

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

The council met in a workshop session on Monday, March 21, 2022, and called to order at 6:38 p.m. This meeting was held in person at the Town Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Council Chairman, Nathan Calouro
Vice-Chairwoman, Mary Parella,
Councilman, Antonio "Tony" Teixeira
Councilman, Timothy Sweeney
Councilman, Aaron Ley

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator, Steven Contente
Town Treasurer, Julie Goucher.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR OVERVIEW

General Budget Discussion

Steven Contente, Town Administrator

Town Administrator Contente presented his fiscal budget recommendations to the Town Council. He noted the increases in municipal expenditures and non-property tax expenditures.

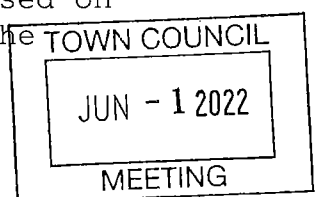
Town Administrator Contente noted that the majority of the increase was invested in capital projects. He explained that funding for infrastructure and projects introduced in the 5-year capital plan would ultimately minimize the impact on taxpayers.

Town Administrator Contente noted that reflected in the FY23 budget is an adjustment to the assessed property values in town resulting from a statistical revaluation. He stated that the town would see an overall increase of 15% in residential assessments; and that the recommended budget anticipates a decrease in the tax rate of \$1.26 per thousand from \$14.38 to \$13.12, an 8.8% decrease.

Town Administrator Contente noted the estimated sewer use increase fee from \$571 to \$582.50. He explained that an increase would support and improve the wastewater treatment facility.

Town Administrator Contente noted that his proposed budget focuses on investment in personnel and a strong investment in infrastructure. He added that he appreciated the council's consideration of the recommended budget.

Treasurer Goucher that based on the proposed budget, the Tax Assessor reviews the tax roll and adjusts the tax rate based on any revised assessments and what is required to support the



TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

budget. The tax rate is then determined by the tax assessor at a later date.

701-POLICE DEPARTMENT

Kevin Lynch, Chief of Police

Police Chief Lynch provided an overview of the police department's year-end report.

Police Chief Lynch noted that there was an increase in the detailed wages to support security measures for the Fourth of July concerts being resumed at Independence Park and other related needs for security of town-related events.

Police Chief Lynch further noted that the building's maintenance fund would assist in the removal and remediation of asbestos as well as assist in building maintenance of the aging building.

It was explained that education was an unfunded state mandate and that the need for more education was essential to support the younger workforce.

It was noted that due to supply chain issues (shortages) there was a substantial increase in the cost of ammunition.

Vice Chairwoman Parella noted the Covid pandemic has disrupted supply chains and the invasion of Ukraine had caused unprecedented costs in fuel; and that it may be hard to forecast some cost increases for this fiscal year.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

702-Animal Control

Kevin Lynch, Chief of Police

Animal Control Supervisor Deborah DaSilva explained to the council that the supply increase of \$500 was to assist with the purchasing of cat litter, a new printer, and some office supplies.

Discussions ensued relative to the support received from the Friends of the Animal Shelter organization. Chairman Calouro recommended that the animal shelter provide periodic reviews to the council.

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

703-HARBOR PATROL

Greg Marsili, Harbormaster

Chairman Calouro noted that there had been major efforts made to complete the marina fuel dock project.

Harbor Master Marsili explained that the increases in salaries included the additional duties associated with the expansion of the marina. He also noted an increase in the supply costs that were due to inflation costs of materials used for the repair of the marinas. He explained that the town would see an increase in revenue in the near future due to the increase in transient slips, fuel sales, and the new marina expansion.

Town Administrator Contente explained that the Harbor Master has been available all hours, including after-hours, and noted his recommended increase in the Harbor Master's salary.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

402 TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Steven Contente, Town Administrator

Town Administrator Contente stated that there were no significant changes to the Town Administrator's department budget.

Council Chairman Calouro asked to know if last year's increase to the Administrators contingency line item was working in his favor. Town Administrator Contente stated that the increase has been helpful and a portion of it has also been used for visiting dignitaries.

Town Administrator Contente noted that he was requesting level funding for the Labor and negotiation line item. He explained that the funds would be used for labor matters and upcoming union contract negotiations.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

601-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Diane Williamson, Director

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

Director Williamson noted the increase in the conservation project line item. She explained that the funds would be used to help maintain open space parcels including trail maintenance and signage. She further noted that the open space markers would be installed soon.

Chairman Calouro asked for an update on tourism and promotions. Economic Development Coordinator Vitale explained that business organizations were still trying to regroup and catch up after the Covid-19 pandemic. He explained that the Tourism Partnership budget would include added funding for a new part-time content manager for the Explore Business Website.

Town Administrator Contente also noted that the new part-time content manager would assist the town with requests received for local recommendations.

Chairman Calouro noted that he would like to see how the expansion of the new marina could assist with promoting local businesses.

Coordinator Vitale noted that Harbor Master Marsili has been attending local merchant association meetings to assist with local business promotion opportunities.

Councilman Sweeney asked if the part-time content manager would be able to capture google analytics to track. Coordinator Vitale responded that the new platform should allow the content manager the capability to use the analytic platform.

Vice Chairwoman Parella asked why the Economic Development Coordinators' salary line item had been moved to the Town Hall Complex line item. Town Administrator Contente stated that it "made sense" to move him to the Town Hall Complex line item as he also handles the communications for the town.

Vice Chairwoman questioned the staffing and salary changes to the Historic District Commission Staff assistant and the Code Compliance Officer. Director Williamson explained that the position of the Historic District staff assistant and Code Compliance Officer was, for a short period of time, held as one full-time position. She explained that they are once more being held as two separate part-time positions. She further noted that the part-time position of the HDC staff assistant would remain under the community development line item and the code compliance

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

officer would fall back under the direction of the building official.

Councilman Ley asked Treasurer Goucher if there was a distinction in generated Hotel revenue between hotels and short-term rentals. Treasure Goucher noted that there was a way to determine the breakdown of the two and she could later report it to the council.

Discussions ensued pertaining to short-term rentals, the effects on local services, and the possibility of local short-term registrations.

Chairman Calouro stated that he would like to resume conversations in regard to short-term rentals at a later council meeting or at a council workshop.

Councilman Sweeney asked Director Williamson if she had enough time and resources to keep up with all of the departments' grant writing and funding requests. He noted the department's proven track record of awarded grants and the amount of effort that has been put in by the department to keep up with project funding.

Director Williamson stated that she has a very good team that shared in the vision of saving the town money; that the work of the office at times ebbs and flows and that they have been managing to get the work done.

Councilman Sweeney asked if the part-time content manager would be able to capture google analytics. Coordinator Vitale responded that they should have the capability of utilizing google analytics.

602-Building Inspection

Stephen Greenleaf- Building Official

Chairman Calouro asked for an update on the e-permitting website.

Building Official Greenleaf responded that the e-permitting website has been successful and has made building permits easy to track and transparent. He further noted that his department is still working on assisting residents use of the technology.

Councilman Teixeira asked about the increase in the temporary inspectors. Building Official Greenleaf responded that it is due to the increase in building projects around town; and the need to alleviate some time to assist with disaster

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

preparedness, town construction projects, and improvements to community services.

Town Administrator Contente noted that the temporary inspectors' line items not only cover building inspections, but it also covers electrical and plumbing inspectors.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

806 MUNICIPAL OBSERVANCES

Steven Contente- Town Administrator

Ms. Diane Davis explained to the council that funding was needed to continue the concerts on the common. She explained that it had been difficult to find businesses to sponsor the event after the covid pandemic.

Council Chairman Calouro noted difficulties in funding the Last Night Concerts, in particular, and the Concerts on the Common.

Town Administrator Contente noted that last year's Last Night Concert was mainly funded by a grant received by the Philharmonics and the TACO-White foundation. He explained that they were in the process of applying for another grant and that it was unclear if the funds would be granted.

Treasurer Goucher noted that because the line item for the Last Night concert was not funded last year, it had been included in a special events account in the recreation budget. She explained that the council could reintroduce the line-item number either in the recreation departments' budget or back into the Municipal observances.

Town Administrator Contente noted that the Last Night's Concert had been moved into the Parks and Recreations Department to be able to assist with volunteer services and recommended that the two events remain in the recreation departments' budget line.

(*) The Council, by consensus, agreed to withhold discussion regarding Concerts on the Common and the Last Night's Concert until tomorrow evening's budget workshop.

The Council made no changes to this budget as recommended by the Town Administrator.

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

407 MUNICIPAL COURT

Melissa Cordeiro- Town Clerk

Clerk Cordeiro noted an increase in the municipal court operating line. She explained that the additional funds would be used for post-transition support with respect to the municipal court database platform maintenance and technical support.

The council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

401 TOWN COUNCIL

Council Chairman Calouro suggested council consideration for iPads. He recommended that the iPads would be used by members of the council and various town boards that use the council meeting chambers. He explained that with the increased use of technology it would be a better format to review supporting meeting documents without the waste of paper. He suggested that the iPads would remain secured in the meeting chambers strictly used for meetings and not for take-home use. He recommended that \$6,000 to \$8,000 be added to the budget to allow for the purchase of eight or nine meeting iPads. The number of iPads would be based on the number of board members and may include department staff and perhaps a reserve.

Vice Chairwoman Parella suggested that the iPads be categorized under the Technology Replacement budget line-item Town Hall Complex 504-0223-404.

The Council agreed by consensus to place an asterisk () at the Town Council's budget line so that the council might consider the possibility of reserving funds for I-pads.

403 TOWN CLERK

Melissa Cordeiro- Town Clerk

Clerk Cordeiro noted that a line item for the probate court database was added to Town Clerk's budget to clearly outline the fees associated with the existing program.

The council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

504 Town Hall Complex

Coordinator Vitale noted that there was a decrease in the website maintenance line as the town is no longer paying for the (dot).gov domain.

Coordinator Vitale explained that the town was scheduled to go out to bid for IT services and that the change in the line item was attributed to the expected cost increase.

Coordinator Vitale discussed the town's software and licensing upgrades; noting that the current computer replacement plan would generate savings.

Coordinator Vitale explained the differences between a government G1 license vs a G3 license, noting that the G1 license was an email license only and a G3 license allowed for an email license and full Microsoft office 365 suite that could be used on multiple devices.

*The Council, by consensus, requested that Coordinator Vitale provide the Council with further licensing and software details breakdown later in the budget workshop cycle for council review.

The council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

501 FINANCE

Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

Town Treasurer Goucher informed the council that the deputy treasurer had accepted a new position within the town. She explained that due to the new installation of the town's accounting system, the position will be reclassified as an Accounting/Purchasing Agent.

The council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

502 Debt Service

Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

Town Treasurer Goucher outlined the details of the budget.

Councilman Ley asked how debt payments were scheduled and if the town was at its interest-bonded debt peak. Treasurer Goucher responded that one principal payment and two interest payments were made annually and that it was in the town's best interest to

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

divert from bond borrowing and borrow against the operating budget as it would be more economical and save the town money on interest payments.

Vice Chairwoman Parella asked if there were any bonds set to drop off, Treasure Goucher responded that two bonds were to reach maturity.

Chairman Calouro suggested that funds from bond fruitions be used to offset Capital Projects.

Town Treasurer noted that the road repaving project did not make it into the town's borrowing resolution and suggested the council consider borrowing against the Gooding Funds.

Chairman Calouro stated that if the town borrowed against its own funds, it would sequentially save taxpayer dollars in interest payments.

Councilman Teixeira asked how much money was still required to complete the road resurfacing project. Town Administrator Contente responded that the project was short by \$1 million.

A discussion ensued in regard to the costs associated with borrowing funds to complete the road resurfacing project versus going out to bond; and the trending interest rates increases.

The council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

503 Fixed Charges

Julie Goucher, Town Treasurer

Town Treasurer Goucher explained the increases to the town's medical and dental insurance policies, noting a potential 2% increase.

Town Treasurer Goucher noted a 10% increase in worker compensation insurance claims. She further noted that the town was currently working on increasing the fund balance in severance pay to ensure adequate funding for future retirees.

The council made no changes to the budget as recommended.

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING- MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

Recap

Chairman Calouro recapped the following question items to be discussed for consideration at a later time (asterisk items):

- **401 TOWN COUNCIL**
(*) Consideration of \$8-9K for iPads; and consideration for the item to be added to technology replacement line in Town Hall Complex 504-0223-404
- **504 Town Hall Complex**
(*) Coordinator Vitale to provide more information on the software and licensing

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Sweeney, seconded by Councilman Ley and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 10:04 PM.

Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk