

**APPROVED**

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on April 18, 2018:

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 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; Tim Kane, Town Solicitor; Susan Harris, Deputy Town Clerk; Gary Treml, Director of Public Works; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police; Jane Steere, Tax Collector; Walter Steere, Jr.; School Committee member; and David Steere, Budget Board chair.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Public Hearing

- A. Proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2018/2019
  - 1. Review of proposed budget (as needed)
  - 2. Public Discussion
  - 3. Council Discussion and/or action

Councilor G. Steere stated that this Public Hearing was advertised in the Valley Breeze Observer on April 5, 2018.

Councilor G. Steere DECLARED the Public Hearing OPEN.

Discussion: Dave Steere, Budget Board chair, stated that he has conducted a number of these Public Hearings and he is still amazed at the lack of interest of the Gloucester taxpayers. D. Steere noted that there are 21 people in attendance tonight which means, in his opinion, that there will be 21 informed voters at the all-day referendum in May to vote on a 29.4 million dollar budget.

D. Steere stated that the proposed budget includes increases in wages and benefits for all union employees, per the union contracts, which are available for review on the Department of Municipal Affairs website. D. Steere stated that all non-union employees have a 3% salary increase in the budget. D. Steere noted that in the current year budget, the Town Council included \$50,000 for salary adjustments for department heads and/or department managers who are deemed underpaid. D. Steere stated that those positions receiving adjustments will be identified as we review the budget. D. Steere stated that health care expenses are expected to increase by 10% and dental expenses by 5%.

D. Steere noted that not much has changed in the budget since the Budget Board presented it to

the Town Council back in March. D. Steere stated that he will review the budget and asked that questions be held until the end. D. Steere stated that he will only mention the areas that have either large increases or large decreases.

D. Steere began on page 3, under Town Council, noting that there is a reduction for advertising, contingency was reduced by \$2,000, and filming of Town Council meetings was eliminated for a reduction of \$750. D. Steere stated that the total reduction is \$3,000.

Under Town Clerk, D. Steere stated that there is a reduction of \$300 for advertising and for purchased services, a reduction of \$1,000. On page 4, D. Steere stated that the Board of Canvassers is a department that fluctuates based on Elections and this year there is a proposal for early voting, which will require additional personnel, therefore the budget is increasing significantly.

D. Steere stated that in Building/Zoning, under clerical, there is an 8% increase due to a Clerk II going to Senior Clerk. D. Steere stated that under fees (plumbing, electrical and mechanical) there is an increase of \$1,500 for each based on a project that FM Global is in the process of completing. D. Steere noted that this is anticipated to be a one-year increase. D. Steere further stated that we have reduced the fee for outside building inspector because our building official is close to getting his certification.

On page 5, Planning Office, D. Steere noted that there are two (2) increases; one for the clerk who is going from Clerk I to Clerk II, and the other for the GIS Consultant, whose hours will be increased from 6.9 to 8 per week.

Regarding Community Resource, D. Steere stated that he is not sure if they are active, so their budget has been zeroed out.

D. Steere stated that there are no major changes concerning the Planning Board and the Zoning Board.

With regard to the Conservation Commission, D. Steere stated that there was a request for \$110 for training which was inadvertently omitted, and asked the Council to add this amount. D. Steere pointed out that there is a new line item for landscape enhancements, which is offset by a reduction in the tree seedling program, due to funding from another source.

D. Steere stated that Legal Services has been bumped up by \$10,000, based on the request.

On page 7, Financial Administration, Director's Office, the Council has given a raise to the Finance Director, effective 7/1/18, which is reflected in the increase. Under Treasurer's Office, D. Steere explained that the large increase in the Clerks is due to additional personnel and the Fringe Benefits increase is a result of two (2) health insurance family plans. Under Expenses, D. Steere stated that advertising and printing have been zeroed out, based on usage. D. Steere stated that Payroll Services has been bumped up by \$3,500, based on the Finance Director's estimate. D.

Steere stated that the GASB 45 Actuarial Study has been reduced by \$2,000 and the Personnel Office has a small increase for advertising.

On page 8, Tax Collection Office, D. Steere stated that the Tax Collector got an increase in salary, effective 7/1/17, which is reflected in the 2018 budget. For the Tax Assessor's office clerical staff, there is an increase of \$5,168 because it is budgeted as a Senior Clerk, but if it is hired at less than a Senior Clerk, there would be some savings. Regarding Education/Training, D. Steere stated that we have an Assessor who has been on the job for a little over a year and there are classes that she has to take, as well as classes for the clerk, therefore the line item has been increased.

On page 9, D. Steere noted that the Police Chief's salary was increased from the \$50,000 which was allocated for Department Head salary adjustments, and is reflected in the 2019 budget. D. Steere stated that the increase will be effective 7/1/18. D. Steere stated that there is a new line item, Accreditation Incentive, and explained that in the current year, policemen and dispatchers received a \$500 bonus and in FY 19 it will be a \$750 bonus. Under Expenses, D. Steere stated that electricity was increased by \$3,500 and there was a reduction in propane, based on usage. D. Steere stated that the \$4,000 increase for Education/Training is for accreditation training which is mandated by the State but not funded.

D. Steere stated that on page 10, the EMA Director received a salary increase of \$3,763, which was approved by the Town Council. D. Steere explained the salary increase for the Animal Control Officer, stating that when the Animal Control Officer was hired, it was at a lower wage with a bump-up after 6 months, plus the normal 3% increase given to all non-union personnel. D. Steere further stated that there is some required training for the Animal Control Officer and the Assistant ACO.

D. Steere stated that under Department of Public Works (pg. 11) there is a large increase (\$18,771) for Fringe Benefits, as a result of a person going from a health insurance buyback to a family plan. D. Steere stated that under Highway Division Fringe Benefits, there is an increase of \$28,405 which represents an employee going from a single plan to a family plan. D. Steere stated that Safety Equipment was reduced by \$250, based on usage.

On page 12, D. Steere stated that there is no change in the storm-related services account. Under Building & Grounds Wages-GMP/Winsor Park Support, D. Steere stated that \$3,232 was removed because it was a duplication of DPW's responsibility to maintain the fields. Under Expenses, Safety Equipment was reduced by \$200 and Miscellaneous Expense was increased by \$3,000 to take into account any repairs or maintenance to the new pavilion. D. Steere stated that Tools was reduced by \$2,500 because it had been increased in 2016 to purchase a portable generator, but was never taken out of the budgets for 2017 and 2018.

D. Steere referred to page 13, vehicle and equipment maintenance, stating that the \$1,300 for overtime was taken out, per the DPW Director. D. Steere stated that \$115,000 was requested for repair parts, but \$2,000 of it was a duplication and the line item was reduced by that amount.

Regarding the increase for Tires/Tubes, D. Steere stated that it was something that was requested by the Director and needed.

Under Waste Disposal, D. Steere stated that the Litter Corps was eliminated because it is difficult to find people to work for minimum wage and the DPW Director does not see it as an asset to his program. Under expenses, D. Steere noted that propane was reduced by \$2,000, based on usage, as is the case with diesel fuel, which was reduced by \$2,700. D. Steere stated that Waste Removal Tipping Fees were increased by \$15,000, based on an estimate of 2,400 tons at \$47 per ton. D. Steere stated that soil testing at the landfill was reduced by \$2,700, per the DPW Director's request.

D. Steere stated that on page 14, under Recreation, the Director requested that we reduce the wages for the swim, tennis and arts and crafts programs by \$3,500. Under Expenses, the Recreation Director requested that advertising be bumped up by \$1,300, and requested a new line item for Special Events, \$4,000, which is offset by a reduction of the same amount in Recreation Materials & Equipment.

D. Steere reviewed the Senior Center budget, stating that the Director was hired at a higher wage, which is reflected in the FY 18 Budget. D. Steere stated that Kitchen Aide/Interim Director was reduced by \$5,713 because it has never gotten close to the current budgeted amount of \$10,682. Regarding expenses, D. Steere noted that there is \$2,000 in the current budget for Mechanical Appliances Repair/Replace, and it was decided to take that \$2,000, if it is not spent, and put it in an assigned account for future years. D. Steere explained that this would give them funds if an appliance breaks down.

D. Steere referred to Social Services on page 15. D. Steere stated that, per the Director of Human Services, we have reduced the van driver's wages by \$2,678.

Under Other Operational, D. Steere stated that the line item Negotiations/Salary reflects the remainder of the \$50,000 which was put into the FY 18 budget. D. Steere explained that some of that money is in the budget for the year we are in, and some will be in FY 19. D. Steere stated it wasn't all spent and, therefore, shows a reduction of \$25,100.

Under IT Office, D. Steere stated that we reduced Computer Systems Support/Repairs by \$37,100 but it is deceiving because we created a new line item, IT Consultants, which breaks out to \$18,660. D. Steere noted that we have two (2) consultants, one in state and one out of state, and by breaking it out, it makes it more transparent. D. Steere stated that there is a reduction of \$30,000 for future workstations and programs, and a reduction of \$5,000 for major conversions. Councilor Burlingame asked if the cancellation of the fiber optic program is in here. D. Steere replied that this will come up when we discuss the Capital Budget.

On page 16, regarding the Parade, D. Steere stated that the committee submitted no request, but it came to the Council and they put \$25,000 into the budget to take care of the expenses for the

parade and fireworks.

Regarding Social Services, D. Steere stated that there is a reduction of \$3,600 for the Little League because they only asked for \$1,400. D. Steere stated that the Heritage Society requested \$2,000 and we put in \$1,250.

D. Steere stated that this takes care of Operating Expenses and referred to page 1, Subtotal Municipal Expenses, and stated that what is being proposed is \$7,702,403, for an increase of \$496,452. D. Steere stated that out of that increase, \$474,576 is for salary and benefits, and Operating is increasing by \$22,159. D. Steere stated that from FY 18 to FY 19, wages and benefits increased by 9.2%, where Operating for the same time period has increased by 1.1%. D. Steere stated that of the total proposed, 74% is wages and benefits and 26% is for operating expenses. D. Steere stated that out of the \$474,576 for wages, the biggest user is the Police Department at \$225,093, or 47.4% of the total.

D. Steere stated that for the Gloucester Schools, we are recommending level-funding them and they have been working off their fund balance to compensate for the reduction of State Aid. D. Steere noted that the fund balance will not last forever, so we have done something under Special Appropriations, which will be explained when it comes up. Regarding the Foster-Glocester Region, D. Steere stated that we made out well this year with a total increase of \$42,924, but we can't expect to be that lucky every year.

Under Special Appropriations, D. Steere explained that we have transferred money from Fund Balance to the Town School Capital for the third deposit of a \$1.5 million appropriation for school repairs. D. Steere stated that an additional \$52,612 was transferred from Fund Balance to Capital and we appropriated \$100,000 for future Foster-Glocester proration to offset any large fluctuation. D. Steere stated that in addition, \$200,000 was reserved for future operations of the Gloucester Schools because their fund balance is not going to last forever and at some point, they will need money from the Town. D. Steere stated that it is tough to give money because once you do, it becomes part of the Maintenance of Effort and it is there forever. D. Steere noted that we won't know until after June 30<sup>th</sup> whether they had to use any of their fund balance.

D. Steere stated that the Capital Reserve Fund 2% set-aside is \$549,707, Debt Service for the Gloucester Schools is \$49,788 and for non-school is \$230,030. D. Steere noted that there will be a reduction in Debt Service for non-school in FY 19.

D. Steere referred to page 2, Revenues, and pointed out that the excise tax vehicle phase-out shows an increase of \$52,873 and also an increase of \$55,902 in FM Global. D. Steere noted that there is a new line item, School Resource Officer, which will be paid for by the Foster-Glocester Region and we will receive a reimbursement.

D. Steere concluded by stating that the amount to be raised by taxes before adjustments is \$22,128,308, and there are adjustments for abatements/allowances for uncollected taxes in the

amount of \$120,000, transfer from Surplus in the amount of \$353,851, and transfer from Surplus for Gloucester schools in the amount of \$200,000. D. Steere stated that the amount to be raised by taxes is \$21,694,457. D. Steere stated that he will now take questions on the Operations Budget, then he will review the Capital Budget. D. Steere stated that questions regarding the School Budget will be addressed by Diane Brennan, Finance Director.

#### Discussion:

1. Walter Steere, Jr. stated that the ad in the Valley Breeze stated that the property tax levy was going to be \$19,000,000, however the amount to be raised by taxes in the Budget is \$21,000,000. Diane Brennan, Finance Director, explained that the ad had to be certified by the State and they decided not to include money that would be raised for motor vehicle taxation, that is the way they presented the information for all communities. D. Brennan stated that you can't tie back that number to the Budget, because we include all taxation. D. Brennan stated it was a little deceiving but that is what the state certified.

W. Steere, Jr. spoke regarding the increases for Department Heads and asked how are we transferring the remainder of the \$50,000 that was in last year's budget. D. Steere replied that some people got it this year, effective 7/1/17, and others will get it 7/1/18. D. Steere stated that he does not know why because the money was already in the budget for them to get it this year. D. Steere stated that some of the money is in this year's budget and the rest is in the proposed budget, under salary increases. W. Steere, Jr. asked if there is any new money being allocated in the budget for salary increases, other than what is being carried over. D. Steere replied that there is nothing in the budget for salary adjustments.

W. Steere, Jr. referred to the new line item for Accreditation Incentive and asked if this was part of negotiations. The response was affirmative. W. Steere, Jr. expressed concern that this amount will continue to grow because it started at \$500 this year and is now increasing to \$750.

Regarding the increase for Legal Services, W. Steere, Jr. asked if this amount includes any outside attorneys that we have to hire to assist us with larger lawsuits. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, replied that so far, this amount has covered us in that regard. T. Kane noted that we have ended up under for several years, but he wanted to err on the side of caution.

W. Steere, Jr. spoke about the Healthcare Reserve Assignment, asking how much is in that account and when was the last time we used it. Diane Brennan replied that we haven't actually gone to the bank for that, but it is to mitigate any increases we have in health care because we are self-insured. D. Brennan noted that there is approximately \$450,000 in that reserve. W. Steere, Jr. asked if we have ever used it. D. Brennan replied she has not, but she does not know if anybody prior to her had used it.

Councilor Burlingame asked if we took something out of that account in last year's budget. D. Brennan replied that it was Compensated Absences. D. Steere stated that both Healthcare Reserve and Compensated Absences were reduced last year. Councilor Burlingame stated that there is \$450,000 in the Healthcare Reserve account and asked how much is in the Compensated Absences account. D. Steere replied almost \$539,000. Councilor Burlingame asked if we have used anything in the Compensated Absences account over time. D. Brennan replied in the affirmative, stating that she uses it when an employee that leaves has funds that have accrued for vacation time or sick time. Councilor Burlingame asked if we put a number in for Compensated Absences in the FY 19 budget. D. Brennan replied \$5,000. D. Brennan stated that we used \$44,000 worth of funds in 2017 for Compensated Absences. Councilor Henry asked, on average over the last 5 or 7 years, how much per year is used out of Compensated Absences. D. Brennan replied that she would have to go back and look, but stated that we have some long-term employees who have been leaving so the number is more significant now. Councilor Burlingame asked D. Brennan to go back to see how much we have used over the past five (5) years, year by year, from each of these accounts. Councilor Burlingame stated we could mitigate some of this without creating structural problems. Councilor Henry agreed with Councilor Burlingame but stated that while she appreciates being prudent by putting these funds aside they do need to be looked at. D. Steere commented that when the bond raters look at these assigned accounts, it is a positive thing for the Town.

W. Steere, Jr. asked if this budget reflects any increase in property assessment. W. Steere, Jr. also asked if the revenue from car tax is going up. D. Brennan replied in the negative, stating that the taxable portion of vehicles is going down because it is no longer based on full value and we have to give a \$2,000 credit. W. Steere, Jr. asked if the State will make up the difference. D. Brennan replied that they have calculated what they feel the Town is entitled to but she is not confident that we will receive what they determine. Councilor Burlingame asked if our total motor vehicle tax revenue is two (2) to three (3) million and discussed how this should equal out over five years with the state's five year plan. Councilor Burlingame asked if the State's proposal is to wipe that out over five (5) years. After further discussion, Councilor Burlingame stated that we need to get a better understanding of that.

W. Steere, Jr. pointed out that on page 2, Interest on Delinquent Taxes, the amounts for 2016 and 2017 are exactly the same, but for the upcoming year, it is down to \$85,000. D. Brennan stated that it doesn't look right. D. Steere stated that the actual number for 2017 was \$94,899 according to the audit. D. Steere stated that some of the figures in the "actual" column for 2017 did not carry over correctly.

W. Steere, Jr. asked how much the fund balance went up at the end of 2017 and are we projecting a surplus this year. D. Steere replied that the unassigned fund balance increased by \$567,534. W. Steere, Jr. commented that this is a pretty big surplus, but then we raised taxes the next year and he questioned why. D. Steere replied that it is not an exact science and if you budget too close, you might not have enough money. W. Steere, Jr. asked when

was the last year we overspent what we budgeted. D. Steere replied probably before he got here. Councilor Burlingame noted that of that \$567,534, we are moving some of it for the schools and there are other transfers in there. Councilor Burlingame stated that we are not letting it accumulate but turn that surplus back in the following year to mitigate a tax increase. W. Steere, Jr. stated that by Charter, we have to have 12% of the budget in surplus, but we have been running 16% to 18%. Councilor Burlingame stated that at the end of the year it may be that much, but then we turn around and spend some of it. W. Steere, Jr. stated we also have to consider assigned accounts as surplus, and that there is millions of dollars in these assigned accounts (between the School and the Town). Councilor Burlingame pointed out that we assigned \$300,000 for school renovations and will receive a reimbursement of 45% from the State. W. Steere, Jr. stated he agrees it helped the schools but we shouldn't raise taxes because of this assignments. D. Steere noted that the assigned accounts, such as the storm account and the reval account, help us to keep the budget lower. W. Steere, Jr. stated as long as you don't take money from those accounts for other things because you can play games with those accounts.

2. Adam Muccino, of Stone Dam Road, referred to page 2, \$72,000 for a School Resource Office, and asked for an explanation. D. Brennan stated that it is for salary and benefits prorated for the amount of time that the officer will be in the school. A. Muccino asked if this was split evenly between Foster and Gloucester. D. Brennan explained it is just prorated on the number of days a year. Councilor G. Steere stated that the town pays for this officer for the time school is out. Mr. Muccino again questioned what Foster's share was. D. Steere stated that Foster's share would show in their budget. Councilor Burlingame stated this person is solely on the Gloucester payroll. Councilor Henry stated that in light of the current trend in our country, she feels that Resource Officers will be needed in all schools. Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police, agreed. Mr. Muccino stated he was just questioning the revenue coming back and not the merits of having a resource officer.

On page 15, A. Muccino asked what is driving the number for the IT Office Computer Equipment Hardware. Mr. Muccino questioned the \$30,000 in the equipment hardware account coming back every year. D. Steere stated the Budget Board did not receive a break down of hardware they just looked at actual expenses in previous years. Mr. Muccino questioned it because the other line items were very specific. Councilor Burlingame stated that he recalls a conversation with our IT person that this is just normal replacement of hardware for the Police Department and the Town Hall due to normal wear and tear.

3. Councilor W. Steere spoke regarding the \$200,000 that we are setting aside for the elementary schools and asked who has control of that money and decides how it gets used. D. Steere replied that it stays on the Town side so the Town Council has the say as to when it gets used. All agreed it is by vote of the Council. Councilor Burlingame stated that this was a way to set money aside while avoiding adding to the maintenance of effort. Councilor W. Steere asked if we would be contributing to the MOE when we transfer the funds. Councilor Burlingame replied that when we add it we would, but right now it doesn't

because it is not in the school account. D. Steere noted that if the school had a bad year and had to use their Fund Balance, and the next year they needed funds from the Town, this would ease the tax increase that would result. Councilor W. Steere stated that the only reason he is comfortable is that we are not adding to taxes to come up with the money; it is coming from surplus. D. Steere stated that no, it is not. D. Steere stated it is built into the budget. Councilor W. Steere stated that he thought it was a transfer from surplus, so that changes his mind about things.

Councilor W. Steere spoke regarding increases for certain non-union employees and asked if the increases approved by the Council include the 3% for all non-union employees, or do they get the 3% on top of the increases. D. Steere replied that for the two (2) employees whose increase was effective 7/1/17, they would get the 3%, but for the other two (2) employees, they calculated current salary plus 3%, then the raise.

Councilor W. Steere asked if we have received any results from consultants on their review of non-union pay scales. D. Brennan replied that she gave the Council the information, but nobody has asked her to do it. Councilor W. Steere stated that he thought the Council had voted to have the survey conducted. Councilor Burlingame stated there was question as to who was to be included. Councilor W. Steere expressed his frustration at nothing being done. Councilor W. Steere stated that we have used approximately \$38,000 of the \$50,000 and asked where the remaining \$12,000 will go at the end of the year. D. Steere replied that it will go to the bottom line.

4. Councilor Henry stated that she thought that when businesses or individuals required inspections, such as plumbing, they were charged for that. Councilor Henry noted that on page 4 of this budget, there was an increase for inspections because FM Global will be requiring more inspections this year. Councilor Henry asked why would we increase that when FM Global will be paying for all those inspections. Councilor Burlingame replied that it comes back as revenue.
5. Councilor G. Steere referred to Councilor W. Steere's point regarding the salary study, stating that we have two (2) proposals; one for department heads and the other for all non-union employees. Councilor G. Steere asked if we want to include that in this budget. Councilor W. Steere stated that it shouldn't be included in the budget because we have \$12,000 left from the \$50,000. Councilor G. Steere stated that it is not for a study. Councilor W. Steere stated that it is for general salaries, so why can't it be used for the salary study. Councilor Burlingame noted that there will be fewer non-union employees, so why spend \$10,000 on something that is not going to be there. Councilor W. Steere replied that when we have to negotiate, we will have something to work with. Councilor Burlingame stated that we got a price for what we originally asked for, \$5,000 for department heads, then the question came up if we should go beyond that to include all non-union, and the Finance Director got a price for that, but we never acted on it. Councilor Burlingame asked if it is appropriate to use these funds for this purpose when it was originally designed for

salaries as opposed to a salary survey. Councilor Reichert mentioned that the Highway Department has voted to go union, so we will have to negotiate a whole new contract. Councilor Burlingame stated that if in fact that goes through, we will start with a clean sheet of paper.

Councilor W. Steere stated that, going back to the \$200,000 for the schools, what is the approximate number from the Fund balance and if we would be at 14% at the end of the year. D. Brennan replied that it would be approximately 15.4%. Councilor W. Steere expressed his opinion that having a surplus is important, rather than just the 12%, but at the same time, we are looking at a 2% increase and he wonders if we could take some from surplus. D. Brennan stated that she will have some numbers tomorrow night.

Regarding the salary survey, Councilor G. Steere stated that we should have it done for department heads and managers and he feels that it should be added to the budget and not taken from the funds allocated for salaries. Councilor W. Steere noted that we have \$12,000 left that will just go back to the general balance so why add to the budget. Councilor Burlingame stated that there is no assurance that it would be done and paid for by July 1. Councilor G. Steere stated we need to think about it for tomorrow night.

Councilor Burlingame referred to that \$200,000 on page 2, stating that it is shown as a credit or negative, however on page 1 it shows as being spent. Councilor W. Steere stated that this is why he asked if it was a transfer from surplus. D. Steere stated that it is listed as an offset because it should not have been shown as a transfer from surplus. D. Steere stated that it was the intention of the Budget Board to build that into the budget and it shouldn't have said transfer from surplus. Councilor Burlingame stated that this compounds the problem by adding another \$200,000 to the amount to be raised by taxes.

6. Mike Ahnrud, Conservation Commission chair, requested another \$100 for the Conservation Commission budget for Watershed Watch Program, which has been at the same figure for many years. Councilor Burlingame stated that this could be put on for additional items.

Dave Steere reviewed the proposed Capital Budget with a total expenditure of \$1,018,558, a 2% set-aside of \$549,707, and additional transfer from surplus of \$353,851. D. Steere noted that we have reassigned Capital from prior periods in the amount of \$115,000 and explained that this is a result of funds that weren't used or projects that were completed with extra funds available. D. Steere asked if there are any questions on the Capital Budget.

1. Adam Muccino asked for an explanation of those projects. D. Steere gave a breakdown as follows: the fiber optics project was approved at \$25,000 but is never going to happen, the half-million dollar Transfer Station project has \$92,167 remaining and \$80,000 of it was taken for Capital, and a roll-off truck was purchased in FY 14 with \$10,869 remaining, for a total of close to \$115,000.

A. Muccino questioned the item “Portable Amplification/recording System” under Town Clerk. D. Steere explained that this is for the Council Chambers and would be able to be used in other locations as well, such as the pavilion. A. Muccino questioned the \$25,000 under IT Support. D. Steere stated that this is for software. A. Muccino referred to the all-wheel drive police utility vehicle and asked if it would be lettered and distinguishable like the rest of the fleet. Chief DelPrete responded but was inaudible.

Under IT, A. Muccino asked what we are getting for Assessor Upgrades in the amount of \$67,000. D. Steere replied that the Assessor has software programs that have to be updated in the next Fiscal Year.

2. Councilor Henry asked if we have gotten a hard number for the Senior Center HVAC replacement, or is this \$90,000 just a guess. D. Steere replied that the \$90,000 was based on the best estimate that was submitted to the Budget Board at \$45,000 for two (2) years, but it was decided that if the problem is that bad, it should be done all at once. Gary Trembl, Director of Public works, spoke but was inaudible. There was discussion regarding different types of HVAC systems and the costs of each. There was Council consensus to leave the \$90,000 in the Capital budget for the Senior Center.
3. Walter Steere, Jr. expressed concern regarding the Assessor Upgrades to match what Vision has for us because we have not had good luck with this company. W. Steere, Jr. stated that there have been complaints the last couple of times they have done our revaluation. D. Steere stated that there are other companies that provide this service. W. Steere, Jr. stated that if we upgrade to match up with Vision, other companies may have different software, so what do we do then. D. Brennan replied that companies have some commonalities for the software and although it is labeled “Vision”, she believes it would be compatible with whatever selection we make.

W. Steere, Jr. asked if the School Budget will be reviewed. D. Steere stated that it is level-funded, but if anyone had any questions, he would be happy to answer them. There were no questions.

Councilor G. Steere asked if there were any other questions or comments. Hearing none, Councilor G. Steere DECLARED the Public Hearing Closed and stated that the Council must adopt the Budget and ballot questions before April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Budget Referendum will be held on May 15, 2018 at the Senior Center from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

V. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Burlingame to ADJOURN at 8:56 p.m.; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

VOTE: AYES- G. Steere, Burlingame, W. Steere, Reichert and Henry  
NAYS-0  
MOTION PASSED