

**Town of Seymour ~ Board of Finance
MINUTES
Budget Deliberations
Monday, February 24, 2020 at 7:00pm
Norma Drummer Room, Seymour Town Hall**

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 2/25/2020
TIME: 11:00 AM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

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

Members Absent: Jim Cretella; Grace Brangwynne, (alternate)

Others Present: Tony DePrimo, Bill Paecht, 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

Parks Department – Bill Paecht, Chairman of the Parks Department, presented the budget

- We maintain 9 parks, approximately 203 acres; also, 4 schools, approximately 62 acres. All labor comes under the Public Works budget. There are 4 basketball courts, 5 play centers, 1 trail, 6 tennis courts, 4 soccer fields, 4 gazebos, 8 baseball fields, and 6 softball fields to maintain as well.
- Recently the Community Center has gotten very busy, using our fields a lot more. They moved the summer camp to Gary Park. Under purchased services – Janitorial we need an increase. Due to the camp @ Gary Park, the bathrooms need to be cleaned every day.
- We replaced two roofs on buildings this year (put in metal roofs because they last longer). Next year we hope to replace three roofs, plus the gazebos.

Discussion/Questions:

- Bill Sawicki asked what the increase is for under Repairs & Maintenance. Bill Paecht said it is for the roofs. We are fortunate that the Public Works Department does all our labor. These guys are unbelievable, the number of things they are doing. So, this is for materials.
- The stone buildings @ French Park are falling apart and need to be replaced. These are the original stones from the French house. Hopefully some day we can get the bathrooms back open again. We have applied for grants. It would cost about \$45,000 - \$55,000 to fix them. The pipes are filled with cement. Need to dig all the pipe right to the street.
- We are trying to get grants for the trees. You can't walk the trails because of downed trees.
- There are a few projects that we need to get done: French Park Tennis Courts (\$15,500 for re-surfacing – about 5 years ago we spent \$120,000 to redo them), High School Football Field (\$19,325), and French Park wall (\$6,000 – SAFETY ISSUE). If there is extra money in the budget, we will pick one of these to get done.
- This year we redid the Middle School baseball field. And also, some work on the High School softball field.

- Richard Demko asked if the “Trees” costs are for a separate vendor, not what Public Works does. Bill Paecht said yes.
- Bill Sawicki asked what is included under General Supplies. Bill Paecht said that it is for clay, seed, and we will be needing a LOT more geese repellent this year. They are coming back near the Community Center and Sochrin’s Pond. We can’t do anything with the geese at Broad Street Park because we can’t put chemicals there due to the water. Coyotes do repel the geese. They had some but were stolen. They were styrofoam. The cost is about \$60 each. Bill Sawicki said we should find the money to get these or plastic ones.
- Bill Paecht said that Parks are important to the Town. They bring people to the Town. He said that the treatments were about 90% effective. The treatments are not to be used on school grounds or Broad Street Park (we lease that property).

Public Works Department – Tony DePrimo, chairman of the Public Works Department presented the budget

- Requesting one to two extra full-time Laborer Positions.

Through the course of this FY-20, DPW has been assigned additional tasks. In addition to our success maintaining BOE grounds, & pristine parks, we have also taken on grounds maintenance for all our town buildings. There have been preliminary discussions with the board of DPW to also carry out some small like construction repairs to the Town’s sanitary sewer system & grounds maintenance for Sewage plant, and numerous pump-stations across town.

In order to fulfill these additional duties, I am requesting 2 additional fulltime Laborer positions in accordance to current bargaining union contract. To offset a portion of funding, I am proposing to transfer funding from seasonal acct. to full time salaries acct for 1 of the requested positions. FY-21 budget.

- One Full Time Laborer position annual salary= \$31,200.00
- Seasonal Acct # 570-115= \$50,000.00-\$31,200.00 transferred to salaries acct # 570-110
- Remaining Balance Seasonal Acct# 570-115= \$18,800.00

I further request the second position be negotiated with BOE in consideration for DPW services.

- Bill Sawicki said that the Board of Selectmen is in charge of hiring. Bill suggested to Tony that he (through the Public Works Board, formally petition the Board of Selectmen for these two positions ASAP. If it’s approved by them, then it comes to us (BOF) to fund it. The benefits package is about \$23,000 to \$25,000 per person.
- **WINTER ACCOUNTS** – quiet year so far. But December was challenging – used up the Salt Account. *Based upon this season activity, it is determined an approximate 150 to 200 tons of product has been applied to road surfaces for the more significant accumulating ice events and an approximate 100 to 110 tons applied to road surfaces for more minor inclement snow/ice weather events. We have already depleted approx. 65%our account for snow related materials with 12 weeks of winter still remaining.*

Further review of said account 5 year history I am requesting (acct # 430-3110-570-422 snow plowing materials) consideration for increase of \$50,000.00 from current \$100,000.00 to \$150,000.00.

Also, for consideration based on review of a 5 year history I am requesting (acct # 430-3110-570-131 overtime snow plowing) consideration for increase of \$50,000.00 from current \$90,000.00 to \$140,000.00. For this current season, expended is an estimated \$28,928.24 for 585.5 overtime hours worked. These estimates reflect a very active pattern of snow/ ice-events relevant to this season inclement weather.

- **TREES**

Please be advised, there is a concern regarding numerous decaying trees within town easements that pose a hazard that can sustain moderate infrastructure damages. In an effort to address these hazards, I am requesting the above referenced account be increased from \$75,000.00FY-20 to \$100,000.00FY21

DPW staff does not possess the appropriate certifications and or equipment to effectively execute this scope of service. The additional funding will provide a means to deploy the necessary professional resources to remove these hazards protecting our precious infrastructure, and safeguarding the general public.

- **CAPITAL INVESTMENTS & PROJECTS:**

Need a new plow truck and there are four new small trucks needed. They are on their last leg. I would hate to lose one of these in a storm.

Currently there are 8 large truck routes, and 4 small-truck routes (mason-dumps) and 1 sidewalk team structured to effectively have coverage for a full complement snow operation. Of these routes, we have aging large trucks late 90's models too early 2000 models in need of replacement. Some trucks are showing major ratting of the steel bodies, and becoming more challenging & costly to make repairs.

Of our 8 large trucks, 4 trucks should be considered for replacement in the upcoming FY's. If one of these trucks brakes down during a snow event, that causes significant challenges to effectively combat a storm. Streets will be delayed service snow removal & treatment, which can lead to critical public safety hazards.

I am requesting consideration to purchase 1 new freightliner plow truck FY-21 capital in the amount of \$195,000.00 for FY-21 following the same bidding practice as FY-19. Prior investments on new equipment has shown positive results. We need to further invest to effectively forecast future departmental needs.

- Also, we are still in need of the new scale at the Transfer Station. It was approved in last year's budget. We (Board of Finance) discussed the scale in December and January and will make sure that it is in the Capital plan for this year. Bill Sawicki said that the Public Works Department does a phenomenal job and we are very fortunate that your team is so conscientious and takes pride in their work.
- Bill Sawicki asked if Tony had a "Wish List". Tony said maybe a new woodchipper and a new sweeper. Bill said that he should put these items into the Capital Plan (it is laid out 5 years forward).
- Beverly Kennedy said that under "Department Request" on the budget, the total for Highway Wages & Maintenance is incorrect. It should be \$1,905,645 (up \$152,670 from last year's budget). Doug can correct this and re-run the budget. Also, Bill Sawicki asked if we could have a REVISED budget run for tomorrow.
- John Stelma asked if there were any changes with the recycling revenues. Tony said they are about the same as last year. About 100 tons/month.
- Bill Sawicki asked about the recycling check. Tony is checking this now. We can keep track of people going into the transfer station now. Just last month they found a discrepancy of about 16 tons by checking the tickets. The scale will be a big help.
- Beverly Kennedy asked about the \$18,000 for vehicle storage that was budgeted for last year. Tony said that he is working on this with Tim Connors. There will be no expense this year. The expense will come from his budget. We will build something at the DPW Complex. The \$18,000 will be put towards that construction.
- Kwame Dunbar asked why the amount in Communications/Telephones went to \$10,000. Tony said this is a typo. There is an additional fee for the GPS, but not to \$10,000. Doug will check and correct the error for tomorrow.

DISCUSSION:

- Bill Sawicki said that the auditors (Scott Bassett) will be here tomorrow to present their report. It will be filed with the State. We will vote to accept. Paul Wetowitz asked what the auditors look for. Bill Sawicki said that they will ensure that the financial statements are fairly presented within certain parameters that auditors have. Were there any material misstatements in the numbers? They DO NOT look for fraud, they DO NOT look at every transaction. That kind of audit is much more expensive. We paid about \$62,000 for our audit. There are cheaper companies out there, but Bill said that we do not want them doing our audit. Our auditors will look at the grants we have received to see if we were compliant. They will look at our systems. Do any controls need strengthening? Are the Town numbers free of materials misstatements? The biggest liability we have right now is OPEB. Last year was about \$37 million. This year about \$45 million. Actuaries use formulas to get to this number (estimated liability). We have opened an OPEB Trust account with \$100,000 in it. This is a positive step financially. We will never get to the total number. But the fact that we are “looking towards the debt” is a positive statement. The OPEB Trust is safe from creditors. Previously this was not included on financial statements. But we really should – in full disclosure of all aspects that affect the Town’s finances – include this number. The rating agencies know all about the OPEB.
- Bill said that the Town Newsletter is going out March 23rd. We should plan to be done with deliberations in time to put the Town Hearing date in the newsletter. Doug will check to see the exact date the newsletter is going out.
- Bill Sawicki asked if Doug has heard from the Board of Education with a revised number. Doug said he has not. Will reach out to them tomorrow.
- Bill Sawicki asked if Doug has heard or gotten anything on our Energy Savings. We received a payment from the Board of Education for \$414,000 for the lease payment. This gets credited to Debt Service. Regarding the energy credit, Doug said that the savings will be less this year because the projects started late in the year. Next year it will be higher. We are anticipating a shortage in the electrical lines, but we expect a rebate of about \$400,000 from Eversource for putting in all the energy-saving equipment. And we should expect about \$100,000/year for the next 15 years. Doug will bring in report showing lease payments, credits. Doug will bring in a copy of the commitment letter from Eversource. Bill said the auditors would need to see this commitment letter also. We don’t want this to be missed.
- Beverly Kennedy asked about the \$350,000 from the Board of Education (and \$50,000/year) for the lease payments. Doug said we did not give them \$350,000, just took out the lease for them and they will pay us back every year.

Doug will reschedule the “Town Buildings” budget presentation.

Item #5 – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

Submitted by:

Monica Dimon
Recording Secretary