

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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BOARD OF FINANCE

Budget Meeting
Hybrid- In Person and Online

February 2, 2023
7:00 PM

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

Members Present (a quorum of 4 members is required to conduct business):

Stephanie (Stef) Summers Chairman	Geoffrey (Geoff) Prusak Vice Chairman	Christina Mailhos	Joseph (Joe) Sherrell	Peter (Pete) Tanaka Secretary	James (Jim) Marshall	Jim Gilligan (ALT)	Elisabeth (Lisa) Woolf (ALT)
In Person	In person	In Person	In Person	In Person	In Person	Via Zoom	Via Zoom

Also Present:

Jennifer Miller- Willington Animal Control Officer- In Person
Alan Humphrey- Director of Parks and Recreation- Via Zoom
Jennie Arpin- Director of Human Services- Via Zoom
KarenAnn Caldwell- Chair of the of Library Board
Deb Linares- Co-Director of the Library
Fire Chief Station #1- Alex Moore – In person
Donna Latincsics- Business Manager – In person
Members of the Public

Chairman Stephanie Summers called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

SEATING OF ALTERNANTES:

None Needed

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Nick Tella, 49 Myrtle, would like to bring attention to the BOF that he heard at the CIP meeting that the Fire Departments are looking to add their potential new buildings to the potential bond needed for the new schools and he is concerned about that.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) Budget request presentations: Special revenue funds
 - a. 0511 Animal Control

Jennifer Miller stated there will not be any increase in their budget this year.

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b. 0512 Parks and Recreation

Alan Humphrey stated they are currently requesting a 5.09% increase to their budget due mainly to an increase in electricity: the rates as well as the new lights added to River Road Park; landscaping: the town is looking to change the current landscaping contract; and summer camp costs: this year it is only half funded by ARPA and minimum wage increases. Christina, Alan and Donna discussed the large increase in the director and assistant director's salaries, as they did not match the standardized 2.75% increase townwide, a change made during the most recent union contract negotiations. Donna said the current year for the assistant's salary was set up as too low of a number; the 8.21% increase was made to raise the salary to what it was supposed to be as well as including the 2.75% increase. She will send worksheets showing the correct numbers. Joe commented that we have been doing well with the current landscaping contract setup, so even though it may be viewed as convoluted, we are saving money by doing it this way and it should not be changed. Stef questioned why a mower was proposed for purchase if we're entering a more expensive contract with a landscaper. Alan told the board that after Covid, the rec sports teams have dwindled substantially statewide. Stef recalled avid interest in middle and high school rec basketball before the pandemic and suggested readvertising the programs. Alan was also asked why the pickleball court at River Road has not been built as set out in the CIP plan and approved by the town. Regarding the large Parks & Rec fund balance, Alan stated that the funds from the Lions Club are designated for a baseball score board for the Town Office Building fields and other money will be for overdue repairs, including replacing the deteriorated rope system to enclose the swimming area at Hall's Pond that was harming swimmers who swam too close. It has since been destroyed and removed. The posts and connectors for the fence at River Road Park that separate the parking area from the walking trail need to be replaced, and additional maintenance needs to be done at the four baseball fields to entice more teams to rent them. Stef advised Alan that he has the option to lump a few repair projects together to bring to CIP for such projects. Christina agreed that she would like to see all his projects listed out with the quotes.

c. 0513 Human Services

Jennie Arpin stated they are currently requesting a 21.6% budget increase due to the addition of the Senior Center coordinator position as well as the restored Summer Camp staffing. In the past, they had a volunteer who would open the Senior Center, as well as staff the front desk. That person has since stopped volunteering. Due to the large senior population, a paid coordinator position was determined to be needed. The new salary is partially funded by ARPA and will be incrementally incorporated into the Human Services budget. Stef reflected that at the time, having ARPA funds partially fund a salary position may have seemed like a good idea, but playing it out in the future, especially with this position becoming a union position, will have ongoing impact on the operating budget.

d. 0517 Library

Library Board Chair KarenAnn Caldwell stated they are requesting a 23.35% increase due to payroll increases, office supplies, professional development, trash removal, building repairs, propane and electricity, as well as patron software upkeep. James asked KarenAnn if she felt an increase was needed to the current building maintenance budget because she had mentioned that there was a \$11,500 HVAC repair needed due to damage from lack of maintenance. She replied no. There was discussion questioning the addition of a \$2000 trash removal service when there was also an increase to the custodian's salary and the Library is only a mile from the Transfer Station. KarenAnn stated that there has been an increase of patronage after the pandemic resulting in more trash, and no one who works at the library wants to put the large amount of trash in their personal vehicles to take to the Transfer Station. The library would prefer restoring their dumpster service. There was discussion about the need for all the staff as well as the additional requested hired help. The only full-time staff would be the two co-directors, the other staff is part time. The board questioned why one of the salaried co-directors

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received \$13,566 in overtime pay and why it wasn't reflected on the spreadsheet. Stef mentioned that in the last 3 years the library's budget has grown substantially with an increase of 18.1%, 7.5% and a current request for 23.3%. KarenAnn responded that there are large grants out there that they are not eligible for due to not having the front desk covered by two people at all times, and the increases received in the past with the previous director were never implemented correctly to be able to get on track to become eligible for those grants. It was discussed that there were some discrepancies on the submitted budget spreadsheet and it will need to be revised by the Library and sent back, one large error being no projected revenue for Fiscal Year 23-24.

PRESENT TO SPEAK:

Zafir Hussein, 48 Myrtle Road, stated he was interested in seeing a compiled list of tasks and projects from the various boards around town. He stated it seems like maintenance isn't being prioritized in town and would like projects to be made public to the townspeople, so they know what is going on and what needs to be done. He said it feels like we are focusing on putting out fires rather than looking at the big picture of competitive, fair wages for our employees as well as infrastructure maintenance. He stated that he doesn't think many of the townspeople are aware that public spaces within town are available for rent and felt like there could be more advertisement for that.

Nick Tella, 49 Myrtle Road, stated that a potential cost-saving idea would be for someone from Public Works to go to the library and bring the trash to the Transfer Station so they wouldn't have to incur the \$2000 dumpster expense. He mentioned that he thought it would be cost beneficial to go back to one director and one programmer and bump their salaries higher than to have all the separate lesser paying positions. He doesn't think there is enough foot traffic for all of those positions to work efficiently.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Reports shared with the board.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

Stef wanted to encourage everyone to stay up to date with what the SBC is doing and watch the most recent YouTube video from the Feb. 1 meeting.

Peter moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 pm.

Christina seconded the motion

All in favor

Motion passes

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Sperry
Recording Secretary

RECEIVED
WILLINGTON, CT.
2023 MAR 10 A 9:12

TOWN CLERK