

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tuesday, January 31, 2017

Chairman Joshua Bell called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Andrew Buckland, Stephan Bunker, Michael Fogg, and Matthew Smith. Town Manager Richard Davis, Town Secretary Linda Grant, Treasurer LucyAnn Cook, Fire Rescue Chief Terry Bell, Deputy Chief Clyde Ross, Deputy Chief Tim A. Hardy, Capt. Tim D. Hardy, Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Foster, Public Works Director Philip Hutchins, and members of the press and public were also in attendance.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Joshua Bell led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets:

A) Treasurer / Clerk

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$245,274 for the 2017 Treasurer/Clerk budget, which is a decrease from 2016 of \$8,391, or -3.31%; Matthew Smith seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

B) Cemeteries

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$86,643 for the 2017 Cemeteries budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$9,132, or 11.78%; Andrew Buckland seconded.

In response to an inquiry by Stephan Bunker, Richard Davis reviewed recent revenue adjustments to this budget. Joshua Bell expressed his concern with the amount of this budget and asked that a discussion of possible ways to decrease it be held in the near future. Richard Davis shared information that he had compiled recently of comparisons of the maintenance of other cemeteries in the area. Mr. Davis pointed out that the Cemeteries budget spreadsheet does not reflect the revenue offset, so the net cost is much less.

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 OPPOSED 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Joshua Bell)**

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

R) T.A.N.

Treasurer LucyAnn Cook explained that this budget has not had to be utilized for quite some time. The Selectmen briefly discussed past use and requirements of this account.

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$5,000 for the 2017 T.A.N. budget, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2016; Michael Fogg seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

C) General Assistance

Richard Davis stated that this proposal has not changed from the initial presentation.

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$25,000 for the 2017 General Assistance budget, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2016; Matthew Smith seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

D) Assessing

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$81,634 for the 2017 Assessing budget, which is a decrease from 2016 of \$16,150, or -16.52%; Matthew Smith seconded.

Stephan Bunker stated that he has heard only positive comments on the Town's current Assessing process.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

E) Code Enforcement

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$139,187 for the 2017 Code Enforcement budget, which is a decrease from 2016 of \$11,374, or -7.55%; Matthew Smith seconded.

Joshua Bell pointed out that the Wages line item has been reduced because there is one unfilled position in that department at this time.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

F) Police

Chief Peck was present and explained the changes that have been made to this proposal since it was initially presented, all of which are related to negotiations of the Union Contract that expires April 1, 2017. Chief Peck stated that he has included the maximum amount, but is confident that it will be less once negotiations are complete and presented to the Selectmen in Executive Session on February 14, 2017. Richard Davis stated that this was explained to the Budget Committee last week and they understand that if this budget is reduced the Budget Committee will go along with the Selectmen's recommendation.

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$1,257,826 for the 2017 Police Department budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$43,276, or 3.56%; Stephan Bunker seconded.

In response to Andrew Buckland's inquiry as to why a recommendation is being voted on if there needs to be further discussion, Richard Davis stated that the Selectmen cannot ratify the contract until the Agreement that was discussed in Executive Session can be presented to, discussed with, and accepted by the Union representatives.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

G) Fire Rescue

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$516,057 for the 2017 Fire Rescue budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$81,565, or 18.77%; Andrew Buckland seconded.

Joshua Bell asked that the Per Diem and Wages line items be combined, which Chief Terry Bell agreed to do.

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSTAINED 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Stephan Bunker)**

H) Parks and Recreation

Michael Fogg moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$163,227 for the 2017 Parks and Recreation Department budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$7,587, or 4.87%; Matthew Smith seconded.

Richard Davis explained a concern one of the Budget Committee members has regarding the cost and liability coverage of seasonal and coaching positions. Mr. Davis pointed out that it doesn't show on the budget spreadsheet, but revenues have been nearly doubled by

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

H) Parks and Recreation (Cont.)

Director Foster, for which he should be commended. Director Foster explained program participation percentages versus the necessary staffing. Joshua Bell pointed out that, as it was this year, minimum wage adjustments will be an even bigger challenge next year.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

I) Community Center

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$116,542 for the 2017 Community Center budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$36, or .03%; Stephan Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

J) Public Works

Joshua Bell questioned the low amount of motor fuel purchased in 2016. The Selectmen attributed it to the mild winter. Richard Davis stated that the July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018 fuel oil bid is presently be negotiated by the school district.

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$1,330,734, for the 2017 Public Works budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$81,197, or 6.50%; Andrew Buckland seconded.

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 OPPOSED 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Joshua Bell)**

K) L.O.R.A.P.

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$158,780 for the 2017 L.O.R.A.P., which is the same amount as budgeted in 2016; Matthew Smith seconded.

In response to Joshua Bell's inquiry, Richard Davis stated that the full amount was received from the State last year. Not all of it appears to have been spent, but would have been carried forward into this year.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

L) Five Year Road Program

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$270,736 for the 2017 Five Year Road Program budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$37,736, or 16.20%; Stephan Bunker seconded.

Stephan Bunker expressed his hope that the same citizenry support as in the past is received at Town Meeting.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

M) Public Works Reserve

Michael Fogg received verification from Richard Davis that the total for this Reserve with the proposed amount will be \$40,519.34. Richard Davis stated that the increase in this proposal is attributable to the needed repairs to the salt shed.

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$10,000 for the 2017 Public Works Building Reserve budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$5,000, or 100%; Stephan Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

N) Recycling

Matthew Smith moved to approve the proposed amount of \$76,658 for the 2017 Recycling budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$7,820, or 11.36%; Stephan Bunker seconded.

In response to Stephan Bunker's inquiry as to whether they should be looking at the bulky waste fees, Richard Davis stated that the fees should be adequate this year as the cost of transporting will be reduced with the repair of the Town's transport truck.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

O) Administration

Michael Fogg pointed out that it has been eleven (11) years since there has been an increase in the Selectmen's stipend. It was his recommendation that the Wages line item be increased by \$1,000 to \$84,784, so that each Selectman will receive a \$200 increase in annual stipend. It was his recommendation also that the stipends be increased every three to five years.

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

O) Administration (Cont.)

Michael Fogg moved to increase the Selectmen’s stipends by \$1,000, bringing the Wages line item total to \$84,784; Matthew Smith seconded.

The Selectmen discussed whether or not this is the time to be increasing the stipends. Budget Committee Chairman Clyde Ross reminded the Selectmen that they are only making a recommendation, of which an explanation will be included, and the voters will be making the final decision. Resident Dennis O’Neil joined in the discussion.

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 OPPOSED 2 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell/Buckland)**

Michael Fogg moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$247,152 for the 2017 Administration budget, plus any applicable adjustments as a result of the \$1,000 increase in the Wages line item, which is an approximate increase over 2016 of \$8,100, or 3.37%; Matthew Smith seconded.

**VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 OPPOSED 2 MOTION CARRIED
(Bell/Buckland)**

P) Committees & Events

Michael Fogg moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$6,800 for the 2017 Committees and Events budget, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2016; Stephan Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Q) Municipal Building

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$94,220 for the 2017 Municipal Building budget, which is a decrease from 2016 of \$3,100, or -3.19%; Matthew Smith seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

S) Other Protections

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$498,494 for the 2017 Other Protections budget, which is an increase over 2016 of \$1,342, or 0.27%; Andrew Buckland seconded.

Stephan Bunker asked Richard Davis if he and Fire Rescue Chief Terry Bell are still members of the NorthStar Advisory Board, and if so, has there been any sense of any changes in the relationship between the Board and Franklin Memorial Hospital as it

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

S) Other Protections (Cont.)

reorganizes with a larger corporation. Mr. Davis stated that he and Chief Bell are still members, and explained that NorthStar is under the umbrella of the hospital, and while NorthStar does share some of the administration of the hospital, it is separately funded so he does not anticipate any changes. The only changes that may occur will be in rural subsidies and Medicare reimbursements. Mr. Bunker asked Mr. Davis that if he should get a sense of some change at that level that affects NorthStar to please let the Selectmen know.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

T) Debt Service

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$102,206 for the 2017 Debt Service budget, which is a decrease from 2016 of \$49,117, or -32.46%; Michael Fogg seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

U) Legal Reserve

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$7,500 for the 2017 Legal Reserve budget, which is a decrease from 2016 of \$7,500, or -50%; Andrew Buckland seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

V) ADA Reserve

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$1,500 for the 2017 ADA Reserve budget, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2016; Matthew Smith seconded.

In answer to Joshua Bell inquiry as to whether there has been any further research of ADA access to the downstairs of the Municipal Building, Richard Davis stated that just the engineering of such a project proved to be extremely expensive and there is no funding. He further stated that all large meetings where there is a need, or potential need, for handicap accessibility will continue to be held at the Community Center.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

W) Contracts / Public Services

Stephan Bunker moved to recommend the proposed amount of \$1,000 and \$15,520 for the Gay Cemetery and the Franklin County Animal Shelter items for the 2017 Contracts / Public Services; Matthew Smith seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Farmington Library Treasurer Richard Morton was present and pointed out that the Library Board is in full support of the original assessment and assertion of Librarian Maurie Stockford, who was also present, that operating the Library at its current level will require \$209,990, but they fully understand the conversation of the previous meeting and are willing to try to respond to it in a responsible manner. He further pointed out that because of the timing of meetings, the Budget Committee has not received the information on tonight's lower budget request. With the aid of another spreadsheet that he passed out, Mr. Morton reviewed the changes that have been made in the Library's budget to reduce it from the original request of \$209,990 to the amount of \$187,094 being presented tonight. Discussion included: reduction in Library hours; reduction in staff/wages; endowments; fund raising; grants; an increase in the original health insurance estimate by approximately \$8,900, which is not included in the most recent \$187,094 budget request; Mission Statement of the Library; uses and purposes of a modern day library, and staffing needed to facilitate access. In answer to Joshua Bell's question as to what has changed over the years to get to a \$200,000 budget, Mr. Morton cited health insurance, computers rather than books dominating technology, and staffing as being the most significantly different. Ms. Stockford further explained those changes, as well as others, that have taken place over the past fifteen years. Clyde Ross explained how the Budget Committee came up with its recommended amount of \$165,945.

Matthew Smith moved to recommend the amount of \$157,723 for the 2017 Farmington Library appropriation request, which is an increase over 2016 of \$8,223, or 5.5%; Michael Fogg seconded.

In answer to Joshua Bell's inquiry as to when the Town originally started appropriating funding for the Library's operating expenses and how it came about, Richard Morton explained that it began sometime between 1905-1910, but there was never any agreement other than that the Town would contribute to the Cutler Memorial Public Library in return for no library fees to its citizens. Mr. Morton stated that he will take responsibility for any reference over the last thirty-plus years of any increase being relative to costs of personnel, because it was the easiest way to explain it, and it was the figure that changed the most significantly based on the economy. Mr. Morton pointed out that as long as there is going to be a Farmington Library, the fact remains that the Town does not want any part of the ownership or liability of the Library building. The Selectmen discussed whether it would be feasible to look into taking ownership of the building and having the

ITEM 2: To Review and Make Recommendations on the Following Proposed 2017 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

W) Contracts / Public Services

Library employees become Town employees in order to be added to the Town's health insurance. Mr. Morton stated that any time this has been suggested in the past the answer has been "no" but he feels it should be looked into at least every two years.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 3 OPPOSED 2 MOTION CARRIED
(Bunker/Buckland)

Richard Davis asked Budget Committee Chairman Clyde Ross if he had any interest in polling the Budget Committee, in consideration of the changes in this account and the Administrative budget, and/or scheduling a final meeting. Mr. Ross asked Mr. Davis to send email to the Budget Committee members asking for their opinions.

ITEM 3: To Discuss Other Business

- A)** Andrew Buckland, going off topic, highly recommended that everyone see the movie "Eagle Huntress".
- B)** Matthew Smith thanked Clyde Ross and the Budget Committee members for their due diligence with this year's budget process.
- C)** In response to Joshua Bell's inquiry as to the status of the repair of the pot holes on High Street, Richard Davis stated that there have been numerous complaints and the pot holes have been patched, but as is typical this time of year, the patch is not staying in place.

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Stephan Bunker moved to adjourn at 7:57 P.M.; Matthew Smith seconded.**

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda H. Grant.

Andrew R. Buckland - Secretary