

**Town of Seymour ~ Board of Finance  
MINUTES  
Budget Deliberations  
Monday, March 9, 2020 at 7:00pm  
Norma Drummer Room, Seymour Town Hall**

**Members Present:** Kwame Dunbar, Richard Demko, Beverly Kennedy, Jim Cretella, Bill Sawicki; Paul Wetowitz (alternate)

**Members Absent:** Bettyann Peck, John Stelma; Gary Popielasz, Grace Brangwynne, (alternate)

**Others Present:** Doug Thomas

**Item #1 – Call Meeting to order**

Chairman Bill Sawicki called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**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**

- Previous question on Town Computers – breakdown of \$46,385 – was provided in e-mail today. Kurt requested that we keep the \$46,385. Total IT budget should keep at \$161,601.
- Previous question on advertising – do we really need the \$15,000? Kurt said yes. Keep this in the budget.
- Previous question on Election Staffing - \$20,000 was cut by First Selectman. He said that if we should need it, we will provide the money. Would rather not tax the people on a “what if we need it”. Leave this number @ \$25,000.
- Previous question on Memberships under the EDC – we do not need the \$1,700 because CCM is partnering with MEDC & CREC. Leave the budget # @ \$1,500.
- Previous question on how much the Pumpkin Festival was paid last year and what the budget was. They were paid \$5,500. Their budget was \$10,500 last year but was cut to \$5,500. This year it is at \$5,000.
- Paul Wetowitz suggested that the Board keep the requested stipend for the Fire Chiefs. He got some information on how much time the Chiefs spend doing this job:
  - Mike Lombardi said that he goes to 2-4 meetings/month, goes to between 25 – 40 calls/week, endless texts and e-mails, decisions regarding equipment and other issues.
  - Chris Edwards does a lot of similar things/month; decisions regarding equipment repair, lost time due to school lockdowns drills, training classes, mass casualty drills, committee meetings, 5-10 hours/week doing reports, spends 30-40 hours/month as the Assistant Fire Chief.
  - David Van Wert – 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant – when on call interfacing with local Fire Marshal, local Fire Departments, in charge of maintaining protective equipment for about 100 people.

Paul said that he has done this for about 6 years previously. We are not getting as many volunteers as we used to. It is a LOT of work. It takes them away from their families. We need to make sure that we take care of the volunteers that we have. Regarding EMS: they get \$20/call period and \$5/call. We need to recognize the Fire Department in Seymour. The stipend would be a step in the right direction. Other departments in the area do provide stipends.

There was a discussion in which everyone agreed that this would be a good idea.

- Bill Sawicki asked Doug Thomas if there were any issues with this. Doug said that we would need to figure out if they would be EMPLOYEES or INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS. The Board of Selectman would not need to create the positions, it is already there.
- Bill Sawicki asked Doug Thomas to talk with Rich Buturla, Town Counsel and Kurt Miller about this and find out if there would be any issues on their end and what we would classify them – EMPLOYEE or INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS? If we were to pay them, would we take out social security, would they fall under MERS, would they fall under health insurance? Do we have any further employment liability?
- Bill Sawicki asked Doug to find out if the \$16,600 for the Engineers have taxes taken out of them?
- Bill Sawicki said that he spoke to Mike Wilson (Superintendent) about the Board of Education budget. He said that there may be a meeting tonight – he needs to bring it before the Board of Education. He said that he anticipates a “best guess” for us by the 16<sup>th</sup>. Bill said that the Board of Finance is hoping to wrap this (Town) budget up by the 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Regarding the \$1,583 – Doug will check with Community Services and the Library. Do we need to put the \$1,583 in each budget?
- Bill Sawicki said that the YTD number for Parks as of the April meeting will be much higher. Richard Demko asked if we could take the additional \$5,000 we put in the Parks Department for Trees and put that money in the Public Works Department for Trees.
- Richard Demko asked if we should reduce the \$10,000 in for Turf Replacement to \$2,000 like last year. Bill Sawicki said that it will cost over \$1 million to replace. If we don’t start socking away some money for this, it will cost too much to fix when it needs it. We still have about \$200,000 left that we need to finish the Town Building Repairs. Bill advised that we keep this line at \$10,000.
- Beverly asked regarding the newsletter advertisements – we received \$17,200 in revenues. The cost for the newsletter is \$3,750/quarter. So, we are all good.
- Paul Wetowitz asked if we will see an increase in revenue after the revaluation. Bill Sawicki said that the property values will go up, the mill rate will come down – because the Grand List will go up. Your assessment usually goes up by 1/3 on a revaluation, and the mill rate will decrease by 1/3. When the revaluation comes in, they will have a total Grand List minus small adjustments. Out of this net Grand List, what would be the mill rate that we would have to charge to come out to the same budget that we have. From there we work to change the mill rate.
- Beverly Kennedy asked if we have asked other towns to partner with on the Dog Warden. Oxford has their own. Woodbridge is it for now.
- Doug said that the revised budget number is currently at: \$58,049,673 or an increase of 1.17%. This is including the First Selectman’s number for Board of Education.
- Bill Sawicki asked Doug to have new Revenue Sheets and revised Budget Sheets for Monday’s meeting. We need to keep in mind that it wouldn’t be a bad thing to increase to 36.1 mills. Our mill rate hasn’t increased for four years. The rating agency actually may think that the rate is low for political reasons if we continually kept the mill rate the same. Eventually the departments are going to need more money to deliver the same services.
- Doug said that he may have trouble locating someone to come to Monday meeting. If he can’t, we will need to cancel it. He will let Bill know by Thursday morning.

#### **Item #5 – Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

Submitted by:

***Monica Dimon, Recording Secretary***