

Legislative Council

Finance and Administration Committee

Special Meeting

Senior Center Multipurpose Room, 3 Primrose St., Newtown, CT

Monday, March 4, 2024

Minutes

PRESENT: Heather Dean (7:21 pm), Chris Gardner, Tom Long, Eric Paradis, Derek Pisani

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Keith Alexander, Bernard Molloy

CALL TO ORDER AND SALUTE THE FLAG: Chris Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

2024-25 Board of Selectmen Budget

Per the Legislative Council's referral to committee (2/28/24), Health and Welfare, Outside Agencies, Land Use, Economic & Community Development, Parks & Recreation, Library, Debt Service, Capital Nonrecurring, Contingency, and Other Financing Revenue in the BOS budget were reviewed:

- The Newtown Health District leases three trucks. Has the health district's board considered buying the trucks instead of leasing them?
- What is the purpose of the \$35,000 contingency in the Newtown Health District's budget? Has the entire amount been used in prior years?
- Committee members would like clarification on Newtown Youth & Family Services' (NYFS) health insurance payment increase from 39 to 50 percent. What do other outside agencies that receive health insurance benefits from the town pay?
- Committee members noted with concern that NYFS continues to lag in fundraising (\$8,703 in the prior fiscal year) compared to other outside agencies like the library. It was noted that NYFS administration has been urged to increase its fundraising.
- Committee members would like to know how many out of town individuals are being served by NYFS, and if other towns are contributing revenue to the agency.
- Committee members would like to see Newtown Underwater Search & Rescue's (NUSAR) entire budget to review all expenses and revenues from the prior fiscal year. What is NUSAR's fund balance?
- What organization in town cares for "pocket" cemeteries in neighborhoods? Does more money need to be allocated for upkeep?
- The Land Use Dues, Travel & Education line is increasing by 25 percent. Is conference participation in all departments done in person or online and if in person can meetings be attended remotely to reduce travel costs?

- There was a discussion about redundancies in the Economic and Community Development fees and professional services budget (marketing in two lines, for example). Request justification for the \$5,300 increase in fees and professional services and the expense for marketing the Labor Day Parade. Does the parade need marketing and is that the Parade Committee's responsibility?
- Committee members suggested Parks & Recreation increase the financial incentive for lifeguards to remain on staff between Memorial Day and Labor Day given staffing challenges at Eichler's Cove and the Treadwell Park pool.
- Committee members discussed the planned purchase of the Toro 5910 in the Parks & Recreation capital account. Is the machine needed given a recent \$14,000 repair? If needed, members suggested using capital nonrecurring to purchase the machine (\$166,000) instead of leasing it for \$38,500, assuming the lease is for five years.
- Committee members discussed using American Rescue Plan funding to pay for the pool vacuum replacement (\$25,000) and drum mulch head (\$14,000) instead of funding them in the budget. Mr. Gardner will contact First Selectman Capeci to propose the idea and determine if there is support for it.
- Committee members discussed the library's proposed budget. There was support for the town's proposed \$1,475,000 contribution to the library. Committee members questioned why the Friends of the Library did not provide more money to the library in the current fiscal year.
- Committee members discussed the proposed conversation to ADP payroll services (\$65,000) in the capital nonrecurring budget. What is the justification, and can money be saved elsewhere in the budget such as reducing employee hours? What is the annual maintenance cost for ADP compared to the current payroll system?

Committee members agreed to cancel the Finance and Administration Committee meeting on Thursday, March 7, 2024 pending receipt of answers to questions.

VOTER COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Mr. Paradis moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 pm. Seconded by Mr. Long. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Gardner, Chair, Finance and Administration Committee of the Legislative Council

These minutes are subject to approval by the Finance and Administration Committee. Any edits will be reflected in the minutes of the meeting at which they are approved.