

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A BUDGET HEARING
MAY 1, 2019**

A Special Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was held at the Enfield High School, 1264 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Wednesday, May 1, 2019. Chairman Ludwick called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL-CALL – Present were Councilors Bosco, Cressotti, Deni, Kiner, Ludwick, Muller, Sferrazza, Szewczak and Unghire. Councilors Cekala and Davis were absent. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki and Director of Finance, John Wilcox

Present from the Enfield Board of Education were Walter Kruzel, Tina LeBlanc, Timothy Neville, Richard Regnier, Charlotte Riley, Christopher Rutledge, and Scott Ryder. Ashley Depeau and Sarah Hernandez were absent. Also present were Superintendent, Christopher Drezek and Deputy Superintendent, Andrew Longey

Chairman Ludwick read the notice of Public Hearing and announced the ground rules for the Public Hearing.

PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED 2019/2020 BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

Walter Kruzel, Chairman of the Enfield Board of Education, stated the Superintendent's budget called for a 2.7% increase when it was turned over to the Board of Education in January. He noted the Board dropped that increase down to a .48% increase.

Mr. Drezek presented the Board of Education budget as follows:

- Enfield's per pupil expenditure is \$14,442 compared to the State of Connecticut average per pupil expenditure of \$16,564. The DRG figure is \$17,247.
- It costs over \$75 million dollars to run the school system with \$71 million provided by the Town and grants amounting to \$3.9 million
- All needs requested and known for the 19/20 budget amount to \$76 million dollars
- The Town of Enfield had \$4 million dollars cut in state funding last year, but the Town did not pass on that shortage to the Board of Education
- Last year the Board requested a 1.85% increase, but they received a 2.5% increase.
- In appreciation, the Board of Education returned \$125,000 to the Town at the end of the fiscal year, and it was agreed this funding would be used for cleaning school buildings.
- The Town agreed to allow the Board of Education to carryover up to 1% of the budget as a contingency for the next fiscal year.

- Fixed costs for FY19/20 is \$72,324,000

When the budget was being prepared there were some unknowns, i.e., retirements, health insurance, magnet school tuition and special education costs. Following is what is now known:

- 16 retirements amounting to \$480,000 savings
- Health Insurance - \$2,220 in savings
- General liability insurance - \$23,630 in savings
- Magnet school tuition - \$368,990
- Special Education - \$351,880
- Transportation - \$50,000

Mr. Drezek then displayed a chart showing a six-year historical perspective and noted this year the Board of Education's increase request at .48% is the lowest in several years.

He then reviewed the following "Value Adds":

- Keeps all existing staff and programs
- Maintains transition classrooms
- Enhances social and emotional support for students
- Enhances learning opportunities at all levels
- Continues with Pre-K-12 STEAM initiative
- Allows for compliance with NEASC requirements
- Continues all athletic programs

PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED 2019/2020 TOWN OF ENFIELD BUDGET

Mr. Bromson stated the proposed total budget for the Town of Enfield is \$137,939,029 with \$66,308,755 for the Town and \$71,630,274 for the Board of Education. 51.9% is the Board's side and 48.1% is the Town's side. He stated it appears the combined increase is 5.5%, or \$3,485,322. He then provided a breakdown of where the proposed increases are coming from:

- Public Safety – they had reduced officers from 95 to 88, but found this unsustainable and restored that figure back to 95, and they wish to maintain that number going forward. This amounts to \$1.2 million dollars.
- CIP was increased \$949,064
- Debt service constitutes approximately \$158,000
- Other (EMS) - \$255,000

He noted revenue anticipated from the State amounts to \$32,174,605.

Mr. Bromson reviewed the FY20 General Fund Overview as follows:

General Government - .82% increase
Public Safety – 9.61% increase
Public Works - .94% decrease
Development Services – 17.07% increase
Social Services – 4.08% increase
EMS – 4.9% increase
Library/Recreation - .76 increase
Information Technology – 12.25% increase

He explained the increase in General Government relates to restoring the Assistant Town Manager position. He noted the decrease in Public Works relates to the implementation of some of the Novak Study recommendations. He explained the increase in Development Services is because they're trying to increase some positions to try and stimulate and increase the Town's ability to attract more businesses. He noted they added a ZEO Land Use Analyst and they included money for consulting services for the upcoming new Plan of Conservation & Development as well as consulting services to upgrade and totally re-do the Town's zoning regulations. He stated the increase in Information Technology is because they consolidated all software, including phones. He explained they were diverse throughout all the different departments, and it was decided to place everything under IT, therefore, those departments' budgets decreased and IT's budget increased. He noted there were cost savings because IT was able to get better phone and cellular services as well as upgraded software. He pointed out because of this consolidation, everything will be much more manageable, will help save money and be more productive going forward.

Mr. Bromson showed a slide about General Fund Revenue and noted \$100 million dollars of the entire budget comes from property and motor vehicle taxes. He noted \$32 million comes from intergovernmental revenue followed by charges for services, investments, rental income and licenses and permits.

He stated the total CIP budget amounts to an increase of \$3,184,206. He provided the following breakdown:

- Vehicle replacement - \$398,000
- Public Works equipment - \$12,500
- School Facilities - \$788,000
- Refuse & Resource Management - \$40,000
- Town building repairs - \$428,000
- Public Works-Other - \$584,000
- Town Road Paving/Miscellaneous - \$785,000
- Other Projects - \$146,000

Mr. Bromson explained the \$398,000 for vehicle replacement covers the cost of heavy trucks, police vehicles and an ambulance. Public Works equipment needed includes new mowers and snowblowers. School facilities at \$788,000 calls for \$50,000 for roof repairs; \$580,000 to complete the Henry Barnard roof; restriping of the Enfield High School track and \$150,000 for the Board of Education sinking fund. Some items under Town building repairs include \$100,000 for general repairs to Town buildings; \$25,000 for roof repairs followed by other items such as the replacement of an underground fuel tank at the Enfield Police Department. As concerns Public Works Other, the Orlando Drive culvert needs to be replaced, and the Town Road Paving funding is required for on-going road repairs, crack sealing, replacement of road signage and \$100,000 for the Town's sinking fund.

He then reviewed the Water Pollution Control budget and noted the total operating cost last year was \$4.3 million with capital at \$1.8 million for a total of \$6.1 million dollars. He stated the proposed budget is less, with operating cost at \$4.3 million and capital at \$1.1 million.

Mr. Bromson spoke about Water Pollution Control revenue and needs. He stated \$3.5 million dollars was borrowed from the General Fund over time because they did not have enough revenue for Water Pollution Control. He noted as of FY19, they have been trying to pay this back, and they paid back \$150,000. He stated they appropriated \$250,000 per year going forward so that they can pay off the balance.

He then explained the revenue needed to run the plant for FY19. He stated the sewer rate will generate \$7.39 million. He noted in 2019 the consultant recommended the base charge be \$30 per quarter, but after several public hearings, the Town Council implemented a \$21 per quarter charge, therefore, it was lower than what the consultants recommended. He explained a second component was the volumetric charge, and the consultant recommended \$3.49 and \$5.24. He noted if a household goes over 20,000 gallons of usage per year, it goes up to \$5.24. He stated the Town adopted \$3.43 and \$5.13.

Mr. Bromson stated for FY2020, the consultant recommended \$36 per quarter for the base charge, and this is what the Town is recommending. He noted the consultant recommended \$3.60 and \$5.39 for the volumetric with \$5.39 being charged for the over 20,000 gallons per year. He stated the Town is recommending \$3.49 and \$5.24. He noted the total of the combined services (base charge and volumetric) for 2020 would be a \$16.28 per quarter increase for a total of \$65.00 per year for a household. He stated last year, the total average was about \$258, and this proposal would bring that figure to \$322 per year. He stated the Council can either accept or lower this.

He then displayed a chart showing the historical mill rate and noted this budget proposes a one mill increase to 34.4, which means a \$200,000 house would have an average increase of \$140.00. He stated compared to other municipalities, Enfield falls in the middle regarding mill rate. He then showed a chart that shows the services offered in different communities and pointed out Enfield offers a lot of services that other communities do not offer.

Mr. Bromson reviewed some of the highlights that Enfield has that other communities do not:

- Enfield offers a lot of services
- The pension is well funded at 92.87%
- Strong fund balance at \$5.8 million dollars (Enfield has a Double A rating with Standard & Poors)
- Honeywell energy savings of \$710,000
- Eversource credit of \$1.6 million dollars
- Healthcare savings
- Many recommendations of the Novak Study have been implemented

He concluded stating the budget is scheduled to be adopted no later than May 20th.

Neal Narkon, 5 Clear Street

Questioned whether salary increases are the result of a union deal or contractual type of rate.

Mr. Narkon stated he was never a fan of charging students for parking since everything belongs to the taxpayer. He stated his belief no one should have to pay for parking on Town-owned properties.

He stated his belief Food Services has a surplus, and it's known that school lunches have been atrocious for years. He recommended any surplus should immediately go back into the system to offset better grades of food. He stated rather than quality food, the menu resembles a fast-food restaurant. He noted breakfast should be available for those who want it, and even if some students can't afford it, it should be available so kids can start the day right.

George Young, 8 Holly Lane

Referred to Thompsonville Revitalization and \$75,000 for overtime and questioned whether that should be in the Enfield Police Department budget for patrols.

He referred to "Pension and Retirement Charges" and questioned whether the \$1,238,000 includes the WPC budget.

Mr. Young referred to the Water Pollution Control area and noted they're proposing to get revenue of \$7.2 million dollars, and expenditures are \$5.5 million dollars. He questioned why they're collecting so much extra money. He questioned how much of this money that they're generating in revenue is for the usage charge.

Neal Narkon, 5 Clear Street

Questioned whether all officers are on an hourly basis, or are some officers salaried. He questioned why they're incurring such high expenses on overtime.

Mr. Narkon questioned why Public Works has overtime expenses. He feels this should be controlled.

George Young, 8 Holly Lane

Referred to Water Pollution Control and noted on Page 79, it says the revised budget for total capital purchases was \$2.3 million dollars. He noted it was zero in 2019 according to the prior budget. He stated there was \$1,812,000 transferred to capital. He questioned if this is a duplication.

Councilor Sferrazza referred to overtime in the Enfield Police Department and stated that department is unionized, except for the Chief, Deputy Chief and Captain positions, and they don't get overtime, but rather a straight salary. He noted everyone else gets overtime if they work over 40 hours.

As concerns the amount of overtime amounting to \$650,000, Councilor Sferrazza explained included in that fee are not only back-filling shifts when people are out, but also when they have a major case, i.e., a homicide or death. He noted Manchester is almost at a million dollars for overtime. He stated Enfield's police administration scrutinizes overtime.

Regarding Thompsonville walking patrols, Councilor Sferrazza stated about six or seven years ago, they did not have this line item, so out of the operating police overtime budget, they would assign officers to walk in the neighborhoods. He stated this program is extremely successful, but at the end of the year it wasn't reflecting accurately what the Town was putting into resources to fix Thompsonville. He noted the Council decided to make this a separate line item, so that people could see exactly what resources are being put into Thompsonville and what it's costing.

Chairman Ludwick stated last year they cut overtime approximately 40% to 50% across the board. He noted the Council monitors overtime on a monthly basis.

Ms. Riley stated Nutrition Services funds itself and has no impact on the budget because they have a federal grant, and that excess amount is what they reimburse the Board of Education to pay for in-kind services, i.e., benefits and a portion of the Lunchroom Aide salaries. She noted menus are based off federal guidelines.

Mr. Kruzel referred to student parking and noted that fee was reduced from \$100 to \$35, and that fee goes directly into the Student Activity Fund.

Ms. Riley stated breakfast is offered at school.

Chairman Ludwick stated answers will be provided for Mr. Young's questions.

As no one else wished to speak, Chairman Ludwick closed the Public Hearing at 8:08 p.m.