

**Town of Seymour ~ Board of Finance
MINUTES
Budget Deliberations
Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 7:00pm
Norma Drummer Room, Seymour Town Hall**

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 2/13/2020
TIME: 4:15pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Members Present: Bettyann Peck, Kwame Dunbar, Bill Sawicki, Beverly Kennedy, Jim Cretella, John Stelma; Gary Popielasz, Paul Wetowitz (alternates)

Members Absent: Richard Demko; Grace Brangwynne, (alternate)

Others Present: Dana Flach, Mary McNelis, Joe Kuziak, Suzanne Garvey, Paula Chapla, Debbie Wasikowski, Jean Uhelsky, Joyce Koslowski, Doug Thomas

Item #1 – Call Meeting to order

Chairman Bill Sawicki called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Item #2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone saluted the Flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item #3 – Public Comment

None

Item #4 – Deliberation and discussion of 2020/2021 Budget

Tax Collector – Dana Flach, Tax Collector presented the budget

- Budget is the same as last years except for the salaries which are contractual.
- Would like to add a request to the Capital Account for new Cabinets/File Cabinets/Counters. Asked last year got a quote for \$7,000 from Oxford Hardware (Dana asked Tony Caserta who said to ask Jim Baldwin who said to call Oxford Hardware). They were supposed to try and find this money in the budget last year but could not and it doesn't look like it's on this years either. Bill Sawicki asked Doug Thomas to look and see if there is any money in Contingency or Buildings or anyplace else to cover this expense. If not, we will put in the Capital Plan.

Assessor's Office – Joe Kuziak, Assessor presented the budget

- Salaries increased per contractual obligations
- Revaluation estimate went up. Estimate was \$100,000. Actual revaluation costs \$169,700. (Bill asked Doug to see how much we have put away over the past few years for the revaluation.) Joe said we need to pay the remainder of \$89,127 in April 2021. (\$80,573 was paid already). Bill Sawicki asked why we were over on the total cost. Joe said that in 2016 he asked the various revaluation companies what they would estimate we would need for the 2020 Revaluation. They gave him the \$100,000 figure. This company we have used since about 2000 and they are very good. They were also the low bidder.
- Education Meetings/Seminars remained the same.
- Professional Association dues went up \$10 (New Haven County Membership).
- Purchased Services – includes copier lease \$1,260, computer maintenance fee \$6,496, CAMA cloud hosting \$3,605 (down from \$7,000 – which included an initial charge), Personal Property Audits, \$5,000 (same), Map Updates \$10,000 - last year cost was \$8,500; they now have 2019 aerial photos & building/paving layers for an additional \$1,500 (\$500 for the aerial photos and \$1,000 for the building/paving). Joe said he doesn't need this additional information, but some in the Town may want

it. Quality Software – went up to \$10,153. Access to DMV files - \$250. CAMA Upgrades is zero (was only payments for two years – we are done).

- Car Allowance - \$500 (same)
- Supplies & Postage - \$2,300 (same)
- Clothing - \$400 – up \$100 per union contract
- Books & Periodicals – small increase due to CAAM increase
- Equipment Capital – we will need file cabinets, office equipment, chair
- On 12/23/19 Meeting - New Business – “A few people discussed if we should have a small increase now so that years from now, we don’t have a major increase. The revaluation hadn’t happened for like 10 years, now we found out that we were in violation of State charter.” This was a situation from many years ago. Not recently. Just to clarify.

Community Services – Mary McNelis, Community Services Director, presented the budget

- Community Services encompasses the Recreation Department and Elderly Services
- Salaries – except for line item 110, all salaries are the standard union increase
- Salaries – line item 110 – 12.6% increase (\$10,080). Increase is due to 2 reasons:
 - This includes Evening Site Manager for Community Center; 28 weeks of the year (we only need 28 weeks because during basketball season we already have a site manager so he can patrol the upstairs as well as the gym – November through February). We have so much going on in the evenings there that we really need to have someone patrolling. \$14/hr x 3 hrs/night x Average 4 nights/week = \$4,704.
 - The other increase is for our Camp Counselors = 18 Camp Counselors x 32.5 hrs/wk x 7 weeks. Minimum Wage is increasing to \$11.00/hr. Total = \$5,376. By 2023 the Minimum Wage will be up to \$15.00/hr. In addition, we are going to look at raising the cost of Summer Camp by 5%. This SHOULD cover the minimum wage increase. However, the unknown is how much vendors will increase their services based on the increased minimum wage. The next increase is November 2021 = \$12.00.
- Communications & Telephone – increase of 11% (\$795) is due to our on-line registration; this new vendor cost is about \$4,800 (from \$4,000). We would like to keep the registrations all in the same place, the Library will be asking for about \$1,500 for this same service. If the Library portion is approved, the Community Services budget will go down about \$1,500. This cost is split between Elderly Services, Recreation, and the Library.
- All other line items have remained the same.
- Bill Sawicki asked if we could have a copy of Mary’s Revenue Budget. Mary will give to Doug and he will distribute to the Board. Currently the budget is for \$152,300.
- Bill Sawicki asked what Other Purchased Services for \$33,000 consists of. Mary said that it includes in-house presenters, some salaries, contractors, copier. Bill asked if Mary could give a breakdown of this number to Doug as well. He will distribute to the Board.
- Bill Sawicki asked what the cost for Summer Camp is. Mary said it is \$220 for 7 weeks (when Mary first got here, the price was \$99 for 7 weeks). We are the most reasonably priced in the state. We won’t feel the sting of the minimum wage because I have been gradually increasing the cost. This year the cost will be \$235 for 7 weeks. Revenue is at \$67,000. Last year we had 310 people. This year we have to move from Bungay School to Gary Park due to the work at the High School, so it’s not recommended to raise the cost higher than 5%.

Library – Suzanne Garvey, Library Director, presented the budget

- The first two line items are salaries which are contractual.

- Line #121 – Pages:
121 Salary: Library Pages: \$ 14,000.00- This is a requested increase of \$2,000.00 in the Page line item. Library employs three students to perform paging duties for the library. The continued increase in minimum wage (going up to \$12.00 in September 2020) has seriously depleted the hours the library can schedule. These very necessary library employees perform the critical tasks of reshelving returned books and shelf reading to make sure the books are where they should be by call number. They also dust the shelves and other areas in the building making them more accessible for library patrons and those with allergies.

- Line #430 – Repairs & Maintenance:
430 Repair/Maintenance: \$15,000.00- \$3,000.00 of this requested amount is for an upgrade to the two first floor rest rooms. A quote of \$1,200 for vinyl flooring for both bathrooms, \$1,000.00 for painting, and funds for new sinks in each bathroom totals the expenses. The balance \$12,000.00 is requested as a utility expense. The town does pay for electricity in the building. It does not pay for the gas to heat the Library. Last year the Library endowment paid for the heating to the building which was a great and very necessary expense. As a town building, the Board respectfully asks that the Town take on this utility expense which they provide for every other Town building so that the Library can use endowment funds for materials that the Library desperately needs. For example- our chairs, furniture, and many other areas need upgrades.

- There is so much work needed for painting, carpeting, flooring.
- The cost for on-line registration will be reduced to \$1,583.00 (from the \$2,916 requested) per Mary McNelis. We will use the same website for the children’s programs registration.
- Books & Periodicals, Machinery & Equipment, and Machinery & Equipment – Technology are all the same as last year.
- Bill Sawicki asked what the Library receives from the Trusts. Suzanne said the Wooster Trust = \$54,000 (plus an additional \$10,000 – after taxes). The Hamel Trust = \$44,000 (to be used exclusively for books). Total is about \$100,000. Bill asked what the portfolio looks like now. Bill asked if they come out only once a year. At the very least, they should at least get quarterly updates. But they have asked several times for the investment advisor to come out to no avail.
- Bettyann Peck asked what Bibliomation is. Suzanne said it is the Library’s consortium. She is on the Board of Directors. It does cataloging, circulation, take care of holdings (about 80,000), they offer tech-support (Rob Dyer does also), for computers we get our printing software through them, on each computer no one can download anything, they are with 68 other libraries, and is very good for interlibrary loans.
- The building has been updated. They replaced the ceiling tiles upstairs, upgrade of lights, and the windows downstairs. They also did the asbestos replacement in the old entryway. It is a large building, and the maintenance crew is very small. There is no more leaking since the roof was replaced, but the gutters are a problem.
- Paula Chapla, Chair of the Library Board of Directors did a Powerpoint Presentation.
 - Started with statistics of # of programs, # of patrons, expenditures (2018/2019 only), online databases, hours & staffing, etc. for 2019/2020.
 - 2019 Achievements
 - Second Eagle Scout program – Cody Kellogg – Flagpole beautification & Memorial Garden
 - Received a Matthies Grant – received a meeting pod, sewing machines, chromebooks, many games, and a 3-D printer
 - Seymour Library Friends – they hold 10 book sales a year, raises between \$3,000 to \$5,000/year for the Library. They purchased new shades on the downstairs windows. They also purchased passes for Mystic Aquarium & Seaport, MOAM (New Britain), Peabody Museum. They purchased monitors and folding chairs as well.

- Board of Directors have standardized monitors, purchased IndieFlix, purchased a sign (\$750 and matched other Town Buildings) for the Library. We painted the programming room in 2017 (about \$3,000). Worked on completing carpeting for the Children’s Room – received five quotes – cost is about \$7,000. Valley Flooring offered to do the area in front of the Children’s Room for free. Finally, Benchmarked the Fairfield Public Library. It was awesome.
 - 2019/2020 Achievements – Building Projects
 - We have had the lighting upgraded
 - We have new ceiling tiles
 - The old entryway is up to code (doors & glass); asbestos removed; fresh paint on railings & radiators.
 - New windows downstairs
 - New HVAC system – we are having problems with this – Alex Danka is trying to fix.
 - Meeting Pod – received a grant for this; it is a moveable, stand-alone room. Per the Fire Marshal we need to have the room plumbed so that in case of a fire, no one would be trapped inside. Hopefully, it will be a minimal cost to bring in plumbing.
 - New computers – there is no more support for Windows 7 so all the computers need an upgrade. We need about 23.
- Library Operations Comparison was included between libraries in the Valley. Note that the Pages can ONLY shelf-read and re-shelf books.
- Board of Directors – see below for definition – please note that it says that we are responsible for the determination of need for major building repairs – not that we should use our Trust money to repair a Town Building:
 - An elected board of 5 members who are responsible for the approval of the Library Director’s budget and service policy as well as the management of the Library’s endowment funds. They are also responsible for the determination of need for major building repairs and strategic planning. They also work with community organizations to coordinate and promote services with the Library.
- There was a comparison of Library Funding (what the Town covers vs. what the Endowments cover).
- Also, there was a spreadsheet showing the budget and expenditures for the Endowments for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 (to date). Note that the \$7,000 difference is what was used to re-do the carpeting in the Children’s Room. With regards to the natural gas -there is SUPPOSED to be a program in place that saves us money. This spreadsheet only goes through November (where the number was very high). Hopefully over the next few months, we will have realized some savings.
- There were a few Patron Requests: fax machine, art classes (for adults) – very expensive, homework help (children) – very expensive.
- 2020 and Beyond:
 - Need to replace electrical outlets – noted on safety walk done at the library. Some of the outlets are under the shelving. We cannot run a cord (for their computer) to the study area – this is a safety hazard.
 - Need to replace more ceiling tiles
 - Painting needed in entryway, foyer, window areas, walls, and downstairs walls. Maybe we could hire someone to do this.
 - Bathroom Upgrades – flooring quote for upstairs (\$1,100), painting needed downstairs. Alex Danka painted the upstairs bathrooms, but the floors look terrible.
 - Elevator – new one needed.
- Challenges

- Limited staffing availability – we have 6 people working 35 hrs/week. It is very tough to schedule vacations, medical situations, etc. Also, there are only two people working on Saturday. This is very scary considering recent events.
- The Board thinks that the Director should report DIRECTLY to the First Selectman.
- Town Funding – asking the Town to assume the Natural Gas and Water & Sewer costs as the Library is a Town Building.
- We have furniture needs: desks, chairs and need to provide plumbing for the Meeting Pod.
- We have had many conversations about what to put in the budget. What we would like to do is this: if the Town can pay all the utilities (including natural gas), we would have HR draw up a job description that is broad based to add ½ person to cover programming, vacations, illness, comp time. We are willing to meet halfway.
- With regards to the financial statements from the Trusts: we had about \$43,000 with Raymond James Investments (Paula has had experience with them). We had a CD @ Ion Bank and a CD @ Liberty Bank and rolled them over to the Raymond James account (80% low risk/20% a bit more aggressive). This was so we could have the funds if we should need them. We are VERY unhappy with the Bank of America. They feel as though they have had this account for MANY years. We would like to change. They charge outrageous fees. With Raymond James we were able to negotiate the fee. They did not listen to what we said, and they didn't care. I would like to set up another meeting with them and really ask them questions. Bill Sawicki asked who set up the Trust. Let's see if we can move the money. We could involve Town Counsel – see if they can file a petition in probate to move the trust.
- Paul Wetowitz said that the Town Buildings really do need a lot of help.
- The projections were that the we should save 30% once the projects are up & running. If they do not meet that savings, we can have them pay the difference or do more projects. The High School is the largest building. We submit our costs to the State Department of Education improvements and apply for reimbursement. We shouldn't move on the project until we get the ok from the State to see how much we can get in reimbursement. A lot hinges on the State letter of commitment. This is holding up getting the savings number.
- Jim Cretella asked about the streetlight credits. Bill said this is different. We submit all the information (types of lights, etc.) to Eversource. They have their engineers work out how much we would save. The streetlights are at a flat rate. The savings are a lot (cost could be ¼ of what we are paying). The problem is that the State is SO slow with paying for things.
- Bill Sawicki said that the Library should put together a Capital Project Request for the things they need. For many years nothing has been done. They need to have grounded outlets. This is a safety issue.
- In 2000, the Fund Balance was \$5 million. In 2009, the Fund Balance was \$2.5 Million. All that went to keeping the Mill Rate low artificially.

Item #5 – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Submitted by:

Monica Dimon
Recording Secretary