the third and fourth course this spring instead of in the fall. This is a reduction of \$865 from the Revenue Department budget Dept 0137-Line645 (Training & Education).

Currently the town is awaiting an updated price on the accounting software. Business Manager Latincsics stated to budget for a 5% increase for the next fiscal year at this time.

In the senior center budget (line 185-822), for senior center programs there is \$1,000.00 listed. First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked if this was pass-through money and Business Manager Latincsics confirmed it is. This is separate from the \$1,000.00 that is in the senior center program to run the various programs at the center.

The current budget total is \$381,488.00 which is a 10.3% increase.

Business Manager Latincsics asked to revisit the computer expense line item to confirm that that number is current for the upcoming fiscal year.

Discussion was held on the current cost of fuel prices (oil, diesel).

Region 19 is presenting a 3.4% increase.

The budget discussion will continue on Tuesday, February 22nd at 6:30pm during the next Board of Selectmen meeting. If the budget is agreed upon, a vote of the Board will take place to send the budget to the Board of Finance for review and approval.

Selectwoman Boritz moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Selectman Bulick seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Bulick, Boritz & Wiecenski) 0 No. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelsey Allard
Recording Secretary
Town of Willington

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TOWN CLERK