

ORANGE, CONN
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Patrick B. O'Sullivan
TOWN CLERK



Board of Finance Budget Workshop

Town Hall Meeting Room
Friday February 7, 2020 8:00 a.m.

(Unapproved)

Attendance

Board Members Present: Chairman Kevin Houlihan, Vice Chairman James Leahy, Kevin Moffett, Patricia Romano, P. J. Shanley, and Joseph Nuzzo

Staff: John Cifarelli, Finance Director; Audrey Geer, Assistant Finance Director; Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

1. Orange Police Service – Chief Robert Gagne

- Chief Gagne reviewed the status of police vehicles, showing both mileage and hours of each vehicle. Last year, unused salaries were used to purchase a police vehicle. Mr. Cifarelli indicated that this would not be an option this year. Chief Gagne requested funding for two marked vehicles to replace vehicle #15 and #18. Car #17 was totaled after hitting a street pole during a snow storm and the department received a \$16k insurance payout. Chief Gagne would like partial funding to replace this vehicle as well, making a request for 2 ½ vehicles in the 2020-2021 budget. Chief Gagne reported that the cost for two vehicles is approximately \$99k, and this includes all the required outfitting, including computer and cage fittings.
- Chief Gagne reviewed the crime statistics for the Town of Orange, noting the growing need for a three-car deployment south of the Boston Post Road. With new businesses moving into this area, such as the new hotel, the Veterans Administration, and Fed Ex, more patrol cars are needed. Chief Gagne indicated that it has been a struggle to keep personal due to benefit issues and he suspects that two officers may be leaving in June. While he needs five more officers, he is requesting one additional officer in this upcoming budget.
- In lieu of a paid Fire Department, as in Milford and West Haven, the Orange Police Department are the first responders for the Town of Orange. Chief Gagne spoke of the aging

population in the Town of Orange and the increase of medical emergencies, justifying the need for additional police officers. Mr. Romano inquired as to the cost to hire one new officer, including salary, benefits, police car, uniform, etc. Chief Gagne estimated that the total cost is \$130k. Chief Gagne added that Attorney Elliot Spector handles all of the police certifications in Connecticut. With a potential police officer transferring from Savanna, Georgia to the Orange Police Department, the training is slightly reduced and the cost factor would be reflected in this.

- Lastly, Chief Gagne requested an increase in Computer software, explaining that the Department has received Tier One Accreditation and this software upgrade is required. Mr. Cifarelli indicated that he will recheck the salary for the Assistant Records Clerk as there might be a salary error. Capital Projects for the Police Department include a new HVAC system at the gun range, as moisture presents a safety concern.

2. Director of Technology – Paul Mongillo

- Mr. Mongillo reported that all Town inventory is accounted for and the fire wall is complete. He is currently removing all out-of-date and unused Town equipment, such as the two motion detectors at High Plains Community Center.
- Mr. Mongillo reviewed his budget by going over each individual line item, noting that the IT technology of the Fire Department and Police Department should be updated. He currently has thirty open orders and suggested that Joshua's hours be increased from four days a week to five in order to better handle the workload.

3. Orange Conservation Commission – Sharon Ewen

- Ms. Ewen discussed the prospect of using goats to eat the invasive overgrowth in the Town's Open Space. There is minimal liability involved and she will discuss this topic further with Mr. Zeoli. The goats would be contained within an electric fence and she would like an eight week trial period using the goats.
- Ms. Ewen brought photographs of the fallen tree on the Racebrook Tract walkway, noting that this is a safety liability. She reported that the Commission has struggled getting volunteers to clean the Open Space, using Boy Scouts and Amity students in the past. She has requested additional funding in the 2020-2021 budget as the Highway Department and the Parks and Recreation Department have been unable to help maintain the Open Space to the same degree that they were in the past. Hiring on outside contractor to cut down diseased trees is expensive and her husband has volunteered his time in cutting down many dead trees on these properties.

4. Public Works – Robert Brinton

- Mr. Brinton reviewed each line item within the Department's proposed budget. There was a requested increase of \$85k in Streets and Bridges to cover the paving of roads in lieu of a

bond. This amount includes chip sealing and cold patch as well. The line item Sand and Salt was increased by \$80k and Emergency Tree Removal by \$5k. Other proposed increases were highlighted and refuse was discussed in greater detail. Mr. Cifarelli noted that while recycling is a mandatory State Statute, the Town would save \$150k if house recycling were eliminated. There will be charges at the Transfer station for construction debris and the disposal of tires. The Transfer Station is also checking drivers' licenses to insure that only Town residents are using it.

5. Town Clerk – Patrick O’Sullivan

- Mr. O’Sullivan explained the importance of the position of Town Clerk, particularly during an election year. The two individuals that work in the Register of Voters work forty hour work weeks but get paid for three days. Mr. Cifarelli felt that this is a difficult political job that needs a salary increase.
- Mr. O’Sullivan reported that the Town is using new software called IQS, which allows online viewing of all land records. Mr. Leahy displayed the software for the Board members using his PowerPoint presentation.

6. Parks and Recreation – Dan Lynch

- Mr. Lynch reviewed the proposed budget with the Board of Finance members. The overtime account for the pool needs to be funded every year and a transfer was made into this line item. Mr. Lynch reported that outside groups that use our fields pay \$75 for the first hour or \$100 for a game. In light of the fact that minimum wage is increasing, the fees for camp and other programs will have to be increased to cover this cost. Some of the outside groups that use our fields are Babe Ruth, The Grind, American Legion, Amity High School, CT Gators, and Core Trainers Academy.
- The Board of Finance discussed the snack stand at Old Tavern, noting that it is hard to get parents to volunteer their time to run the snack stand. It was suggested that an outside food truck vendor could pay the town a rental fee and sell food to patrons at the games. Mr. Lynch felt that the Orange Little League would have to decide if this was something that they wanted to consider.

7. Case Memorial Library – Kathy Giotsas

- Ms. Giotsas distributed a complimentary packet to every Board of Finance member highlighting the programs that are currently being offered at the library. She pointed out that the library serves many functions: an educational support for the schools, socialization for seniors, a job bank for the unemployed, family entertainment, and more. Their Summer Reading Program is robust and there has been a 16% increase in Programs being offered at the library.
- Ms. Giotsas requested an increase of \$3,560 in the book budget to buy larger print books for

the growing senior population as well as to purchase downloadable books. The Library borrows a lot of books from other libraries who are reluctant to loan new releases to them. She noted that she is currently looking for grant money for more STEM programs and received a grant from the Rotary Club for career books.

- Ms. Giotsas explained that the Library is doing their part in creating revenue for the Town. They collect revenue from copier and fax usage, room rentals, and overdue fines. They also have a color printer and a new print management system that allows patrons to print from home. In addition to this, the Library is also conducting a golf fundraiser on April 3-4th to bring money into the Library.
- Lastly, Ms. Giotsas requested a \$200 increase in Botanicals, which is needed to help maintain and beautify the grounds.

8. Community Services – Joan Cretella

- Ms. Cretella asked for increases in the budget for training purposes, noting that there are changes in the law and this training is required. She also requested an increase for Tracy Bunch as this group is going out into the community on more day trips. There was a brief discussion on Bridges and their fees, noting that there has been a requested increase of \$10k for this line item.

9. Capital Projects Committee – Ralph Okenquist

- Mr. Okenquist, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Capital Planning Committee, presented the entire Capital Project requests for all of the Town Departments in a priority list format. They are as follows:

Convert 2 nd Floor Sprinkler System at Silverbrook Senior Housing	\$160k
Replace Police Dept. Armor Kits	26k
Server Room Expansion at Police Dept.	15k
Security Camera System at HPCC	44k
Sand Pro for Parks & Rec	21k
Replace Boiler at Firehouse 2	15k
Replace 3 HVAC Units – (1 at THS & 2 at RBS)	43k
Sidewalk Brick Repair at MLT/Concrete at RBS	58k
Replace PWD ½ Ton Pick-Up Truck & Plow	50k
Replace Battery Backup Unit & 20 Battery Pks (BOE)	16k
Replace stem Pipes at HPCC	225k
Total	673k

- Mr. Okenquist noted that LOCIP might cover a portion of the steam pipes at HPCC. He also made mention of other Capital Projects that are important but not on the top of the current priority list.

11. Budget Discussion, Amity, and Adjournment

- Mr. Leahy made a brief presentation of the Amity surplus over the last 15 years. It was noted that Amity will be presenting their 2020-2021 budget at the Board of Finance meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 13th. Mr. Leahy noted that these surpluses mean that residents have been overtaxed over the years. Mr. Shanley would also like to see how much of this surplus has been returned back to the respective Towns over the last 15 years. While it was agreed that Amity would have to go for a referendum if they needed additional funds, the Board agreed that the ongoing surpluses over the years have been excessive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Satonick,
Recording Secretary