

BUDGET BOARD & TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
February 22, 2017 @ 6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The joint workshop of the Budget Board and the Gloucester Town Council was called to order by Councilor President G. Steere at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

A. Town Council: George O. (Buster) Steere, Jr., President; Edward C. Burlingame, Vice-President; Walter M. O. Steere, III; William E. Reichert and Patricia Henry.

Also present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Jacky DiPietro, Financial Analyst; & Diane Brennan, Finance Director.

B. Budget Board: Members Greg Agnone; Eric Croft; Alfred Fuoroli; David Lohr; Michael Morgan; Charles Poirier.

Member Absent: Kevin Lavoie

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

IV. Review of Budget for FY 2017/2018 - Discussion and/or Action

Councilor G. Steere stated the purpose of this meeting is to review the Budget Board's proposed budget before it is submitted to the Town Council on March 16th. Councilor G. Steere stated the Councilors and/or the Budget Board can still make suggestions at this point and the budget presented to the Council on the 16th will go to public hearing.

Councilor G. Steere turned the meeting over to Greg Agnone, Budget Board Chair to review the draft budget at this point.

G. Agnone explained this budget represents expenses of \$29,092,364 which is an increase over last year of \$375,060 or a 1.31% increase. G. Agnone further explained that within that \$147,166 or 2.99% is from salaries. G. Agnone stated that 1% is to be raised by taxes and \$120,000 would be transferred from the fund balance to make up the amount needed.

G. Agnone stated this year there were many capital requests.

G. Agnone reviewed each department:

Town Council: \$ 21 decrease

Town Clerk: \$15,000 increase (\$14,004 salaries)

Board of Canvassers: \$15,958 decrease reflects a non election year budget

Probate: \$1.00 difference

Bldg./Zoning: \$1000. increase for each inspector's fees due to expected increase in number

of inspections
 Additional minor changes reflect relinquish of cell phone by inspector and additional educational course & licence fees

Planning Office: \$600.00 Additional for advertising (was transferred from Planning Board expense)

Community Resource: Level funded, waiting for Council direction.

Planning Board: Additional funds added for the possible need for stenographic services particularly in light of the applications coming forward.

Zoning Board: No change

Conservation Comm: Request for an additional \$200 for the purchase of trees

Land Trust: D. Brennan explained the increase that appears in the expenses for Land Trust. D. Brennan explained that it is relatively budget neutral and that previous year ending amounts have fallen short of the actual. D. Brennan stated the budgeted amount doesn't show the amount we are statutorily obligated to give the Land Trust, therefore, it appears to be a negative. D. Brennan stated the thought is to start increasing that amount (on paper) to bring it closer in line to the actual amount we must give them from state realty stamps. D. Brennan stated there is also a corresponding revenue amount.

Legal Fees: G. Agnone stated there is an increase of \$25,000 that reflects a negotiated change with Council.

Town Sergeant: No change

Financial Admin: Salary/fringe makes up major portion of increase. Slight increase for travel/training.

Councilor Burlingame stated we may have to set aside some funds for potential salary increases. Councilor Burlingame stated the state wide report shows we are not competitive.

Treasurer: Salary line increased.

Personnel: \$2,000 advertising increase

Tax Collection: Additional \$17,000 for Tax Sale fees reflects a change in practice to revenue & expenses. D. Brennan stated it was showing as a negative revenue because of when the events occur and she is now trying to record expenses and revenue in proper categories.

Tax Assessor: Salary line increased.

Police Dept: Increase of Operational costs \$75,000, \$88,000 salaries and also reflects the elimination of the portable and mobile radio replacement programs.

Councilor Burlingame questioned if the head count is the same. D. Brennan stated the headcount is in the same as last year, at this time.

Councilor Henry questioned if an officer for the school is included in that number because the School Committee had discussed their interest in requesting an officer present at the school. D. Brennan stated it was not included.

Councilor Burlingame stated he believed the school had budgeted and he believed they were asking

the town to pick up the expense for two to three summer months. Councilor Henry asked if that amount was in the budget. **Councilor Burlingame stated that can be discussed.**

EMA: Increase of \$200

Councilor Henry asked if there was training funds in this budget for the volunteer corp the EMA Director was suppose to put in place. Eric Croft, Budget Board member, stated he took that course and there was no charge. Councilor Henry stated we submitted to the state that we would create a volunteer corp and we are supposed to have a certain number of volunteers. Councilor Henry questioned what that number is. Councilor Burlingame stated the Chief will be bringing us a response on this issue as it is a live agenda item. It was agreed that the EMA could probably train for no cost.

Animal Control: No change (other than salary)

Dept. of Public Works: Increase of \$5,831 for salaries.

Highway Division: Increase of \$8,500 for Purchased Services. G. Agnone stated \$8000 was identified for tree work.

Storm/Snow related services: Additional \$40,000 to replenish the storm account. G. Agnone stated ideal balance is \$150,000.

Maintenance Div.: Decrease of \$40,200 due to a previous one time expense for roof repairs and kitchen repairs.

D. Brennan stated there is funds for the hiring of someone to maintain the period lights. Councilor G. Steere asked if the funds for the maintenance contract was in the budget. D. Brennan stated in the affirmative and explained it is approx. \$7,000. (Repair/Maintenance Construction Material)

Councilor G. Steere asked if the expenses for the lights should be in a separate line item to track those expenses. It was agreed to break it out.

Maintenance Vehicle/Equipment:

Decrease of \$45,223 to include gas, diesel, and tires/tubes to correct as it appears to have been over funded in the past.

Waste Disposal: Covers the current systems including proposed tipping fees.

Recreation: There is a decrease of \$9,000(which reflected a one time expense in last years budget) and an addition of \$12,000 for Winsor Park's (playground equipment), which nets out to a \$3,000 increase.

Councilor Burlingame questioned if that was just for Winsor Park and not the other. Councilor Henry asked why that wasn't a capital expense. G. Agnone stated the 5-year plan has a lot of expenses in it. G. Agnone stated the \$14,000 listed includes the playground equipment and some smaller items.

A grant opportunity was discussed. It was noted that the grant request will be for landscape work for the pavilion project. G. Agnone noted that the capital amount for the pavilion may be affected

it the grant is received.

Senior Center: An increase of \$17,000 for furniture/fixtures & Mechanical - appliances-Repair/Replace

G. Agnone explained that due to the age of the center it was discussed that some of the fixtures and furniture may need to be replaced.

D. Brennan stated the increases include some tables and chairs as well as a “spring” cleaning.

Councilor Henry questioned what was included in Purchased Services. D. Brennan stated additional cleaning service.

D. Brennan stated there was also a request for a part time employee, a part time activities director. Councilor Henry questioned the \$10,000 between furniture & fixtures.

Councilor Burlingame explained the facility was checked (with the help of Public Works) and it was agreed that some of the equipment would be needing replacement/maintenance.

Councilor Henry stated her concern is a 21% increase. Councilor G. Steere stated that half of that number is the salary section. Councilor W. Steere stated the age of the building is catching up to us and these things need to be looked at. Councilor Reichert stated we used to use the town janitor and now we hire out.

Discussion followed on the request for a part time employee for activities director and it was stated that more discussion will follow at another time.

Councilor Henry asked if any funds were received from Burrillville towards our expenses. G. Agnone stated \$6,000.

Social Services: G. Agnone explained that increase of \$500 is for the emergency fund recently established. G. Agnone stated the Human Services Director was satisfied that she had sufficient aid funds, therefore none were requested this year.

Councilor Henry questioned if the proposed part time assistant was included. D. Brennan stated it is included on page 21 and explained that it is just for a person to assist with paper work. Councilor Burlingame stated the Council will consider that position for approval if the budget is approved.

IT: G. Agnone explained there is a \$17,500 increase listed for encryption software as well as an increase of \$10,000 for new vehicle equipment. G. Agnone stated there is an increase for M. Floor because he needs additional time to do the work needed.

Councilor Burlingame asked what portion is E. Juairé’s of the salary expense line. J. DiPietro stated that E. Juairé is paid through purchased services not through salaries.

Aid Requests: G. Agnone explained there is an increase from the library of \$7515 which includes \$7500 for a feasibility study regarding the use of two buildings.

Councilor Henry questioned the town paying for the libraries feasibility study.

Glocester Light Infantry: G. Agnone stated this group was defunded last year but the budget board proposed putting some funds back in this year because of the confidence that their accounting has been cleared up. G. Agnone stated the Glocester Light would participate in two town parades.

Independence Day - Parade: G. Agnone stated last year the budget board

increased the parade committee's budget by \$1,000 due to the anniversary year with the feeling that it would go back down this year. G. Agnone stated the group requested an additional \$17,000 for a total of \$30,000: \$13,000 for parade and \$17,000 for fireworks. Fund-raising has slowed and they felt they would not be able to continue to fund fireworks for many more years. G. Agnone stated they have a reserve fund that should carry them a little longer. Councilor Henry asked what was in the reserve fund. J. DiPietro stated there was currently \$29,000(actual amt. inaudible). G. Agnone stated the Budget Board allocated \$13,000 for the parade. Councilor Henry stated she would like GBA to participate with the Parade Committee.

Glocester Little League: G. Agnone stated the Budget Board did not propose funding the well and mower as the Little League requested. G. Agnone stated the Board did fund \$3000 in the thoughts it would help with potential increased fees.

G. Agnone stated there was no request rec'd from the Glocester Senior Association.

G. Agnone explained the procedure followed by the board with deadlines of submittal.

WellOne Primary Medical & Dental Care: The Board proposed \$2,500.
(Previously budgeted) - Gateway Healthcare: Did not solicit funds

Senior Service Meals on Wheels Program: G. Agnone stated the Board funded at \$4,000 due to a change in the organization's procedure. G. Agnone explained they are no longer able to provide the meals, therefore, they must contract with a caterer.

(Previously budgeted) - Citizens & Students Together: Program has ended

The Clerk submitted requests from the Glocester Heritage Society, the Glocester Senior Association, and the Northern RI Conservation Commission.

Northern RI Conservation Commission: Discussion followed regarding this organization. As there was no specific request for funds no funding was discussed.

Heritage Society: To be discussed

Glocester Senior Association: To be discussed

Capital Requests:

Police Department: Requested \$175,618 in Capital Expenses/\$58,200 was proposed funding

G. Agnone explained that a request had been submitted for three new vehicles and the Budget Board proposed funding one vehicle. Discussion followed on the use and replacement of vehicles. G. Agnone stated it his opinion that a five year replacement plan and a vehicle use plan needs to be created. G. Agnone gave an overview of the issues regarding the use of vehicles over 100,000 miles. Council members discussed the car usage. G. Agnone stated the Public Works Director had agreed that more vehicles may be needed.

Councilor W. Steere stated that we may have more cars to replace because of running cars for sixteen or more hours a day. Councilor W. Steere expressed his concern that if they are called they need to be able to respond.

Councilor G. Steere disagreed that running cars sixteen or more hours a day will cause the vehicle to need to be replaced.

Councilor G. Steere stated this replacement of vehicles is a sore point with him because of practices such as allowing vehicles to go to Putnam Connecticut for car washing.

Councilor W. Steere stated that over the last ten years some of the cars have been purchased with forfeiture funds and averages out to about one car per year.

Councilor Henry stated she agrees that a five year plan is necessary and further that perhaps in today's technology 100,000 miles is not enough to "retire" a vehicle. Councilor Henry stated she would agree to one or maybe two cars in this budget.

G. Agnone stated there was a request for the regrading and resurfacing of the parking lot which the Board didn't include for funding.

G. Agnone stated a request for \$15,000 for window replacement was included.

G. Agnone stated a request was included (but withdrawn) for the replacement of flooring in the hallway, patrol room and offices so therefore was not funded but \$8,200 for Heating/Air Conditioning-repair/replace was included in the Capital budget.

Senior Center: Requested \$24,000/ \$12,000 was the proposed funding

G. Agnone stated both interior painting and replacing flooring were each submitted for \$12,000 each but the Budget Board proposed cutting those requests in half. It was discussed briefly and determined that estimates were received through Public Works and flooring vendors.

Public Works Dept.: Requested \$724,100/\$674,400 was the proposed funding

G. Agnone reviewed the requests: Paving/Road work \$400,000; Vehicle Replacement \$50,000; Sandblasting Trucks/Plows \$15,000; Rental of Equipment-Crushing \$75,700; **New/Used Asphalt Zipper \$50,000 (which G. Treml was able to purchase from this years budget for \$20,000 less)** **G. Agnone stated the Budget Board proposed leaving \$30,000 in that account for replacement of other equipment but suggested the line item be renamed;** Asphalt to Re-pave DPW lot \$48,400 reduced to \$24,200; Pavilion requested \$63,000. Grant funds was discussed. G. Agnone stated that Town Hall improvements of \$11,000 was requested to remove the steps facing Douglas Hook Road outside the Town Hall but the Budget Board cut that to \$5,500 because (the Board believes) repairs have already been made; Leja Field: \$11,000 was requested for seeding and/or irrigation. G. Agnone stated that continued repairs must be made in order to receive grant funding previously granted to the Town.

There was discussion regarding the account "New/Used Equipment" and it was stated by J. DiPietro that there is currently \$70,000 in that account (after paying for Zipper). Councilor

G. Steere stated perhaps Council should discuss whether that is sufficient for now.

Recreation Department: Requested \$22,000 for the playground at Gloucester Memorial Park. The 5-year plan for Recreation was discussed briefly. Councilor Henry stated our parks are in poor condition and she is disappointed to see only one proposed expense in the Capital proposal. Councilor Henry stated there aren't even picnic tables to sit at, and there isn't even a sign at Gloucester Memorial Park, and felt it was a disservice to fund so little for recreation in this capital budget that is already proposed at \$1,066,600.

Councilor G. Steere questioned why elsewhere in the budget there was a request for \$12,000 for a playground at Winsor Park and this request is \$22,000. G. Agnone stated he believes it is because of the size of the playground.

Education - Gloucester Public Schools: \$300,000 for Town Contribution to School renovations.

Councilor Henry asked that the 5-year Plan for the Recreation Dept. be clarified.

Council thanked the Budget Board.

Future dates were discussed. G. Agnone stated the budget will be presented to Council on March 16th. It was agreed to include an agenda item for the Council meeting of March 2nd to discuss budget proposals.

Councilor Burlingame questioned if the salary of Mike Barnes "moonlighting" as Superintendent of Foster Schools, related to salary for the Region, came up when the Budget Board met with the Region. Councilor Burlingame stated there is no offset in the Regional budget for his time as Foster's local Superintendent. G. Agnone stated it did not come up. Councilor Henry questioned what day a week is he not working for the Region that is compensating him for 100% of workdays weekly.

G. Agnone stated the pathways program came up and a Budget Board member asked what the revenues were last year and what the region did with the revenue from the pathways programs. G. Agnone stated a clear answer was not received, and they were told that some of it went to the fund balance and some went to other expenses. G. Agnone expressed concerns that once the budget is passed what authorizes them to spend it. Councilor Burlingame expressed his concerns regarding the pathways funding means extra funds coming in and he does not want to see the funds spent from this revenue going into maintenance of effort. Councilor Burlingame stated that when all the other communities pull their students we would be left with a larger maintenance of effort. Councilor Burlingame stated he was told that a baseline was established and when the numbers dwindle we will not be held to maintenance of effort. Councilor Burlingame stated broader concern is when they start hiring more administrators for these programs they are building the infrastructure. G. Agnone stated that he had discussed this with Supt. Barnes and questioned the Supt. what would happen when other towns get tired of paying for this program. G. Agnone stated M. Barnes stated he could cut within variable expenses. G. Agnone stated they stated that with the surplus they made last year they could fund their whole budget this year. G. Agnone stated the answer was they were trying to build the fund balance. Councilor Henry stated that M. Barnes was asked by herself and School Committeewoman Carroll what the funds from the pathways tuition

was spent on and they were given a list that was not detailed or included actual numbers.

Councilor Henry again asked how we want to go forward with M. Barnes working elsewhere while we continue to pay his salary. Councilor Burlingame stated that is a Regional School Committee problem and they should answer that question.

Councilor Burlingame referred to a pending law suit from other communities that want to set up their own programs in lieu of our pathway programs.

Councilor Henry questioned G. Agnone if in the Regional proposed budget the region had a line item for purchased curriculum for the pathways program. Councilor Henry asked if that item was being paid for by that tuition dollar amount or is that in the budget being passed on to the taxpayer. Councilor Burlingame stated we can get an answer to that question.

Councilor G. Steere stated the proposed budget will be discussed by Council on March 2, 2017 and asked the Budget Board if they would consider Council's recommendations if received before the 16th. G. Agnone stated he understands this is not the final version.

Councilor W. Steere asked G. Agnone if any discussions came up regarding security for the Town Hall by either IT or the Chief. D. Brennan stated it was talked about and G. Agnone stated no requests were made for funds. **Council agreed they could talk about funds.**

The Clerk explained that on the night of March 16th, the Budget Board will give the Council a budget which should be ready for acceptance to be forward to the Public Hearing. D. Brennan stated that if any items change before the 16th she will bring those items to Council.

V. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Henry to ADJOURN at 8:18 p.m; seconded by Councilor Burlingame

Discussion: none

VOTE: AYES - G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert, & Henry
NAYS - 0

MOTION PASSED

A Motion was also made by the Budget Board to ADJOURN at this time.

