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**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 28, 2023**

TIME: 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Dept. of Public Works Building & Teams Videoconference

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Plumley, Dan Kiley, Nancy Smith, Mike Diehn, Jim Fickett, John Kluge (ex-officio), Shirley Green, Dimitri Deserranno

EXCUSED: Tina Stearns

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

Members of the Public: Kate Minshall, Library Director; Kevin Marker, Recreation Director; Brad Rich, Roy Holland,

CALL TO ORDER

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

MINUTES- December 14, 2023

Mr. Diehn made a motion to approve of the minutes as presented/amended. Mr. Kluge seconded.

Members of the Budget Committee (BC) discussed the minutes on the table.

Ms. Plumley requested that the sentence on page 2 be completed.

Mr. Morris stated that the sentence was with reference to salaries and will be completed to state: "Mr. Morris stated that.... slated increase in salaries."

Ms. Green requested to correct the spelling for the word 'eaves' on page 3.

Ms. Smith made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Ms. Plumley seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (9-0)

Mr. Diehn requested that the line numbers be added to the minutes for easier reference.

Members of the committee agreed with his recommendation.

With no further discussion, the BC moved on to review the Library budget.

BUSINESS

Library Budget Review

Ms. Minshall stated that the only increase was the special projects being increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 due to being in a new space.

Mr. Morris stated that other increases are related to the compensation study, which he will address later in the evening.

Mr. Diehn inquired about metrics related to library usage that can be brought forward to the Budget Committee.

53 Ms. Minshall stated that statistics are posted online each month, and she did not bring them forward but can
54 do so in the future.

55
56 Ms. Plumley stated that knowing about the usage of online and digital data is helpful as well.

57
58 Mr. Diehn inquired if the number of people were tracked for usage of the public internet services.

59
60 Ms. Minshall stated that it is tricky with privacy, but there is a sign in sheet that can be used to anonymously
61 collect data.

62
63 Mr. Morris stated that it may be possible to look at the hours of Wi-Fi utilized based on people using it from
64 the parking lot.

65
66 Mr. Kiley inquired how many out-of-town users are using library resources such as subscription-based items
67 like Hoopla.

68
69 Ms. Minshall stated that she has reviewed the policy for subscription-based items with the Library Trustees
70 and it has been updated to only allow Enfield residents to access digital services.

71
72 Ms. Green stated that the number of adults and children that come to the library and attend the programs,
73 such as the story time.

74
75 Mr. Morris stated that numbers may be down this year as the library is in its temporary location on Route 4A.

76
77 Ms. Minshall stated that she plans to continue to engage with students at the Enfield Village School, such as
78 meeting classes at the Mascoma Lakeside Park pavilion or on the rail trail. She noted that, with the change in
79 location, it can be anticipated that there will be an increase in the use of digital services, which influenced the
80 change in policy as well.

81
82 Mr. Young inquired about why there are lawyer fees budgeted for the library.

83
84 Ms. Minshall stated that as the policies are revised, they need to go through the lawyer to ensure they are
85 legal. She stated that it is possible that there may be a book that could be challenged, which would require
86 her to seek legal counsel as well.

87
88 Mr. Young inquired about the breakout of the \$25,000 allocated for books and digital media.

89
90 Ms. Minshall stated that it breaks down to about \$15,000 books, and \$10,000 in digital media. She noted that
91 there are trends with the age of residents as younger people moving into town use digital media but people
92 with children tend to come to the library.

93
94 With no further comments or questions, Mr. Deserranno moved on to the next agenda item.

95
96 **Recreation Budget Review**

97 Kevin Marker stated that what was previously 'recreation programming' in the budget he broke down into
98 summer programming and winter programming. He stated that there are increases in summer programming
99 because buses are becoming more expensive, especially utilizing them out of season. He noted that some
100 buses needed to be canceled in 2023 due to lack of lifeguards, or the trips were rained out. He noted that
101 \$1,300 has been added for maintenance as much of the sand put on the baseball fields in June of 2022 has
102 been washed away and the fields are overgrown with weeds. He stated that the infield was not tampered
103 down, which leads to the sand washing away easily.

104

105 Mr. Diehn inquired how long the \$1,300 jock sand might last.
106

107 Mr. Marker stated that it is the first time it is being tried on that field so it will need to be assessed. He stated
108 that there is a steel drum at the DPW that can be utilized to tamp it down.
109

110 It was noted that Recreation Directors in the past have been part time and had other jobs which made it hard
111 for them to coordinate with the DPW work schedule and plan for those types of efforts.
112

113 Mr. Deserranno inquired who owns the building on Shaker Field.
114

115 Mr. Marker stated that the town does.
116

117 Ms. Plumley stated that the Lions Club helped pour the slab and move the building that is currently standing
118 on the property. She inquired about the bases that are still out on the baseball field.
119

120 Mr. Marker stated that the old bases are left out year-round, but the new bases are stored inside. He stated
121 that there is a 6 x 6 hole that is left when the bases are removed, and kids fill the holes with sand which
122 makes it hard to put them in, so the old ones are now left out during the off season.
123

124 Mr. Morris stated that we are looking at taking charge of organizing youth sports in coordination with the
125 Mascoma Youth Sports League (MYSL). He stated that there will be a revenue offset income for that
126 expense, with the hope of dividing the costs with other towns that participate with the sports league. He has
127 reached out to Canaan, Orange, Grafton, and Dorchester to discuss that possibility. He stated that that the
128 estimated Enfield residents make up about 50% of the participants in MYSL, and he used participation
129 percentages to break out proposed town contributions. He stated that the work related to MYSL will use
130 about 15 hours per week of the Recreation Directors time. He stated that the goal is to offset the costs and
131 support the management of MYSL with permanent staff instead of solely relying on volunteers.
132

133 Mr. Diehn inquired about what the source of income is for MYSL.
134

135 Mr. Morris stated that registration fees and grants are the main income for MYSL, and the registration fees
136 will come to the town instead of through MYSL. He noted that the registration fees will come into the town,
137 and there is an expense line to expend to have a revenue line.
138

139 Ms. Plumley inquired about the availability of the program to everyone, and inquired if business
140 sponsorships would be pursued.
141

142 Mr. Morris stated that there will be a similar scholarship program to ensure opportunities for youth
143 participation, and confirmed sponsorships will be accepted by the town. He noted that he encouraged MYSL
144 to maintain a board and operate as a parent organization and participate in a way that helps the engagement
145 for the kids, like hosting pizza parties, instead of running the business aspects of the organization.
146

147 Mr. Diehn inquired if there would be institutional memory and engagement.
148

149 Mr. Morris confirmed and stated that MYSL and the current Recreation Commission will also be a part of
150 the conversation. He stated that he proposed to the Select Board to start a reserve fund for recreation instead
151 of having the money run through the general fund.
152

153 Mr. Deserranno inquired about the financial support of MYSL from other towns and if it will affect current
154 registration fees.
155

156 Mr. Morris stated that registration fees will remain the same in the immediate future as they will help cover
157 the cost difference in adding a full-time staff member to support youth sports.

158
159 Mr. Young inquired if the expenses for recreation personnel budget includes paying for expenses such as
160 referees for youth sports.

161
162 Mr. Morris stated that referees have not been paid in the past so that is not included in the current budget. He
163 noted that the increase in the personnel compensation is based on an increase in pay for personnel such as
164 lifeguards.

165
166 Mr. Young inquired about whether the cost to takeover MYSL is estimated to cost \$38,000, which could be
167 recovered by increased revenue and by adjusted fees.

168
169 Mr. Young inquired about the soccer nets which have been left out.

170
171 Mr. Marker stated that MYSL has a grant for new nets to be purchased which are stored in the sheds, and
172 what is currently outside is no longer going to be used.

173
174 Mr. Rich inquired if MYSL is staying intact or if the town is taking control.

175
176 Mr. Morris stated that the MYSL board will be staying intact to maintain other tasks, while having the
177 recreation director serve as administrative support for the organization.

178
179 Mr. Rich inquired if the current MYSL organization was working, what is the reason for the change.

180
181 Members of the BC and the public stated that MYSL has faced a lot of challenges, including high turnover in
182 volunteers and board members, which makes it hard to remain consistently operated. It was noted that there
183 are a limited number of parent volunteers who are supporting the organization, and they have supported the
184 process of having the town involved in administering the program.

185
186 Mr. Morris stated that the goal is to add consistency and support to the youth sports in town.

187
188 Mr. Plumley stated that there is a history of having volunteer referees, and inquired if we can anticipate that
189 to continue or consider that we may need to pay for those services in the future.

190
191 Mr. Morris stated that there has been trouble with finding volunteer coaches and referees, and it may be
192 necessary to set a limit to the number of children able to play if there aren't enough coaches. He stated that
193 umpires and referee volunteers are a little different, but it will be asked for parents to help with that as well.

194
195 Ms. Plumley stated that it was a considerable amount of work and is there a position and commission that
196 can support making that happen, in addition to MYSL members participating.

197
198 Mr. Marker noted that he also has other resources available, such as local recreation departments, which will
199 help support the needs of youth programming as well.

200
201 Mr. Morris stated that the town insurance company has also offered help with policies associated with youth
202 sports, which will be extremely helpful. He noted that volunteers are already included in the town insurance
203 and programming, as it is within the normal functioning of the town.

204
205 With no further comments or questions, Mr. Deserranno moved on to the next agenda item.

206
207

208 Regional Organization Budget Review

209 Ms. Green stated that members of the Regional Organization Subcommittee met with Shantelle Delworth,
210 the head of Human Services, to review the regional organization requests submitted to the town. She noted
211 that the total amount to budget is lower than last year as there were two organizations that did not have
212 complete applications, and there was more than one organization that did not submit an application.
213

214 Mr. Kluge inquired if groups that have applied in the past were reached out to.
215

216 Mr. Morris stated that a letter is typically sent with the application that includes the deadline for applications.
217

218 Mr. Rich inquired if it was known why Advanced Transit didn't submit a request. He stated that when
219 Advanced Transit met with the Master Planning Committee it seemed as if they would be asking for more
220 money.
221

222 Mr. Kiley stated that Advanced Transit has a new Executive Director, and Mascoma Community Health is in
223 the midst of a merger, and communications may have been lost in turnover.
224

225 Mr. Morris stated that a date was set for an annual application deadline and confirmed that Ms. Delworth did
226 reach out to each organization prior to the deadline.
227

228 With no further discussion, Mr. Deserranno moved on to the next agenda item.
229

230 Budget Review

231 Mr. Morris stated that \$80,000 is being budgeted to offset funding that is anticipated to be received in 2024.
232 He noted that the town received \$422,000 for the meals and rooms tax, which is an increase from the
233 previous year, when \$350,000 was budgeted. He stated that motor vehicle permits were down by \$125,000,
234 which may have been affected by the higher interest rates.
235

236 Mr. Kiley stated that he doesn't see that the revenue for the ambulance services.
237

238 Mr. Morris stated that he believes the revenue numbers are off, but the number of Enfield responses is down
239 overall. He noted that the number of calls for service are consistent with last year, but Lebanon has been
240 responding to more calls. He stated that the calls for service are close to where they were last year, but
241 Lebanon has been picking up more of the calls. He stated that the ambulance lines for the upcoming budget
242 have been adjusted to allocate more to the contracting with Lebanon for response than to the ambulance
243 wages.
244

245 Mr. Morris stated that the \$10,000 which was budgeted to replace the backstop at Huse Park is going to be
246 reallocated to the refinishing of the Community Building floors. He noted that \$11,500 has been added to the
247 culvert budget, which is being requested to be offset by FEMA funding for stormwater mitigation which has
248 been received and noted that the offset will be revisited in the next budget year. He added that the town has
249 replaced a lot of culverts - including 26 so far this year, and the funding will support the stormwater
250 mitigation work that is necessary to maintain the current culvert replacement cycle.
251

252 Mr. Deserranno inquired about the undesignated balance, and he anticipated it to be lower this year than it
253 has been in prior years.
254

255 Mr. Morris stated that the undesignated funds have not been totaled yet and noted that there is \$59,000 in
256 FEMA money that will be included in the balance because it was not budgeted to spend in the year it was
257 received. He stated that the expenditures for the 2023 budget year have not been finalized yet, which is why
258 the information is not available yet, but information should be available mid-January. He noted that there is a

259 bonus program which was put in place, which will be funded by the lack of expenditure from the personnel
260 line from not being fully staffed.

261

262 Members of the BC and Ms. Bonnette discussed the finalization of financials that do not occur until the close
263 of the calendar year.

264

265 Members of the BC discussed trends of revenues and expenditures related to vehicle registrations and the
266 ambulance department.

267

268 Mr. Deserranno inquired what percentage of the budget increase is due to the two building projects.

269

270 Mr. Morris stated that the increase in last year's general fund budget was 8.27%, which does not include debt
271 services. Including debt service, the general fund increase is 11.04%. He stated that the current total
272 municipal increase for the upcoming year would be 18.9% including CIP, debt service, and general fund, but
273 that is not acceptable and will be reduced. It was noted that last year's increase was 15.9%.

274

275 Mr. Rich stated that double digit increases multiple years in a row is difficult for people on a fixed income.

276

277 Mr. Morris stated that the buildings are having an impact on those increases, and the goal is to balance the
278 budget and the revenues to try to offset costs. He stated that the general fund increase is currently at 8.2%,
279 and it is the buildings and CIP that is added to the tax rate that contributes to the overall increase.

280

281 Members of the BC discussed the tax increases to include the school tax rate and how that impacts Enfield
282 residents.

283

284 Mr. Deserranno stated that he would like to be cognizant that the undesignated fund balance should not be
285 used to try to lower the tax impact. He noted that services need to be maintained, and we cannot erode the
286 undesignated fund in the process.

287

288 Roy Holland stated that the increases associated with buildings were approved by voters at Town Meeting,
289 and the focus should be on the general fund and the services that residents want. He noted that the cost of
290 inflation affects those services, and there is no cutting out the approved projects, so the only way to save
291 money is to cut services.

292

293 Mr. Deserranno stated that both building projects were approved by voters and are outside of the purview of
294 the Budget Committee and acknowledged that reducing the budget may involve reducing the service offered.
295 He stated that the Select Board decides what the staffing level is, but if staffing was reduced it would also
296 reduce the services fulfilled by the town. He noted that the committee can make recommendations for
297 changes, but the ultimate decision is made by the Select Board and Town Manager. He added that there also
298 seems to be some miscommunication or misunderstanding surrounding the loans as well.

299

300 Mr. Young stated that the assessment of town owned property and buildings was a multi-year project that
301 started in 2019, and the recommendations brought forward by the committee were made to improve the town
302 and services associated with it, and to attract people to the town.

303

304 With no further discussion, Mr. Morris moved on to review compensation with members of the committee.

305

306 **Compensation Review**

307 Mr. Morris stated that, in reviewing the compensation study, there were a couple of people who were around
308 30% underpaid, but most staff were within 2% of what their compensation should be. He noted that a
309 placeholder has been put in as a 5% increase in compensation, which includes COLA and merit. He stated
310 that he plans to update the compensation for anyone who was 20% under market over the course of two

311 years, and a four-year program for those who are in the 30% range. He stated that the COLA was based on
312 the Boston metric of 2.8%.

313

314 Mr. Diehn inquired about the total if no one was caught up with the compensation study and only got the
315 COLA, and what the total would be to catch everyone up according to the compensation study, to include the
316 salary and benefit increase. He stated that comparing the worst-case and best-case scenarios can be helpful
317 for the overall conversation.

318

319 Members of the BC and Mr. Morris discussed the compensation study and implementation within the
320 proposed budget.

321

322 Mr. Young stated that there was a great classification of the positions included in the compensation study. He
323 stated that the information presented will help align the positions and pay with demand.

324

325 Mr. Deserranno inquired what problem was being solved by moving to a step program when it hasn't been
326 used in the past.

327

328 Mr. Morris stated that there were many years where employees were only getting COLA raises and we fell
329 behind in the market, which leads to losing people and having difficulty with recruitment.

330

331 Mr. Holland stated that he has been an employee of the town for over 20 years, and up until 2005 there was a
332 step program in place. He stated that the pay had remained competitive, but when the practice was
333 discontinued the merit and COLA raises barely met the COLA minimum increase. He noted that there is a
334 history of raises being inconsistent and then having a jump to try to keep up with the market, which is what
335 the compensation study reflects.

336

337 Members of the Budget Committee discussed how a step plan would be implemented.

338

339 Ms. Green inquired if a step raise would work in the current wage climate where things such as bonuses are
340 being offered.

341

342 Mr. Kluge stated that he came onto the board during a recession in which some towns in New Hampshire
343 declared bankruptcy. He stated that there was a freeze on raises during that time, with a noted commitment to
344 maintaining jobs and positions for the employees. He noted that we are at the mercy of a national economy
345 as well as our local economy and he likes the step program, but it is a tool.

346

347 Mr. Young stated that we may not need a written policy for the implementation of step raises, but there
348 should be a clear philosophy and objective. He stated that economic conditions change and there needs to be
349 flexibility.

350

351 **Consideration of appointment to fill vacancy on the Committee (Rich)**

352 Mr. Deserranno welcomed Mr. Rich to speak to the BC regarding his application for appointment.

353

354 Mr. Rich stated that he has run a company and worked with budgets in that capacity, but this is his first
355 introduction to municipal finance, and he will be happy to ask questions and learn more about it.

356

357 Ms. Plumley made a motion to accept Bradley Rich to the Budget Committee. Mr. Kluge seconded. Vote
358 unanimous in favor of the motion (8-0).

359

360 Ms. Bonnette informed Mr. Rich that his appointment will need to be renewed in 2024.

361

362

363 **OTHER BUSINESS**364 **Public Comment**

365 Mr. Deserranno requested comments or questions from the public.

366

367 Ms. Plumley stated that she received information regarding updated standards for firefighter turnout gear and
368 she will pass the information to Mr. Morris to share with the fire chief as it will be pertinent to the purchase
369 of new gear.

370

371 With no further comments for questions, members of the BC moved on to adjournment.

372

373 **NEXT MEETING**

374 January 18th @ 6:30pm, @ Public Works; Budget Review

375 January 25th @ 6:30pm @ Public Works; Budget Review & Presentation Preparation

376

377 **ADJOURNMENT**378 Mr. Kluge made a motion to adjourn at 8:51pm. Mr. Kiley seconded. A roll call vote was cast. Vote
379 unanimous in favor of the motion (8-0).

380

381 The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.