

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 9, 2023**

TIME: 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Dept. of Public Works Building & Teams Videoconference

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Plumley, Dan Kiley, Tim Lenihan, Nancy Smith, Mike Diehn, Dimitri Deserranno, John Kluge (ex-officio), Tina Stearns (online), Jim Fickett (6:33), Shirley Green (6:51)

OTHERS: Ed Morris, Town Manager; Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager

Members of the Public: Tracy Young, Jean Patten, Bradley Rich, David Beaufait

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Deserranno called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

MINUTES- October 12, 2023 & October 26, 2023

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve of the minutes as presented. Mr. Kluge seconded.

Ms. Plumley requested a correction to the minutes of October 26th: Page 2, Line 100; it should be clarified that it is Kate Stewart.

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve both sets of minutes as amended. Ms. Plumley seconded. A roll call vote was held. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion. (8-0)

BUSINESS

CIP Presentation

Mr. Kiley stated that there is going to be a change in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) regulation for tank trucks. He stated that the one we have is not a fire tanker, it is a milk truck tanker, which means it is more apt to roll on a turn, and there are a limited number of personnel who can operate the current tanker. He added that a new vehicle will take 3 years to be made, but if ordered in 2023 will fall into the current regulations, and payments could be made over a three-year period. He said there could be an option for a floor or sample model, which is being looked into as well.

Mr. Kiley advised that it may be necessary to look at more than a nickel because inflation and supply issues are leading to increased costs. He noted that a cruiser that cost \$35,000 seven years ago is now costing \$60,000.

Mr. Lenihan inquired how much the tanker would cost.

Mr. Kiley stated it would be \$450,000. He stated that EPA standards have changed for diesel vehicles which will further drive costs starting in 2024. He noted that there are also four bridges that are due for replacement in the next six years, and looking five years ahead for the CIP it may be necessary to build the fund up.

Mr. Diehn inquired why this was an unanticipated expense.

Mr. Kiley stated that it was not anticipated that the EPA and NFPA standards would change, and the change in emission standards will add at least \$30,000 in cost, plus the average annual increase per year.

Mr. Young, a member of the CIP Committee, added that it has also been proposed to sell Engine 5, an American LaFrance, which is 20 years old to offset the cost. He stated that Chief Neily has looked carefully at the fleet and current usage in with regards to replacing the tanker and selling one engine.

Ms. Bonnette stated that the selling of the engine will be going before the Select Board on November 20th for approval.

Mr. Lenihan inquired if the Select Board had considered utilizing the Undesignated Fund Balance (UFB) for the purchase.

Mr. Young stated that they have not, and there is a minimal amount going into it this year so it will not be an option.

Members of the Budget Committee discussed the increase from a nickel per thousand-dollar valuation for the CIP Fund, and what it might increase to. It was noted that, when discussing the additional \$500,000 purchase, it is important to note to residents that we need to keep our firefighters safe, have equipment that meets the current laws, and have equipment that more individuals can operate, whereas the current one only has two people on the department who can operate it.

Members of the Budget Committee discussed the DPW purchases, including grants offsetting purchases of trucks, as well as the finances regarding the replacement of the chipper, and other vehicle replacements outlined in the CIP Plan.

With no further questions or comments, members of the Budget Committee moved on to the next agenda item.

Administrative Budgets Review

Ms. Bonnette reviewed details and updates regarding the 2023 budget with members of the Budget Committee.

Bradley Rich inquired what the net increase is year over year for the total budget.

Ms. Bonnette stated that the full budget has not been completed so the numbers are not available as of yet, but the Town Manager is working on it.

Mr. Diehn stated that the Budget Committee will meet with departments for their proposals, and then Mr. Morris will assemble the budget for a final discussion.

Mr. Deserranno added that there will be a meeting to discuss compensation separate from the department proposals.

Ms. Bonnette stated that she completes a financial overview of what is unexpended from the budget year and what contributes to the balance of the unassigned fund balance.

With no further comments or questions, Mr. Deserranno moved on to Public Comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

Public Comment

Mr. Deserranno requested comments or questions from the public.

Jean Patten stated that she had questions regarding the wage study and proposed wage increases.

Mr. Deserranno noted that the previous meeting was for the consultant to present their report to the Budget Committee, and a future meeting will be held to discuss compensation.

Ms. Patten stated that giving people big lump sum increases and COLA raises is going to be a constant uphill battle, and people in town are paid well and get a good benefit package and she is concerned about taxpayers and at some point, a line needs to be drawn in the sand.

Ms. Plumley stated that the wage study data presented information relative to towns the size of Enfield, and even though data from Lebanon and Hanover were included, the recommendations were based on the towns relative to Enfield and those towns were not included in that process.

Members of the Budget Committee stated that the wage study is a public record available to residents.

Mr. Lenihan stated that benefits were not a part of the study, which he feels would have been of value to know how much an employee contributes to their plan without comparing benefit plans.

Mr. Rich stated that the town he resided in previously, in Massachusetts, did away with the step system because automatic raises in addition to COLA can become a challenge financially. He added that Lebanon and Hanover should not have been included in the wage study at all.

Mr. Lenihan noted that the state government is also doing away with the step system as well. He stated that there are challenges to withholding a step increase that need to be considered as well.

Ms. Patten inquired how many vacant positions there are in town.

Ms. Bonnette stated that there are two police officer positions, three positions in the highway department, and the janitor/maintenance position. She noted that the Water Supervisor and a grounds position that were open have been filled.

Ms. Patten stated that she is extremely concerned about the work that is proposed to be completed on Whitney Hall in the winter, such as concrete work that has a cost increase as well as other necessary measures due to the temperatures.

Mr. Young stated that MFAC meets weekly, and meetings are open to the public, which may provide more insight.

Mr. Deserranno noted that information related to the building projects would be best brought to the Select Board as it is outside the purview of the Budget Committee.

With no comments or questions, the Budget Committee moved on to adjournment.

NEXT MEETING

November 30 @ 6:30pm, DPW: Police, Fire, EMS Budget Presentations

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kiley made a motion to adjourn at 7:59pm. Ms. Plumley seconded. A roll call vote was cast. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (10-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 pm.