

Town of Sherman
Board of Selectman Budget Workshop
March 9, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
Mallory Town Hall

Member's Present: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Kevin Keenan, Selectman Bob Ostrosky, Liz LaVia, and Eric Holub

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Superintendent Jeff Melendez, James Neunzig, Carrie Dretel, Ashleigh Blake, Susan Seeger and members from the community

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Don Lowe called meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Review of Revenue Budget noted minor changes including reduction of PreK revenue of around \$37,000 and reduction of HRRR related revenue diverted HRRR events.

Selectman's Office: No significant changes to budget except for a 3% increase (union/non-union). Discussion on whether Salary of First Selectman should be increased 10% or so in the next election year budget (to come inline with industry standards) Business Admin hours will increase due to QuickBooks transition and usual overages. Hours not reflected in salary line.

Treasurer: No changes except for standard 3% salary increase

Tax Collector Office: 3% increase in salary, no other changes to budget

Town Clerk Office: No Budget change, 3% increase in salary

Assessor's Office: 3% increase in salary, budget increase for map processing, and new update to field card access.

Board of Assessment/Appeals: No change to budget

Building Department: 3% salary increase for administrative assistant, no other budget changes

Planning and Zoning Department: 3% salary increase, no other budget changes

Zoning Board of Appeals: No Budget change

Inland/Wetland Department: No Budget changes

Counsel and Court Costs: It was suggested that the \$35,000 budget be reduced to \$30,000 with an equal breakdown of \$10,000 (general), \$10,000 (land use), and \$10,000 (legal expense)

Registrars Department: Minor increases/decreases (resulting in overall decrease) due to number of referendums next year.

Membership: Increase in Cost fees. Discussion on merits of various associations.

Consultants: No changes

General Government: No Budget changes

Town Hall Technology: 3% salary increase for IT administrator, decrease in software fees due to termination of Phoenix Software and install of QuickBooks. Increase line by \$2000 to cover QuickBooks training.

Buildings: Slight increase in budget due to utilities and phone overages

Public Safety: No significant changes, selectman plan to revisit Fire Marshal expenses associated with reference books, equipment, mileage, and fund dues

ESF Operating: No significant changes except for anticipated utilities fees

SVFD Operating: No change to Budget

SVFD Insurances: Increase of \$2200 includes new Tanker coverage

Candlewood Lake Expense: Discussion on possible increase to Candlewood Lake Authority above current request for fees associated with weed mapping but selectman in agreement with denying proposed increase. As stated in previous meetings, representatives for the Town of Sherman believe money can be better spent on equipment. First Selectman to research other 4 towns for monetary commitment (3 of 5 per contract).

Economic Development: No changes

Animal Control: Proposed increase to budget due to New Fairfield opting out. Budget must be funded accordingly but selectman were in agreement to research ways of lowering the cost, possibly by losing an officer to offset.

Collections/Recycling: Slight increase in removal fees

Public Works: 3% salary increase as per union standards, no other significant changes, slight increase in landscaping, increase in employee physicals/screening fees, surplus in winter maintenance supply line due to lack of winter precipitation. Will monitor next budget cycle to adjust for need.

Health Department: 3% salary increase for Health Director, selectman proposed a decrease for Sanitarian hours based on history, a new budget line was added for a possible Health Department clerk but selectman agreed that a detailed job description needed to be supplied before a true discussion ensued.

Health and Welfare: No budget changes but a new request was added to the line for possibly offering Regional Hospice to our aging population. The selectman discussed the viability of the benefit and if it was appropriate to add. Decision to omit funding for Hospice due to charitable nature of organization (unfavorable practice of choosing one charity over another).

Debt Service: Current debt lowered due to payment of loans, decrease in debt principal repayment and interest.

Insurance/Employee Exp: 5.2% increase driven by medical insurance increase (CT Partnership 2.0 and Union), no change in defined benefit plan, slight variations in money allocated for insurance plans

Reserve for Capital: No change to \$500,000 budget but selectman agreed to discuss a possible increase from \$500,000 to \$600,000.

Land Acquisition Fund: No change to budget but there is possible discussion to end board and take whatever money left in fund that could be reallocated to the Capital & Nonrecurring fund.

Library: 2.9% increase in budget as per request on file

Park/Recreation: 3% salary increase for director, and line added to budget for a request for potential maintenance person. The potential hiree would act as a liaison for work performed for Park/Rec currently by Public Works. This person would take on responsibilities to maintain town beach area, lock/unlock bathrooms, and maintain fields and general maintenance. The request was offered at an \$18 per hour rate at 20 hours per week. The selectman discussed the risks and benefits of having the new position and whether it falls under the lines of seasonal help. All selectman agreed that a thorough job description needed to be provided before any serious discussion moved forward as well as reduced hours: \$18 per hour, 20 hours per week, 30 weeks per year seasonally. Lastly, a slight increase in request for money provided for additional concerts was amended from initial asking amount of \$3000 to \$2000.

Celebrations: No changes

Probate Service: Increase noted to accommodate for building rent on new Probate Court location.

Senior Center: A slight 1.8% increase in budget, offset costs for increased printing (newsletters), an increase for activities director salary, and additional activities provided for the senior community.

Historic District: No budget changes

Decedent Expenses: No change

Cemetery Flags: No Change

Tree Warden/Removals: increase in stipend due to issues relating with Ash Borer (inspections and removal).

Miscellaneous Exp: No change

Conservation Commission: No change

Housing Commission: Increase proposed for mailing and clerk hours, in turn the selectman discussed what the purpose of the mailing entailed and opted to reduce line accordingly. If mailing is necessary the commission can approach the Selectman for options.

School/ Board of Education: No increase in budget, Superintendent Jeff Melendez gave a power point presentation on the operation of the school and the breakdown of monetary allocation. He detailed at length programs and benefits, and supplied analysis as to the changing demographics in town due to the potential rise/fall of families moving to Sherman. One point of discussion was the recommendation of inclusive pre-k, which in turn the selectman had a discussion on the pros/cons of offering this to town residents. The added revenue to Sherman for pre-school costs amounts to \$37,000. The selectman agreed to discuss, at a later date, possibly agreeing to supplementing pre-k but need to do further research on the topic.

Expenditures: Proposed expenses for future projects as followed: 1) replace public works truck \$200,000, 2) purchase Kubota tractor \$15,000, 3) replace tanker \$240,000, approved for \$228,468, 4) P&R replace boardwalk sections \$45,000, 5) \$5,800 outdoor stair climber machine, 6) dog park fence \$15,000, 7) renovate/upgrade MTH business office \$12,000, and 8) renovate stonewalls/landscape grounds of MTH \$15,000. Removal of 2019/2020 BOE marker of \$300,000 for K-wing Rebuild.

Adjournment: First Selectman adjourned meeting unanimously at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Beatty

