ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING/BUDGET REVIEW SESSION
SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2021

A Special Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick in the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Saturday April 10, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m.

ROLL-CALL – Present were Councilors Cekala, Hemmeler, Ludwick, Mangini, Muller, Riley, Sferrazza, Szewczak and Unghire. Councilors Bosco and Cressotti were absent. Also present Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Director of Finance, John Wilcox; Director of EMS, Erin Riggott; Chief of Police, Alaric Fox; Director of Public Works, Donald Nunes; Director of Social Services Cindy Guerreri; Town Clerk, Sheila Bailey

Mr. Bromson indicated that today's meeting will follow the format of last year and will review the agencies which are the largest cost drivers of the budget. Department Heads will be available to answer questions. As usual, if Council has any questions between now and their deliberations next Saturday as well as any questions from departments who are not presenting today, forward those questions to his office and he will get the answers.

After the four presenters, he will briefly review the CIP budget.

EMS

Chief Riggott stated that the EMS budget remains at status quo with the exception of two full-time EMTs. They currently have 28 full-time employees.

- 6 Supervisor/administrative paramedic staff
- 11 Paramedics
- 11 Full-time EMTs

This results in four ambulances in service during the day and two ambulances in service during the overnight hours. They have had that model since at least 2014. In 2014 they responded to 6,400 calls during the year. As of today, there were approximately 7,400 calls which is 1,000 calls more annually with the same amount of staff. This has resulted in greater use of mutual aid ambulances. In 2014 they used mutual aid 97 times, while this year they used mutual aid over 500 times, causing slower responses and reduced revenue.

The bulk of the calls are coming in between 2:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. The day crews are being held over at the end of their shifts causing a morale issue, overtime issue and additional liability. Adding two additional EMTs will allow them to put another ambulance into service five days a week between the hours of 2:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. This will reduce the use of mutual aid ambulances, reduce overtime, and increase revenues. The cost including salary and benefits is about $75,000 per EMT.

Mr. Bromson explained all the administrative supervisory staff are working lieutenants who run shifts and do paramedics. They will continue to do that but at a more appropriate rate. Adding an ambulance during this critical time will reduce overtime and fatigue, increase morale, safety and reduce workmen compensation claims.

Chairman Ludwick thanked Chief Riggott for her dedication and that of her staff during COVID. Many residents expressed to him their appreciation of her staff during this past year. She has turned the department around during the last four years.

Mr. Bromson also wanted to thank the fire departments in this town. All five departments supply supplemental first responder service to our EMS. They are an integral part of our EMS system and in many instances, they are the first responders. He would like to commend all our fire chiefs and firefighters for the part they play in EMS – they are integral and indispensable.

POLICE

Chief Fox stated that the Enfield's Police Department's operational budget was held flat and wherever he found an insurmountable need to add something into the budget they made tough choices and cut something else out. The single biggest drivers of the overall budget increase were all directly tied to the Police Accountability Bill.

- Second payment to Axon for the body worn and in-car camera system
- Ongoing psychological exams which become mandatory this year
- Mandated steroid testing

The operational budget provides Enfield with 95 sworn, authorized positions, 93 which are filled at this time. They have made an offer to a candidate who will start next month and are currently involved in a testing, hiring process that will bring the number to 95.

There are 11 officers who are in other duty status.

- Two officers are deployed on military leave
- Three officers are out of work medically
- Three officers are in the Academy
- One officer is in the FTO program
- Two officers are in modified duty status

This results in 82 positions.

Mr. Bromson indicated that given the circumstances and challenges over the last year or two, nationally, there is a real difficulty recruiting police officers. Because of the reputation of our police department as led by Chief Fox and the willingness of this Council to commit the resources and tools for our officers to do their jobs, we are able to retain and recruit new officers.

Specifically, settling the union contract where we adjusted payrates for captains and others allowing us to be competitive and pay the officers we have what they are worth and to recruit other officers. The Town invested last year in the Computer Assisted Dispatch system. This year we are investing in cruisers, money in our Joint Operations Center, new sidearms and over the next 2-3 years, $1.7 million dollars in new radios.

Councilor Mangini remarked that we are very fortunate in Enfield that we have such a stellar police department. She also wanted to make public that through Chief Fox's efforts, Enfield received the highest award from the bond commission of $134,000+ for aid to fund the body cameras. Chief Fox stated that when it comes to technology and grant writing, he wanted to publicly recognize the talents of Officer Mickey Emons.

Councilor Sferrazza asked whether any of the cost of the ongoing psychological exams put on the towns from the Police Accountability Bill was reimbursable. Chief Fox indicated that the $10,000/year cost was not reimbursable. Council Sferrazza wanted to ensure that the cost is included in this year's budget.

Chairman Ludwick stated that he is 100% in support of having a Public Safety Complex. Chairman Ludwick would like to see more of the good things the police department is doing made public such as the number of Narcan saves.

Mr. Bromson stated that the Council purchased 7 acres off Moody Road adjacent to the police department. It is the intent to create a Public Safety Complex which would be expanded to address police needs, relocate EMS, and create a regional conference center. The Town has already spoken with East Windsor, Suffield and Windsor Locks and their First Selectmen sent letters in support of this. Kasia prepared a bond request of almost $13 million dollars which was co-sponsored by Representative Carol Hall and Representative Tom Arnone. Senator John Kissel and Congressman Joe Courtney are aware that Enfield is looking for any federal funds that may become available under the Infrastructure Act.

Chief Fox reviewed the police department's portion of the CIP budget consisting of five items.

- Replacement of the voice recorder system
- Replacement of department firearms
- Refresh/rebuild the departmental radio system
- Joint Operation Center Phase III
- 10 new cruisers

DPW

Mr. Nunes stated DPW is currently tasked with 62 CIP projects and plans to make them all successful.

The budget was level-funded over all divisions except for WPCF for which they added the positions of a plumber and another operator.

DPW was able to realize the following savings:

- $50,000 from termination of the Honeywell contract
- $27,000 reduction in natural gas from building consolidation project
- $41,000 reduction in electricity from building consolidation project
- $3.00 per ton reduction of salt and less utilization due to a mild winter
- Froze two custodial positions due to building consolidation

DPW absorbed large health insurance costs, contractual raises, rent for Enfield Express and $1.50 per ton increase in municipal waste dumping fees. The total dollars they had to find money for was $530,225. Even with these cuts, DPW is committed to providing the best services and amenities within their budget.

Mr. Nunes began his presentation on DPW's portion of the CIP budget with an update on the following:

- Hazardville Memorial Roof
- South River Street Bridge
- Orlando Drive culvert
- Adult Day Care demolition
- Replacing a Vetrac sidewalk machine
- Replacing DPW heavy lift truck
- Charging station and vehicles
- Crack seal program
- Transfer station improvements
- DPW fuel tank first installment

Mr. Bromson reviewed additional CIP projects:

- Higgins Park walking path
- Higgins Park playground and basketball courts
- Brainard Park field
- Powder Hollow improvements
- Enfield High School track and turf improvements
- Library Community room enhancements

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Guerreri gave an overview of the Enfield Social Services Department which is organized into five divisions.

Adult Community Division

- Basic needs
- Renter's Rebate

- Circuit Breaker
- Energy assistance
- Case Management on mental health and addiction
- Housing
- Veteran's Affairs
- Workforce development
- Elderly Services Care Coordinator
- Medicare Choice counselling
- At Risk Registry
- Mark Twain food nutrition program

<u>Early Childhood Development Center</u>

Currently services approximately 144 children infant through school-age. They are co-located with Enfield Public Schools Pre-School Program and Head Start Program.

<u>Family Resource Centers</u>

Focuses on birth to eight on parenting and child development.

- Play groups
- Education
- Developmental screenings
- Case Management
- School Readiness Grant for Early Childhood Division
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program
- Circle of Security Parenting Program
- Regional hub for family childcare providers through grant

<u>Transportation Division</u>

- Dial-a-Ride Program for those 65 and older and those with disabilities
- Magic Carpet Bus

<u>Youth Services Division</u>

The Youth Services Division works hand-in-hand with the public school system and the police department focused on prevention of substance use and trauma co-response team in the event of an untimely death. They also perform some grief counselling and run the Youth Center.

Ms. Guerreri stated the budget is largely unchanged except for a Grants and Performance Manager position.

60% or $3,741,000 of the Social Services Department is resourced through grants, fees, and donations. They currently manage 19 grants across the divisions involving:

- Two Federal Agencies
    - CDC
    - USDA
- State Agencies
    - State Department of Education
    - Office of Early Childhood
    - Department of Children and Families
- Two Regional Grants
    - Amplify
    - NCAAA
- One State Chapter National Organization Grant
- One Philanthropic Grant

Of the 19 grants there are 9 different funders, each with a different set of deliverables and metrics that need to be managed, tracked, and analyzed. Some operate on a fiscal year while others operate on a calendar year.

Within that context they have no dedicated position that oversees all of this. Division Heads must oversee grant writing, grant management, data collection and reporting, as well as their program design and implementation, staff supervision and professional development. There is no uniform set of guidelines for grant applications, acquisition, performance management or reporting and no staff dedicated to evidence-based practice research or grant research to address the ever-changing landscape of the needs of our residents. There is also no uniform quality assurance practice for continuous improvement to our service delivery.

The Grants and Performance Manager would be responsible for creating efficiencies by providing a retrospective review of all their current department grants. They would research community needs, write grants for programs and services to meet those needs, as well as manage the annual Social Services grant that the Town awards to community organizations. This position would develop and maintain a performance management quality improvement system built on best practice with consistent and predictable results. This person would also serve as a second in command of the department.

They have identified a tool called Apricot 360 as a safe, secure, reliable, and innovative platform to allow them to create a better impact by turning the data they collect into action.

Mr. Bromson stated that the IT portion would be funded under the IT Department which is approximately $50,000 and goes down the following year.

Councilor Cekala supports this grant position but would like to see this position utilized by other divisions who may need help with grant writing and may not have a grant writer.

Mr. Bromson remarked that this person will be integral to the Grant Committee that was started with police and Kasia overseeing it. The need at Social Services is probably enough to utilize 100% of the position, however they will use the expertise of the position to assist others.

Councilor Mangini asked if the $64,000 increase was for this position.

Ms. Guerreri confirmed that it was.

Chairman Ludwick thanked Ms. Guerreri for her efforts and hopes the data she will be able to collect will allow her to let the public know just what her staff does to help the community.

Councilor Hemmeler thanked Ms. Guerreri for what she has done for this department. She wished to thank her for all those she has helped and for the people she will help in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #5746 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Cekala to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #5746** adopted 9-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila M. Bailey, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council