

Revised 3/24/2023
March 15, 2023
Board of Finance and Town Council Finance Committee
#1 Department Budget Hearings
FY 2023-2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lainie McHugh called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom. All those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman called the roll and the clerk recorded the following:

PRESENT

Lainie McHugh
Paul Timpanelli
Michael Barker
Marty Isaac
Scott Zimov (arrived @ 8:45 a.m.)
Justin Scheuble
Vincent DeGennaro – Alternate
Marc Mascola – Alternate
Christine El Eris – Alternate (arrived later)

ABSENT

The Finance Committee did not have a quorum:

Mary Isaac
Dawn Cantafio
Kevin Shively (arrived later)

Nicole Satin
Joy Colon
Tony Scinto
Michael Buswell
Anthony Dorsey

Also present:

First Selectman Vicki Tesoro; Maria Pires, Finance Director; Cynthia Katske, Chief Administrative Officer; Rebeca Lopez, Internal Auditor; Ashley Gaudiano, Town Council Chairman; Daniel Schopick, Esq., Town Attorney

01011800 – Board of Assessment Appeals

Tim Cantafio

- Not sure what to expect this year, since their Clerk retired this past year. It will be challenging, since she was experienced.
- To date, only 10 applications for the April hearing. Difficult to predict; last year there were 300.
- Nearly all of the applications are for residential property – maybe 5% are for commercial.

0101100 – Tax Assessor

Elizabeth Duffy / Maria Pires, Finance Director

- Facing challenges with technical issues; systems need to communicate between departments.
- We should be able to access information we need and to better serve the needs of other departments that we work with.
- There are staffing issues; we need a full-time person and one part-time person.
- We added \$150,000 additional fund for tax appeals.
- Training is needed and we have additional funds available.
- We are on track to fill these positions before July 1, 2023.
- Assessments increased by \$40 million.
- State put a 32.46 cap on Motor Vehicles and the State is subsidizing.

01015400 – Conservation Commission

Mary Ellen Lemay

- Tree survey; 1000 trees for Trumbull outreach.
- Working with P&Z and Inland Wetlands and the Veterans.

- \$12,000 funding to start the Trees of Trumbull was received; this is progressive expense and will be needed this year also. We are looking at 100 trees for 10 years.
- Funding used for trees to be planted at Twin Brooks. Dimitri provided a list of trees; it is a native arboretum and being used for storm water control.
- Working very closely with Dimitri and working with the Town of Greenwich to get a better price on trees.
- We will stay with \$12,000 per year and continue to look for better prices.
- We can also accept private donations and use private grants for funding.

75501023200 – Building Official

Robert Dunn

- We need to estimate what we will bring in for permit fees each year but it is difficult as we have control.
- We have met our goal for this year with 3 months to go.
- We have a few new projects:
 - They are going to repair the parking deck at the mall, which should bring in close to \$100,000; it is a +/- \$6M project.
 - Cooperative Educational Services purchased property at 40 Oakview Drive. They want to make it into a new school and will drop off plans to us.
 - St. Joseph is making major renovations in the school and we just received the plans for that.
- The Garden Apartments on Main Street are moving along right on schedule.
- We are moving forward with Open Gov Software. Mr. DeGennaro has been a big help in getting through the process of signing on with them and we are making great strides with it. It is user friendly and easy for us to access the reports we need. We should be able to go live with it in the next few months. All the permits and fees information will interface with the Vision Software and make it very easy for the assessor to get all the information they need.
- Overtime will be going down. We have an opening and someone on-staff has been filling-in so once we have a replacement it will go back to normal.

01012000 – Tax Collector

Donna Pellitteri

- Trying to keep expenses flat while anticipating an increase in postage.
- She put in for overtime this year; she is down one person and it will only be for a 5-week period in July when it is very busy.
- The HR department has a list of candidates so a new person can be hired and trained by July.
- The following tax collections have been made FY to date:
 - Real Estate - 76.34%
 - Personal Property - 97.85%
 - Motor Vehicle – 95.2%

01022800 – Fire Marshal

Megan Murphy, Fire Marshal/ Emergency Management Director

- We have recruited and trained additional staff and office is at 100% and functioning well.
- Providing specific fire prevention programs for apartment building residents and have visited 45%.
- Continue to work with getting the permits on-line.
- Continue to have fire drills at the school.
- Learn better de-escalation procedures to deal with difficult situations.
- Revenue brought in year to date is \$33,630.
- New Vehicle approved last year – problems with getting new cars.
- When car ordered on May 27, delivery date continued go out and the price continued to escalate.
- Radios wound up costing an additional \$4,000 and we needed to go out of state to get a new car and it still on order.
- We actually needed 2 radios and she was able to transfer funds so now she has an additional radio for a new car. Since it is taking longer to come and prices continue to escalate she ordered the second car and she plans to use it as a pool car when her new employee is not using it.

01023400 – Emergency Management

**Megan Murphy, Fire Marshal / Emergency Management Director and
Andrew Kingsbury, Deputy Director Emergency Management**

- Help residents get back on their feet when homes are no longer safe. The town is responsible for this location service. On an average, we have about 4 families a year that need to be relocated. We also must make sure they have three meals a day, housing, clothing, etc. Most don't understand why they need to leave their home. We also use funds in the social services account for this purpose.
- When we need to relocate individuals and clean up their property we recoup those funds; we lien their property.
- We now have 4 EMS boards.
- We need to be storm ready and call into weather service to get updates for the Town. This is a safety issue and necessary in order to get the children off the field in the event of a tornado, etc. Right now, we have to relay using cell phones to reach the coaches and the fields are in use 7 days a week.

01022824 – Fire Hydrants

Megan Murphy

- Budget changed; decreased from last year to \$1,568,479. Aquarian's fees are increasing in October 2023. We budgeted lower than last year.

01022000 – Police Department

Michael Lombardo, Chief of Police; Assistant Chief Burns; Lt. Lopes

- Overtime will continue until the until we are fully staffed. The size of the department is determined by state by town size, etc.
- The patrol shortages result in the overtime. Minimum patrol, etc., is in the contract that developed over many years.
- We have security guards in the schools and one dedicated officer for the Mall. The part time positions move into full time positions; hard to keep part time people.
- Need to fill a captain vacancy to replace a retired individual; this is a managerial position. He is not replacing the deputy chief.
- Requesting \$50,000 for new firearms.

01022400 – Animal Control

Lynn Della Bianca

- Salaries are going up to \$15 per hour. Need to increase the assistant dog warden to \$18 per hour.
- Vet costs and food costs for animals have increased; the dog fund provides assistance.
- She indicated that her van is paid off.

01012600 –Technology

William Chin

- Increased security log in; auditors and insurance carriers request.
- Network assessment performed.
- Implemented the following:
 - detective bureau storage.
 - tree warden system.
 - system for town pickups.
 - system for nursing department.
- Budget is thin and allows for minimal but important upgrades.
- Servers need to be replaced; Need to upgrade to Microsoft 365
- Department needs more use of pool cars.
- Needs to replace laptops and monitors; take funds out of Bond \$42,000.
- Looking to replace \$54,000 taken from capital outlay.
- Moving Health Department to fiber network. Running without any issues.
- Other cuts are contractual. Microsoft + upgrade for office 365 \$150,000
- Microsoft Access that some individuals need.
- Microsoft office will end in 10/2023 must upgrade or move to cloud.

01014200 – Planning and Zoning

Rob Librandi / Rina Bakalar

- Almost have a full staff. Still have a part time person and need someone full time.
- The Blight Officer position has been filled.
- Working on the Affordable Housing Study. Will finalize by the end of May.
- Stream of permitting is steady; additions and apartments. New Permitting Software through the building department.
- Mall Study is in process along with areas around the Mall. The new owners are taking an active role.
- Rob is the ADA compliance officer.
- Working on Zoning Regulation rewrite and updating the regs.

01014600 – Economic Development

Rina Bakalar

- In the process of adding a Grant person.
- Looking into grants: re-submission of EMS Radio; extend the Trail Head, etc.
- Setting up a resource event for businesses.
- Involved with Mall study and Long Hill Green area; assist with home-based businesses; projects on the Monroe Trumbull line.
- Working through wetland issues in Trumbull Center.

01050000 – Human Services

Michele Jakab

- Now using ARPA funds for local meal service.
- Assisting with water programs and internet usage.
- Assisting caregivers.
- Reaching out to households served during Covid-19 to see if they need additional help.
- We work with social workers at the schools to keep them aware of what is being offered.

01050600 – Senior Services

Michele Jakab

- Make seniors aware of scams; increased fraud education programs.
- Opened at regular hours.
- Training all staff, volunteers, and interns in CPR and how to recognize elder abuse.
- Concerns with existing building: parking shortage and small areas vs large open spaces for programs.
- We have \$42,000 in Grant money to provide services for our residents.

01050200 – Mary J. Sherlach Counseling Center

Michele Jakab

- There are 17 active clients.
- Want to become a billable clinic; looking to get the paperwork completed.

01013600 – Town Clerk

Mary Markham

- Slowed down from last year but still doing very well.
- Seasonal temp. cut to \$5,000 as we don't expect the same volume.
- Overtime was also cut back; use of seasonal temp eliminated overtime.
- Longevity was eliminated once Susan Cole left.
- No primaries for municipal elections.
- Historical Preservation Grant is paying for the scanning and we have plenty to scan.
- Looking into using the Kennedy Center to do the scanning; would need to outsource, not do here.

01040200 – Vital Statistics

Mary Markham

- No changes this year.

01012400 – Town Treasurer

Anthony Musto, Esq.

- Attorney Musto indicated that everything is the same as last year.

01012800 – Attorneys Fees

Daniel Schopick, Esq.

- 3 Town attorneys.
- Attend almost every town meeting.
- Handle issues related to: land use; WPCA; Town Council; Board of Finance.
- Meets with the First Selectman on a regular basis.
- Handles contracts and litigations

01070000 – Library

Stefan Lyhne-Nielson

- Bringing back programs; steadily getting back to pre-Covid program and activities schedule. Increasing our story time programs.
- We are coming up with new program ideas.
- Increasing our large-scale events, i.e., author events.
- Re-established the Friends of the Library; new members as they disbanded during Covid; and the next book sale is March 25, 2023.
- Looking to do more with involved community programs and fundraisers.
- Goal this year is installing new carpet and additional study rooms. Looking to August for carpeting and hoping to do it all at once. Getting a discount through the state.
- We have 19,000 +/- with cards and looking for an outreach program to increase library registration; looking to increase by 10%.
- Transition to digital audio books and digital rather than hardcover books.
- He uses about 5% - \$90,000 - of his annual budget to run Fairchild Branch, since the majority of the funding comes from the Fairchild Trust.
- Increase in base rate for part time employees - 2.25%.
- Needs \$8,000 for new office chairs.

01010000 – Town Council

Maria Pires

- This budget contains funding requests for Clerk Fees, outside auditors' fees, professional audit reviews and legal notices.

01010200 – Ethics Commission

Maria Pires

- Clerical fees only for 2 meetings per year.

010115800 – Transit District

Maria Pires

- We pay an annual set fee of \$44,084 for the public bus service to come through Trumbull.
- The fee is based on the size of the population.

01011000 – Finance Department

Maria Pires

- All audits, rating agencies, grants, filings with the state government.
- Munis system – continually monitor for ways to use to assist.
- Continue to monitor the ARPA Funding.
- Continue to get the GOFA Award
- Software for multiple departments that will interface with Munis and Vision.
- Continue vehicle sales.
- Link QDS and Munis.

01013800 – Town Hall

Maria Pires

- Part time floater.
- Greeters (ARPA) budgeted for in this account.
- Majority of contracts are open; upgrades in various departments.

01011400 – Board of Finance

Maria Pires

- Clerical Fees.
- Auditors' professional services.
- Legal notifications.

01080000 – Public Events

Maria Pires

- Increased this year \$5,000.
- Used to fund parades, etc.
- Employee picnic
- Scouts

By unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis C. Collier

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Finance Board Clerk