

TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP - WEDNESDAY EVENING
MARCH 18, 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 Wednesday evening, March 18, 2020 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 6:39 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

704 - Fire Department
Michael DeMello - Chief

Fire Chief DeMello noted that the department has experienced a "busy year" answering over 3,100 EMS calls. He explained that his budget request represents a modest change for improvement.

Fire Chief DeMello noted a new initiative for an EMA specialist who will provide extra office coverage during the day and also will enable the Town to react to additional emergency calls that are now referred to others. He explained that the result of this new position may produce positive revenue and pay for itself due to increased insurance billings.

A general discussion ensued regarding request for response trends, volumes and timing, inspections, and volunteer rolls.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

406 - Board of Canvassers
Louis P. Cirillo - Clerk

The Clerk outlined details of the budget, as proposed by the Board and recommended by the Town Administrator.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

405 - Boards and Commissions

A discussion ensued regarding the repair of the iron fence at the East Burial Ground.

Town Administrator Contente reported that the Substance Abuse Prevention Task force is doing "phenomenally well" with its programming.

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The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

Discussion of Town Administrator's recommended level of funding for Regional School District

Town Administrator Contente stated that he initially was recommending full funding of the School District request but reduced it, along with other Town budget requests, in order to remain below the State mandated cap.

Town Administrator Contente explained that his recommendation includes a 2.28% increase for the schools or approximately \$619,305 more than last year.

It was noted also that the cost of health insurance, other insurance and transportation may be overstated in the budget request, likely due to overestimation of the cost increases.

It was noted that questions were being forwarded to Dr. Brice concerning these budget items in particular. Town Administrator Contente stated that he hopes to have clarification for these questions prior to the Joint Finance Committee meeting.

A further discussion ensued.

Town Administrator Contente noted that fully funding the school request at 4.7% will add \$.50 to the tax rate and create a Town budget that is \$300,000 over the State mandated budget cap.

The Council made no change to the budget as recommended.

Items Previously Identified by an Asterisk (*) - Additional Discussion

Town Treasurer Pellerin provided several documents in support of original budget requests.

501 - Finance Revaluation

Councilwoman Parella suggested that this amount may be reduced in favor of other budget requests since there may be opportunity to provide a higher level of funding in future years.

Town Treasurer Pellerin noted that this budget is utilized, in part, for software improvements that will ultimately aid the

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future revaluations. She suggested that it might be better left alone.

The Council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

504 - Town Hall Complex
Council Chamber Television Monitors