

Judit DeStefano, Chair
Jay Mattegat, Vice-Chair
Dan Honan
Bob Pickard
Chris Smith
Dan Wiedemann



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

MINUTES

The Municipal Operations Committee of the Legislative Council held a regular meeting on Tuesday, March 20 at 7:00pm in Meeting Room 2 of Edmond Town Hall, 45 Main Street, Newtown, CT.

Committee Chair Judit DeStefano called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Present: Judit DeStefano, Jay Mattegat, Dan Honan, Bob Pickard, Chris Smith, and Dan Wiedemann. Also present were LC Chair Paul Lundquist and First Selectman Dan Rosenthal (7:20).

Discussion of Municipal Operations budget for 2018-2019, with review of questions previously assembled and answered by Selectman's office (see attached).

Jay Mattegat moved to recommend to the full council that the vehicle added by BOF (\$65,000) be removed from the budget. Dan Honan seconded. All in favor.

Dan Weideman moved to recommend to the full council that the additional funds added by the BOF for Technology (\$100,000) and EDC New Hire (\$25,000) be removed from the budget. Chris Smith seconded. All in favor.

Dan Weideman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 pm. Seconded by Dan Honan.

Respectfully submitted,

Judit DeStefano
Chairperson

BOS

Pg 40 – Does “increased charges for service’ refer to expected hikes in rates, or just increase need for services at existing rates?

Represents an expected increase in economic activity which most of these accounts are tied to.

Pg 60 – Revenue for Senior Center member fees sees big increase. Is this due to new center opening? Will it open early enough in the fiscal year to be able to expect the jump year 1?

Represents increased membership. This started a few years ago so it does not relate to new center. New center opening is closer to 2019-20 fiscal year.

Pg 100 – IT Director salary increase of 12%, is this to get more in line with current salary structure?

Yes, sorry, I thought I put that explanation in the salaries section? I will add that explanation to the LC adopted budget. The detail was in the First Selectman’s budget presentation:

<u>DEPT/POSITION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>JUSTIFICATION</u>
<u>Selectmen</u>		
Executive Assistant	\$6,000	Enhancement 2 of 2
<u>Information Technology</u>		
Director	\$10,000	Reflects responsibility (1 of 2)
<u>Fire</u>		
Deputy Fire Marshal	\$2,000	Reflects responsibility
<u>Parks & Recreation</u>		
Parks – Operations Supervisor	\$2,000	Reflects responsibility
<u>Senior Services</u>		
Director	<u>\$1,000</u>	Reflects responsibility
TOTAL	\$21,000	

Pg 103 – BOF increased by \$100,000, does all of this need to be done this year or can we accrue it in Capital non-recurring?

Yes, it can be done incrementally. The First Selectman chose to include the IT road map in your budget folder pocket to show the planned improvements to IT over time.

Pg. 103 – – BOF increased by \$100,000, is there any benefit (other than keeping budget increase minimal) to the phased approach initially decided upon for tech overhaul?

A short term phased approach gives IT time to implement and test the improvements.

Pg 111 – Should we increase the amount for the audit to the actual cost?

Actual cost is \$45,000. The 2017-18 12/31 amount represents the amount paid at December 31, 2017. Another \$20,000 was paid in January (progress billing).

Pg 114 – Why is maintenance increased by \$10,000?

New streetscaping needs to be maintained as well as building barriers and general campus maintenance.

Pg 118 – CIP has Radio System Upgrade and Console in 20-21; with a 10 year lifespan, can this (or at least the next) be worked into the capital line item? (ie: save for instead of borrow for)?

Yes that is an option to “save for” in the capital non-recurring.

Pg 125 – Salaries show increase of \$143,286 and on pg 128 detail shows \$112,542, can you explain the difference?

Good catch! The 143,286 is correct. The salary detail on page 128 correctly shows the individual line items with their increases. The grand total increase, however, does not account for the prior year Board of Finance reduction of (30,744). Grand total increase amount on page 128 will be corrected on the LC adopted budget.

Pg 150 – Insurance NUSAR \$8,400, what did we have in the past?

NUSAR has been trying to obtain this insurance for years. Legislators have been trying to include this activity in the worker’s compensation statutes without success. So this amount represents insurance to cover members if injured on call.

Pg 192 – The increase of \$5,000 for the van driver when history does not support it and trip have decreased since 2012?

The increase is for a part time senior aide position. Planned hiring date is 4/1/2019. Due to increased activity at the new senior center.

Pg 246 – After the BOS reduced the P&R budget by \$65,000 the BOF increased by the same. What does the BOF know that the BOF doesn’t?

I think this is a question for the Board of Finance. This request was for an additional truck. It was not a replacement truck. If you look on the last page of your budget book you will notice that all of the Parks & Recreation trucks are below 90,000 miles.

Pg 246 – Why does Parks and Rec not have Capital nonrecurring line item for items like the truck BOF inserted?

The capital non-recurring account on page 262 includes capital planning for all departments.

Pg. 246 – Are there shared use vehicles for Parks and Rec and Highway?

There has been both vehicle and equipment sharing between Highway and Park & Recreation for at least the last 28+ years. This both a common and very well established practice.

Pg 246 - In the p and r budget they have a 5,000 request for replacing weed whackers yearly, what happens to all the equipment that is replaced yearly?

Its not just weed wackers....We annually replace some small power equipment. This may consist of weed wackers, back pack blowers, chain saws, plate compactors, push mowers, snow blowers, generators or trash pumps. These are small engine equipment that is more expensive to repair when they fail versus buy new. We have 8 chain saws, 10 back pack blowers, 12 weed wackers, 2 plate compactors, 4 generators, 3 trash pumps and 3 snow blowers

Equipment is replaced when it is worn beyond repair, damaged beyond repair, or parts are no longer available.

Generally if the item is really old or not repairable it is disposed of. Often since we have multiple units of the same item we keep the old unit for parts salvage. We often can use a part off of an old unit to keep another old unit going, or make one running unit out of two non running units.

Pg 259 – What has been used in 2017 – 2018 contingency thus far and projected through year end?

\$21,000 has been used plus another \$85,120 still to be authorized for the town contribution to the sidewalk project along South Main Street between Glover Avenue and Mile Hill Road; and along Mile Hill Road between South Main Street and Trades Lane. This leaves \$93,880. There will be a request for winter maintenance overage (35,000 - \$40,000?).

Pg 262 – Why is there general capital non-recurring, as well as department specific? (Ie PD's \$183,950)?

Capital non-recurring is a financing tool for capital assets. Other tools are bonding (long term borrowing) and pay as you go (capital account budget amounts in department budgets).

So in capital non-recurring there may be specific assets that are requested by departments like a public works sweeper or there may be a town wide item like replacing a roof at the municipal complex.

1) Need more explanations in the pension benefits. They have increased 22%. All because of the discount rate? A subset to this is the police retirement benefits. They are upwards of 25% of payroll. No other employee in the town has more than 3% or 4%. Also when you look at the police 401k matching, the town pays 15%. The rest of the town employees only get 5% which is in line with the private market.

The increase in pension contribution was due to two factors; the decrease in the interest rate assumption from 7.5% to 7.0% and the change in the actuarial calculation method from the Projected Unit Credit method (PUC) to the Entry Age Normal method (EAN). The EAN method is best practice and reflects a better calculation. The actuarial report for both town and police can be found on the town website on the pension committee page:

<http://www.newtown-ct.gov/pension-committee>

Overall, CT wide, police pension plans are more robust than other plans. The town contribution to the 401a defined contribution plan of 15% for police is much less than the 25% contribution to the pension. The 15% was arrived at in union negotiations.

2) Would like to speak more about roads. Just how much are we lacking and is \$3m the right target number?

The road system in total is worth a million dollars per mile including the land value (\$275 Million). It takes between \$500,000 and \$750,000 to build a new road per mile depending on width, amount of expected traffic etc. Capital repair and maintenance on a mile runs around \$300,000 to \$400,000 over a single lifespan (nominally 20 years). At that rate the Town should be spending around \$5 Million annually not adjusted for inflation but using a straight line need. Our operational and capital budget has not averaged that level of expenditure. This discussion requires a great deal more than a sentence or two but I think you get the idea. If we don't properly fund road maintenance on a sustained basis we are just shuffling chairs on the Titanic.

3) FHA - I would like to discuss this group further. Are there areas we can manage more efficiently? How are we measuring their progress? Is this something that can be put back into the selectman's bucket?

The Fairfield Hills Budget only includes contractual services for mowing snow removal and landscaping that is administered by Park and Rec.

The Fairfield Hills Authority are guided by the Fairfield Hills Master Plan.

4) I was surprised how much IT expenditure we have. How do we measure their productivity? What are their challenges currently?

How do we measure their productivity?

IT tracks problems/incidents using a system called TRACKIT. Incidents are logged at the onset of a problem and documented by an assigned technician, steps taken to fix the issue and how the issue was finally resolved. TRACKIT is also used to document GIS parcel updates.

IT also tracks changes to the infrastructure environment using a CHANGE MANAGEMENT spreadsheet. Updates to PD servers and switches are logged, as well as changes to router configurations and replacing system disk storage. Changes to the IT infrastructure are targeted to increase system reliability, reduce application response time and reduce network outages. IT also tracks individual applications and servers using MTBF (mean time between failures) measurements, which helps the department to focus resources on recurring problem areas

The IT department implemented remote take over of PCs in order to increase response time to users not located in the Municipal Building. Using this technology, IT techs can quickly determine how to fix users issues without driving to the location.

IT has implemented major projects such as the Work Order System for DPW, the Online Building Permit system for the Building dept, RECTRAC major update for Park and Recreation, the online Alarm Registration system for the PD and coming this summer, Online Location Services for people using Newtown Trails. All of these projects were delivered on time and helped the various departments to improve services to town residents.

These actions have had a significant positive impact on town employees as determined by informal surveys and remarks by employees on the responsiveness of the IT department to address users issues, the follow up of IT technicians to verify that issues were fully resolved and by comments from department heads stating that their organizations are receiving timely and satisfactory IT services.

What are their challenges currently?

Protecting the IT environment from malicious software, viruses and hackers continue to be a major concern. IT uses a layered approach to network security by notifying users to be wary of suspicious and unknown emails, maintaining security patches on servers, updating the firewall hardware and software and backing up data. IT created security groups for each department to contain viruses or other malware from rapidly spreading throughout the enterprise.

Another significant challenge is improving the IT infrastructure to support cloud-based software technologies by minimizing downtime due to internet outages. When internet outages occur, the duration is usually several hours and departments using cloud base software cannot perform their tasks. Creating a secondary path to the internet will ameliorate this problem and allow the expansion of cloud-based resources,

Creating a fault tolerance environment to allow key applications such as the PD, dispatch and tax systems to continue to operate in the event of an equipment or building failure. This requires upgrading old and failing equipment and configuring the network to support high availability devices from 2 separate locations.

Replace crumbling IT infrastructure: In the past 4 months, failures occurred in disk drives, switches, PCs and phone equipment. Forward progress must be made in all areas of the IT infrastructure to avoid preventable outages such as the inability to replace outdated and obsolete data switches or several drives failing at once which could result in major data loss.

5) When was the last time we marketed our liability insurance?

We don't, we (as a Town and Board of Education) belong to the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) which is a member owned and member governed organization. It is an insurance risk pool with most towns being members. It was created when insurance companies would not insure municipalities (early 1980's I think). CIRMA is a part of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM)

6) Does districting help our bottom line? I noticed we spent \$3,500 from contingency for signs (entering and leaving the district).

Courtesy of the Economic Development department:

What is wayfinding?

“Wayfinding encompasses all of the ways in which people orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place”

“Wayfinding is an experience, signage is a tool”

According to *The Signage Foundation Urban Wayfinding Planning and Implementation Manual*, economic viability is influenced by wayfinding that enhances a municipality's brand, eases the visitors navigation and reinforces key destinations. Wayfinding should enrich and enhance the experience within the municipality. It should define the place through direction and education. The visitor becomes familiar with its boundaries, destinations and key features. It should highlight complementary destinations to bring increased attendance to the municipality. It should enhance the commercial brand through consistent signs and materials. It can provide traffic and parking controls. It can promote walking and encourage interaction with the place. **Wayfinding is an important tool in a community's economic development toolbox. It is an experience and should be welcoming, friendly and comforting.**

7) For Police, we have 23 in step 5, is that unusual?

No, police advance a step each year. Takes a little more than 5 years to reach step 5.

8) For cars that are being asked to replace, can we go with used instead of new?

The reason vehicles are being replaced is because we have used up the goodness and repairs are starting to climb. Used cars just get you to repair needs quicker and do not come with the warranties on drive-trains etc. that have save us thousands in repair costs.

9) For public works, how do we measure what should be contracted out vs what we use through employees?

Not an easy question to answer. For larger paving or bridge reconstruction projects, the choice of a contractor is obvious. However, for medium or small projects it typically is an either or based on available manpower within the department. If I have a small or medium size drainage job that has some urgency I send the in-house crew available. It's a matter of managing the available resource in the most timely and efficient manner, while responding to the urgency of the need.

10) For social services, is our budget enough? Have we been asked to do more?

We have been operating on a \$400,000+ grant for social services. 2018-19 could be the last year for this grant.

11) Has there been any talk with other towns about health district services?

The Newtown Health District Director of Health is the chairperson of an active group of Health Directors that has been meeting monthly for 15+ years.

The group was found by the ten-town planning region formerly known as HVCEO (Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials). The Directors work collaboratively on Public Health Emergency Preparedness and the work often evolves to include more standard local public health issues and emerging public health issues.

We have learned to help each other while still working within the political confines of our respective local government structures. It's a collaboration, but there have not been sharing of services or contractual arrangements.

If the question is asking, have other towns asked to join our health district, and/or has our health district looked to invite other towns to join our health district?

The answer is...not lately.

Bridgewater and Roxbury asked to join our health district back in 2005/06 as there was legislation being proposed to force "part-time health depts" to go full-time by either hiring their own health director or joining an existing health district (or even joining others to create a new health district). The legislation did not pass but Bridgewater and Roxbury thought it would be a good idea and so did our existing Board. I will point out that the two towns did not save money by joining the health district, nor did the District reduce costs by adding the 2 towns. The 2 towns have maintained level costs and have gotten a lot more service.

Brookfield approached the District in 2008 to possibly join the District. It was a lengthy evaluation. The District did not think they were a good candidate to join the District as Brookfield had enormous water supply issues and it was thought that resources would be diverted from the District to Brookfield. District considered caveats to try to capture the unknown effort. Brookfield thought that the costs had the potential of being prohibitive. The discussion did not get to a formal proposal with definitive costs. Brookfield has since hired a part-time health director who is very professionally invested in the health department and is doing a great job.

There have not been additional discussions with any other towns since.

12) Can Dan review his plan for Economic Development?

Will be glad to discuss plan for economic development at a LC budget meeting.

13) Parks and Rec is up 111k, with an 18% increase in full time salaries since 2015-2016. Can we get an explanation? Is it more people? Are there more people using our facilities? How do we measure?

Parks and Recreation did get the position approved last budget season to hire a Maintainer that was approved in 2008 but then not hired due to a hiring freeze. P&R Administration delayed the hiring to be sure that when operating under full staff this position was necessary. Increased responsibilities and more amenities and facilities proved that the filling of this position was vital to keep same services. We also had a small increase with the Operations Supervisor position to bring this salary

comparable and more in line to a Crew Chief at Public Works position. The rest is increases with union negotiations of 2.25% per contract.

14) Parks and Rec Contractual services are up 13%. Can we get an explanation? Any way we could share resources with the Highway department?

The largest increase in Contractual Services is the addition of the responsibility for Sandy Hook School lawn maintenance in the overall Lawn Maintenance Contract. A \$21,000 cost. An additional increase in this line item is the irrigation central contract of 12,000. By paying a onetime fee for 5 years of \$13,500 it is a 34% savings over the annual renewal fee if paid yearly. None of these increases are anything that can be shared with Public Works.

15) How is Library "Value of Services" conformed?

The library director was asked this very question at the Board of Finance budget meeting. Remembering that, here is an example of how it is conformed. Taking out a book is valued as if you purchased the book. Same thing for music, film, etc. Attending a free workshop is valued as if you went to the same workshop sponsored by a for profit company. Using a study room could be valued by applying an hourly rent. So a value is applied to every service performed by the library.