

TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - TUESDAY EVENING - MARCH 17, 2020

PRESENT: Calouro, Sweeney, Teixeira, Parella and Ley (Present through speaker phone per Governor's Executive Order 20-05)

ALSO PRESENT: Steven Contente, Town Administrator
Raquel Pellerin, Town Treasurer

The Council met in workshop session on Tuesday evening, March 17, 2020 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 6:38 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

404 - Town Solicitor

Michael A. Ursillo, Esq., Town Solicitor

Town Administrator Contente noted his amended recommendation to increase the Solicitor line item by \$1,124 for an overall increase of \$2248 (2%).

Town Solicitor Ursillo stated that he is delighted to have the opportunity to serve as Town Solicitor.

A discussion ensued regarding the litigation costs with Town Solicitor Ursillo explaining that the Mosaico litigation has been the most difficult.

Councilman Ley asked to know about the Town's share of the class action concerning the General Assembly evergreen bill.

Town Treasurer Pellerin stated that she has not seen a bill for this.

Town Solicitor Ursillo stated that he would check into this and provide the Clerk with information that may be distributed to the Council.

Councilwoman Parella noted that in past similar circumstances, the Council would receive information and make a specific appropriation.

Town Solicitor Ursillo recalled that the Council agreed to an initial amount.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to the increase as recommended by the Town Administrator.

The Council made no additional changes to the budget as recommended.

803 - Parks and Recreation

Sarah Klein - Director

Recreation Director Klein reported that the recreation program served 50,000 participants last year and that the programs, after school activities, summer camp, meetings, etc., have been very busy.

Recreation Director Klein explained that the recommended budget includes a senior services coordinator, staffing for the front desk and a part time maintenance person to allow for the existing maintenance staff to have earned time off.

A discussion ensued regarding park maintenance with Councilwoman Parella reminding those present of her earlier advocacy for Big-Belly trash compactors. Councilwoman Parella suggested that the Town might try to find a way to procure some of these large-capacity rubbish collection containers.

Recreation Director Klein reported an error in the departmental narrative concerning overtime.

Councilman Teixeira expressed concern that the gas and oil account has been increased. He suggested that it may not be necessary to have the maintenance person check parks every day during winter months.

Recreation Director Klein noted that some of the park areas are quite busy during winter months and that trash receptacles are often overflowing.

Councilman Teixeira asked to know about the proposed coordinator of senior services with Recreation Director Klein explaining that this role is currently covered by a person funded by the HEZ grant and that the future funding is questionable.

A discussion ensued regarding some of the other increased budget lines.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to place an asterisk (*) on the budget line for the proposed senior services coordinator.

The Council made no additional changes to the budget as recommended.

603 - Public Works

Kevin R. McBride, Director

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Public Works Director McBride appeared before the Council and explained that the significant increase in the transfer station operations is attributed to a new hauling contract. He explained that the last hauling contract was from 19 years ago.

Public Works Director McBride noted that the hauling contractor is the same.

A general discussion ensued regarding some budget lines including snow and ice, landfill monitoring, tree care, landfill vehicle, and street light repairs.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

604 - Water Pollution Control
Jose DaSilva - Superintendent

Water Pollution Control Superintendent DaSilva explained that the line for Infiltration and Inflow is provided to ease the cost of infiltration repairs for homeowners.

A discussion ensued regarding the continuing repairs of the RBC units.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

605 - Composting
Jose DaSilva - Superintendent

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

607 - Enterprise Fund
Raquel Pellerin - Town Treasurer

Town Treasurer Pellerin explained the costs associated with the Enterprise Fund.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

802 - Rogers Free Library
Jacqueline O'Brien - Assistant Director
Kristen Amaral - Technology Associate

Ms. O'Brien reviewed the library program and the use of the building for outside activities, etc.

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A discussion ensued regarding the plan to purchase certain library materials with Ms. O'Brien explaining that these materials support the library programs.

A discussion ensued regarding the library's computers with Ms. Amaral explaining that these computers are well used and require much maintenance. She noted that the budget request asks for consideration for a technical specialist to help with this task.

Town Administrator Contente noted that he did not recommend the additional position and suggested that it may be possible to add the library to the Town's Freedom Tech contract.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to place an asterisk (*) on the Technical Specialist line item so that the Council may discuss it further at a later time.

Councilman Ley suggested that Print Materials, Subscriptions, Audio Visual and Computer Replacement might be level-funded (the total amount of new spending for these lines is \$10,000)

Ms. O'Brien explained details of these line items. She noted that there have been price increases and that the increase requested is to maintain a certain level of service with newspapers, etc.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to place an asterisk (*) on the increased line items amounting to \$10,000 so that the Council may discuss these matters at a later time.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

806 - Municipal Observances

Fourth of July

Michele Martins - General Chairman

Ms. Martins thanked the Council for its past support and noted that the price for the stage for the concert series went up by \$13,000. She outlined several new fundraising initiatives to help fund the celebration and offset cost increases.

Councilwoman Parella noted that the Town contributes probably in excess of \$120,000 for police and public works personnel in support of the celebration.

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Councilwoman Parella suggested that the committee might consider charging for preferred concert seating as a fundraiser.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know if celebration components must be as large as these have become. He asked to know if there is data indicating that area businesses benefit from the increase in concert traffic.

Ms. Martins reported that businesses do claim an increase in foot traffic due to the concerts.

Council Chairman Calouro suggested that the Committee may wish to scale-back some of its activities.

Last Night

Steven Contente - Town Administrator

Town Administrator Contente reported that it has been very difficult to obtain sponsorships for this concert.

Councilwoman Parella asked to know if the Town is getting its best "bang for the buck." She asked to know if the event might have to be "refreshed."

Council Chairman Calouro noted that the Council seems to have this same discussion every year.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to place an asterisk (*) on this budget item so that it may discuss it further at a later time.

There was no discussion on any of the remaining Municipal Observances lines.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

501 - Finance

Raquel Pellerin, Town Treasurer

Town Treasurer Pellerin reported an overall reduction in the medical and dental line and an increase in the defined contribution.

Town Treasurer Pellerin also noted the need to acquire new budgeting software and that this change will allow the Town to bring payroll back in-house.

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Councilwoman Parella noted that the Town uses the Revaluation line as a "savings account" for future revaluations and suggested that this may be a place to reduce the budget if necessary.

The Council, by consensus, agreed to place an asterisk (*) on this line item so that the Council may consider it at a later time.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

502 - Debt Service

Raquel Pellerin - Town Treasurer

Town Treasurer Pellerin noted that the budget includes payments on 2019 bonded debt.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

503 - Fixed Charges

Raquel Pellerin - Town Treasurer

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

407 - Municipal Court

Louis P. Cirillo, Clerk/Magistrate

The Clerk explained the increase relating to a change in the Municipal Court software and the housing of the court files in a "cloud" environment versus a server environment.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

401 - Town Council

Councilman Ley questioned the value of the Town's membership in the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns.

Several examples were noted of the ways that the League provides value to the Town.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

Prior to adjournment, Council Chairman Calouro reviewed the following items that have been noted by an asterisk (*).

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<u>Department No.</u>	<u>Department Name</u>	<u>Line Item</u>	<u>Line Name</u>	<u>Adm. Recommend.</u>
		0500-		\$
501	Finance	412	Revaluation	75,000
504	Town Hall Complex	* * *	(New) Town Hall A/V	?
		2333-		\$
701	Police Department	404	M/V Replacement	57,050
		0100-		\$
701	Police Department	100	Salaries	108,000
		0100-		\$
703	Harbor Patrol	100	Salaries	70,000
	Rogers Free	0100-		\$
802	Library	100	Salaries	-
	Rogers Free	0301-		\$
802	Library	402	Print Materials	25,000
	Rogers Free	0303-		\$
802	Library	402	Subscriptions	6,500
	Rogers Free	0304-		\$
802	Library	402	Audio-Visual	10,000
	Rogers Free	0305-		\$
802	Library	404	Computer Replacement	6,000
	Parks &	0100-		\$
803	Recreation	100	Salaries	45,000
	Municipal	0028-		\$
806	Observances	401	Last Night	30,000

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Teixeira and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 9:40 o'clock PM.

Louis P. Cirillo, CMC, Council Clerk

