

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tuesday, January 5, 2016

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 Diana Young, Police Chief Jack Peck, Fire Rescue Chief Terry Bell, Deputy Chief /Budget Committee Chairman Clyde Ross, Deputy Chief Tim Hardy, Captain Mike Bell, Lt. Tim Hardy and Chaplain Stan Wheeler, Parks & Recreation Director Matthew Foster, Public Works Director Denis Castonguay, Foreman Jim Kiernan, Shop Manager/Chief Mechanic Jonathan Alexander and Mechanic Scott Bouchard, Code Enforcement Officer Steve Kaiser, 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 the Following Proposed 2016 Departmental Budgets:

Richard Davis gave a brief overview of the 2016 budget with the aid of the Appropriations Summary. He reported that the total increase in the overall budget is \$105,990, or 1.99%.

A) Treasurer / Clerk

Treasurer Diana Young reviewed the proposed 2016 Treasurer/Clerk budget in the amount of \$253,665, which is an increase from 2015 of \$10,781, or 4.44%. She explained the increase in the Salaries, Advertising and Elections line items, which are due to the advertising for and hiring of a new finance director, and the presidential election.

B) Cemeteries

Treasurer Diana Young reviewed the proposed 2016 Cemeteries budget in the amount of \$77,511, which is an increase from 2015 of \$4,033, or 5.49%. She explained that the increase in the Land and Property line item is due to a new plot of land needing to be surveyed for grave sites. In answer to a question regarding the labor use of inmates for mowing, Richard Davis stated that he will check with the jail administrator.

R) T.A.N.

Treasurer Diana Young reviewed the proposed 2016 T.A.N. budget in the amount of \$5,000, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2015. She reported that it was not necessary for the Town to draw on the T.A.N. in 2015.

ITEM 2: To Review the Following Proposed 2016 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

C) General Assistance

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 General Assistance budget in the amount of \$25,000, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2015. He stated that this budget amount is very reasonable for a Service Center community, and the clerk is very frugal when determining applicant eligibility.

D) Assessing

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Assessing budget in the amount of \$97,784, which is an increase from 2015 of \$18,284, or 23%. Mr. Davis reviewed an email memo from Assessor John O'Donnell, as he was unable to attend the meeting tonight. Mr. O'Donnell's memo explained the increases in the Professional Services line item, both of which are one-time costs. Mr. Davis pointed out that even though this budget increased this year, it is still lower than when the Town had on-staff assessing.

E) Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Steve Kaiser reviewed the proposed 2016 Code Enforcement budget in the amount of \$150,561, which is a decrease from 2015 of \$605, or -0.40%. He explained that Jane Ford is retiring on July 29th. GIS implementation and the lack of telephone expenditures were discussed.

F) Police

Police Chief Jack Peck reviewed the proposed 2016 Police Department budget in the amount of \$1,214,550, which is a decrease from 2015 of \$30,787, or -2.47%. Due to the department's continued staffing challenges, Chief Peck explained his proposal to restructure the department again by increasing the Overtime and Training line items, dropping the 14th officer position and adding an evening detective position.

G) Fire Rescue

Fire Chief Terry Bell reviewed the proposed 2016 Fire Rescue Department budget in the amount of \$452,751, which is an increase over 2015 of \$51,238, or 12.76%. He explained the increase in this budget, which is largely due to the proposal to hire four (4) full-time 12-hour shift employees and related benefits seven (7) days per week and retention of one (1) per diem 8-hour shift position five (5) days per week. He pointed out that if this budget passes the Wages line item will increase in 2017 because the 2016 budget is only for 39 weeks. Also discussed were: the installation of the ductless air conditioner that was formerly in the outer Administrative office in the Fire Department meeting room; the final payment for the tower truck; the Equipment Reserve account; the next apparatus to be replaced; replacement of all of the soon to be outdated air packs, hopefully through a federal grant; and problems with the current per diem program. Chief Bell encouraged the Selectmen to come in to talk with him.

ITEM 2: To Review the Following Proposed 2016 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

H) Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Foster reviewed the proposed 2016 Parks and Recreation Department budget in the amount of \$155,640, which is an increase over 2015 of \$2,900, or 1.90%. He explained the increase in the Part time, Health Insurance, Dues, Land/Property Improvements, and Vehicles & Equipment line items and decrease in the Salaries, Wages, Electricity, and Legal/Advertising line items. He also explained the impact of the construction of a new sidewalk at Hippach Field on the Land/Property Improvements line item.

I) Community Center

Director Matthew Foster reviewed the proposed 2016 Community Center budget in the amount of \$116,506, which is an increase over 2015 of \$4,295, or 3.83%. He explained the increase in the Part time, Electricity, Land/Property Improvement, and Reserve line items and decrease in the Wages, Overtime, Retirement, Health Insurance, and Heat line items. Discussion included why it was not possible to connect the Community Center to the new University of Maine at Farmington heating system.

J) Public Works

Public Works Director Denis Castonguay reviewed the proposed 2016 Public Works budget in the amount of \$1,254,537, which is an increase over 2015 of \$15,954, or 1.29%. Foreman Jim Kiernan, Shop Manager/Chief Mechanic Jonathan Alexander and Mechanic Scott Bouchard were also present to help answer any questions the Board might have. He explained that the increase in the Salaries line item is due to the hiring of a new Public Works Director. He also explained the increase in the Retirement and Contractual Services line items and slight decrease in the Health Insurance line item. Discussion included: replacement of the downtown trash cans; the 3-year cemetery mowing contract; and line striping.

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

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 L.O.R.A.P. budget in the amount of \$158,780, which is an increase over 2015 of \$456, or 0.29%. Mr. Davis explained that this budget amount comes from the State.

L) Five Year Road Program

Public Works Director Denis Castonguay reviewed the proposed 2016 Five Year Road Program budget in the amount of \$233,000, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2015. Town Manager Richard Davis assisted with explaining the total capital budget and reviewed the list of road paving and reconstruction projects for 2016. Mr. Castonguay commented on the impact on a number of the road projects by underground power. Mr. Davis explained that the road plan will need to be updated next year.

ITEM 2: To Review the Following Proposed 2016 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

M) Public Works Reserve

Public Works Director Denis Castonguay reviewed the proposed 2016 Public Works Reserve budget in the amount of \$5,000, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2015. Mr. Castonguay explained the difference between this Reserve and the Public Works Equipment Reserve account. Discussion included the need for a new boiler in the garage as well as the lack of sufficient insulation.

N) Recycling

Public Works Director Denis Castonguay reviewed the proposed 2016 Recycling budget in the amount of \$69,638, which is a decrease from 2015 of \$2,500, or -3.47%. He explained that, although the decision has not yet been made, the decrease in this budget is due to contracting the hauling of demolition to Norridgewock by Archie's, Inc. and the elimination of man hours, and certain related vehicles and/or equipment. The Selectmen asked that Alan Archibald's proposal be placed on the agenda of their next scheduled meeting on January 12, 2016.

O) Administration

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Administration budget in the amount of \$240,052, which is a decrease from 2015 of \$1,894, or -0.78%. He explained the increase in the Equipment Rental, Legal/Advertising, and Professional Services line items and decrease in the Health Insurance and Dues line items. Michael Fogg generated a discussion regarding the possibility of increasing the Selectmen's stipends. Deputy Fire Rescue Chief /Budget Committee Chairman Clyde Ross joined the discussion and expressed his concern with the lack of any increase in wages for part-time and seasonal employees this year.

P) Committees & Events

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Committees and Events budget in the amount of \$6,800, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2015. Mr. Davis reported that there is \$637 remaining in the Special Projects account.

Q) Municipal Building

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Municipal Building budget in the amount of \$100,552, which is an increase over 2015 of \$12,601, or 14.33%. He explained the increase in the Electricity and Land and Property line items and decrease in the Heat and Water line items. Discussion included: the building's aging heating and air handling systems, which Mr. Davis encouraged the Selectmen to view; the custodian not using his allocated hours.

S) Other Protections

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Other Protections budget in the amount of \$493,152, which is an increase over 2015 of \$20,319, or 4.30%. Mr. Davis explained the repair difficulties with the traffic lights in the past year that have increased the expenditures in this line item.

ITEM 2: To Review the Following Proposed 2016 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

S) Other Protections (Cont.)

Michael Fogg moved to increase the Traffic Lights line item from \$8,500 to \$10,000; Matthew Smith seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Further discussion included: cost effect and safety issues of removal of some of the street lights.

T) Debt Service

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Debt Service budget in the amount of \$151,323, which is a decrease from 2015 of \$3,847, or -2.48%. Mr. Davis reported that the fire truck debt will be paid off this year, while there is another six years on the Public Works garage and ten years on the Police Station.

U) Legal Reserve

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Legal Reserve budget in the amount of \$15,000, which is the same amount as budgeted in 2015.

V) ADA Reserve

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 ADA Reserve budget in the amount of \$1,500, which is an increase over 2015 of \$500. Mr. Davis explained the projects that the funds in this account could be used for.

W) Transportation Advisory Committee

Town Manager Richard Davis stated that the balance in this account is carried forward from year to year. Discussion included eliminating the tab for this line item until such time as there is a need for an appropriation.

X) Contracts / Public Services

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Farmington Library appropriation request in the amount of \$149,500, which is an increase over 2015 of 1.9% or \$2,834. Librarian Maurie Stockford was present to help answer any questions the Selectmen may have. She explained the endowment value challenge the library is facing and the projected income decrease this year. Ms. Stockford reported that she is in the process of compiling budget material for the Budget Committee the next night.

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Gay Cemetery appropriation request in the amount of \$1,000, which is an increase over 2015 of \$100.

Town Manager Richard Davis reviewed the proposed 2016 Franklin County Animal Shelter appropriation request in the amount of \$15,520, which is the same rate as 2015-2016, but an increase over 2015 because this is a contractual item and the per capita rate of \$2.00 is for a full year, June 1, 2016 to July 1, 2017.

ITEM 2: To Review the Following Proposed 2016 Departmental Budgets: (Cont.)

Resident Dennis O’Neil generated a brief discussion with his suggestion to take out a \$100,000 2-year loan to take care of the insulation problems at the Community Center and Public Works garage instead of adding them to and consequently increasing the budget.

Stephan Bunker expressed his regrets on the unanticipated consequences to several employees of the health care changes that the Selectmen made at their December 22, 2015 meeting. He asked for reconsideration going forward. Richard Davis pointed out that the open enrollment period has passed. He also was regretful of the outcome for several employees, but pointed out that the mistake the Town made was in 1993 when it made a distinction between new hires and existing employees because two different sets of expectations were established. With the change made this year the Town’s contribution to health insurance will now be the same for all employees.

ITEM 3: To Discuss Other Business

- A) Richard Davis thanked the Selectmen for their input and patience, and reported that the first Budget Committee meeting will be tomorrow night, January 6th, in the downstairs meeting room. He said that it is his hope to bring the budget back to the Selectmen for their votes at their meeting on January 26th.

- B) Michael Fogg reiterated that he was hoping for a flat line budget but he now understands why that can’t be. He stated that he is not happy but feels it is a modest increase for the services provided.

- C) Michael Fogg reported that he will not be available to attend the January 26th Selectmen’s meeting.

ITEM 4: To Hold an Executive Session Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 405.6.E to discuss Pending Litigation

Matthew Smith moved to go into Executive Session at 9:45 P.M.; Stephan Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

The Selectmen came out of Executive Session at 10:21 P.M.

No public action was taken.

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Michael Fogg moved to adjourn at 10:21 P.M.; Matthew Smith seconded.**

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda H. Grant.

Andrew R. Buckland – Secretary