

TOWN COUNCIL
Town of Trumbull
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TOWN HALL
Trumbull

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FINANCE COMMITTEE
BUDGET HEARING
MINUTES
MAY 10, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

The clerk called the roll and recorded it as follows:

PRESENT: Kevin Shively, Chairman, Michael Miller, Vice Chairman, Ashley Gaudiano, Mary Isaac, Lori Rosasco-Schwartz, Tony Scinto and Carole Hans, Alternate

ABSENT: Donna Seidell, Alternate

ALSO

PRESENT: First Selectman Vicki A. Tesoro, Chief Administrative Officers Cynthia Katske and Kathleen McGannon, Town Council members Thomas Whitmoyer, Eric Paulson, Nicole Satin, Patricia Borghesan, Jason Marsh, Joanne Glasser-Orenstein, Joy Colon, Town Attorney Daniels Schopick, Director of Finance Maria Pires, Chief of Police Michael Lombardo, Assistant Chief of Police Glenn Byrnes, Fire Marshal /Director of Emergency Management Megan Murphy, Deputy Director of Emergency Management Andrew Kingsbury, EMS Chief Leigh Goodman, Labor Relations Director Thomas McCarthy, Economic & Community Development Director Rina Bakalar, Roberto Librandi of Planning & Zoning, Tax Assessor Mark Devestern, Building Official Robert Dunn, Animal Control Officer Lynn Delabianca, Library Director Stefan Lynne, Human Services Director Michele Jacob

01011800/Board of Assessment Appeals – The Chair noted the BOF increased for clerk fees and legal notices due to the upcoming reevaluation year. No questions

01011600/Tax Assessor – No changes by the BOF. Mr. DeVestern explained the reductions totalling \$42 million in assessed values (70% of the property value) for 2018-2019-2020 Grand List are due to court appeals, the main one was the biggest property in town. We would need an assessed value of \$142 million at the current mill rate to produce \$5 million.

01013000/Human Resources – No questions

01013400/Employee Benefits – Mr. McCarthy believes the workers comp line item will be sufficient. A number of the bigger cases were done this past year, which will allow them to live with this number in the coming year, although COVID-19 related claims remains an unknown. In the last year he, Ms. Pires and CIRMA worked together to focus on some long-term worker's comp employees and a number of them have left the town employment therefore a number of significant claims are off the table. Ms. Pires explained there is a large reserve for this line item the large claims will be paid out of the reserve and in return that reserve will go down. The balance of the reserve is \$3.2 million, she would get an exact amount after the meeting. The amount of the large claims will be sent to the committee after the meeting. Current or future claims will be paid from this line item. Eventually the shortfall comes from the general fund. The claims are down and have been for the past ten (10) years due to safety training being done on a regular basis. Ms. Rosasco-Schwartz noted the historical number is \$1.5 million, which leaves this line item short.

01023200-Building Official – The BOF increased over-time. No questions

01012000/Tax Collector – Ms. Pires will send the current collection rate to the committee after the meeting.

01014200/Planning & Zoning – The Chair noted there were no changes by the BOF. Ms. Bakalar confirmed the legal notice line item is sufficient because they have moved to the Trumbull Times, which is a cost savings. Mr. Librandi agreed and believes the \$25,000 is sufficient.

01014600 Economic Development – Ms. Bakalar explained they are in the process of raising money to do a full plan for the mall area and southern gateway to town. The town has committed some money but they want to do a world-class plan. They are working with the State Department of Economic & Community Development, and some of the landowner/tenants for contributions to such a plan. This would not just be a municipal land use plan; the mall area had been rezoned to a mixed-use district. This was a very important first step. They will be looking at the economic side of this, what is the economic analysis, and what the industry and probabilities are for the mall property. They will look at what is viable there, has the market bears. This is in addition to traditional planning. They will embark on a plan, and on a parallel track to raising the money, they are also working on the scope of work for the RFQ for the team that will assemble this. The vision adopted in the land use regulations is a mixed-use vision based on a lot of input and

understanding of how these properties are transforming around the country. There is one potential user for the former Lord & Taylor box who wouldn't have come here if it weren't a mixed-use site.

The Chair appreciated the question and answer and knows these are important questions but asked that the question be kept to specifically the budget.

01022400 Animal Control – The Chair noted there were no changes by the BOF or the first selectman. The \$6,600 Capital Outlay was for the purchase of the van. The town purchased the vehicle out right and charges the department a lease payment out of the operating budget over a five (5) year period. This van was purchased in 2019.

01022600/EMS – The Chair noted the BOF restored the step increase for the salaries and vacation weekend and the purchase of the ambulance and additional equipment. Ms. Goodman explained they are looking to meeting not exceeding their expenses this year. They will meet or be just below due to the pandemic.

01023400/Emergency Management – The Chair noted a reduction by the first selectman in the Capital Outlay and the BOF made no changes. Ms. Murphy stated she is comfortable with the amount. The Director of Health was kind enough to use her money to purchase the sign for their department and it will be purchased this year.

01022800/Fire Marshal – The Chair noted no BOF changes. No questions.

01022824/Fire Hydrants – The Chair noted no BOF changes. Ms. Pires explained the rate was reduced, they were to raise it last year but the state denied the increase.

01022000/Police – The Chair noted there was a small change, a salary increase for the administrative assistant. Chief Lombardo stated they are authorized for 82 sworn officers and currently have 76. Last year the Council voted for the police to apply for a federal grant to hire a full-time officer at the mall. They need to hire six (6) officers and has been working with HR for another test for an entry level officers. They are also seeking lateral officers.

There are approximately fourteen (14) officers that could retire now. That number is shrinking because over the past five (5) years some have retired. He suspects two (2) to three (3) more retirements in the coming year, although he doesn't have any notices.

The department is six (6) officers short currently, if they were to test in June, and hire them it would be 4 months out and then they go to the police academy. They wouldn't hire someone unless there was an opening at the academy, otherwise they would be on the payroll and unable to use them. The overtime is a slight increase over last year's budget. Assistant Chief Byrnes noted they did have a variety of things change over the past year, aside from the contract changes. They

see the salaries as reasonable and will make the best effort to make the numbers work. They understand the hardships we all live within, will adjust accordingly, and are confident they can come very close to the number.

01050000/Social Services – No questions.

01050600/Sr. Citizen Services – The Chair noted there were no changes from the BOF and one (1) small first selectman change.

Ms. Jacob explained the permanent full-time positions have three (3) positions with a very low hourly rate this increase will bring them up to a little over minimum wage, two (2) of the positions are open and she hopes this will influence more hire. This would be for three bus drivers and a clerk.

Programing will start slow, when they proposed the budget they didn't know they would be starting this late so she believes the programing budget will be fine. This past year they also received donations more than ever, and the donations are for programs. There is approximately \$30,000-\$40,000 in the senior special agency account. There is sufficient funding to add a class or two. Ms. Jacob indicated she believes they will be ok based on the budget and the programs they want to do.

Ms. Jacob indicated the Fairfield County Senior Center directors are very connected and participate with all of the state directors. There are some senior centers in CT that have been up and running this entire time, those are very few and have done very limited programing. Fairfield County will be kicking off in June; Trumbull will be as well starting with a few exercise classes, in-person bingo. It will all start with preregistration and determining the need. There will not be any congregating for a while, that still needs to be determined as to when we could start to do that again. In July, they will add to the programs and again in August and so on.

01012600/Technology – The Chair indicated the BOF did put money back in the overtime account and contacts. Mr. Chin indicated the Zoom meetings are not coming from his account. Ms. Pires stated the Zoom meetings license is \$5,600 per year, currently it's being paid out of the FEMA grant, that will grant will expire eventually.

522204-\$654,000 represents all of their contractual obligations, such as the internet for all of the buildings, the fiber optic network, licensing, MUNIS licensing, webmaster contract, firewall licensing, anti-virus licensing, server licensing. The \$50,000 increase from last year is for the Veoci licensing, a program that maintains workflow/citizen engagement on the website. This is used for control of COVID-19, all of the Town Hall appointments are done through Veoci, school nurse tracking, and all of the emergency management core operations are being run through Veoci. Zoom video licensing is also part of that increase. A lot of this was for the storage licensing network, (server environment), there was a misunderstanding that there was a two (2) year contract but was really a one (1) year. The speed was also increased. The contracts are all for the town side only. BOE has their own licenses and many of theirs are less expensive because of

the education discounts and some they receive free. It's not allowable to share the majority of those. Mr. Chin explained they hope to get a more modern anti-virus software next year representing \$12,000 of the budget, the firewall is also rolled in to cyber security.

01013600/Town Clerk – No questions.

01040200/Vital Statistics – No questions.

01012400/Treasurer – The Chair indicated there were no changes and confirmed this represents salary only. No questions.

01012800/Town Attorneys – The Chair explained funds were shifted from the professional to the ancillary account.

01070000/Library – The Chair explained the library will open on Sundays; the BOF was able to do that. No questions.

Adjournment: There being no further business to discuss and upon motion made by Rosasco-Schwartz and seconded by Gaudio the Finance Committee adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret D. Mastroni, Council Clerk