Conway Municipal Budget Committee, January 2, 2019 Meeting Minutes

MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 2, 2019
Professional Development Room
Kennett Middle School, Conway, NH

Chairman Jim LeFebvre called the meeting to order at 6:31pm. The following members were present: Vice Chair, Dave Jensen, Eric Dziedzic, Michael Tetreault, Greydon Turner, Diane Ryan, Joe Mosca, Terry McCarthy, John Colbath, Michael Fougere, John Edgerton, and Ted Sares. Also present: Lisa Towle, recording secretary

Excused: Mike Laracy.

Absent: Ellin Leonard, Steven Steiner, and Sarah Verney.

Vice Chair Jensen led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING MINUTES (December 12, 2018):

Mr. Jensen moved, seconded by Mr. Edgerton to approve the minutes as written. Motion Carries (10-0-3 [Mr. Mosca, Mr. Edgerton, and Mr. Fougere])

TOWN BUDGET REVIEW - FIRE PRECINCTS:

Center Conway Fire Precinct
Glen Merrill, Chief, Nancy Leavitt, Clerk, and Al Eaton, Commissioner:
• Proposed operating budget for 2019 is $256,870, which is an increase of $5,000 and includes a 3% salary increase for Chief Merrill.
• The special warrant article for the capital reserve fund increased from $35,000 to $40,000.
• The 2018 budget was $252,000 and $243,000 was spent.
• Salary and Benefits: Medical $18,008; Retirement $18,000; and Wages $46,350.

East Conway Fire Precinct
Peter Camp, Commissioner:
• Proposed operating budget for 2019 is $57,650.
• $7,000 was used from the capital reserve fund to replace the boiler.

Redstone Fire Precinct
Neil Henry, Chief and Ann Michelle Ames, Commissioner:
• Proposed 2019 budget is $76,000 which includes a $10,000 to replace the capital reserve funds used to replace the transmission in Engine 2.
• 2018 budget was $67,000, overspent by $1,007 due to a bank discrepancy and unpaid bill to Diesel Works.

TOWN OVERVIEW:
Executive Budget; Tom Holmes, Town Manager and Lilli Gilligan, Finance Director:

General Questions:

Chair LeFebvre inquired about the Conway Daily Sun article pertaining to the cost to relocate the Conway Rec Center. Mr. Holmes noted meetings have been held with Mr. DegliAngeli and Mr. Eastman regarding the options presented to the town. Additionally, the Board of Selectmen will be discussing options at their meeting on Tuesday, January 8, 2019. Mr. Colbath concurred that the Board of Selectmen need to look at the options.

- As previously noted, the 2018 budget was short on utilities and salt. Currently $400,000+ remains in the 2018 budget, awaiting further outstanding invoices.
  - Mr. Sares inquired what happens if there is a surplus. Mr. Holmes advised it would be up to the selectmen, however it is usually used to offset the tax rate.
- Executive Dues has decreased by $15,000 upon the disassociation with the North Country Council, as the town was not getting the value for their dollar.
- Executive Advertising and News Notices went over last year due to retirements and turnover. This year the proposed budget is for $5,500 as it appears that line will keep rolling.

Election & Registrations; Louise Inkell, Town Clerk:

- With only one election this year the proposed budget has dropped 2%.

Tax Collector; Louise Inkell, Town Clerk:

- Researching mortgages for liening and deeding and registry fees have increased.
- Tax Billing is less than the budget from 2018, yet higher than what was spent. This was due to the previous printer giving a good deal to stay with them. However, the expense is being priced out including using local printers.
  - Mr. Jensen inquired if it would be legal to have the tax bills emailed rather than mailed. Ms. Inkell advised the law states the tax bill must be mailed to the last known address, however, it does not have to be certified.
- In 2019 the law has changed the interest rates for delinquent taxes from 12% to 8%. This is predicted to have a $30,000 loss in revenue.

Assessing; Tom Holmes, Town Manager:

- $12,000 is budgeted for the revaluation related costs.
- Mr. Holmes noted that it will be difficult to set the tax rate until the assessment is complete.
  - Mr. Sares inquired about the statement in the Conway Daily Sun that the school tax rate would go up $300 for a $200,000 home. Chair LeFebvre advised this question is being sent to the school district on the 4th.

Legal; Tom Holmes, Town Manager:

- The noted as spent in 2018 reflects bills through November and additional invoices are anticipated. However, it is expected to come in under budget.
• $15,000 has been budgeted in 2019 for the negotiations for the cable franchise fees.

Planning & Zoning; Tom Holmes, Town Manager:
• Budget is up 2.2% due solely to employee salary increases.

Ambulances; Lilli Gilligan, Finance Director:
• Budget is up 2.6% in accordance with the approved warrant article at the 2017 town meeting.

Fire & Emergency Management; Lilli Gilligan, Finance Director:
• Budget is up 6.7% for non-precinct fire agreement, in accordance with the approved warrant article at the 2017 town meeting. Note only the residences and businesses located in the non-precinct area of town are taxed on this.
  • Chair LeFebvre inquired if there was a map showing the non-precinct area. Ms. Gilligan advised she would provide one. Mr. Turner advised he had a copy of the map available and could provide it immediately.
• The EMS Director has started work on the Hazard Mitigation Plan in November and $5,400 was paid from the 2018 budget, as that is when the work was done.
• $8,633 budgeted is the amount needed beyond the $10,000 grant and includes stipends.

Building Inspections; Lilli Gilligan, Finance Director:
• Budget is up 2.7% due to salaries.

Health; Lilli Gilligan, Finance Director:
• Budget increased to $1,200 for kennel and boarding fees for stray animals.
• $2,750 budget for stipends remains stable.
  • Mr. Jensen inquired how dog licensing revenue affects the profit and loss. Ms. Gilligan advised it is anticipated revenue is $3,300

Welfare; Tom Holmes, Town Manager:
• Budget is down 6% due to the lack of housing available.

Conservation; Tom Holmes, Town Manager:
• Budget is down 1.3%.

General Operating Budget; Lilli Gilligan:
• Proposed budget has a 2.5% increase not including warrant articles, which is a 1% increase over last year.

Mr. Colbath noted for the public that additional information above what was noted on the agenda was presented this evening.
OLD BUSINESS:
Chair LeFebvre reminded members that questions will be submitted to the town and school on Friday, January 4, 2019.

Mr. Colbath reminded members to bring the town operating budget with them to every meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURN:
Mr. Fougere moved, seconded by Mr. Edgerton to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa E. Towle, Recording Secretary