

**Joint Budget Task Force Committee
Minutes of September 9, 2015
Selectmen's Chamber, Town Hall**

Present for Board of Selectmen: Alison Hughes, Tony Archinski, Ann Vandal, Assistant Town Manager/Finance, Jim Duggan, Town Manager and Recording Secretary Shannon Rowe Beaulieu

Present for School Committee: Michael McNamara and Steven Stone, Superintendent of Schools

Present for Finance Committee: Louise Tremblay and Bob Corey

Mrs. Hughes opened the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Continuation of Review of "Draft" Town 5 Year Expenditure Projections

Mr. Duggan stated that the "Draft" Police and Fire Department's 5 Year Expenditure Projections prepared by Mrs. Vandal shows FY13-16 expenditures and FY17-21 projected expenditures.

Mr. Duggan stated his continued investments in personnel will not go under what we already have. Mr. Duggan discussed the sustainable investments moving forward and filling positions over upcoming years.

Mr. Duggan discussed vehicle investments and filling 3 more position for the Fire Department to have a full compliment.

Mr. Duggan discussed increasing areas of training which is in the best interest in this growing Community.

Mrs. Vandal stated that most projections, as well in other Departments, are up 2%. Mrs. Vandal discussed the Consumer Price Index and discussed equipment purchases.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Police Department's expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal stated they are waiting for the Risk Assessment for the Police Department.

Mr. Duggan stated that the first draft of the Risk Assessment should be in within 7-10 days.

Mrs. Vandal stated that they have doubled the training expenditure and they currently have 41 Police Officers and have budgeted to have 46 Police Officers by FY21.

Mrs. Hughes asked about the personnel costs once the Dispatchers go over to the Regional Communications Center. Mrs. Vandal stated that the personnel costs will be included once the Risk Assessment is completed as well.

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Mrs. Vandal discussed technology upgrades needed for the Police and Fire Departments which were never included in upcoming budgets. Mrs. Vandal stated that she included \$10,000 for in-house technology upgrades only.

Dr. McNamara discussed overtime being built into payroll.

Mr. Corey asked about the Police Building Supplies.

Mrs. Vandal stated that as the Police Station gets older it will need repair and maintenance.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Fire Department's expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal stated that they currently have 40 Firefighters including the Chief and would like to fill 3 positions over the next 3 years. Mrs. Vandal discussed contractual obligations and overtime.

Mrs. Vandal stated that she wanted to verify the projected numbers for the uniform allowances for the Police and Fire Departments.

Mrs. Vandal stated that there is a need to address Firefighter training and supplies.

Mrs. Vandal discussed technology, technology replacement, etc.

Mrs. Vandal discussed only the Fire Department and Department of Public Works having equipment Stabilization Funds.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Capital Plan and not sustaining the Capital Plan.

Chief Brouillette appeared before the Committee and discussed fire alarm cable boxes, cooper lines, batteries, radios and all communications.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Building Department's expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed transitioning the part-time Building Inspector's position to a full-time position in FY17.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Plumbing and Gas expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Wiring expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Sealer of Weights expenditure projection and stated that the Town has a service contract with NMCOG.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Emergency Management expenditure projections.

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Mrs. Vandal discussed the Animal Control expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Kennel contract and stated that owner's do reimburse the Town if their pet is kenneled. Mrs. Vandal stated that the Town does not re-coup any fees if an animal is unclaimed.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Greater Lowell Technical High School's expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal stated that the projections go up 5% on the assessment side and 15% on the transportation side.

Dr. McNamara stated that they should look into actual numbers.

Mrs. Hughes questioned if the School Department could bus their own students to the Technical School? Superintendent Stone discussed looking into the Charter and looking at the numbers. Superintendent Stone discussed adding numbers to Dracut's bus contracts.

Mrs. Vandal stated that transportation reimbursements have been all over the place.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Essex Agricultural School expenditure projections.

Superintendent Stone stated that the School Department could not produce a program to match Essex Agriculture and they currently have 11 Dracut students and he cannot see the same enrollment numbers in the future.

Mrs. Vandal discussed projecting an increase of 5% for assessment and 5% for transportation.

Superintendent Stone discussed transportation costs.

Mr. Duggan discussed regionalizing the transportation bid and looking at future collaboration.

Dr. McNamara stated that he thinks what an excellent idea is.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Engineering expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the jump in the Service Contract expenditure and stated that it is due to the Stormwater Management Plan. Mrs. Vandal stated that she did not include the Stormwater Management Plan in the budget as it could turn into a utility like water and sewer.

Mrs. Vandal stated that the Stormwater Management Plan is a major undertaking and they do not have the procedures and policies yet.

Ms. Richardson appeared before the Committee and stated that regional Stormwater Management is currently being looked at by NMCOG.

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Mrs. Vandal discussed the Highway Maintenance expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed filling 1 new position for Highway Maintenance in FY17 and 1 new position in FY19.

Mr. Duggan stated that he will not allow personnel numbers to go under than what is currently there now.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Snow and Ice expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal stated that the target amount should be a 10 year average.

Mr. Duggan explained that they cannot reduce budgeting numbers as they have to be higher than the year before.

Mrs. Vandal stated that they would talk more about the numbers for snow and ice in the future.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Street Lighting expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the projection being based upon the Consumer Price Indexing.

Mr. Duggan discussed purchasing LED lighting and phasing it in and discussed the LED lighting investment.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Public Works Annex expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal stated that the Public Works Annex budget has been moved into the Tree Department budget.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Tree Department expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed adding an additional Laborer's position in FY18 and FY20.

Mrs. Vandal stated that she would look into the increase in Service Contracts with the Public Works Director.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the Vehicle Maintenance expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal discussed adding an additional position in FY19 for Police, Fire and DPW vehicle work. Mrs. Vandal discussed possibly adding School vehicle work as well.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the fuel used from all Departments and the charge backs for the fuel.

Mrs. Vandal stated that they only charge the School Department for fuel if the tanks need to be filled.

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Mrs. Vandal discussed the Solid Waste expenditure projections.

Mrs. Vandal stated that the Town is contractually obligated until FY19 for solid waste disposal.

Mrs. Vandal discussed the automated recycling program and how it is saving money.

Mr. Duggan discussed the continued examination of revenue ideas.

Mrs. Vandal stated that the payroll expenditure is for Household Hazardous Waste Day.

Mrs. Vandal stated that she would finish her expenditure projections at the meeting on September 24th.

Public Input

Mrs. Susan Koufogazos, 22 Blackberry Field Road, appeared before the Committee to discuss the snow deficit and discussed the added plowable services to the parks, etc. Mrs. Koufogazos asked if the Town could pull back on plowing the parks when the snow and ice budget is in the red? Mrs. Vandal stated that most of the parks are used as snow storage. Mrs. Koufogazos stated that the DPW is plowing the walking paths at all of the parks. Mrs. Vandal stated that they only plow the walking paths at Veteran's Park and Dillon McAnespie Park. Mr. Duggan discussed leaving the snow on walkways could do more damage than good. Mr. Archinski stated that he thinks Mike Buxton, Director of Public Works, knows what the best to do is. Dr. McNamara discussed the two plows that maintain the sidewalks and stated that they do an excellent job.

Mrs. Hughes asked who is responsible for shoveling the fire hydrants in Town? Chief Brouillette stated that there is no Town By-Law that states a homeowner has to shovel fire hydrants near their homes, but would hope a resident would want to shovel it out in case of an emergency.

Adjournment

Motion made by Ms. Tremblay to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Corey. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.


Alison Hughes


Tony Archinski

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_____ ABSENT _____
Betsy Murphy

Louise Tremblay

Louise Tremblay

Michael S. McNamara

Dr. Michael McNamara

Bob Corey

Bob Corey