

**Town Of Haddam
BOARD OF FINANCE
Budget Meeting
Town Office Building Annex
Monday, March 17, 2014
MINUTES**

Approved as Printed at the March 24, 2014 Budget Review Meeting

In attendance: Chairman David Kapitulik, Vice Chairman Harlan Fredericksen, and Members: John Bosco, Marjorie DeBold, and John Tabak and Alternates: Joseph Centofanti, Cheryl Haase, and Joanne Nesti

Staff in Attendance: Georgia Emanuel, Financial Coordinator, Barbara Galloway, Recording Secretary
First Selectman Melissa Schlag was also in attendance.

Chairman Kapitulik called the Meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Seating of Alternates

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Fredericksen to seat Ms. Nesti for this evening in place of Ms. Silvestrini, who has resigned from the Board. The Motion was approved unanimously.

1A. Public Input

There was no public input offered at the beginning of this Meeting.

1. Correction/Approval of the Minutes of the March 3, 2014 Budget Meeting

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Ms. Nesti to approve as printed the Minutes from the March 3, 2014 Meeting. The Motion was approved unanimously.

2. Old Business

a. *Discussions and Deliberations of the proposed 2014-2015 Budget*

i. *2013-2014 Budget Discussions with representatives of scheduled Departments/Agencies*

Tax Collector Kristin Battistoni was present to discuss the Tax Collector budget and her request for a notable salary increase that had not been proposed by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Battistoni distributed two sheets of paper, one a backup sheet showing collections for the past fifteen years and a sheet she had prepared that 1) lists improvements made in the office since she took her position and the office's impressive tax collection rate and 2) notes that she has completed the classes and testing for her eventual certification. The sheet also refers to a salary study that had been completed by the Town of East Haddam the previous year (a backup document, which had

not been included in the Board Members' notebooks; however, Ms. Battistoni passed her copy around for the Board Members to review). This document showed Ms. Battistoni's (the Haddam Tax Collector's) salary position in comparison to those of other Middlesex County tax collectors. Other elements of the Tax Collector budget were also discussed briefly. The Board thanked Ms. Battistoni for coming in to speak with them about her budget and her concerns.

ii. *Any Further Discussion of the Board's Budget deliberations approach*

The Board Members had agreed at an earlier Meeting to continue reviewing budgets in notebooks order, tabling discussion of the budgets for which a department head had been scheduled to meet with the Board.

iii. *Scheduling of any additional Department/Agency presentations*

Because some Board Members would not be able to attend the April 7 Meeting when Public Works Assistant Director Philip Goff is scheduled to be present, Chairman Kapitulik requested that the Board reschedule Mr. Goff's meeting appointment to the March 31 Meeting. Mr. Goff and the other departments/agencies affected by this change will be contacted to ensure it is agreeable to all.

iv. *Deliberations of the individual Department/Agency budgets within the proposed 2014-2015 Budget*

A new page for the 230 Dispatch Services budget was distributed to be inserted in the budget notebooks.

The Board Members continued to review and deliberate proposed department budgets beginning where they had stopped on March 3, 2014.

80 Engineering

It was noted that the total of this budget is the same as the one for the 2013-2014 budget. First Selectman Schlag explained that the engineer is paid by the hour, as needed, to review road work subdivisions and other work when asked by the Town.

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Fredericksen to approve the 80 Engineering budget as proposed at \$50,000. The Motion was approved unanimously.

085 Wetlands

First Selectman Schlag informed the Board that the Wetlands Commission from time to time requires an independent study/consultation for which funding in the Town's legal line has

been used in the past. The Wetlands Commission would like to have funding available within its own budget for this activity this year. The commission requested \$1,000 to fund this line. Board Members agreed that if the activity is for engineering services, it should not be paid from a line budgeted for legal work, as it had in past. The Board Members believe that if the commission finds it needs to hire a consultant for specific work in the coming fiscal year, it should come to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance to a request specific amount of funding from the Contingency Fund. The Consultation line will be kept in the budget, but with a \$0 balance.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Mr. Bosco to approve the 085 Wetlands budget (from the Board of Selectmen proposal and the department request of \$1,100) with the amended total of \$100. The Motion was approved unanimously.

090 Central Services

First Selectman Schlag had informed the Board at an earlier Meeting that she had been able to reduce telephone costs for the Town. She noted that the Maintenance of Town Property line will be revisited in the next few months and the total may be reduced due to changes she is planning in this area with the use of town staff. Other lines that were reduced included Building Supplies and Payroll Processing due to changes the Board of Selectmen have made in contracts that will save money.

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Mr. Tabak to approve the 090 Central Services budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen (from the department request of \$186,220) with a total of \$179,988. The Motion was approved unanimously.

095 Insurances

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Ms. DeBold to approve the 095 Insurance/Benefits budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen (from the department request of \$692,438) with a total of \$1,015,438. The Motion was approved unanimously.

This budget may be revisited later in the deliberations process.

100 Capital Planning Committee

The only line in this budget is for a Secretary and has been kept open with a \$10 total in the past. As they have done with other budgets, the Board Members agreed to keep the line/budget open, but to fund it with \$0.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Mr. Tabak to approve the 100 Capital Planning Committee budget

(from the proposed \$10) with an amended total of \$0. The Motion was approved unanimously.

105 Senior Services

It was noted that the paid positions of Municipal Agent and Senior Center Director had been left at a \$0 total by the department, as requested by the Board of Selectmen, who at this time continue to complete the Town Office Building employees' union contract negotiations. The Board of Selectmen used the totals approved for the 2013-2014 budget for these lines. Internet costs will be revisited by updating the system in order to save money.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Mr. Bosco to approve the 105 Senior Services budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen with a total of \$45,115. The Motion was approved by Chairman Kapitulik, Vice Chairman Fredericksen, Mr. Bosco, Ms. Nesti, and Mr. Tabak. There were no votes against. Ms. DeBold abstained due to her personal interest in this department.

106 Community Center

First Selectman Schlag noted that the Board of Selectmen had added \$650 to the Handicap restroom Rental line that had been requested for \$0 by the department. She explained that the Town would like to use the funding to renovate one of the existing indoor restrooms to make it handicap-accessible since the rental portable toilet can be inconvenient and cannot be used a portion of the year since it becomes buried in snow. First Selectman Schlag also noted that the Telephone line will probably be revisited and the total cost reduced. First Selectman Schlag also said that she understood that the telephone at this facility is somehow connected to the fire alarm system, which she must investigate further.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Ms. DeBold to approve the 106 Community Center budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen with a total of \$7,450. The Motion was approved unanimously.

109 Veterans' Museum

It was noted that the Telephone and Heating Fuel lines in this budget were reduced from the department request. There was a question about whether the telephone at this facility was connected to the fire alarm system in a similar manner that it has been reported the Community Center systems are combined. First Selectman Schlag will research this, as well.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Mr. Tabak to approve the 109 Veterans' Museum budget (from the department's request of \$9,250) as proposed by the Board of

Selectmen with a total of \$8,650. The Motion was approved unanimously.

110 Parades

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Mr. Tabak to approve the 110 Parades budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen and requested by the department with a total of \$1,325. The Motion was approved unanimously.

112 Health

Chatham Health District provides this service for the Town. First Selectman Schlag explained that the firm charges a non-negotiable fee for this service. She noted that the firm has many more services that the Town does not currently request, but could make use of in the future.

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Fredericksen to approve the 112 Health budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen with a total of \$74,804. The Motion was approved unanimously.

120 EDC (Economic Development Commission)

The Board noted that this budget contained no detailed backup information for the Consultant Fees line, although it is explained in a letter from the commission Chairman Michael Fortuna that the funding might be used for a cost/benefit analysis for a sewer system in Higganum. The Board Members agreed that if a cost/benefit analysis or other testing or reporting is actually required for Higganum, the commission can come to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance for specific funding for that purpose. The line for Consultant Fees will be kept in the budget, but reduced to a \$0 total. The Marketing line requested at \$2,500 had been reduced by the Board of Selectmen to \$1,000, again as there was no specific backup information included for the use of funding in this line.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Mr. Tabak to approve the 120 EDC budget (from the department's request of \$14,500) as proposed by the Board of Selectmen with a total of \$5,500. The Motion was approved unanimously.

125 Land Use Offices

Chairman Kapitulik noted that the Supplemental Payroll line with a total of \$7,308 requested by the department will now be addressed in the Supplemental Payroll line of the Selectmen's budget as with all of the other Supplemental Payroll lines.

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Ms. Nesti to approve the 125 Land Use Offices budget (from the department's request of \$159,153) as proposed by the Board of Selectmen with a total of \$150,845. The Motion was approved unanimously.

130 Conservation

First Selectman Schlag noted that the Salmon River Watershed funding that used to be addressed within the Conservation Activities line now has its own line in this budget. The Board agreed to keep the Open Space line in this budget, but to fund it with \$0 since there has been no specific request. The commission can come to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance if a promising open space property becomes available.

Mr. Bosco made the Motion seconded by Ms. DeBold to approve the 130 Conservation budget (from the total of \$2,510 proposed by the Board of Selectmen and the total of \$11,000 requested by the department) with a total of \$2,500. The Motion was approved unanimously.

200 Fire Protection

Action on this budget was tabled until after the meeting of the Board with representatives of the Haddam Volunteer fire Department on March 24, 2014.

205 Police

First Selectman Schlag told the Board that she is planning to make some changes to this budget and has corresponded with the troopers regarding overtime and the Emergency/Special Duty line. The Board of Selectmen added the School [Crossing] Guard line total to the budget at the amount approved for the 2013-2014 budget. The Board of Selectmen also increased the State Police line requested by the department, basing this on the current troopers' salaries and benefits. First Selectman Schlag said that she plans to upgrade the antiquated Internet system currently in use in the schools for a decrease in the actual cost.

Mr. Tabak made the Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Fredericksen to approve the 205 Police budget (from the department request of \$313,771) as proposed by the Board of Selectman with a total of \$323,852. The Motion was approved unanimously.

215 Animal Control

First Selectman Schlag noted that the Board of Selectmen designated \$150 less for dog tags this year. She also pointed out that the Dog Warden's Salary line in this budget had been entered as \$0 by the department and the Board of Selectmen had included it at the same total as approved in the 2013-2014 budget.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Ms. DeBold to approve the 215 Animal Control budget (from the department request of \$9,955) as proposed by the Board of

Selectmen with a total of \$20,253. The Motion was approved unanimously.

220 Emergency Management

The Board agreed that more local planning must be done to plan/prepare for emergency situations, based on the communications, services, and shelter problems experienced by the town in the recent past during extended power outages due to/following catastrophic weather conditions.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Mr. Tabak to approve the 220 Emergency Management budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen with a total of \$6,439. The Motion was approved unanimously.

225 Fire Marshal

It was noted that the Fire Marshal Salary line had been left at \$0 by the department and had been funded by the Board of Selectmen with the same total as in the 2013-2014 budget. There was discussion about other aspects of this budget and the reasons for the Board of Selectmen's reductions in funding from the department requests on some lines.

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Mr. Bosco to approve the 225 Fire Marshal budget (from the department request of \$4,750) as proposed by the Board of Selectmen with a total of \$17,241. The Motion was approved unanimously.

230 Dispatch Services

It was noted that the Valley Shore Emergency line/portion of this budget had increased substantially, but First Selectman Schlag reported that the actual Board of Selectmen's proposal in that line was about \$4,000 less than had been printed on the budget forms; she gave the Board the revised total that was reduced from \$105,631 to \$101,372. The Board of Selectmen had increased the K-X Dispatch total only slightly from the 2013-2014 budget Dispatch Services total.

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Mr. Tabak to approve the 230 Dispatch budget (different from the Board of Selectmen printed request of \$127,183) with the amended total of \$122,924. The Motion was approved unanimously.

235 Abandoned Vehicles

The Board Members agreed to keep the line titled "Abandoned Vehicles" in this budget, but funded it with \$0. If the need to address an abandoned vehicle should arise, the Board of Selectmen can come to the Board of Finance for funding to deal with removal or other required action.

Vice Chairman Fredericksen made the Motion seconded by Mr. Tabak to approve the 235 Abandoned Vehicles budget (from

the Board of Selectmen proposal of \$10) with an amended total of \$0. The Motion was approved unanimously.

240 Building Department

It was noted that this budget included salary increases for the building official and the administrative assistant, which the Board of Selectmen changed to the same amounts approved in the 2013-2014 budget. As had been discussed at the previous Budget Meeting, the wage totals of all departments will be addressed once the union contract negotiations for town office building employees have been completed. The Supplemental Payroll line in this budget as in all other budgets has been funded with \$0 and will be addressed by the line within the Selectmen's budget. The Board of Selectmen had also reduced two other lines from this department's budget request.

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Fredericksen to approve the 240 Building Department budget (from the department request of \$115,491) as proposed by the Board of Selectmen with a total of \$106,627.

Chairman Kapitulik and other Board Members expressed concern that the amount that had been allotted to the Supplemental Payroll line of the Selectmen's budget might not be sufficient to address all of the Town Office Building supplemental payroll requirements for the coming year. First Selectman Schlag assured them that she has a plan prepared for addressing replacement needs in the various town offices when employees are out sick, on vacation, or at professional meetings and feels sure that the amount funded in that line will be sufficient to pay for all needed replacement help.

- v. *Discussion of the outcomes of/reactions to the joint 2014-2015 budget meeting of the Board of Education with the Haddam/Killingworth Boards of Finance and Selectmen held on March 12, 2014*

Board Members discussed experiences they had at the joint meeting held the previous week by the Board of Education with the Boards of Selectmen and Finance from both Haddam and Killingworth. There were several areas of concern that were identified to be considered for further research/study.

The Board Members then briefly discussed query Ms. Nesti made to the Board of Education for the Board of Finance about whether or not the Board of Education would welcome a liaison from the Board of Finance at its contract negotiation sessions and budget preparation meetings. Ms. Nesti reported that the

Board of Education is still considering this request and has not yet given Ms. Nesti a response.

3. New Business

a. *Introduction/Discussion of any other new town issues relative to the 2013-2014 Budget*

No new issues regarding the town or the 2013-2014 budget were introduced or discussed.

4. Public Comment – End of Meeting

Resident Ed Schwing reminded the Board about a salary survey that a Board sub-committee had commissioned twelve years before regarding salaries paid to employees of surrounding towns. This survey was then used to do a comparison of salaries for similar positions in Haddam to those of surrounding towns, after which town salaries had been adjusted in order to better compete with other area towns. Mr. Schwing noted that it does not appear that the Town has made considerations regarding or adjustments to the salary lines on a regular basis since that time. The Board thanked Mr. Schwing for this information.

5. Adjournment

Ms. DeBold made the Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Fredericksen to adjourn the Meeting. The Motion was approved unanimously. The Meeting adjourned at 9:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara D. Galloway